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DITCH WEBSITES FOR APPS!

Amazing free phone & tablet apps that
do things mobile sites can't p40



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The only way is app!

Life is full of difficult choices: coffee or tea? Beatles or Stones? Daddy or chips? But on your phone or tablet, you have the luxury of being able to view websites in your mobile browser *and* install apps from the Android or iOS stores, and enjoy them in tandem. So why, you may wonder, is our cover feature this issue advising you to ditch one for the other?

The answer is that most mobile sites are (by necessity) just stripped-down versions of their desktop counterparts, whereas their corresponding apps make clever use of your device to offer handy extra features,

unlock bonus content and improve your life, both online and off.

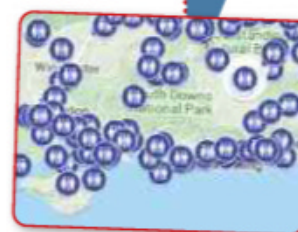
Many people remain unaware of these benefits so, on page 40, we've rounded up 20 of the best free Android and iOS apps that put their sister sites to shame, and highlighted their most useful tools. From scanning and shopping to streaming and swiping, we reveal why these apps are the smarter choice for your smartphone.

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



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2 How to create and share links to text that appears halfway down a web page **page 34**

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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.



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



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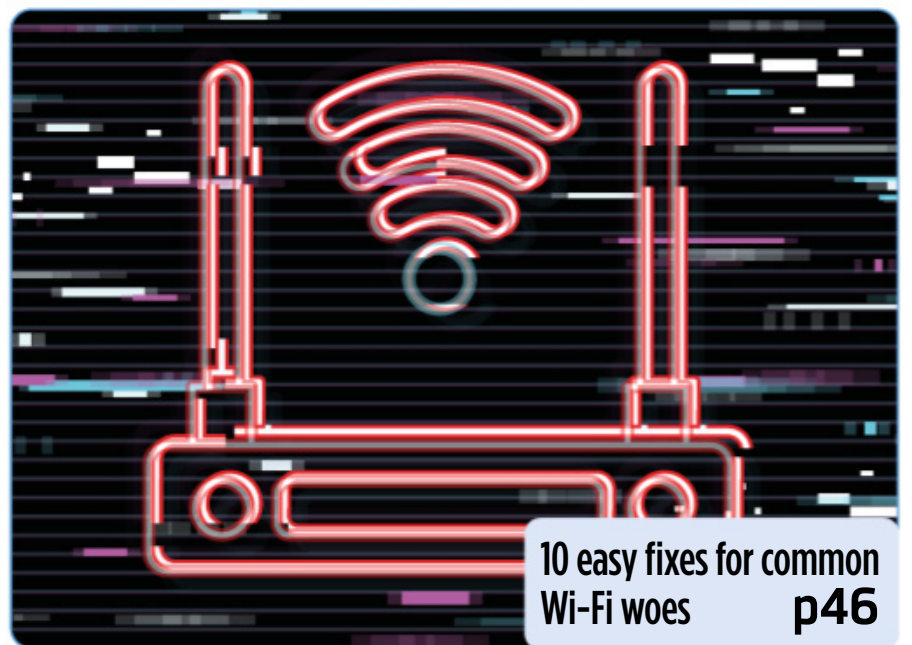
DITCH WEBSITES FOR APPS!

Fantastic free apps that put their
website equivalents to shame

p40



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EDITORIAL

Editor Robert Irvine
Technical & Reviews Editor Andy Shaw
Features Writer Steve Clark
Art Editor Laurence Hallam
Production Editor Miki Berenyi
Contributors Wayne Williams, Jane Hoskyn, Jonathan Parkyn, David Crookes, Roland Waddilove, Nicole Kobie, Barry Collins
Editorial email: editor@webuser.co.uk

ADVERTISING

Tel: 0203 890 3824
Group Advertising Director Andrea Mason
Deputy Advertising Manager Rebecca New
Senior Sales Executive Ashley Wood

ADVERTISING PRODUCTION

Group Production Manager
Stephen Catherall, 0203 890 4050
Production Manager
Mike Hills, michael_hills@dennis.co.uk

MARKETING

Marketing Manager Rachel Hare
Marketing Production Manager Gemma Hills

MANAGEMENT

Group Editor Daniel Booth
Managing Director Dharmesh Mistry
MD of Advertising Julian Lloyd-Evans
Commercial and Retail Director David Barker
Chief Executive James Tye
Company Founder Felix Dennis

SYNDICATION AND LICENSING

Tel: 0203 890 4027
Endorsement Licensing Manager Ryan Chambers
Licensing Content Manager Nicole Creasey

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Tel: 0330 333 9493
Email: subscriptions@dennis.co.uk
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WEB USER
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What's New Online

Collect web content using Google Keen

Does the world need another Pinterest? Ask Google and the answer seems to be a resounding “yes”. The web giant has launched a potential rival called Keen, which allows you and people you trust to work together in curating content on specific interests. As you’d expect, the collections can then be shared, either publicly or privately among friends. All you need is a Google account and a passion.

It won’t take long to get your head around the concept. If you find something useful online, you can add it to a ‘keen’ and view it later by clicking the Gems tab. You can also search for specific terms or use suggested words and phrases inspired by your collection’s title.

This leads to more recommendations

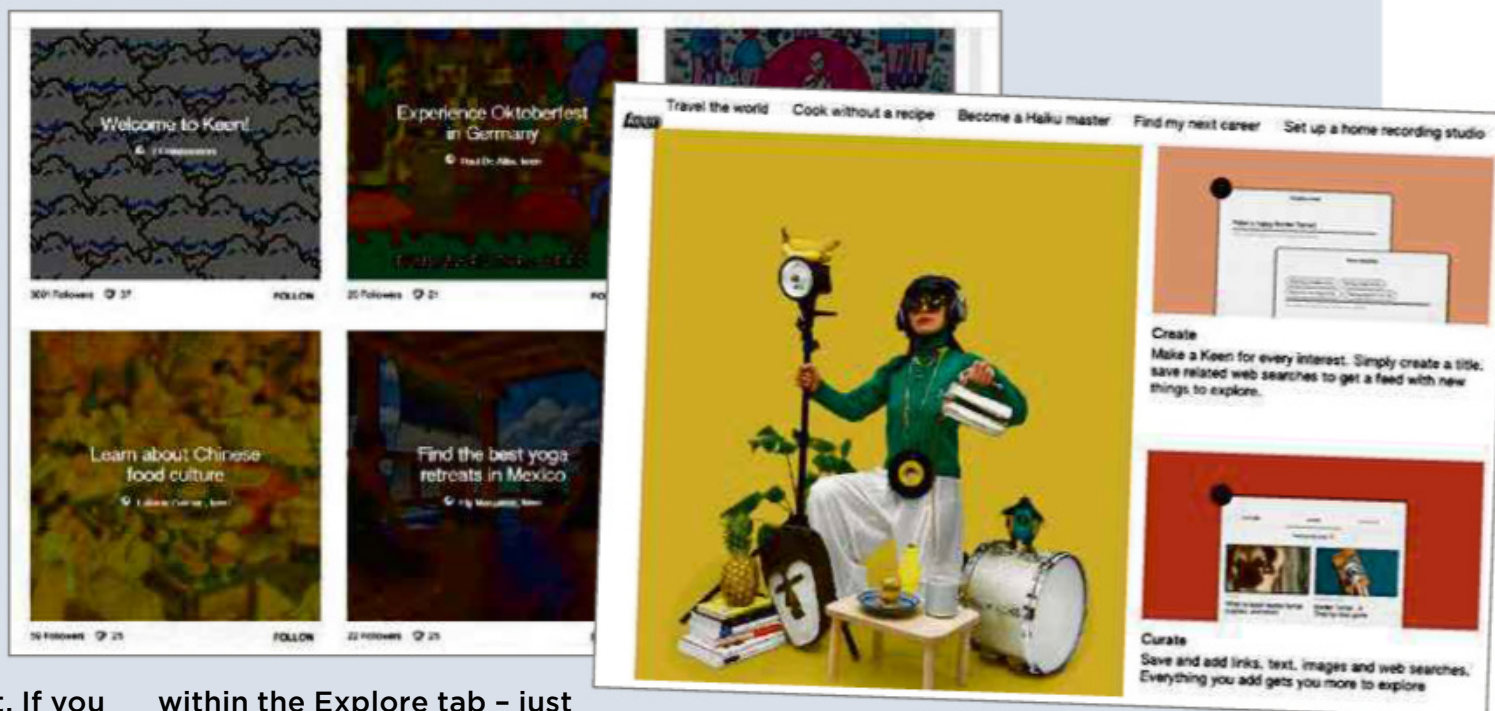
within the Explore tab – just click the diamond icon to save anything you like the look of.

Keen uses machine learning, which means it automatically finds useful and relevant content for you, allowing a collection to grow quickly as you discover more potential gems. It’s also

possible to view and follow other people’s keens, to expand your range of interests and make great finds with little effort.

Look out for a workshop on Keen in our next issue.

staykeen.com



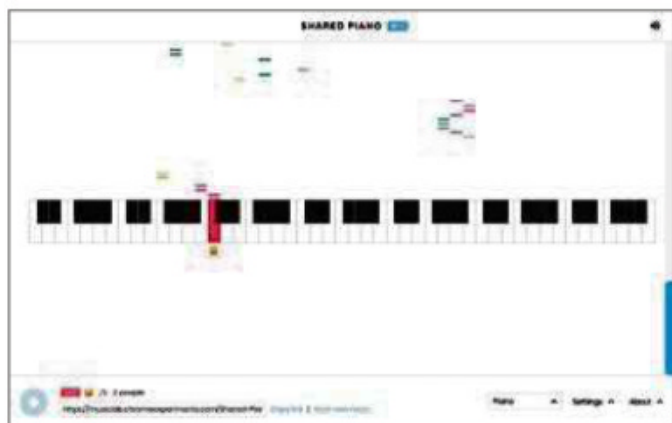
Play the piano with friends online

bit.ly/piano505

Whether you’re musically minded or just fancy tickling the ivories to see what you come up with, Shared Piano is a tuneful new tool that lets you collaborate on a composition with up to nine other people. Start by sharing the link, then either use your mouse to select the keys or tap your computer keyboard to start playing – each user will see and hear what the others are doing, making for a great remote jamming session.

If you have a MIDI keyboard, you can plug it in via USB as long as your browser supports WebMIDI (Chrome does). It’s also possible to change instruments, from options including a drum kit, drum machine, marimba, strings, synth and

woodwind, widening the scope of your tune. By scrolling up the page, you can see what each person has played. If you want to start over, just click ‘Start new room’.



Discover Twitter lists and record voice tweets

twitter.com

As you scroll through your Twitter feed in the iOS or Android app, look out for Show More Recommendations in the Discover New Lists section. This shows you more Lists related to specific fields of interest, making it easier to keep up with topics and groups of people.

Based on who you’re following and the Lists you’re already subscribing to, the recommendations take into account any topics you tweet about. Lists have been reviewed by Twitter’s curation team, too, for added safety.

But that’s not all. Twitter is also rolling out a new voice-recording feature to its iOS app, which lets you tweet up to 140 seconds of audio. Select the icon next to the camera button, tap the microphone button, record your message, choose Done and add text, photos, location or a GIF. Go over the time limit and a thread of up to 25 tweets will be created.



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

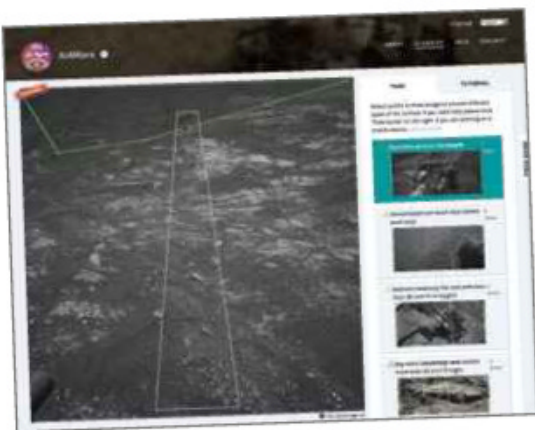
Find the nearest lockdown loo

www.lockdownloo.com

Lockdown restrictions have eased, but many UK public toilets remain closed. Visit this website, however, and you can find more than 3,000 open conveniences, zoom into the map for their “loo-cations” and click to see if there are baby-changing and disabled facilities.



Teach rovers to study Mars



bit.ly/mars505

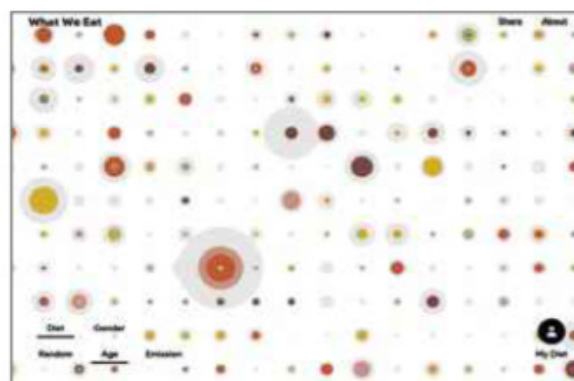
NASA's new AI4Mars online tool aims to teach its rover vehicles how to

classify Martian terrain. The hope is that by getting you to help identify and label parts of the landscape, the rovers can better avoid danger as they trundle over the Red Planet. Start by watching some tutorial videos, which explain how to decipher sand and big rocks from consolidated soil and bedrock, then look at images taken from the Curiosity rover and draw polygons around different types of surface. It's one small set of clicks for you, but it could lead to some major scientific leaps.

Check your diet's carbon footprint

bit.ly/carbon505

Every type of food has a different carbon footprint, so how does your overall diet compare with people living in the UK, US and France? Select Create Diet and either choose a template or start from scratch, then add food items and quantities from the choices on display to see your overall impact. You can then explore data via a colour- and size-coded visualisation created by artist Laurie Frick, selecting diet, gender, age and emission to see who has the greatest carbon footprint and why.



Soar above Mount Everest

bit.ly/everest505

Photographer Renan Ozturk has flown drones above Mount Everest to capture the natural wonder in 360-degrees. This National Geographic site takes you on a journey from the North Side Base Camp, viewing the ice towers and a sunset view, then providing access to the magazine's feature story, and the chance to view more amazing images. Labels help make sense of the landscape, but can be turned off.



NEW VOICE COMMANDS



Teach Assistant to recognise your voice

You can now train Assistant to recognise six individual voices. Launch the Google Home app, tap the Home icon and select Settings. Go to Google Assistant services, 'More settings', Assistant, Voice Match, 'Add devices'.



Control podcasts

In Castro Podcast Player on your iPhone or Apple Watch, you can issue Siri commands to play shows, genres and the news, and control audio playback. Go into the app's settings for a Siri Guide.



Play a word game

Say "Alexa, open Word Pop" to enjoy a voice-powered puzzle game where you have a minute to create as many words as possible from six letters.



Make Meet calls in Gmail

mail.google.com

You can now join Google Meet meetings directly from your inbox in the Android and iOS Gmail app. You can view scheduled chats on the new Meet tab and either join a meeting or start a new one with a tap.

Explore Buckingham Palace

bit.ly/palace505

Take a 360-degree virtual tour of the Queen's main residence, and learn about paintings and furniture in the Throne Room, White Drawing Room and Grand Staircase.

Walk around the Royal Academy of Arts

bit.ly/academy505

Enjoy more than 200 artworks in gigapixel resolution, step inside the RA's grand Piccadilly building and go behind the scenes of the institution's 250-year anniversary.

Need to Know

Confusion continues over coronavirus contact-tracing app

What happened?

The UK's contact-tracing app to help reduce the spread of the coronavirus has been hit by further delays and may not be released for many more months.

The app, developed by NHSX, uses Bluetooth to keep track of your movements, so if you cross paths with anyone who becomes infected with the virus, you can be notified. Such apps are designed to reduce the rate of infection, but officials believe that at least 60% of the population would have to install the app for it to be of any use.

Google and Apple released a framework for an app, but the UK government decided to develop its own. However, Apple's iOS software restricted the NHSX app's ability to be 'always on', impairing its ability to detect other devices. Using the Google and Apple framework addresses this problem and, because the data isn't held by a central authority, offers better privacy. As a result, the UK version has been dropped in favour of Google and Apple's system.

The NHSX app, initially considered a key part of tracing efforts, was scheduled for release in mid-May, but a replacement isn't expected until the winter, the government said.

Despite Prime Minister Boris Johnson's claim that no country yet has a working contact-tracing app, Germany released its version on 15 June, India had a version out in April and Singapore has been using one since March. France released its app in June, but only 1.5 million people appear to be using it.

The government's contradictory statements about the app – it was



essential but is now no longer a priority; we'll have it in May but now we won't get it till the winter; the Google/Apple version isn't good enough but it's now what we'll be using – haven't done much for public understanding of the tool.

This in turn has sparked a viral conspiracy theory on social media accusing Apple and Google of sneaking a contact-tracing app onto mobile phones without users' permission. People have posted that after updating their phone, a new setting appears: "COVID-19 exposure notifications". However, this isn't a hidden app, but part of the API (application programming interface) that Google and Apple have pushed out to phones to enable contact-tracing apps to work.

Your phone is already full of APIs, and this one will allow a contact-tracing app to share and collect data, even when your phone is asleep in your pocket; otherwise, your phone would have to be in active use. A contact-tracing app will still need to be installed before that API comes into use, and the government has made it clear that the use of such an app will remain optional – if it ever gets one working, that is.

How will it affect you?

If you've seen the "COVID-19 exposure notifications" update on your phone, don't panic – it's simply in preparation

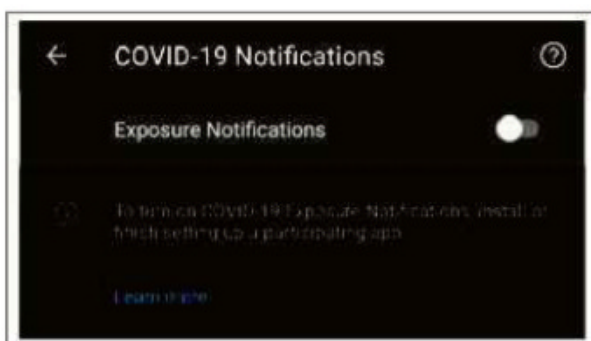
for mobile devices to support a contact-tracing app in the future. You won't be forced to use the app, and the API is not broadcasting data to other people, because it needs to be enabled first.

As the UK doesn't yet have its own contact-tracing app, there's nothing else you can do at this point. We could already have one, as the German system and others used in Europe are open-source, and could be ported over to this country. But that no longer seems to be the priority for our government, so no such app is expected any time soon.

What do we think?

The lack of a contact-tracing app isn't necessarily a major concern. Any such app needs to be backed up with testing and a human contact-tracing network, both of which have stumbled in the UK. Testing and manual contact tracing – simply making calls to people who may have been in contact with newly infected people – have worked in other countries around the world where apps haven't been introduced.

That said, any step we can take to fight this pandemic is surely worth taking, and we wonder why the government didn't initially follow the lead of other countries and use the tracing system offered by Apple and Google. That's a question only ministers can answer.



No, Apple and Google haven't installed a contact-tracing app on your phone

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

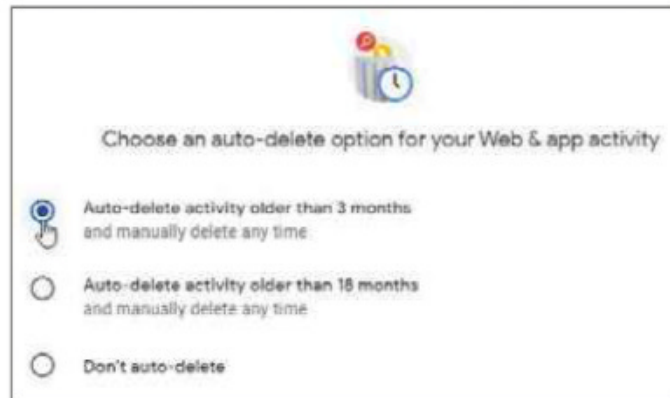
Google to delete your data automatically

What happened?

Last year, Google introduced an option that lets you specify a set amount of time after which you want it to delete certain types of data. Now, the company says it will delete this information automatically.

Google collects what it calls 'activity data', which includes your location, what you search for and what you watch on YouTube. For anyone opening a new Google account, all web and app activity will default to deleting after 18 months.

If you already use Google, you'll have to go into your account settings



to change your defaults and choose to auto-delete your activity data after either three or 18 months. If you enable Location History, that data will now be deleted automatically every 18 months.

Google also announced it will auto-delete YouTube data after 36 months for new users, while existing users

can choose three or 18 months. None of this affects your personal data, such as emails and photos.

How will it affect you?

To check or change your default deletion settings, go to myactivity.google.com and select 'Activity controls'. Click Web & App Activity, select Auto-delete and choose to delete collected data after three months, 18 months or not at all.

It's a shame there isn't another option, for between three and 18 months, but it's

a start. Do the same for Location History and YouTube History.

What do we think?

It's remarkable this hasn't happened sooner. What good is this old data to Google, after all? Clearly the company agrees that it no longer needs to know where you were several years ago. But remember that this auto-deletion only applies to three types of data: location, searches and what you watch on YouTube. Google collects a lot more data than that, so it's worth taking the time to also go through the Privacy Checkup in your settings.

Facebook hit by advertising boycott

What happened?

Several top brands have temporarily pulled their ads from Facebook to protest against its hate-speech policies, which have been accused of being too weak.

The latest round of this row was sparked when Twitter added a warning to a tweet posted by President Trump about voting, which the social-media platform deemed to be incorrect. Since then, Twitter has also blocked a Trump tweet about protesters, on the grounds of it being abusive.

Facebook hasn't taken action against any of Trump's posts on its own site, and is accused of enabling hate speech more widely, though the social network says it does

remove such content.

Clearly, advertisers don't believe it's doing enough. Led by activists such as Stop Hate for Profit and Sleeping Giants, high-profile brands including Ben & Jerry's, Coca-Cola, Starbucks and Unilever have all said they'll pause advertising on the site during July – and possibly for the rest of the year.

How will it affect you?

Facebook users won't notice much difference, aside from fewer ads from brands you recognise, because plenty of other companies are happy to keep advertising on the social network.

The question is whether Facebook will back down and become more aggressive with its content moderation, particularly with Donald



Trump. If that does happen, it's likely to spark anger from the American president – but don't expect him to stop using social media. Despite Twitter's recent action against him, he continues to tweet several times a day.

What do we think?

It's about time Facebook was forced to get to grips with the more disturbing content on its platform, be it hate speech

or propaganda.

Facebook has been slower to react to complaints about misuse of social media by political players, though none of its rivals have yet solved the problem themselves, despite some efforts. But the activist groups involved with this campaign are smart to target Facebook where it most hurts – by denting its profits.

Olympus stops making digital cameras

What happened?

Olympus has announced that it's selling off its camera business after 84 years. According to the Japanese corporation, its Imaging division "recorded operating losses for three consecutive fiscal years up to the term ended in March 2020". The division will be sold off to a Japanese investment fund.

Originally a microscope manufacturer, Olympus launched its first camera in 1936. By 1970, it was a household name across the globe, associated with superior quality and design. In recent times, however, the company has struggled.

It's a familiar tale of digital destruction. The company initially performed well in the first wave of digital cameras because its well-known brand appealed to early adopters. The downfall came when it began focusing on the so-called 'middle market'. Cameraphones dominate the broad, budget market while, at the top end, professional photographers demand high-quality kits, but Olympus, fatefully, chose the middle ground, where profit margins are poor and consumer numbers are low to non-existent. It's just one of many business decisions, like



the company's refusal to invest in video technology, that dismayed photographers and industry experts.

The company later tried to play catch-up, releasing higher-spec cameras – but it was too late. In a statement, Olympus said it "has implemented measures to cope with the extremely severe digital camera market, due to, amongst others, rapid market shrink caused by the evolution of smartphones". Those measures, it seems, weren't enough to save Olympus's camera business.

How will it affect you?

For now, at least, you'll still be able to

buy Olympus cameras, and existing owners should still be able to get repairs. A statement on the Olympus website (bit.ly/olympus505) notes that "during the ongoing discussions, Imaging will continue business as usual. Sales, service and marketing departments will continue to work hard to support customers passionate about photography with great products and services."

The precise fate of the business, once negotiations conclude, is unknown. It's possible that the eventual owner of the camera business will continue to market the products as Olympus – the smartphone market, after all, is littered with companies buying up 'legacy' brands.

What do we think?

It's a shame that Olympus' cameras are no more, but it's not a surprise. Like Polaroid, the company has struggled in the digital age to maintain its identity and consumer base. Mind you, the camera sector only accounts for 10% of Olympus' business – we may know and love the brand for its world-class cameras, but the real money is made in microscopes and other scientific imaging technology.



FIRST LOOK

Nokia 1.3

bit.ly/nokia505

Since its comeback, Nokia's track record for producing high-quality, low-priced phones has been consistently excellent. Its latest model, the Nokia 1.3, costs well under £100 and would make for a decent back-up handset.

The phone runs Android 10 Go – a cut-down, slimline version of Google's operating system designed specifically for low-end phones. And, make no mistake, the dual-sim Nokia 1.3 is decidedly low-end, packing a sluggish quad-core Qualcomm Snapdragon 215 processor and 1GB of RAM. Speed, then, is most certainly not of the essence, and the lag is noticeable. Furthermore, the 1.3 only comes with 16GB of internal storage,

though this can be expanded up to 400GB with a microSD card.

There's a practical simplicity to the Nokia 1.3's design – the solid plastic chassis sits comfortably in your hand, but feels noticeably cheap, while the unremarkable 5.7in screen features an even more unremarkable resolution of 1520 x 720 pixels.

Flip the phone over and you'll find a single 8-megapixel rear camera and flash, while the auto-focusing selfie camera is 5-megapixels. As you'd expect, this delivers photos best described as 'acceptable'. Video



captures are equally basic, at 720p and 30fps (frames per second), without the benefit of stabilisation. The only real 'extra' here is the dedicated Google Assistant button, located on the side, as is a microUSB port for charging.

This is not a phone for obsessive users, who are better catered for by the marginally more powerful mid-range Nokia 5.3 (or even the flagship 9 PureView). But the Nokia 1.3's shortcomings aren't necessarily bad. Yes, the phone is a tad slow under pressure and looks generic, but it's ideal for texts, calls, basic browsing and opening the occasional app. Available in three colours, you can pick up this budget Nokia for the bargain price of £65.



WHAT'S THE RUMOUR

Is Amazon adding live TV to Prime Video?

A string of recent job listings implies that Amazon's streaming platform Prime Video could be getting a live TV component – or 'linear TV', as it's known.

In one ad posted to [amazon.jobs](#), the company suggests it's seeking a linear TV product manager who can "innovate on the next-gen worry-free Linear TV experience." The role demands "designing the end-to-end customer experience for how customers discover and watch Linear TV content" to "redefine how customers watch 24/7 linear broadcast TV content."

One anonymous industry insider hinted that Amazon is "actively pursuing" live programming deals, saying "you should assume they're talking to everybody". Naturally, Amazon hasn't responded to the whispers.

Amazon isn't the first digital business to deliver live TV. Google and Sony both introduced standalone live TV platforms – which, by most measures, failed. Expensive licensing costs were a major obstacle, but experts have suggested that, in Amazon's case, licensing and screening selected packages on the existing Prime Video platform will help mitigate potential failure.

Rather than traditional live TV, the company appears to be looking to license round-the-clock livestreams, which include "sports, news, movies, award shows, special events and TV



shows". Amazon has previously streamed live football and tennis matches via Prime Video and, last October, it began live-streaming news programmes to Fire Stick owners.

LIKELIHOOD RATING



It's no surprise to see Amazon enter the live TV arena. One of its job ads states that "although video on demand is on the rise, the global viewing hours weighs in favor of live or scheduled TV". The 'linear' service would give Prime Video a much-needed advantage over competitors such as Netflix and Apple TV. Amazon already has limited experience in this field. The real question is: will the service crash and burn like so many before it?

WEBOMETER

WE LIKE...

↑ Hide your viewing on Netflix

Netflix has added a feature to its mobile app that lets you hide what you've been watching on the streaming service. Simply press the three-dot menu button below a TV show or film under 'Continue watching' on your home screen and choose 'Remove from row'.



↑ Recover lost data in Windows

Microsoft has released a new data-recovery app that lets you retrieve deleted and corrupted files and photos. Windows File Recovery is free to download from the Microsoft Store ([bit.ly/recovery505](#)) and runs in the Windows command line.



WE DON'T LIKE...

↓ Phishing scams are on the rise

The National Cyber Security Centre received more than one million reports of scam emails in just two months. The NCSC said that most of the 16,500 emails it received every day were linked to cryptocurrency scams and fake online shops.



↓ Internet Archive faces lawsuit

The Internet Archive ended its Emergency Library project two weeks early after being sued by four major publishers for "acting as a piracy site" that infringed authors' copyright. The Archive insists that all its books were uploaded legally.



What's new on Kickstarter

Our favourite new project on the crowdfunding site

MotiWatch

[bit.ly/moti505](#) | From £75

MotiWatch wants to help you "be the best version of yourself". Inspired by sobriety coins, this palm-sized device has a mini E Ink display that tracks multiple 'cessation' goals, such as quitting smoking or ditching junk food. Each hour, the always-on screen updates your current progress while offering motivational help, quotes, facts and 'quests' to help you reach your goals. Using the built-in Bluetooth or the planned app, you can also create your own objectives. For a £75 pledge, backers get a plastic-case MotiWatch, or you can pay £95 for the wooden model.



Stay Safe Online

News about the latest threats and advice from security experts

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

Chrome extensions used in spyware campaign

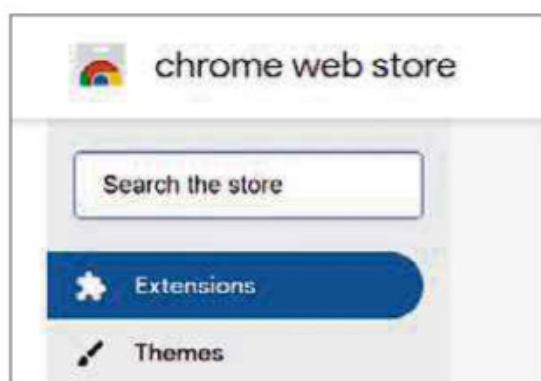
Google has removed more than 70 malicious extensions from the Chrome Web Store, after being alerted that they were being used in a massive spyware campaign.

According to researchers at Awake Security, the add-ons – which had been installed over 32 million times – claimed to warn users about questionable websites or assist them with converting files into different formats. Instead, the extensions obtained users' browsing history and

data in an attempt to steal and share login information from Chrome.

Based on the number of downloads, Awake Security co-founder and chief scientist Gary Golomb believes this campaign is the most far-reaching attack against the Chrome Web Store to date. Google responded by saying that: "When we are alerted of extensions in the Web Store that violate our policies, we take action and use those incidents as training material to improve our automated and manual analyses." It is not yet known who was behind the campaign.

bit.ly/extensions505



Fake Android games infect phones with adware

Android users have been urged to uninstall 47 dangerous apps that were disguised as games in the Google Play store, but bombard your phone with intrusive ads. The apps were discovered by researchers at Avast and are part of a family of Trojans called HiddenAds.

Worryingly, they have been installed more than 15 million times and 17 of the apps are, at the time of writing, still available in the Play store.

Avast said the apps were detected through their similarities with a previous HiddenAds campaign, and their shared activities, features and network traffic. "It became apparent that these apps are disrupting the user experience based on Play store reviews," said the security company. "This, combined with the apps' ability to hide their icon and display ads outside the app, confirmed that they are part of the HiddenAds family."

The apps, which include Shoot Master, Find Hidden Differences and Draw Color By Number, are generally repackaged versions of older games with added layers of ads.

bit.ly/avast505



Security Helpdesk | Your questions answered by security specialists

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



Q How did Google fail to notice malicious extensions in the Chrome Web Store (see story, above)?

Andrew Gunn, Facebook

A The revelation that an unknown developer was able to use fake contact

information to infect the Chrome Web Store with more than 70 malicious add-ons is concerning.

Google has previously promised to exert better control over its stores, yet the tech giant is still failing to protect users. These extensions were potentially extremely harmful because they could be used to steal important credentials and browsing data from compromised devices.

Given the large number of malicious domains involved, it seems likely that this was a large-scale, co-ordinated spyware campaign, designed to harvest huge amounts of data from a wide cross-



“ It's about time Google made good on its promise to clean up its house **”**

section of targets.

It's about time Google made good on its promise to clean up its house. Chrome users need assurances that when they download extensions from the Web Store, the add-ons have been properly inspected and are not going to cause harm.

If a person goes into a physical store, they expect not to be sold products that could cause them harm, yet this consumer protection is not being properly enacted

in the digital realm.

Governments need to look closely at the situation and create legislation that forces Google to vet thoroughly the apps and extensions that make their way into its stores.

The current policy of dishing out fines after a problem has occurred fails to protect web users, and we need digital stores to be regulated in the same way as those offering physical goods.

Credit: Ink Drop / Shutterstock.com

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★ Best New Websites

Site of the Fortnight

WRITING

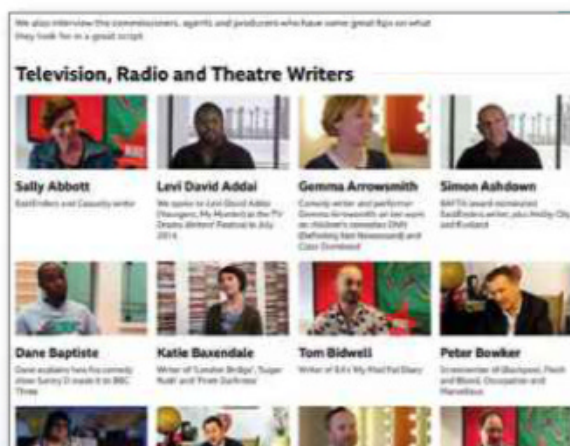
RELAUNCH

BBC Writersroom

bbc.co.uk/writersroom

If you fancy trying your hand at script-writing and need some solid advice, then one of the best places to start is the BBC Writersroom. Unveiling a fresh new design, this site is packed with interviews involving professional writers and producers, videos covering the essentials of writing a script and information about how to create eye-catching treatments, pitches and outlines. A blog keeps you informed of writing events and opportunities, while the abundance of tips is sure to help steer you in the right direction. There's certainly plenty to keep you inspired and, who knows, you may become the Beeb's next writing star.

Our rating

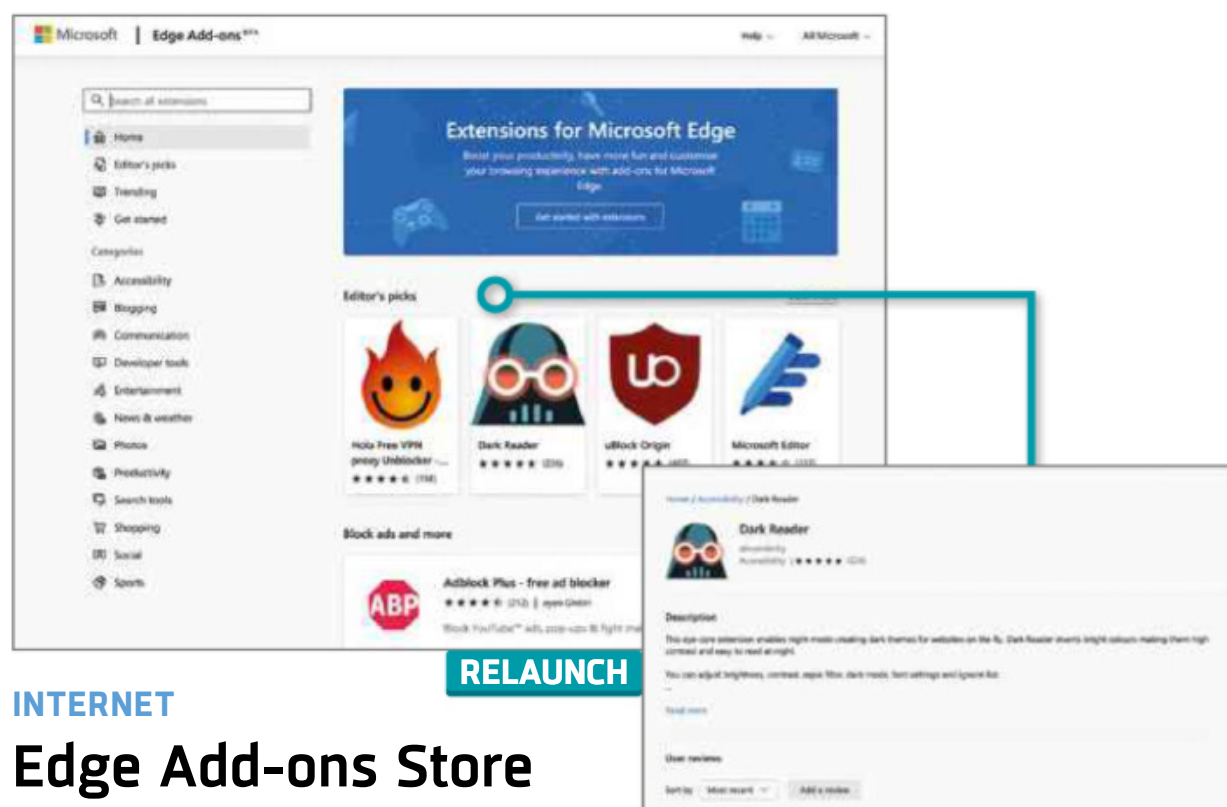
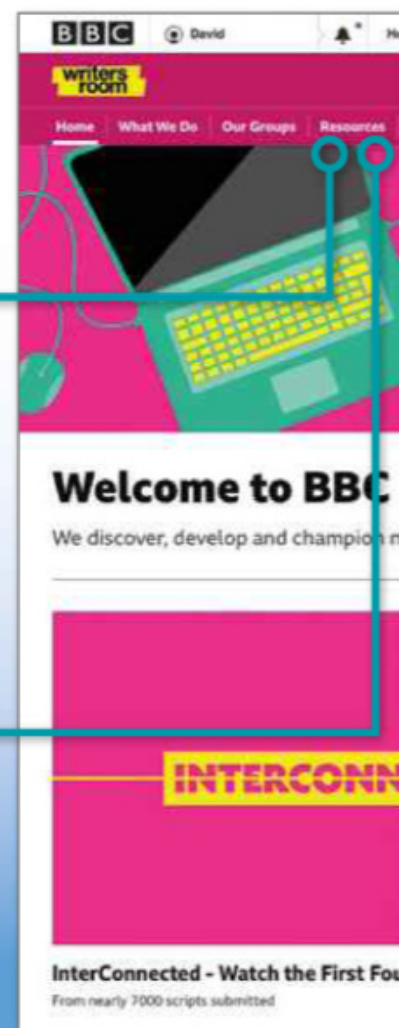


WATCH AND LISTEN
Download and listen to podcasts or watch a series of video interviews with top talent



FORMAT ADVICE

Understand how a script should be presented, with examples for different types of shows



RELAUNCH

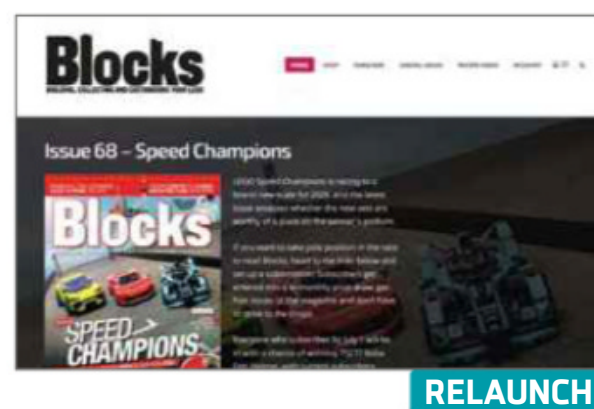
INTERNET

Edge Add-ons Store

bit.ly/edge505

Following Microsoft's relaunch of Edge as a Chromium-based browser, not only can you install Chrome add-ons but developers can now recreate them as official Edge versions, which you can explore more easily in the browser's redesigned store. The site looks like a tidier version of the Chrome Web Store, with a sidebar displaying categories and recommendations. The add-ons themselves are shown in the main window, each within a specific section and with a rating to aid your decision-making. We'd like to see screenshots and links to authors on the individual add-on pages, but installing them is a simple process and there are plenty of useful tools to consider.

Our rating



RELAUNCH

TOYS

Blocks

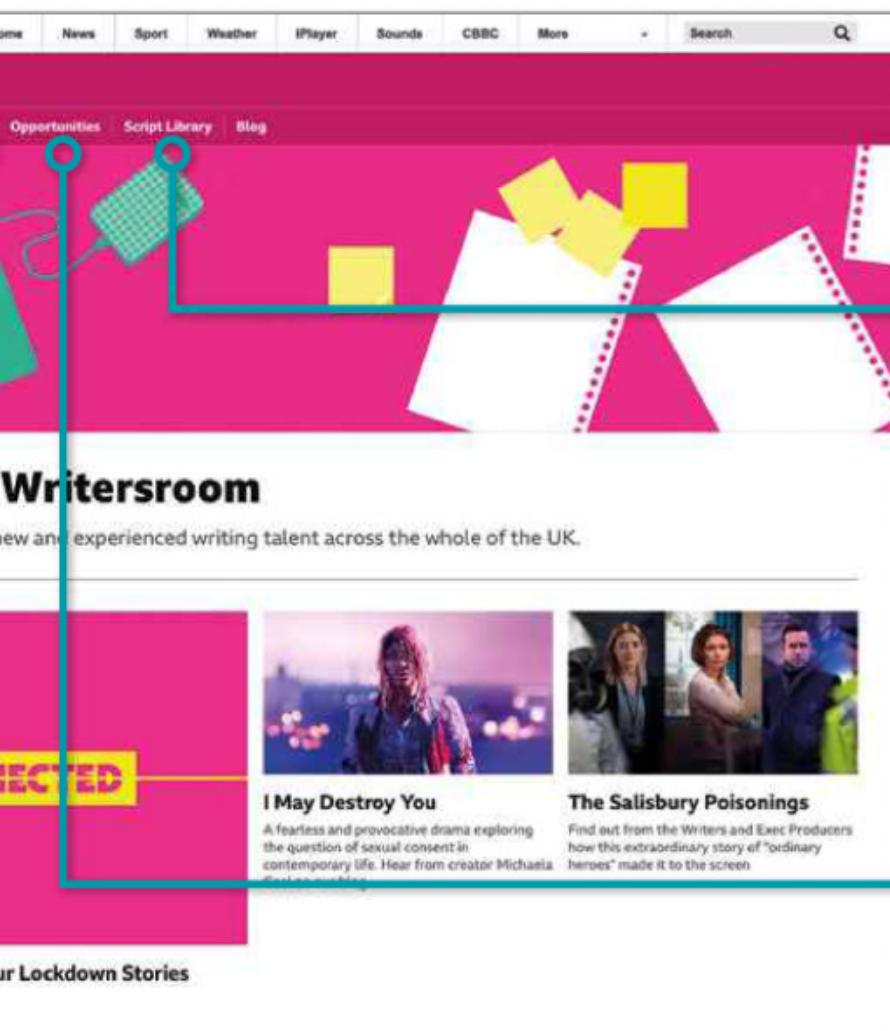
blocksmag.com

Aimed at the growing army of Lego enthusiasts, *Blocks* magazine provides readers with a wealth of reviews, features and creative ideas every month. The site's popularity led to a rather messy offering, cluttered with links, so the team has streamlined the design to make it easier to buy an issue, subscribe or simply catch up with the latest news. The latter needs more regular updates but the addition of a review index (moved from the magazine) is certainly welcome – it allows visitors to choose a Lego theme and find a set, and see what score it obtained and the issue it appeared in.

Our rating

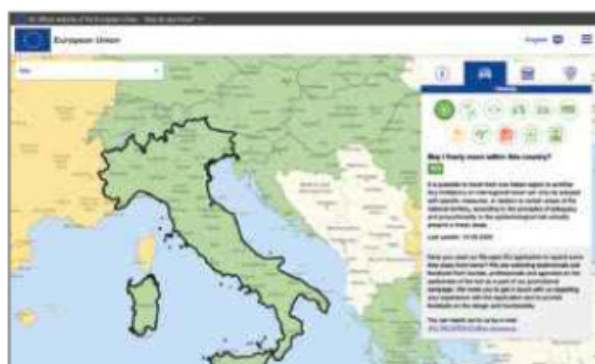


We review this fortnight's best new and relaunched websites and rate them for content, design and features



READ SCRIPTS
Scripts cover both TV and radio including episodes of *Doctor Who*, with first drafts

OPPORTUNITIES
Look out for virtual writing workshops and call-outs for talent, both within and outside of the BBC



NEW

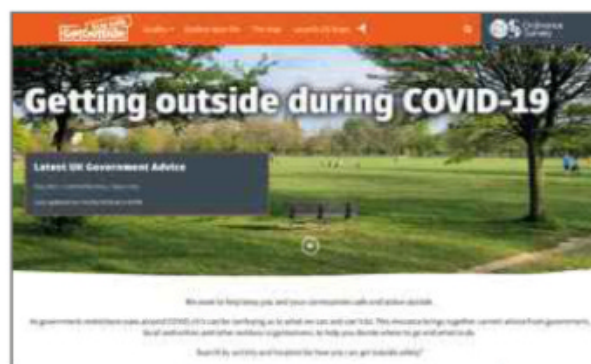
TRAVEL

Re-open EU

reopen.europa.eu/en

COVID-19 has scuppered many holiday plans, but that doesn't mean you can't plan your next break. With this in mind, the European Commission has launched a new travel tool that lets you select an EU country and see whether you can visit this summer. Little attempt has been made to dress up the pages other than a graphic, a drop-down menu and a map, but we like how you can click icons to sift through information such as whether non-essential shops are open and if you'll need to quarantine. It's also helpful to see dates indicating when the details were last updated.

Our rating



NEW

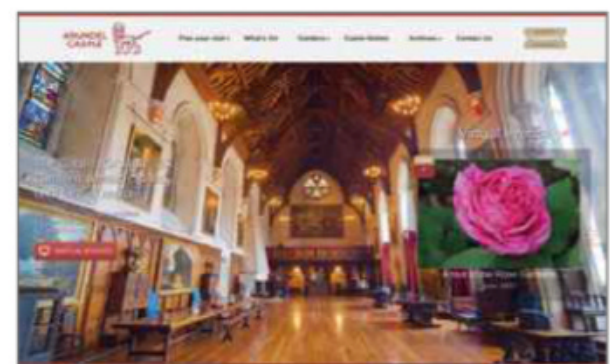
TRAVEL

Stay Safe Get Outside

bit.ly/safe505

It's hard to make sense of what we can and can't do at the moment, so Ordnance Survey has stepped in to walk us through the dos and don'ts of outdoor activities. Covering the entire UK, it provides practical advice and information about social distancing, car parks and which facilities will be open, using details provided by councils, national parks and other organisations involved in outdoor pursuits. Sadly, it doesn't list where you can actually pursue each activity, though some links point you in the right direction. Information is clearly presented and should make it easier to plan a trip.

Our rating



RELAUNCH

HERITAGE

Arundel Castle

www.arundelcastle.org

You don't have to visit Arundel Castle in West Sussex to enjoy the splendour of this medieval gem. The addition of videos to this slick website means you can now take a virtual tour of the fortress and its surrounding walled gardens, and enjoy a series of events from the comfort of your own home. It doesn't match the experience of actually being there, but many of the videos are hosted by head gardener Martin Duncan and history buff Paul Ullson, lending a personal and insightful touch. Elsewhere, you can learn about the castle's past, view stunning photos and peek behind the scenes.

Our rating





RELAUNCH

TRAVEL

Visit Shropshire

www.visitshropshire.co.uk

With staycations more likely this summer, Shropshire's tourist board is hoping to entice visitors by showcasing the area's attractions. While many of these are historic, it's great to see such a modern online offering with clear menu icons used for the main sections and subtle signposting to pages of interest. Professional photos provide a rich experience of the county and images are updated by drawing from the site's Instagram feed. A news section also aims to keep you updated along with the What's On pages, and you can request a brochure, enter a competition and even discover dog-friendly locations.

Our rating ★★★★★



RELAUNCH

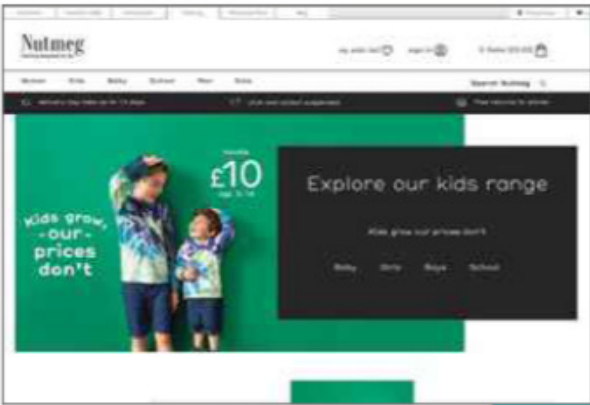
RETAIL

Swimpools

www.swimpools.co.uk

Looking to dive into your savings and splash the cash on a swimming pool? This updated website lets you dip your toes in the water by providing clear information about the company's range of models and the technology used in their creation. You can also check out a range of accessories and watch a video of a pool being delivered and lowered into the ground. The images and annotated diagrams give a good idea of what you'll get, and quotes can be obtained by filling in an online form. A range of enclosures is also available, via Swimpools' sister site, Arch Enclosures (www.archenclosures.co.uk).

Our rating ★★★★★



NEW

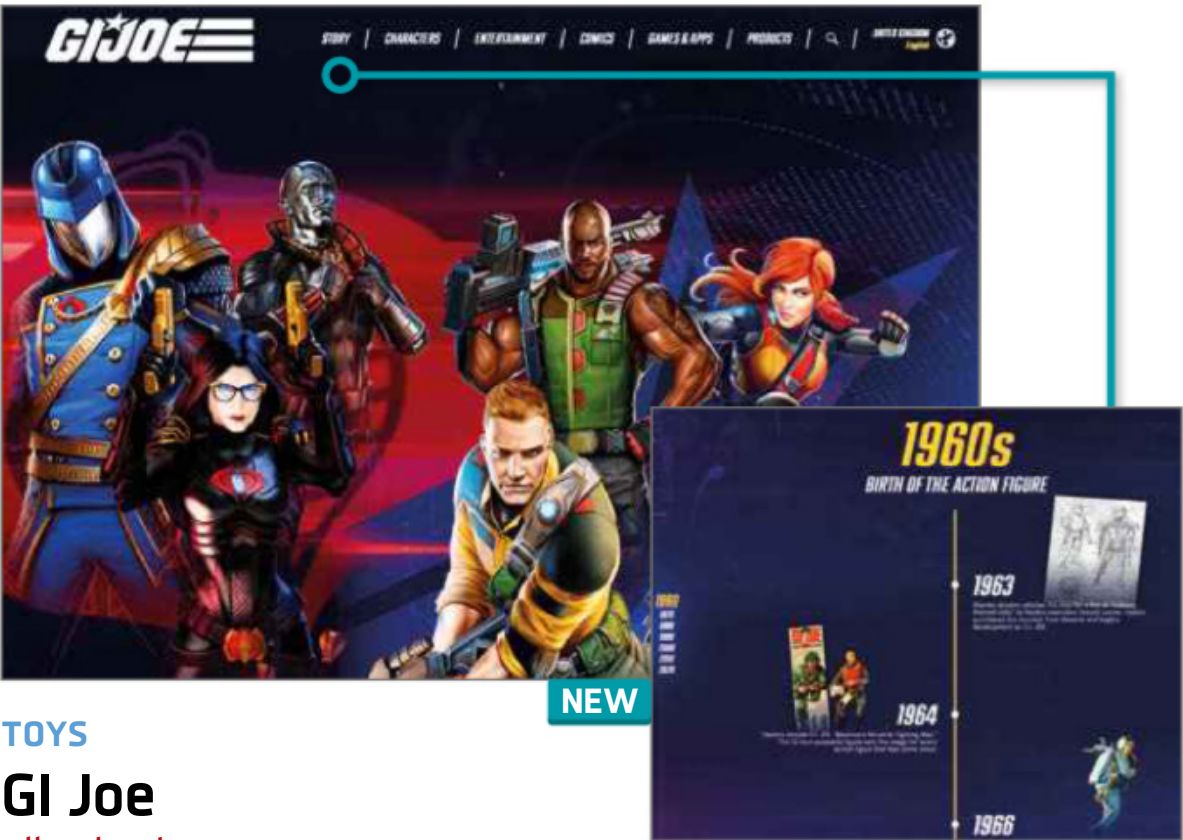
CLOTHES

Nutmeg

nutmeg.morrisons.com

Morrison's clothing label Nutmeg now has an online home. The design bears some similarities to fellow retailers, most notably Next, and navigating its range is a breeze thanks to clear categories, well-presented pages and great filters that let you sift by gender, size, colour and price. Clothes can be viewed from multiple angles, and product pages carry recommendations of similar items. But while there's a wide range of women's clothes, there's a smaller number for men, and the site is also more weighted towards children, although parents will be thankful for the School section and price promise.

Our rating ★★★★★



NEW

TOYS

GI Joe

gijoe.hasbro.com

Brits know him better as Action Man but the American toy line GI Joe is still going strong, some 56 years after its creation. Hasbro has revamped the franchise's website in time for a new line of figures, offering details about the characters including a rundown of their abilities and an in-depth look at their individual skills. A timeline lets you look back over six decades of action, with historical images showing comics, toys, TV stills and more, wrapped up in a colourful, attractive design. You can also discover where to buy GI Joe movies, programmes, comics, games and merchandise, and browse any figure collection that you may want to build.

Our rating ★★★★★



RELAUNCH

FOOTBALL

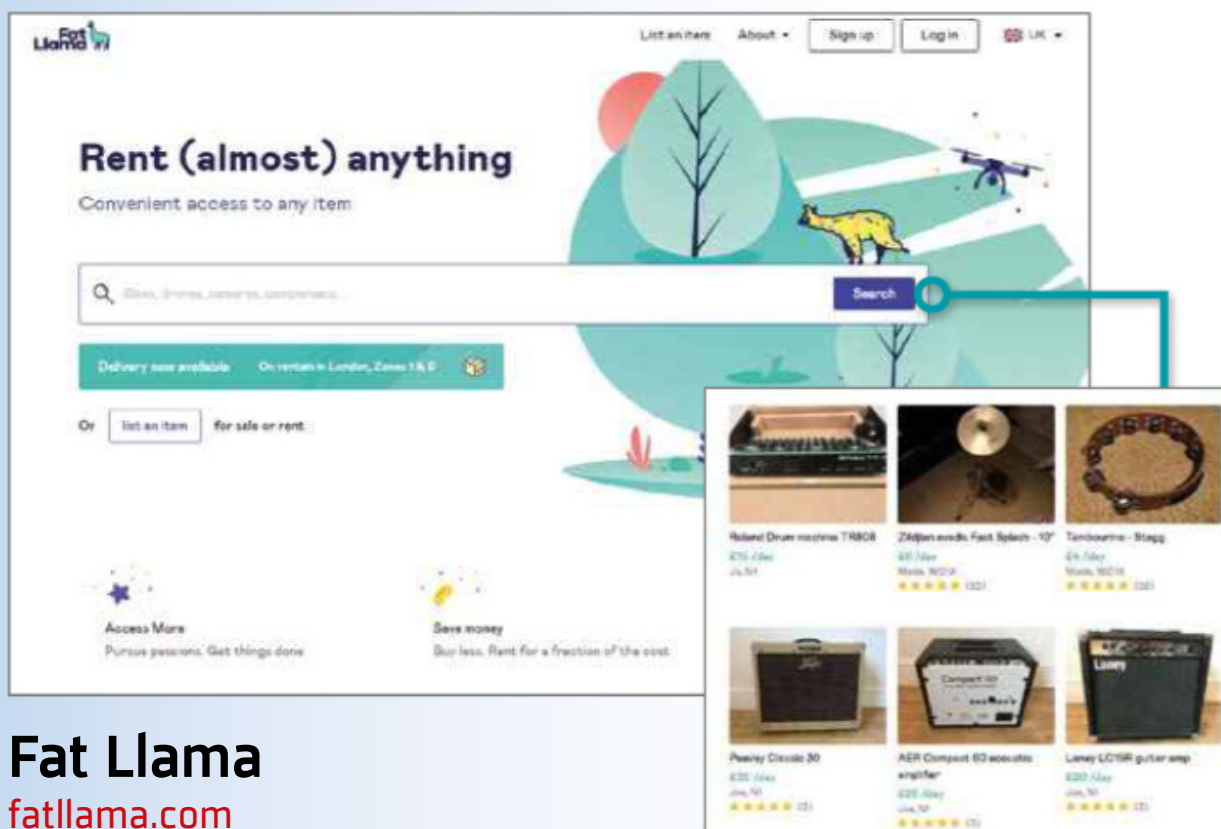
Football Pools

www.footballpools.com

In the wake of the beautiful game reappearing on our screens, the football pools have also returned. This new-look site makes taking part in the pools easier, particularly with the new option of a lucky dip. There's an overwhelming selection of game choices, some of which will look baffling to newbies, but the website does a good job of explaining the rules so you'll soon figure out how to take part. Many of the games are simple enough: try Spot the Ball for a trip down memory lane. Talking of which, you can also read up on more than 96 years of the pools and check the latest betting news.

Our rating ★★★★★

ESSENTIAL BOOKMARKS THIS ISSUE: Really useful rental sites



Fat Llama

fatllama.com

Whether you need to rent a DSLR camera, electric scooter or drone, Fat Llama can connect you with suitable suppliers to save you paying the full purchase price. Search the site (or its mobile app) for an item, or browse categories such as Electronics, Musical Instruments and Home/Office/Garden to see what's available to hire in your area (most listings are in big towns and cities), then specify how long you need it for. If the price is right, you can then contact the renter to arrange collection (delivery is currently only available in central London). Fat Llama also lets you list your own stuff for hire, and covers it up to a value of £25,000, charging borrowers and lenders a 15% transaction fee. Read the site's COVID-related rental advice at bit.ly/covid505.



Turo

turo.com/gb/en

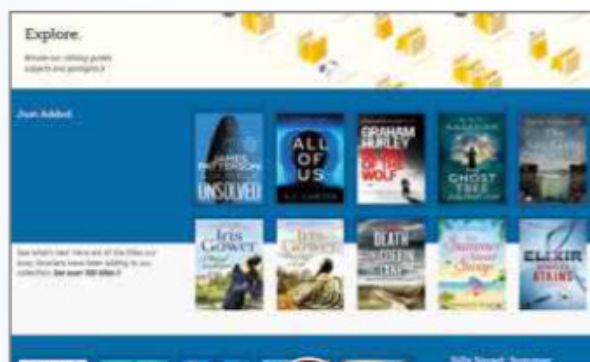
Car sales have been hit badly by the coronavirus, but rentals are going strong and Turo offers a safe way to hire vehicles directly from their owners. Search for when and where you need a car to view prices and availability, and filter the results by vehicle type, make and age, number of seats and other criteria. Booking is quick and easy following a background check, and you can choose whether to collect the car or have it dropped off. Turo ensures all vehicles are thoroughly cleaned and disinfected, lets you cancel for free up to 24 hours before your trip and provides insurance. Its app offers contactless check-in and unlocking so you don't need to meet the renter.



Cinema Paradiso

www.cinemaparadiso.co.uk

If you prefer to watch films on DVD or Blu-ray rather than streaming services, or you find the selection on the latter rather poor, you'll find plenty to enjoy at Cinema Paradiso, one of the few remaining disc-rental sites in the UK. Sign up for a £5.99 monthly subscription to borrow two discs per month, or pay £9.99 for unlimited rental, following a 14-day free trial, with no late-return fees and the option to cancel at any time. Cinema Paradiso offers more than 100,000 movies and TV series, including recent releases and award winners, and stocks an impressive range of world-cinema titles. You can also sign up for a weekly newsletter and follow the service on social media to discover what's been added.



Libby

libbyapp.com

Public libraries have reopened with the lifting of lockdown restrictions, but if you don't want to risk a visit, you can borrow ebooks and audiobooks from your local reading emporium using Libby. Powered by the digital-distribution service Overdrive (www.overdrive.com), this free service makes it easy to find libraries in your area, browse the books on offer, peruse samples and either read or listen to titles in your browser or download them to enjoy offline in its Android or iOS app. You can even stream audiobooks to your Amazon Echo or Google Home speaker. You'll need a library card to use Libby, but if you don't have one, it provides links so you can register online, and helpfully keeps track of all your loaned books and reservations.



Stashbee

stashbee.com

Want to rent storage space without committing to an expensive unit? Then enter your postcode at Stashbee to see if anyone in your area has a garage, shed, spare room, attic or cellar to house your stuff. Listings include plenty of details and photos, and requesting a space couldn't be easier, with both parties verified by the site and insurance included. To keep you safe during lockdown, you can request a virtual viewing beforehand and ask for help transporting your items. Stashbee also covers parking spaces and lets you rent out your own storage. If nothing is available locally, try Storemates (www.storemates.co.uk).

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Build a Better Site

Specialist tips, top tools and practical help

Top Tips of the Fortnight

Measure your site's speed...

Google's Test My Site tool (bit.ly/tms505) has been updated to line up with Google's new Core Web Vitals rating, which measures how well your site performs and might have an impact on how well it ranks with Google in the future. You don't have to log into Test My Site, so it's a great way to quickly measure the impact of any changes you make. You could even use it to keep an eye on the speed of your competitors.



...And make it faster

If Test My Site indicates that your site is struggling, and you use a site-building tool such as

WordPress (wordpress.org), it's worth looking at the template. Home-made HTML sites aren't usually sophisticated enough to cause problems but some WordPress themes, especially older or modified ones, can slow your site.

WP Rocket (wp-rocket.me) has made a list of efficient themes at bit.ly/rocket505. We loaded the first option on the list (GeneratePress, bit.ly/genp505) to an existing website that currently uses a standard WordPress template, and the site loaded one second (about 25%) faster.

Deal of the Fortnight

Bluehost's (bluehost.com) excellent deal on its Basic hosting package – down from £7.74 to £2.66 per month – includes 50GB of SSD storage and a domain name.

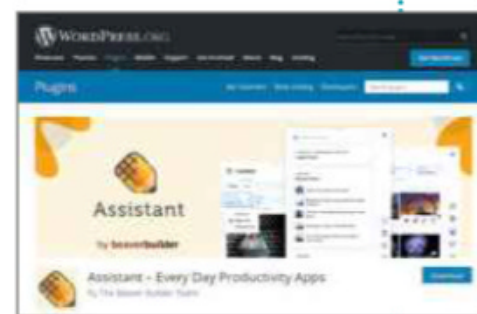
Web-building Helpdesk

Q I love my WordPress website but it's a pain having to go into the 'back end' just to make quick changes if I see a typo. Isn't there an easier way?

Trent Davies, via email

A Try the new Assistant plugin from Beaver Builder (bit.ly/assistant505). This tool sits at the top of your website and lets you make simple changes to pages. It can certainly help make minor tweaks, such as correcting typos, but can also be used for bigger things, such as adding images, approving comments and changing labels and categories. You can see recent posts as a list and even search your site, all without having to enter the WordPress dashboard.

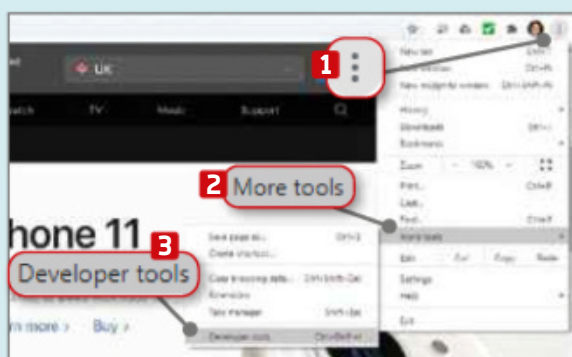
Andy Shaw, Technical & Reviews Editor



MINI WORKSHOP | Copy the best layout tricks from your favourite site designs

Chrome: www.google.co.uk/chrome | 10 mins | No requirements

If you've ever envied the layout of a professionally designed site, there's no reason why you can't use it to inspire your future designs. Open Chrome's 'Developer tools' to reveal a site's secrets.



1 In Chrome, visit the site you want to borrow ideas from. Click the menu button, **1** choose 'More tools', **2** then 'Developer tools'. **3** This opens a sidebar containing lots of information. It looks complicated, but don't let that put you off.



2 With the Elements tab selected, you can find a website's individual elements of interest. Hover your cursor over the HTML until the section you're interested in is highlighted blue. **1** If the section has a right-pointing arrow, click it to open its nested contents. Repeat until you've pinpointed the specific element(s) of interest. **2**



3 Highlight the element and click the Styles tab. **1** There's a wealth of information you can use to inform your own design. On the right, there is a display of the box model, where you can view the height and width of an element, **2** along with any padding or margins it uses. CSS styles can be found below **3** and on the left. **4**



What To Watch Online

Pick of the fortnight

NETFLIX

Watch Cate Blanchett in Aussie drama *Stateless*

From 8 July

Cate Blanchett swaps Hollywood for two big-name miniseries this month. Hulu's feminism drama *Mrs America* has been picked up by the BBC, and will arrive on the iPlayer any minute now (bit.ly/mrsamerica505). But first – or at least, with a confirmed launch date – comes Netflix's *Stateless*, a six-part story about four strangers who end up detained in an Australian immigration camp.

Blanchett is credited as co-creator and executive producer of the drama, which is partly inspired by the real-life story of German-Australian detainee Cornelia Rau, but she only takes a supporting role on screen. Star of the show is Yvonne Strahovski, who plays Sofie, an air hostess on the run from Blanchett's glamorous cult leader. Sofie ends up under lock and key in the Australian Outback, along with an Afghan refugee, a young father and a scandal-hit bureaucrat, whose stories are explored in different episodes. Starring alongside Strahovski are Dominic West and *Suicide Squad*'s Jai Courtney, who plays a rookie prison guard struggling to square his conscience with his job.

All six episodes of *Stateless*, which has already aired on Australian channel ABC, come to Netflix on 8 July at bit.ly/stateless505. Watch the official trailer at bit.ly/state505.



Meet posh superheroes in *Secret Society of Second-Born Royals*

From 17 July

What the world needs now, reckons Disney, is a bunch of aristocratic teenagers with miraculous abilities. New film *Secret Society of Second-Born Royals* sees



royal rebel Sam team up with other bored bluebloods in a top-secret training programme for second-born princes and princesses, all gifted with super-powers

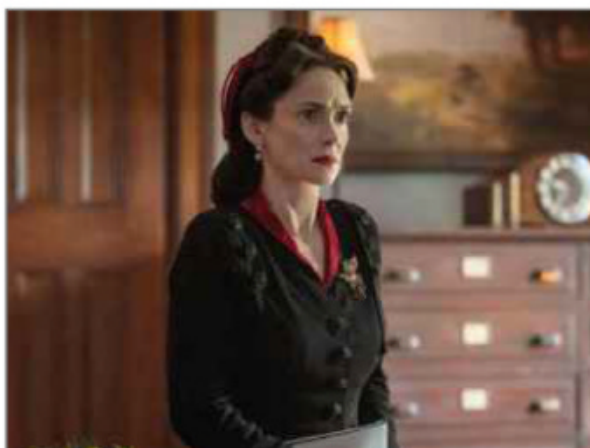
and tasked with saving the world. Disney Plus lets you watch the trailer for free at bit.ly/secret505, but you'll need a £5.99 monthly subscription to stream the film because Disney Plus has just scrapped its free trial (see box opposite).



Watch Winona Ryder in HBO's *The Plot Against America*

From 14 July

Winona Ryder stars in this big-budget Philip Roth novel adaptation, made for HBO by *The Wire* creators David Simon and Ed Burns, and airing in the UK on



Sky Atlantic. John Turturro co-stars in the six-part drama, which imagines an alternate US history that sees celebrity aviator Charles Lindbergh become President in 1940 and turn the nation toward fascism. Many have found Roth's story, first published in 2005 (bit.ly/plot505), spookily prescient. Watch HBO's official trailer at bit.ly/america505, then stream episodes on-demand via Now TV with an Entertainment Pass.

Hunt the Holy Grail again in *Cursed*

From 17 July

The legend of King Arthur makes a fresh appearance on our screens, this time from the point of view of a teenage girl, Nimue (Katherine Langford from *13 Reasons Why*). Nimue is "equal parts classic hero and sword-swinging badass" says Thomas Wheeler, who co-wrote the original graphic novel with Frank Miller (bit.ly/cursedbook505). She also happens to become the Lady of the

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

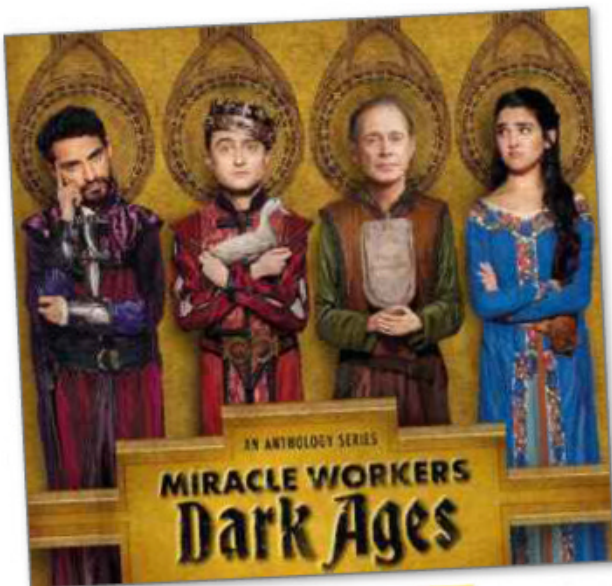


Lake, after discovering a certain legendary sword. Find out how she did it when all 10 episodes of *Cursed* arrive on Netflix on 17 July. Watch the trailer at bit.ly/cursed505.

Now Welcome back *Miracle Workers* Daniel Radcliffe and Steve Buscemi

From 13 July

Last year's first season of *Miracle Workers*, adapted by Simon Rich from his novel *What In God's Name* (bit.ly/gods505), saw Daniel Radcliffe and



Disney Plus ends free trial before *Hamilton*

Days after announcing it would cheer the world up by bringing forward the release dates of smash-hit musical *Hamilton* (pictured) and film sequel *Frozen 2*, Disney Plus wiped the grin off our faces by scrapping its seven-day free trial.

Disney quietly removed the free trial from www.disneyplus.com for UK and US viewers shortly before the two blockbusters arrived on the streaming service on 3 July. A subscription costs £5.99 per month or £59.99 per year (saving about £1 per month). However, with West End *Hamilton* tickets costing up to £250 when the show was still on, it's not a bad deal.

"We believe [the paid-for service] delivers a compelling entertainment offering on its own," Disney Plus said in a statement. Fifty-five million paying subscribers signed up between November 2019 and May 2020.



Steve Buscemi playing angels tasked with saving Earth. Season 2 has the same cast, but a new subtitle – *Dark Ages* – and a whole new story set in the medieval era. Radcliffe plays a royal descended from murderous tyrants, while Buscemi is a good-natured peasant. Watch the trailer at bit.ly/miracle505, then stream new episodes from 13 July with a Now TV Entertainment Pass at bit.ly/workers505, where you can also catch up with Season 1.

Apple TV+ Break into song with *Little Voice*

From 10 July

Not to be confused with the 1998 British film starring Michael Caine and Jane Horrocks (bit.ly/lvfilm505), this *Little Voice* is a glossy new musical comedy-drama show from *Lost* creator



JJ Abrams. A series of young, beautiful New Yorkers break out into song in what Apple describes as a "universal journey", but it may be a tad schmaltzy for British tastes. Get a flavour from the trailer (bit.ly/voice505), then watch the first three episodes on 10 July, with more episodes coming each week. Apple TV+ costs £4.99 per month after a free seven-day trial (bit.ly/appletv505).

In case you missed it...

You wait 20 years for a *Roswell* spin-off, then another year for it to arrive in the UK, and then two seasons turn up at once. Well, almost at once. *Roswell, New Mexico*



Season 1 is available now via ITV Hub at bit.ly/newmex505, with a trailer at bit.ly/roswell505, and Season 2's episodes land weekly from 9 July. The original three-season 1999

Roswell show, aka *Roswell High*, is on Amazon Prime Video at bit.ly/roshigh505.

BBC Three has a new series of *RuPaul's Drag Race, Canada's*

First Drag Superstar, which features 12 fiercely competitive Canuck queens, with weekly episodes streaming via bit.ly/drag505.

Netflix has adapted

Manga novel series *Warrior Nun* into a live-action series starring Alba Baptista as demon hunter Ava. Ten episodes have just arrived at bit.ly/warrior505.

Back on Netflix for a third season is Bill Pullman as haunted detective Harry Ambrose in *The Sinner*, streaming now at bit.ly/sinner505. Netflix's acclaimed German drama *Dark* has also returned for a third and final season at bit.ly/dark505.



Group Test

We test and compare the latest products

Inkjet printers

Despite the ubiquity of screens, there are times when only a hard-copy print will do. We review six inkjet printers to help you choose the right model for your household

No matter how attached we become to our screens, we still need to print things out from time to time. Whether you want photos to frame, letters to send in the post (and the postage labels for sending them) or worksheets for your home-learning kids, printers remain an essential computer peripheral. Throw in a built-in scanner and your average humble printer becomes a scanning, copying and printing multifunctional marvel.

We've reviewed six inkjet printers, five with scanners built-in, to see which ones offer the best balance of print quality and price – both upfront for the unit and over time, considering the cost of ink refills.

HOW WE TESTED

We tested our printers by putting them through a variety of printing tasks, both to examine the print quality and to measure how long it takes a printer to produce a multi-page document. All the printers produce the same prints so we can compare them against each other and against printers we've reviewed in the past. Speed measurements are recorded from the moment we click the Print button to the moment the last page hits the output tray.

Canon Pixma TS8350 | £162 | Buy from Amazon: bit.ly/canonts505

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

Canon's Pixma range has long produced some of the best multifunction printers for creative home users, and the TS8350 sits near the top of the range. While the company has removed touchscreens from its mid-range models, this printer has a satisfyingly large screen. It's not the sharpest or most responsive model we tested but it's comparatively easy to use.

There are two paper feeds supporting a total of 200 plain sheets, and you don't have to unload the 100-sheet tray in the base if you want to use the rear feeder. Both feeds can be used to print on both sides of a page automatically.

There's no Ethernet port but it can connect to your PC via USB or Wi-Fi. The SD card slot on the front is handy for photographers wanting instant prints and the generous screen makes this task particularly simple to perform.

The TS8350 uses six ink cartridges, designed to produce high-quality text and photos. In addition to regular black, cyan, magenta and yellow dye-based inks, there's a photo

blue cartridge and a large pigment black, specifically for printing on plain paper. Even when running XXL cartridges, this worked out to be an expensive printer to run, with colour costing 9.5p per page and black costing 3.4p per page.

It's not exceptionally fast, either. With our 25-page black text document, it managed 11.4ppm (pages per minute), rising to 13.5ppm in

draft mode. In our more complex colour-graphics test, it reached 3.3ppm, though photo printing was more competitive, with a 6x4in print taking around two minutes.

Where the TS8350 stands out is in the quality of its output. Black text is exceptionally crisp and black, while colour graphics are rich, smooth and punchy. Photo prints are also excellent – precise, detailed and colour-accurate.

**Web User
GOLD
AWARD**



VERDICT

The Canon Pixma TS8350 isn't the fastest multifunction printer, nor is it especially cheap to buy or run. That said, it's hard to beat for all-round print, scan and copy quality. The generous touchscreen make it easy to use and it performs well as a standalone device. So, if you have a generous budget and you want good features, great looks and strong all-round performance for your home, this is the inkjet to pick.

Canon Pixma G5050 | £244.25 Buy from Printerbase: bit.ly/canong505

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

WebUser
SILVER
AWARD

The Pixma G series is Canon's ink tank range. Instead of pricey cartridges, the G5050 comes with two bottles of black ink, good for a whopping 18,000 pages, and bottles of cyan, magenta and yellow ink that should last 7,700 pages. By contrast, the average home printer ships with enough ink for a maximum of 300 pages.

The flipside of this economy is that the printer is pricier upfront. This version is a straightforward single-function printer with no scanner, though it does have a 250-sheet paper tray and a 100-sheet secondary feeder to the rear. It connects via USB, Wi-Fi or Ethernet and has a basic mono LCD (non-touch) screen with physical buttons.

It's not fast, producing 10.9 pages of black text per minute, and only 2.3ppm in colour. However, black printing is crisp and sharp, while colour printing is solid and bold.

VERDICT

★★★★★

The Canon Pixma G5050 is a solid performer but its main attraction is that it's cheap to run. Use up all the included colour ink and you'll only have paid around 3p per page. With low refill costs, future colour pages only cost 0.4p each.



Brother MFC-J1300DW All in Box | £316.45 Buy from Printerbase: bit.ly/brother505

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

WebUser
BRONZE
AWARD

This is a comparatively small multifunction device that comes with enough ink for 7,200 colour prints (working out to around 4.3p per page). The printer is well-specified, with support for wired and wireless networks, and a medium-size colour touchscreen control panel. On top is a scanner with a 20-sheet document feeder, but while the printer can print on both sides automatically, the scanner feeder only scans on one side of a sheet unless you flip it manually.

Replacement ink lasts for 6,000 black prints or 5,000 colour, which works out to around 2.3p for a full colour page. It's reasonably quick, delivering 12ppm in mono and 5.2ppm in colour during our tests. However, the quality of prints is disappointing. On plain paper, graphics lack punch and black text isn't as crisp as its rivals.

VERDICT

★★★★★

This solid multifunction printer is the most expensive model in this Group Test but its running costs are reasonably good value. We were disappointed by the quality of its prints, though.



HP OfficeJet Pro 8022 | £165 Buy from Amazon: bit.ly/hpoj505

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

This HP multifunction model has most of the features you're likely to need if you're looking for an office printer. It can copy, scan and fax, and connect to your network through wired and wireless connections. It automatically prints on both sides but the automatic sheet feeder only scans single sides.

The touch controls are superb, incorporating drag and tap gestures that make it a pleasure to use. You can print from and scan to Google Drive and Dropbox, but there's no USB or memory-card slot for direct prints or scans.

It only has a single paper tray, which makes it troublesome to switch to different stock or print on headed paper. It was also slow to print in colour in our tests. Print quality is reasonable, with jet-black, sharp text, though we noticed some banding lines in some of our colour prints.

VERDICT

★★★★★

With colour pages costing around 8.1p to print, this is a cheaper printer to buy but more expensive to run in the long term. If you need to spread the cost of your purchase and aren't a heavy user, this will get you printing for less.



Epson Expression Home XP-2100 | £40.68 Buy from Printerbase: bit.ly/epson2505

★★★★★

A printer and scanner in one, for £40, sounds like a phenomenal deal. The XP-2100 lets you print, scan and copy, but its features are otherwise basic. There's only one paper tray and it can't print on both sides of a sheet automatically.

It's not particularly fast (mono prints come out at 8.6ppm) but the quality isn't bad for such a cheap printer, with precise text but slightly faded colours. However, the ultra-low price is offset by running costs, with colour prints coming out at 17.4p per sheet when you replace the cartridge.



Epson Expression Home XP-3100 | £60.61 Buy from Printerbase: bit.ly/epson3505

★★★★★

The XP-3100 adds some extra features to the XP-2100 (above), including automatic double-sided printing and a colour screen. It's a bit quicker, too, reaching 9.2ppm for black prints. Colour prints are churned out at 2.9ppm. Printing quality was similar, though, with strong black but muted colour, and double-sided prints were fainter still.

It uses the same cartridge system as the XP-2100, so is equally expensive to run once you've replaced the ink.





Group Test Inkjet printers



	Canon Pixma TS8350	Canon Pixma G5050	Brother MFC-J1300DW All in Box	HP OfficeJet Pro 8022
WEBSITE	www.canon.co.uk	www.canon.co.uk	www.brother.co.uk	www.hp.com
PRICE	£162	£244.25	£316.45	£165
BUY FROM	Amazon: bit.ly/canonts505	Printerbase: bit.ly/canong505	Printerbase: bit.ly/brother505	Amazon: bit.ly/hpoj505
PRINT TECHNOLOGY	Thermal inkjet	Thermal inkjet	Piezo inkjet	Thermal inkjet
MAXIMUM PRINT RESOLUTION	4,800 x 1,200dpi	4,800 x 1,200dpi	6,000 x 1,200dpi	4,800 x 1,200dpi
MAXIMUM SCAN RESOLUTION	2,400 x 4,800dpi	✗	1,200 x 2,400dpi	1,200 x 1,200dpi
DISPLAY	10.8cm colour touchscreen	Mono LCD	6.8cm colour touchscreen	6.8cm colour touchscreen
DOUBLE-SIDED PRINTING	✓	✓	✓	✓
PAPER INPUT (CAPACITY)	Tray (100), rear feed (100 plain or 20 photo)	Tray (250), rear feed (100 plain or 20 photo)	Tray (150)	Tray (225)
PAPER OUTPUT CAPACITY	Not stated	Not stated	50	60
CONNECTIONS	USB, SD card, 802.11b/g/n, Airprint, Google Cloud Print	USB, Ethernet, 802.11b/g/n, Airprint, Google Cloud Print	USB, SD card, Ethernet, 802.11b/g/n, Airprint, Google Cloud Print	USB, Ethernet, 802.11a/b/g/n, Airprint, Google Cloud Print
DIMENSIONS	373 x 319 x 141mm	369 x 403 x 166mm	512 x 470 x 272mm	512 x 460 x 263mm
WEIGHT	6.6kg	6.5kg	8kg	8.2kg
WARRANTY	One-year return-to-base	Three-years return-to-base	Three-years return-to-base	One-year return-to-base

OUR VERDICT

Canon has swept the board in this Group Test, taking both Gold and Silver Awards with two very different printers. If print quality is paramount and you don't want to spend a lot up-front, the Pixma TS8350 is an excellent feature-packed device that produces great prints and offers good value for money for light printing duties.

If you carry out a high volume of printing or care about the level of non-recyclable waste you create, the Pixma G5050 is a sound alternative. It's pricier upfront but comes with enough ink to print thousands of pages and vast tanks you can refill from bottles. After refilling, its colour prints cost just 0.4p each, which is incredible value for money.

The Bronze Award goes to Brother, though it only just scraped ahead of the HP model. Brother snatched the close-run contest with cheaper running costs but, if you're a light user and would prefer to pay less upfront, the HP is cheaper to buy. ■



cyclingelectric

Fully equipped with front and rear painted guards, rear pannier rack as well as front and rear lights

Uses Shimano STEPS E6100 drive unit with an internal Darfon 504WH battery

Fully integrated utility focused E-bike

Ideal daily commute bike to replace reliance on the car



Win a Ridgeback Advance e-bike worth £3,499.99.

To celebrate the launch of Cycling Electric, the new magazine all about e-bikes, we are partnering with Freewheel to bring you the chance to win a Ridgeback Advance.* Just answer the following question:
What e-bike drive system does the Ridgeback Advance use?

Enter at cyclist.co.uk/e-bikes-competition

The competition prize is courtesy of [Freewheel.co.uk](https://freewheel.co.uk)

Freewheel, simply put is your local bike shop online. There's nothing quite like the knowledge, reliability and customer experience of a great local bike shop. In an age where it's getting harder to run a bricks and mortar store, Freewheel is the platform that lets shops thrive while giving you the benefits of online shopping. When you shop on Freewheel, you can order a product and have it delivered to an extensive network of authorised shops, where you can make the most of the expertise of the staff on collection. Each purchase benefits your local store via a commission programme. You can find your local Freewheel store at freewheel.co.uk/stores

*Visit the Cyclist website for the full list of terms and conditions.

 **RIDGEBACK**



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HARDWARE, SOFTWARE & SERVICES

INKJET PRINTER

Canon Pixma TS8350

£162 from bit.ly/canonts505

Tested: Issue 505

NEW!



The Canon Pixma TS8350 is hard to beat for all-round print, scan and copy quality, producing rich, crisp text and precise photo prints. The generous touchscreen makes it easy to use and it performs well as a standalone device.

KEY SPECS

Thermal inkjet printer ■ 4,800 x 1,200dpi print resolution ■ 2,400 x 4,800dpi scan resolution ■ 10.8cm colour touchscreen ■ Double-sided printing ■ 200-sheet input ■ 373 x 319 x 141mm ■ 6.6kg ■ One-year return-to-base warranty

MESH WI-FI SYSTEM

Netgear Orbi RBK50

£299.99 from bit.ly/orbi503

Tested: Issue 503



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

Gold Award winners

The best from our software tests

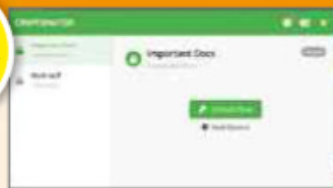
ENCRYPTION TOOL

Cryptomator

Free from cryptomator.org

Tested: Issue 504

Cryptomator's clean, modern interface and cross-platform support makes file encryption incredibly easy. Its security extends to cloud services and it has no hidden costs.



ONLINE IMAGE EDITOR

Photopea

Free from www.photopea.com

Tested: Issue 503

Photopea is a stunning photo-editing suite that has all the tools of Photoshop with none of the cost. It's worth taking the time to learn its ways to reap its many rewards.



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.



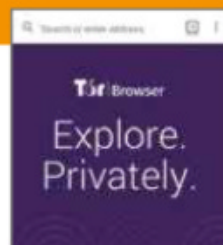
PRIVATE ANDROID BROWSER

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.



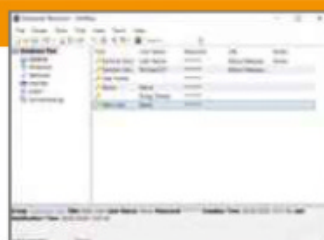
PASSWORD MANAGER

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.



WebUser

BACK ISSUES DISC 2019



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

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



Best Free Software

PRIVACY TOOL

Privacy Eraser Free 5

bit.ly/privacy505

Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10

File size: 9.4MB

Privacy Eraser is a free, all-in-one tool that can identify and remove most traces of your activities from your PC. It wipes your browsing history, typed URLs, auto-complete and auto-fill history, saved passwords, searches, recent documents, temporary files, program run history and more.

The software is very easy to use – just click the large Scan button in the centre of the interface and it will scour your system and present you with a list of items that can be removed. You can then use the three smaller buttons to run a Quick Clean, Clean & Restart or Clean & Shut Down. The sidebar on the left lets you choose specific items to clean in Windows, your web browsers



and installed applications, and provides access to a file shredder, drive wiper, startup manager and uninstaller.

Privacy Eraser's Settings screen lets you set the program to automatically clean your PC at Windows startup, or on a schedule that suits you. You can also add cleaning options to the right-click context menu.

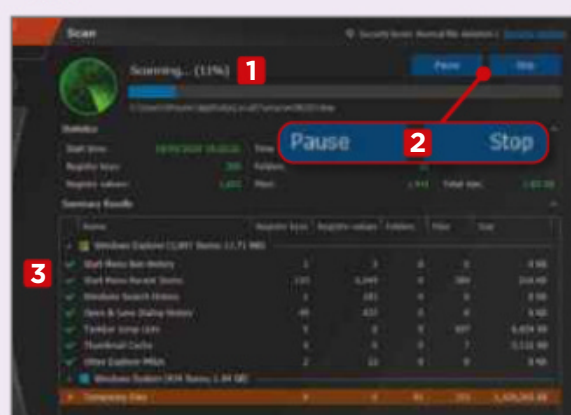
The latest version adds support for cleaning up after Brave, Vivaldi

and the Chromium version of Microsoft Edge, and can now scan for cookies you want to keep. Interestingly, despite the recent update, Privacy Eraser's Misc section still offers options for tweaking the now defunct Internet Explorer. Elsewhere, improvements have been made to general cleaning and workflow.

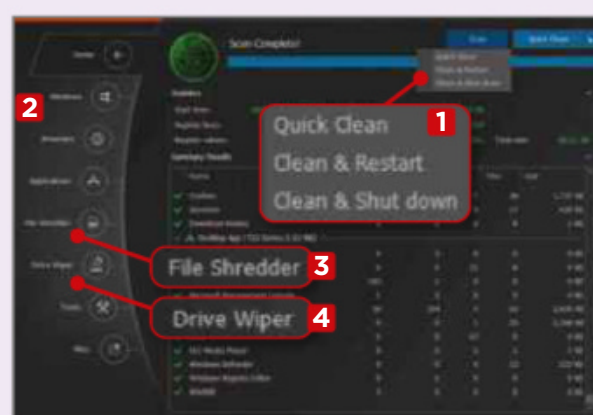
If you want advanced features, such as greater control over the secure file shredder, a Professional edition of Privacy Eraser is available for £21 a year.



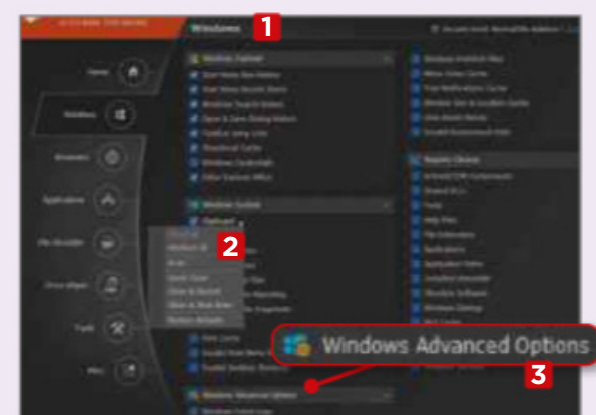
MINI WORKSHOP | Wipe all traces of your PC usage with Privacy Eraser



1 To run a privacy clean with Privacy Eraser, just click the Scan button in the centre of the program window or any of the other quick-clean options on the right. You can monitor the progress, **1** and pause or stop a running scan at any time. **2** The findings of the scan are updated in the panel below. **3**

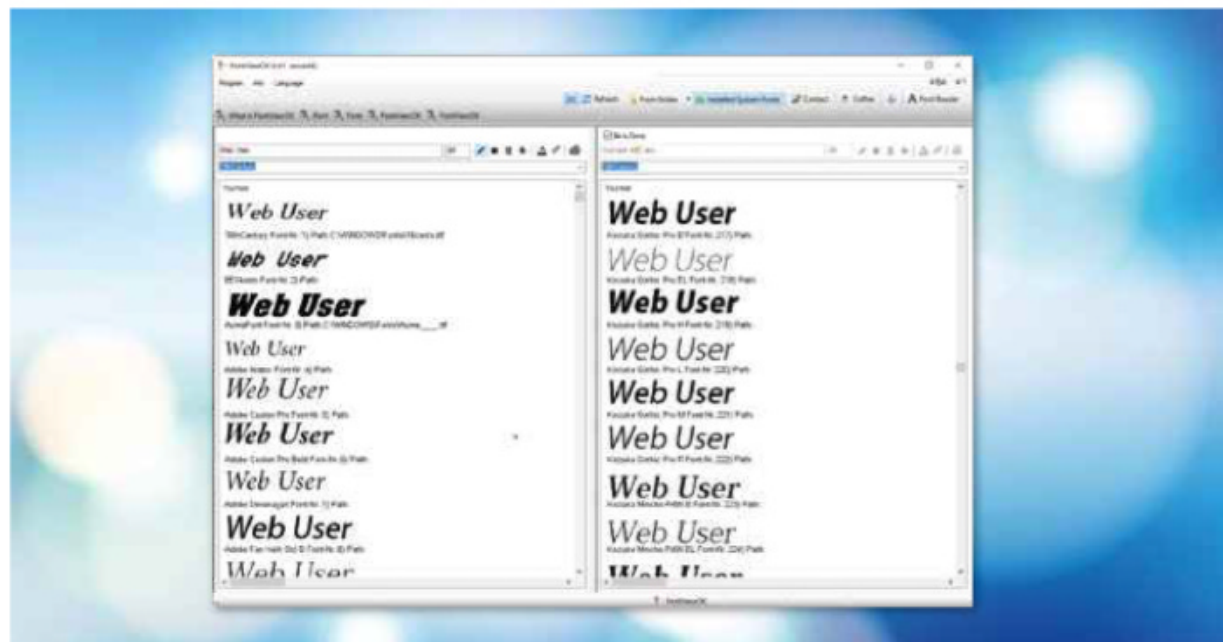


2 When the scan has completed, click the down arrow next to Quick Clean and choose one of the three options. **1** Right-clicking individual items in the list lets you clean those elements exclusively. The sidebar lets you clean up after Windows, browsers and applications, **2** and provides access to the File Shredder **3** and Drive Wiper. **4**



3 Select the Windows entry and choose which areas of your system to clean up. **1** Just tick or untick the various items. You can also right-click items and choose the action to take from the context menu. **2** Windows Advanced Options **3** lets you clean event logs, prefetch files, the notifications cache and more.

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



FONT VIEWER

FontViewOK 6

bit.ly/fontview505

Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10 **File size:** 280KB

FontViewOK is a useful free tool that shows you all the fonts installed on your system, with the option to narrow its search down to particular folders, if required. It displays the fonts in two panes, so you can compare different ones side by side, and lets you enter your own text to see how it looks in each typeface. You can change the size, colour and formatting, too. This update to the program improves the font viewer and fixes some bugs.

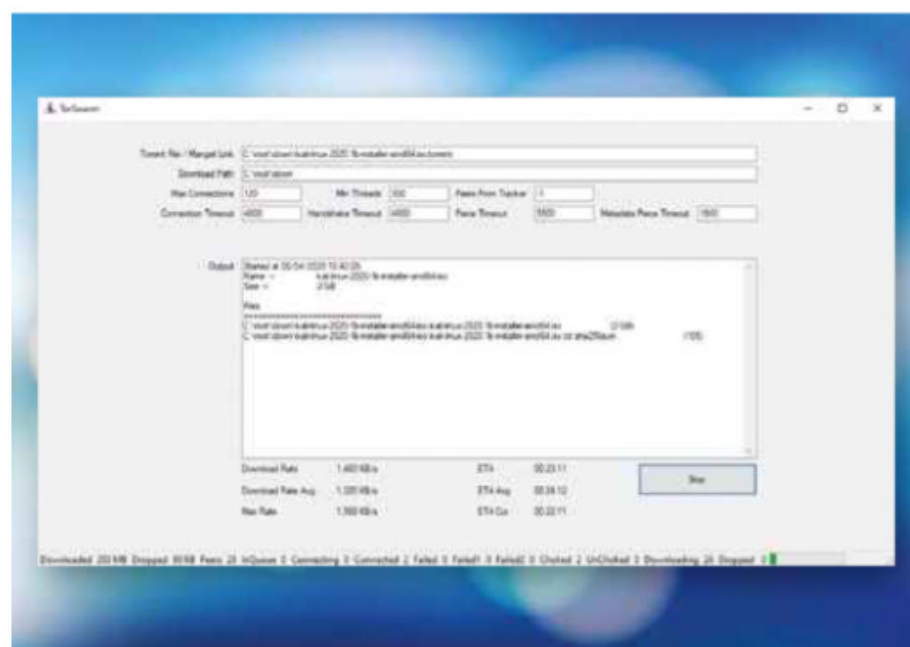
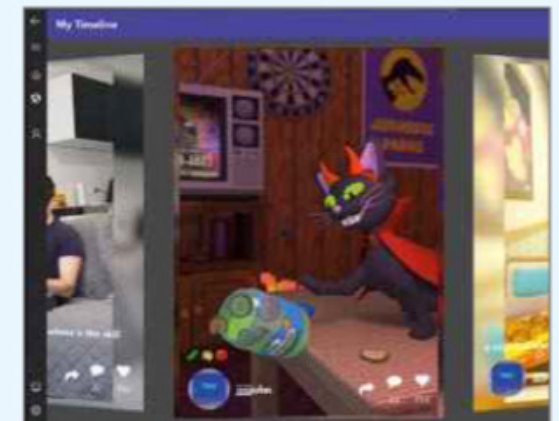
New Windows 10 App

8 byte

bit.ly/8byte505

File size: 37.7MB

This app is an unofficial Windows 10 client for Byte (byte.co), a TikTok-like service for sharing short videos. To use the app, you need to sign into Byte using your Google credentials. Once you've done this, you can follow users and topics, search for content, watch short looping videos and comment on and 'like' your favourites.



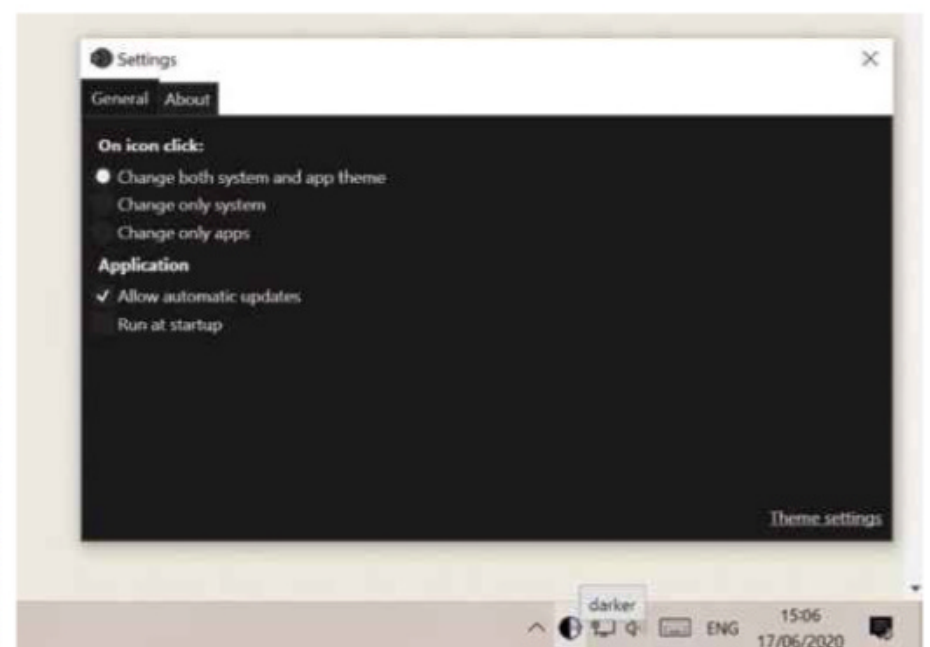
BITTORRENT CLIENT

TorSwarm

bit.ly/tswarm505

Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10 **File size:** 838KB

This open-source, portable BitTorrent client is in the early stages of development. It works well, but currently lacks some features found in other clients, such as support for non-TCP protocols and the ability to set download and upload limits. At the moment, you can't pause sessions or load existing ones, and it doesn't support uploading either, so you can download files but not seed them (this is known as 'leeching' and is frowned upon by other torrenters).



MODE SWITCHER

Darker

bit.ly/darker505

Min requirements: Windows 10 **File size:** 1.7MB

Windows 10 comes with light and dark modes that you activate via Settings. Darker is a simple tool that sits in the system tray and lets you switch to the mode you want with a click of a button, saving you time and effort. The program settings let you choose what gets changed – system and app theme, only the system or only the apps. The developer plans to introduce more features, such as wallpaper switching, in a future release.

NOTE-TAKING SOFTWARE

TreeNoote

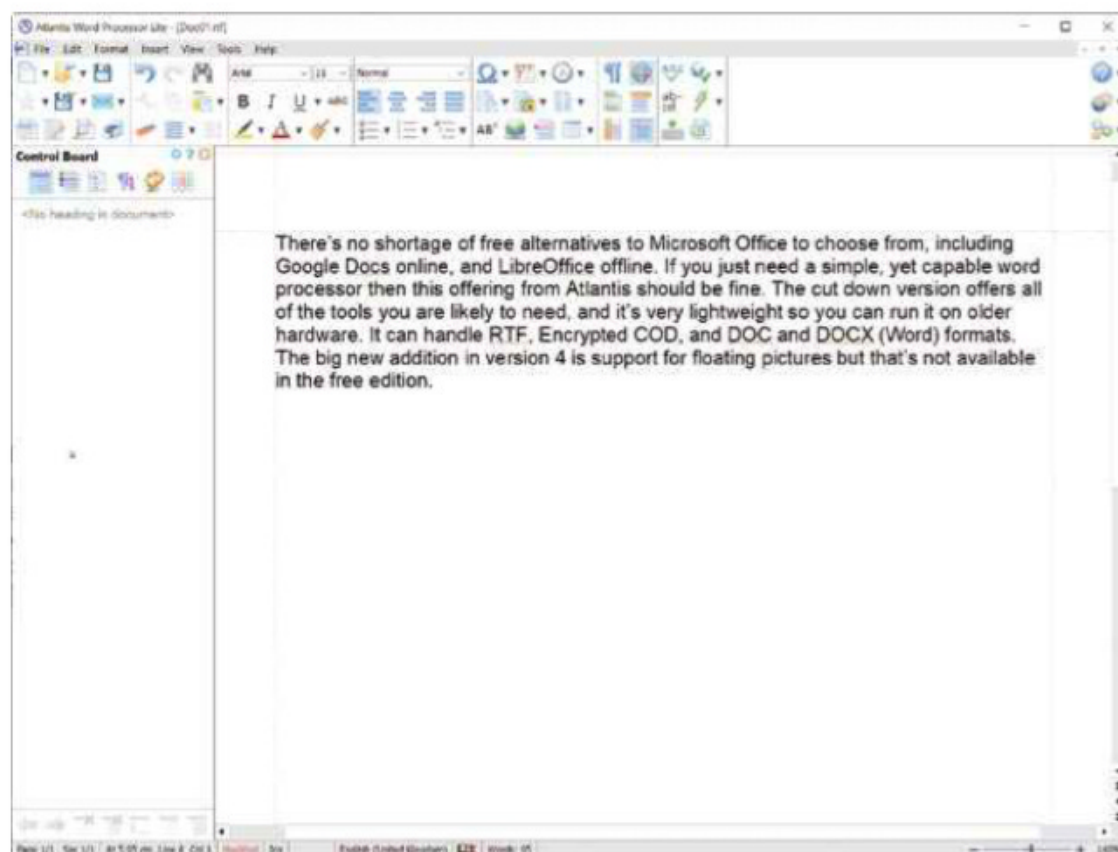
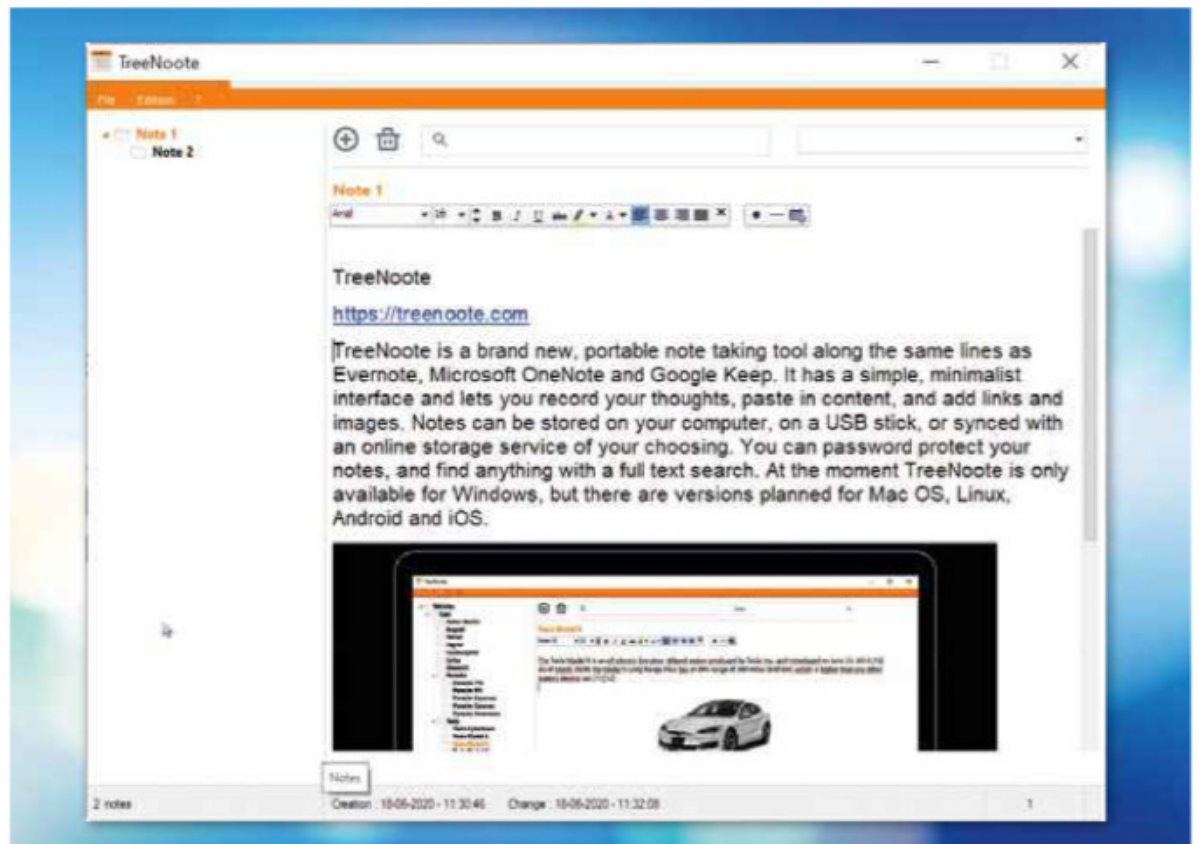
treenoote.com

Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10

File size: 30.1MB

TreeNoote is a new, portable note-taking tool along the same lines as Evernote, Microsoft OneNote and Google Keep. It has a simple, minimalist interface and lets you record your thoughts, paste in content from the web, and add links and images. Notes can be stored on your computer, on a USB stick or synced with an online storage service of your choice. You can also password-protect your notes, and find specific notes by running a full text search.

At the moment, TreeNoote is only available for Windows, but there are versions planned for macOS, Linux, Android and iOS.



WORD PROCESSOR

Atlantis Word Processor Lite 4

bit.ly/atlant505

Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10

File size: 3MB

There's no shortage of free alternatives to Microsoft Office to choose from, including Google Docs and LibreOffice. But if you just need a simple yet capable word processor, then this offering from Atlantis has you covered. Although it's a cut-down version of a commercial program, it offers all the writing and editing tools you are likely to need, and it's very lightweight, so you can run it on older hardware. It can handle RTF, Encrypted COD, and DOC and DOCX (Word) formats.

The major new addition in version 4 of the program is support for floating pictures. However, this feature is not available in the free edition.

NOTEPAD

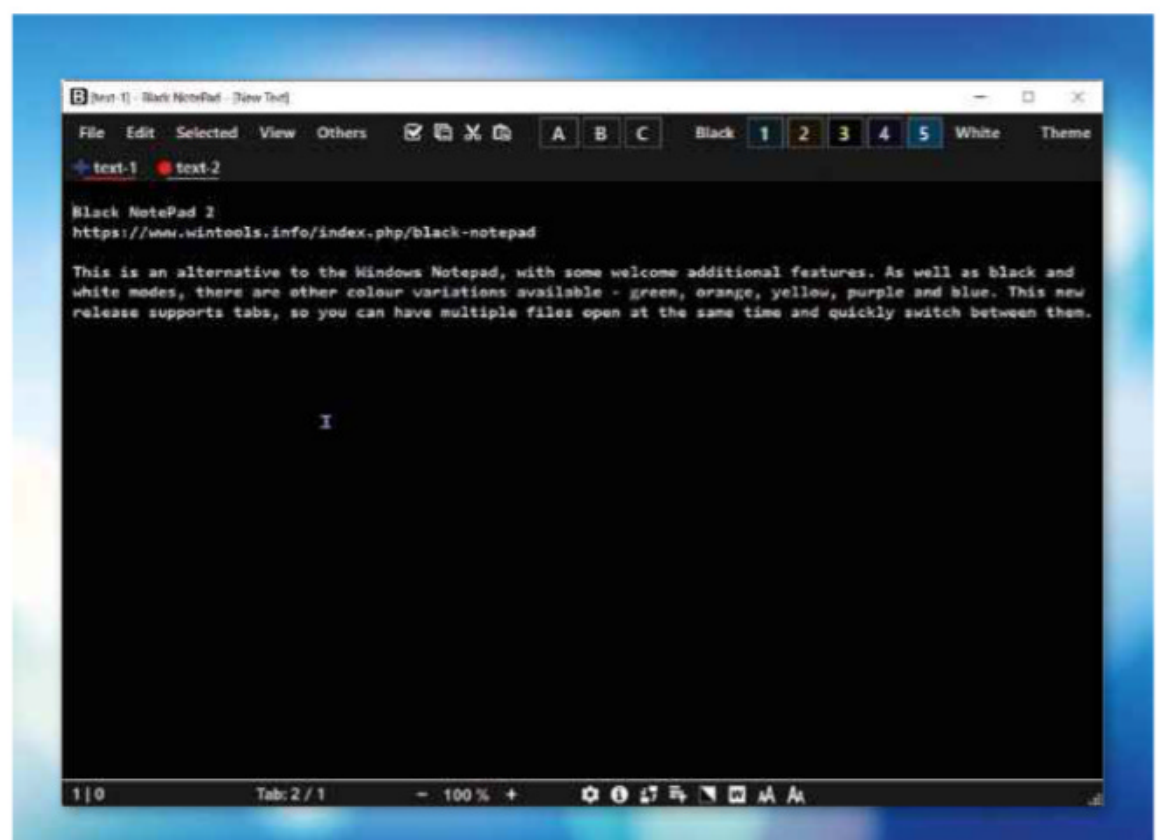
Black NotePad 2

bit.ly/black505

Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10

File size: 572KB

This alternative to Windows Notepad offers some welcome extras. As well as black and white modes, there are other colour variations available – green, orange, yellow, purple and blue. This new release supports tabs, so you can have multiple files open at the same time and quickly switch between them. Additional features include multi-window support – which lets you have multiple instances of the software open – favourites, encryption, statistics and advanced paste and delete options. After 30 days of use, you can upgrade to the paid-for version for \$9.95 (£7.92) or accept some limitations, which include a maximum of three tabs.





GAME

Open Solomon's Key

bit.ly/oskey505

Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10 or Linux **File size:** 11.9MB

Open Solomon's Key is an open-source remake of a 1986 arcade platform game by Tecmo. You clear levels by collecting the keys and making your way through the door, while avoiding enemies and other dangers that try to scupper your progress. You can create and remove blocks and cast fireballs to destroy obstacles. There is also a level editor available to download.

✓ Install this program...

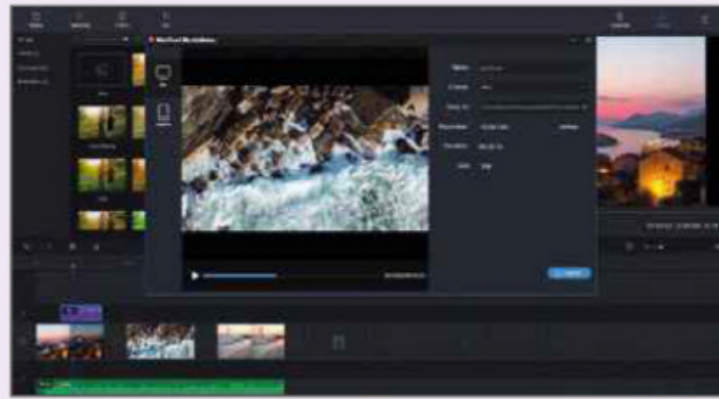
MiniTool MovieMaker Free

moviemaker.minitool.com

Min requirements: Windows 7/8/10

File size: 2MB (installer only)

MiniTool's free MovieMaker program offers an easy way to create movies, slideshows and animated greetings from your videos and photos. Select one of its attractive templates, add some photos and/or videos, alter the text, change the music and then export the movie in a choice of resolutions and formats. Alternatively, start from scratch by adding your media to MovieMaker then dragging and dropping each item to the timeline. You can split clips, insert transitions, apply effects and add text and music. The latest version of the software also lets you speed up, slow down and reverse your videos.



...Not this one ✗

AVS Video Editor

new.avs4you.com

Min requirements:

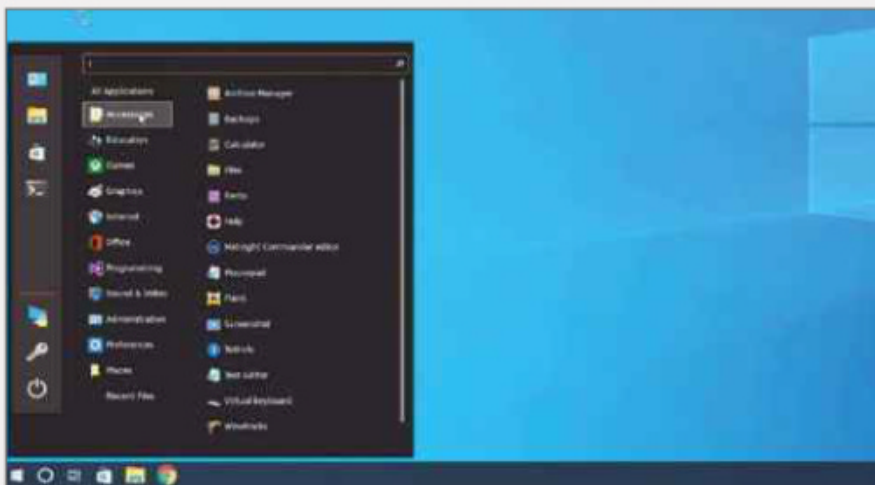
Windows 7/8/10

File size: 160.1MB

AVS Video Editor is a powerful program for editing videos and creating slideshows, and provides a heap of editing tools along with more than 300 effects, transitions and overlays. However, unless you pay \$39 (£30.70) a year for a subscription, it adds a watermark to all the videos you save and a 'voice logo' to your audio creations.



OTHER OPERATING SYSTEMS What's new for Linux and macOS



LINUX DISTRO

Windowsfx 10

windowsfx.org

Min requirements: Dual-core processor, 2GB RAM

File size: 3.23GB

When Microsoft stopped supporting Windows 7 earlier this year, a number of Linux operating systems stepped into the void. The Brazilian-developed Windowsfx (also called Linuxfx WX) offers a Windows-like interface, based on the Cinnamon DE, and the ability to run Windows software via WINE. Version 10 is the first major update since 2018, and is built on Ubuntu 20.04 LTS. It comes with the Sentinela video-management system and a new personal assistant.

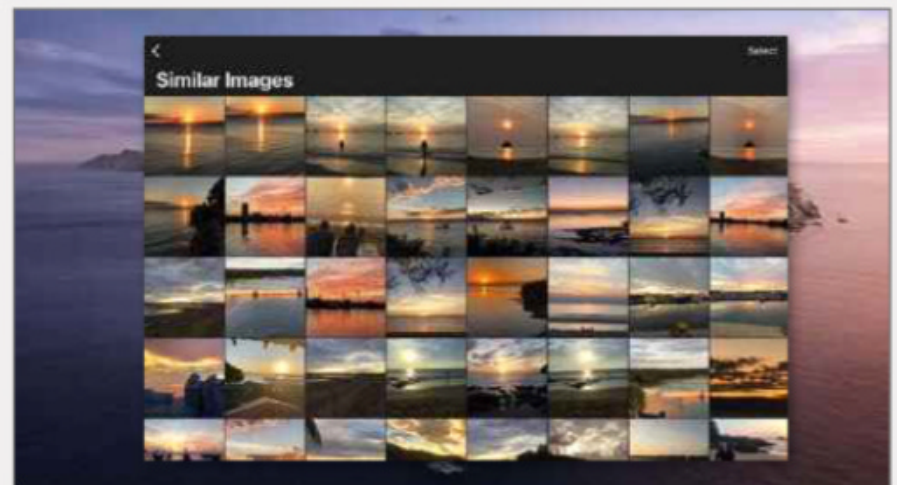


PHOTO ORGANISER

Kiano

bit.ly/kiano505

Min requirements: macOS 10.15 Catalina and above

File size: 5.4MB

Kiano (Keep Images Arranged and Neatly Organised) is a free app that helps you find and view photos on your Mac. It pulls images from your photos library and displays them on a map in flat or perspective views. It lets you look at thousands of photos at once, sorted by colour or content, and you can navigate pictures visually and search by similarity. There's also a list view available, as well as a slideshow and video player.

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Best New Browser Tools

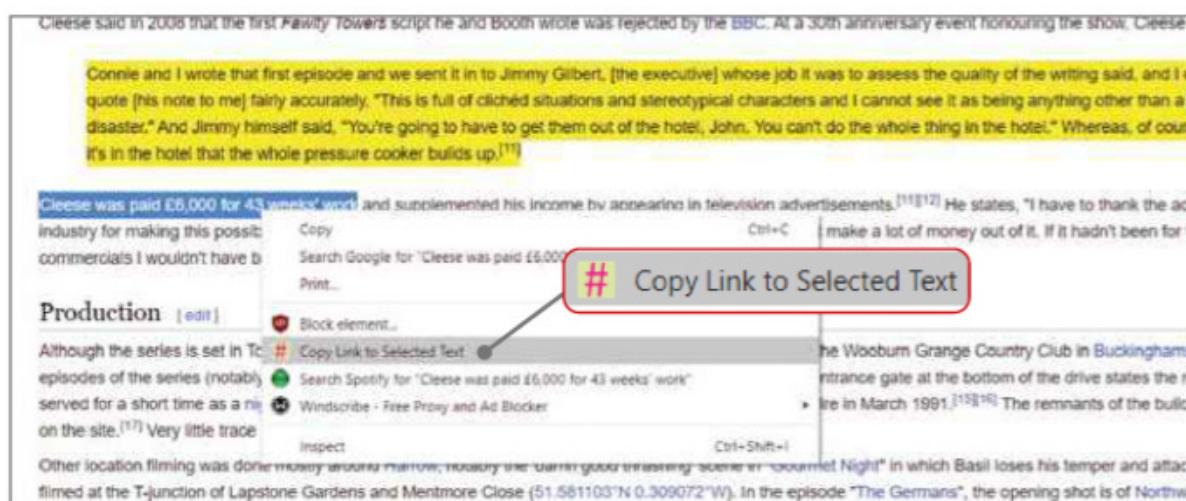


CHROME

Create direct links to text on web pages

Google has created a handy new extension called Link to Text Fragment (bit.ly/text505), which lets you create links to selected text. This is very useful when you want to direct people to specific words on a web page without forcing them to scroll through the whole thing to find the relevant passage themselves.

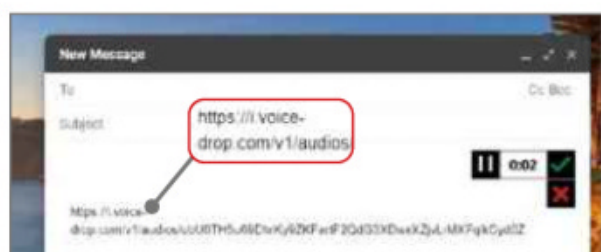
It's a three-step method: highlight any text – words, phrases, names, paragraphs, whatever – and right-click it. You'll see the option to 'Copy Link to Selected Text'. Clicking this generates a URL that can be copied and saved, or pasted into an email or private message. You'll know if it's worked when your highlighted text turns yellow.



Your newly created link features the web page URL, alongside a snippet of text from your referral. Now, when anyone clicks this link, the page opens and automatically scrolls down to your highlighted selection.

Stop typing and start talking

Voice Drop (bit.ly/voicedrop505) is designed for anyone who wants to get their message across quickly and clearly, but doesn't have time to type it out in full. Essentially, it adds a Record button to text fields. After recording your message, your options are to play it back, scrap it and start over, or click the tick to confirm that you're happy with the recording.



Voice Drop then creates a unique link and places it in the text field. The recipient can play the recording at their leisure, with options to control the speed at which the message is spoken. It's very useful for composing emails hands-free.

Create your own voice commands

Orange (bit.ly/orange505) is a new Chrome extension that lets you record actions on websites and link them to your own voice commands.

Start by clicking the toolbar button and choose Microphone. This gives



Orange permission to use your mic. Next, go to a website and click Record. Buttons that are 'controllable' are surrounded by an orange outline. You won't find many of these on standard websites but, if you head to YouTube, for example, there's a lot more on offer.

Click an orange button and you're prompted to associate it with your own voice command, which is stored in Orange's Commands section. The next time you visit the website, click Start and your microphone will listen for your commands.

Control Spotify from your browser

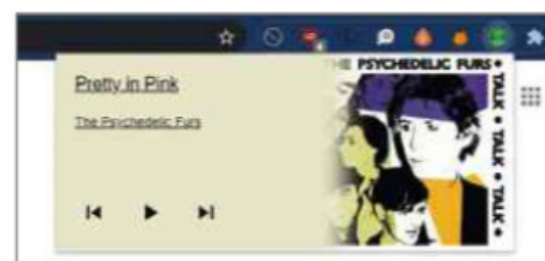
No more opening (and reopening) the Spotify desktop app to control your tunes. Install Spotify Player (bit.ly/spotify505) and you can do it all directly in your browser. Make sure

you're logged into Spotify, then open the player either in your browser or the desktop app. You'll also need to choose your tracks here.

Once the music has started, clicking

Spotify Player's toolbar button opens a simple player, displaying the artist, title and album artwork, along with three controls: Back, Forward and Play/Pause.

Spotify Player is basic, which is not necessarily a bad thing, but it could do with a search box. And there's one curious oversight: clicking a song title or artist opens and displays results in the Spotify web app, which is fine unless you're streaming music through the desktop app. It's also available for Firefox (bit.ly/spotfox505).



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



FIREFOX

Stop websites refreshing automatically

Auto-reloading websites have long been on the list of online annoyances. One minute, you're cheerfully reading an engrossing article, then the page refreshes itself for no good reason and you've got to scroll back down to find your place.

Stop Auto Reload (bit.ly/reload505) should fix this problem, without you needing to do anything. Once the add-on is installed, each tab is monitored and auto-reloads are blocked. You can override the block by refreshing the page using the usual F5 keyboard shortcut. The developer also notes that the tool won't block auto-redirects that take you away from the page you're on – another internet irritation – because it only stops reloads of the same URL.

Right-click Stop Auto Reload's toolbar button to manually blacklist URLs and hostnames, or choose Options to manage sites.

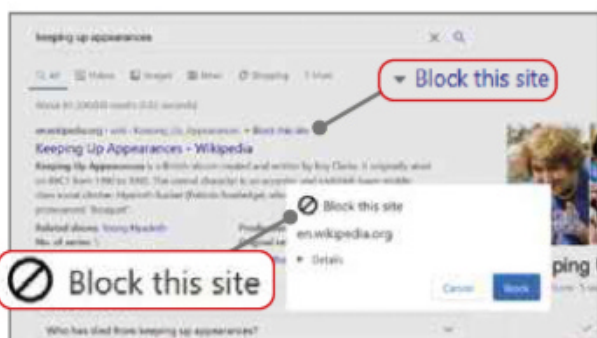


Block sites from search results

Updated add-on uBlacklist (bit.ly/blacklist505) is an absolute must-have if you want to block specific websites from Google search results. It also works with DuckDuckGo and Startpage.com, but you'll need to enable these in Firefox's Add-ons Manager.

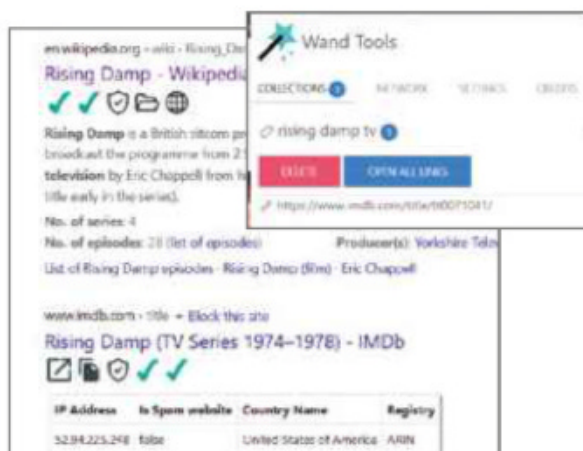
This is where you can build an exclusion list, copying and pasting or typing domain names, or importing an existing blacklist. You can also block web addresses that contain specific words, which makes it quicker to block sites in bulk, though it's easier to block individual sites as you go.

There's a 'Block this site' option you can click next to each search result. Alternatively, when you're on a website (and never want to return), click the add-on's toolbar button to add it to your blacklist. Either way, click OK to confirm and you'll never see the site again.



Search the web faster than ever

Wand Tool (bit.ly/wand505) makes good on all those empty promises from add-ons that claim to "revolutionise the way you browse the web". Run a search on Google or DuckDuckGo and, beneath every result, you'll find the most useful buttons you'll ever need when



browsing. 'Open in new tab' and 'copy link' are the obvious ones, while clicking the globe icon displays the site's IP address and country. Clicking the Folder icon lets you add the link to your Collections, which are retrieved by clicking the add-on's toolbar button. The shield icon is our favourite: it opens the page in the same tab, but without Google being able to track you.

OTHER BROWSERS

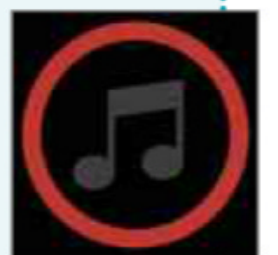
Browse Twitter in your sidebar

Opera's sidebar continues to grow ever-more useful. Not content with adding WhatsApp and Instagram, Twitter is the latest platform to earn a coveted spot. It's part of Opera 69, the browser's latest update, which also brings a new weather widget and a vastly superior tab cyler. But Twitter's inclusion is the main draw. Clicking the Twitter button opens a pop-out window to the side of the browser, letting you keep an eye on your feed without navigating to a new page or checking your phone. Once you download Opera 69, you'll be prompted to turn on the new settings.



Switch off YouTube videos

If you tend to treat YouTube as a personalised radio station or podcast platform, or you just want to cut down on your data usage, install Audio Only for YouTube (bit.ly/audio505) in Edge. This extension 'pauses' the video, while letting the audio play as normal. It even works on YouTube videos embedded on websites. However, you'll need to turn it on or off before you start playing your video, because it can't switch from video to audio mid-play. That's the only bum note for an extension that's also available for Chrome, Firefox and Opera (bit.ly/audiobrowser505).



Best Free Apps



App of the Fortnight

PHOTOS

Photoshop Camera

bit.ly/photodroid505

bit.ly/photoios505



Adobe has a long history of developing tools for editing photos, but Photoshop Camera is the first one that's designed for taking them. Announced last winter and now available for both iOS and Android devices (albeit only certain models, as we'll explain), the app brings some Photoshop magic to your shots before you've even tapped the shutter button.

It does this by offering a selection of 'lenses' (Adobe's term for filters), effects and enhancements that you can apply before (or after) you take the shot. Some of these are subtle, such as a shallow focus filter for portraits, while others are more creative, such as the ability to add a completely different sky to your landscape shots.

While there are plenty of other apps that let you apply filters, Photoshop Camera distinguishes itself with the inclusion of Adobe's Sensei artificial intelligence technology. This automatically recognises what you're photographing

and applies or recommends suitable effects to improve your shot. If none of the supplied lenses are to your taste, you can download new ones or create your own and share it with other users.

Unlike Photoshop itself, Photoshop Camera is free to download and use – the in-app purchase of a Creative Cloud subscription is entirely optional. On the downside, the app is pretty resource-intensive, which seems to have made broad device support impossible. You'll need a relatively recent phone to run the app: iPhone 6S or later, or recent(ish) iPad; while Android compatibility currently appears to be restricted to Pixel, Samsung Galaxy and OnePlus handsets. Check that your device meets

Adobe's system requirements (bit.ly/adoberec505) before you download the app.



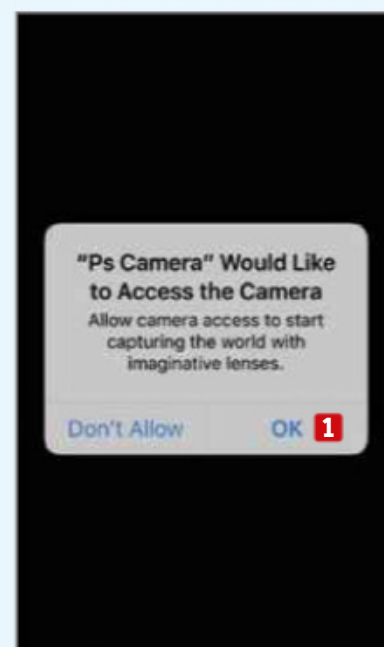
NEW



MINI WORKSHOP

Capture and edit photos using Photoshop Camera

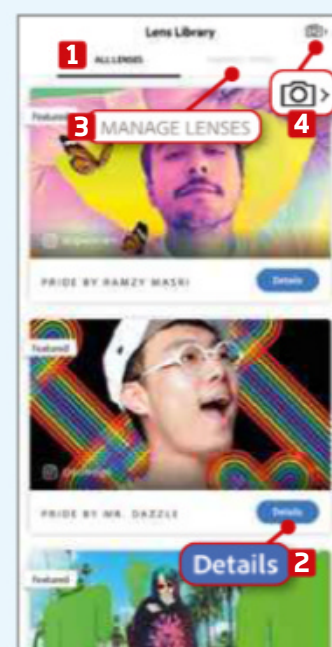
1 When you first launch Photoshop Camera, you're treated to a looping intro video – tap Skip Intro to get past this, then swipe through the intro screens until you see the Get Started button. Tap this, then sign in with an Adobe ID (or one of the other options provided) and work through the remaining screens, allowing permission for the app to use your camera when prompted. **1**



2 Swipe through the strip of lenses at the bottom of the main screen **1** and press one to apply it. Each lens offers a selection of different variations – switch between these by swiping horizontally across the main preview area. Tap the circular-arrows icon **2** to switch between rear and front-facing cameras. Pressing the three-dot icon **3** displays flash and aspect-ratio options. Tap the library icon **4** to access and edit your photos.



3 To add more lenses, press the small globe icon in the top-left corner of the screen. This will open your lens library. Tap the All Lenses tab **1** and scroll through other lenses that are available. Tap Details **2** on one to see more, then tap Add Lens to download it. Press Manage Lenses **3** to delete or reorder your currently installed lenses. Tap the camera icon **4** to return to the main screen.





Our rating



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

SOCIAL

DrawPool

bit.ly/drawdroid505
bit.ly/drawios505
 4.1  9

Enjoy drawing? Dabble in a spot of doodling? Ever wished there was a social network dedicated to sharing your sketches? Well, now there is. DrawPool is a new way to share your drawings with others and express your thoughts and feelings through art. You can draw within the app itself, and all ability levels are welcome. It's a nice idea but, admittedly, posting drawings is a bit more niche than posting photos, so we have our doubts as to whether DrawPool will ever achieve the same success as, for example, Instagram.



Our rating



NEW



GAMING

MiniReview

bit.ly/minireview505
 5

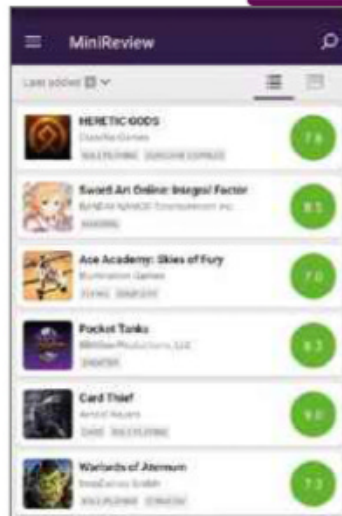
Sadly, we don't have the space in *Web User* to provide more than a handful of mobile game reviews. However, if you're a keen gamer and looking for your next fix, MiniReview can help find what you're looking for. This handy app provides access to reviews, screenshots, videos and essential information for a regularly updated, hand-picked selection of games across a broad range of genres. If you're only interested in certain types of games – for example, RPGs – you can use filters to narrow your searches, and rate or share your favourite titles.



Our rating



NEW



HEALTH

Snore and Cough

bit.ly/snore505
 5

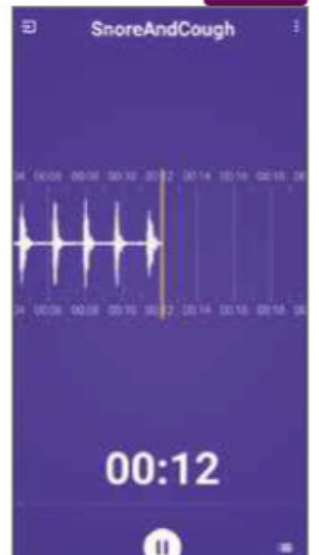
For those who snore and splutter their way through the night, this app can detect when you make nocturnal noises and record them as you sleep, so you can listen to them in the morning to find out when – and how loudly – you were snoring. If you're worried about your sleep patterns, Snore and Cough can provide a very useful way to track your snoring habits and identify if you have a problem that you invariably sleep through. Recordings can be shared by email and played back to medical experts to help diagnose sleep apnoea and other conditions.



Our rating





NEW



PRODUCTIVITY

Acture

bit.ly/acturedroid505
bit.ly/actureios505
 7  11

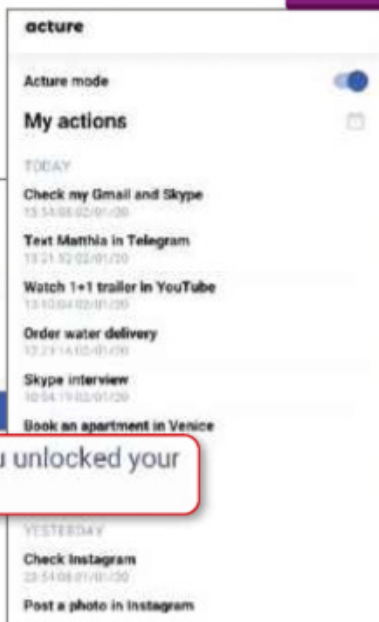
Your smartphone puts a ton of useful tools and features in the palm of your hand, but there are times when you'll find yourself aimlessly scrolling through social feeds or tapping colourful candies in games when you really ought to be getting on with something more productive. Acture is intended as a mindful solution to mindless smartphone use. With the app enabled, you'll be asked to provide a reason every time you unlock your phone. It's a simple yet effective way to stop you absent-mindedly picking up your phone and wasting time. It also keeps a list of your reasons for unlocking your device, to help track your habits.



Our rating





NEW

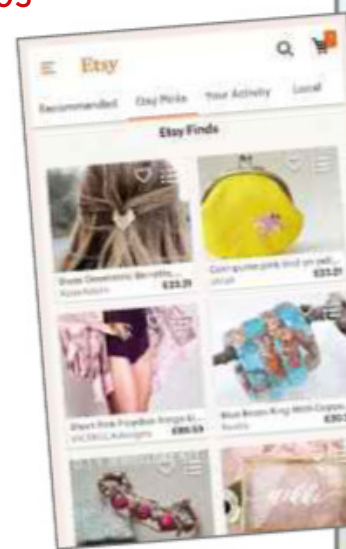


SHOPPING

Etsy

bit.ly/etsydroid505
bit.ly/etsyios505
 (varies)  12.4

If you're ever stuck for a gift idea, then Etsy is your friend. It's a fantastic global marketplace that lets you buy all manner of gifts – from jewellery and clothing to personalised items and handmade art – directly from the people who make them. The official Etsy app lets you browse, buy and track your delivery, and, if you're an Etsy shop owner, you can use the app to manage your storefront and orders. Etsy's iOS app has now been updated to introduce a handy new feature that lets you visualise how a piece of art will look on your wall, via the power of augmented reality.



Our rating



UPDATED

5 NEW APPS WORTH PAYING FOR

MUSIC

Equalizer - Bass Booster Pro

bit.ly/equaliser505

Price: £1.89

 4.2

If your music is lacking oomph, then you could try this equaliser app, which lets you fine-tune your tunes, regardless of which media player you're using. There's a free version to try, too.



HEALTH

Freya

bit.ly/freyadroid505

bit.ly/freya-ios505

Price: £2.99

 5  11

This popular surge (contraction) timer from The Positive Birth Company has been updated with improved navigation, new breathing techniques, customisable relaxation playlists and more.



VIRTUAL REALITY

Inferno VR Roller Coaster

bit.ly/inferno505

Price: 89p

 4.4

Many theme parks are



reopening this month, but if you can't make the trip in person, then why not try this virtual-reality rollercoaster ride instead? You won't have to queue up for it, either!

GENEALOGY

MobileFamilyTree 9

bit.ly/familytree505

Price: £14.99

 11.4

Recently updated, this genealogy tool lets you explore and record your family history from your iPhone or iPad. It's been redesigned with added customisable charts and support for DNA tests.



GAME

The Almost Gone

bit.ly/almostdroid505

bit.ly/almostios505

Price: £3.99

 (varies)  13

In this poignant game, you play a character who's trapped between life and death. Explore beautifully crafted locations to uncover clues and reveal the truth behind your character's fate.



Equalizer - Bass Booster Pro



Freya



Inferno VR Roller Coaster



MobileFamilyTree 9



The Almost Gone



✓ Install this app...

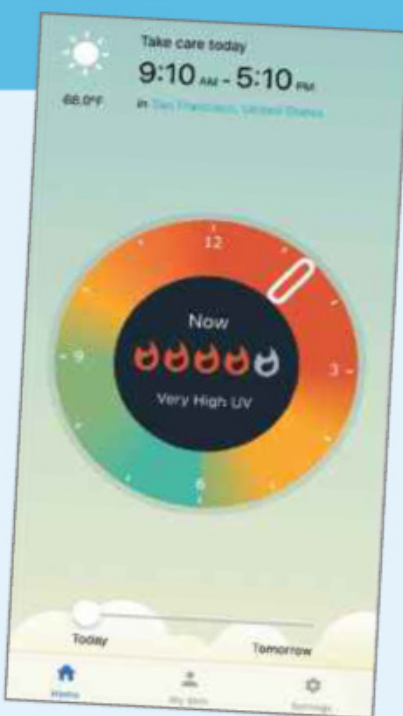
UVLens

bit.ly/uvdroid505

bit.ly/uvios505

 4.1  9.3

Hopefully, by the time you read this, the British summer will be in full swing. However, while it's cheering to be able to get out and enjoy the sun, it's also important to remain aware of the damage that exposure to direct sunlight can cause to your skin. UVLens is a simple, attractive app that shows you the current UV (ultra-violet) index in your location, and tells you how long you can spend in the sun before you start to burn. The UV index forecast, meanwhile, helps you plan the best time to go outdoors, if you want to prevent the sun from damaging your skin.



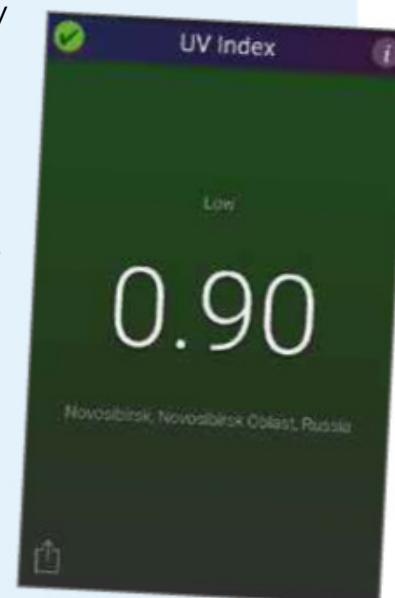
...Not this one



UV Index

bit.ly/index505

UV Index promises to be a helpful, simple app that displays the local UV Index for your area on a background that changes from green to red, depending on the strength of the sun. However, there's a rather obvious reason why we wouldn't trust this app to keep our skin safe - it doesn't work. We tried it on two separate devices and the app just crashes whenever you launch it.





Take a Screen Break

Take a rest from your browser with our fiendish fortnightly challenges. Can you guess our seaside-resort 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 UK SEASIDE RESORTS FROM THE EMOJI?

1



2



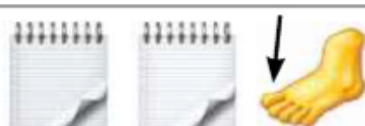
3



4



5



6



GUESS THE WAYBACK MACHINE YEAR

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



Google+ challenges Facebook



COMPETITIONS

WIN 1 OF 3 Corel Painter 2021

Painter 2021 is the latest version of this powerful and creative professional digital-painting software. For the first time, you can access an AI-based style transfer workflow that offers the customization, control and Natural-Media realism professionals demand. To enter, email your address to webusercomp@dennis.co.uk with 'Painter' in the subject line. For more information, visit www.painterartist.com and follow [@corelpainter](https://twitter.com/corelpainter) on Twitter.



**WORTH
£359.99
EACH**

WIN A... PNY Universal Tripod and Mobee Gimbal

PNY's Universal Tripod has a 1/4in screw thread, making it compatible with most phones, cameras and action cams. Its Mobee Gimbal is a three-axis stabiliser for your phone, and can track faces and objects. To enter, email your address to webusercomp@dennis.co.uk with 'PNY' in the subject line. For more information, visit www.pny.eu and follow [@pnyeu](https://twitter.com/pnyeu) on Twitter.



**WORTH
£121.08
IN TOTAL**

? FAQ

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

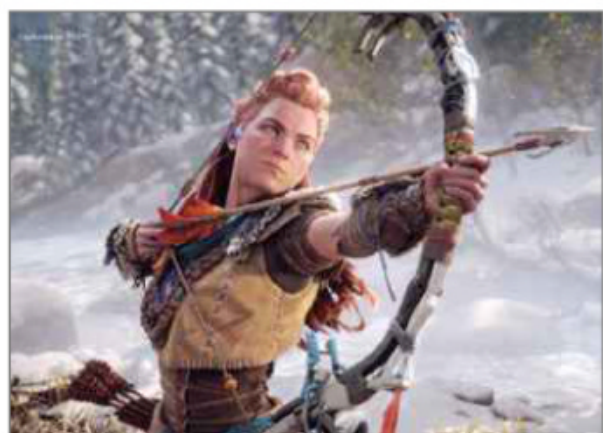


Is this a new router?

There's definitely a resemblance between a 2000s-era router and the PlayStation 5 – Sony's latest iteration of its long-running range of video-game consoles. But get past the odd two-tone styling (some commentators have compared it to a reverse Oreo) and you're eyeing a next-generation gem of a machine that promises to take gaming to another level.

Great. When can I get my hands on it?

Hang fire – the PS5, as it's also known, is not due out until just before Christmas



The PS5 will launch with a strong line-up of games including Horizon II: Forbidden West

PlayStation 5

“It's time to play,” announced Sony, as it unveiled its next-generation games console. **David Crookes** looks at what the PS5 has to offer avid gamers



(and we don't even know how much it will cost, although rumours suggest £499). The good news is that Sony says production isn't going to be affected by the coronavirus pandemic. In the meantime, it is tantalising gamers with a drip-feed of information that has so far revealed details of the internals, the remodelled controller and, of course, the console's striking look. The latter was unveiled at the end of a livestream event in June during which Sony also showcased an eye-catching line-up of games (bit.ly/playstation505).

What can we expect from the PS5?

The new console boasts an eight-core AMD Zen 2 central processor running at a maximum clock speed of 3.5GHz and a custom AMD RDNA 2-based graphics processor that can achieve 2.23GHz. This will provide the PS5 with 10.28 teraflops of power, which alongside the 16GB of memory is set to make it capable of handling the most demanding of games. These will be run from a solid state drive offering a data-processing speed of 5.5GB/s and 825GB of storage. As a

result, games can be more expansive and players should see fewer loading screens and wait less time to get stuck in. The console will also support film-quality 4K graphics.

Much better than the PS4, then?

Oh yes. The PS4 was released in 2013 and is the fourth best-selling console of all time with sales of 110.4 million. Since then, we've also seen the launch of the PlayStation 4 Slim and the PlayStation 4 Pro, as well as the virtual-reality headset, PSVR. But technology moves on and PS5 may well right some past wrongs (the PS4 makes a lot of noise and its controller soon runs out of juice). The specs of the PS5 are obviously superior and the SSD storage is lightning-fast. In fact, Sony CEO Kenichiro Yoshida says the PS5 should be 100 times faster than the PS4.



The PS4 was powerful for its time but Sony claims the PlayStation 5 is 100 times faster

Will it still use physical media?

Yes and no. Sony has been a staunch



Choose either a PS5 with a Blu-ray drive or a digital-only model

supporter of physical media and introduced a DVD drive in the PlayStation 2 and a Blu-ray drive in the PlayStation 3. The standard PS5 model will have an Ultra HD Blu-ray disc drive, but Sony is also releasing a digital model without a disc drive. Gamers will obtain their games entirely through digital downloads.

What is the controller like?

The new DualSense PS5 wireless controller follows the same two-tone black-and-white style as the PS5 and has a pronounced boomerang shape, comfortable grips, enhanced battery life and a built-in microphone so players won't have to wear a headset. Haptic

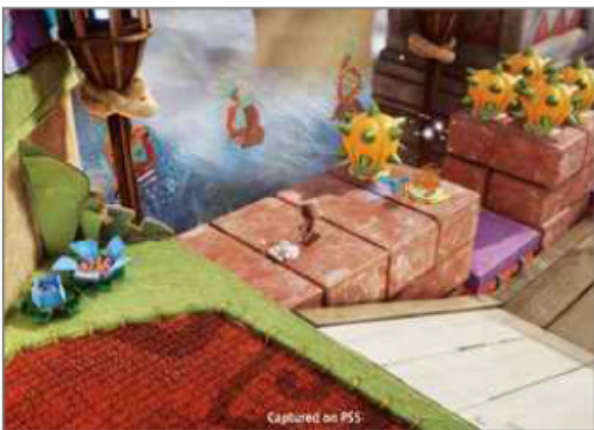
feedback is also being used to create an experience of

touch (Sony says it could let you feel the slow grittiness of driving a car through mud), while adaptive triggers in the L2 and R2 shoulder buttons will

provide resistance for greater realism. The familiar triangle, circle, square and X buttons remain, but the Share button introduced with the DualShock 4 controller has been replaced with a new Create button that will allow for "new ways for players to create epic gameplay content to share with the world".

So what games can I look forward to?

Sony has lined up a strong range of titles, some entirely new and others that continue long-running, popular franchises. Look out for expanded



Sackboy A Big Adventure and Gran Turismo 7 are among the keenly anticipated games

HOW DOES THE XBOX SERIES X COMPARE?

Although gamers' attention is currently focused on PS5, Microsoft is pinning its hopes on the Xbox Series X. Both have solid state drives and AMD CPUs and GPUs, which means there's not much to choose between them. The Xbox Series X has a more muted design, however, as well as a larger, 1TB SSD and greater graphics processing power, at 12.18 teraflops.

Both will offer 4K, 120fps video with ray-tracing graphics, but much depends on how developers use the consoles and whether one machine gets more exclusive games than the other. Backwards-compatibility with a gamer's existing titles will help, too. Indeed, pure power isn't always an indicator of how well a console will perform, as Nintendo's relatively underpowered Wii and Switch have proved.



versions of Grand Theft Auto V and Grand Theft Auto Online earmarked for the second half of 2021. Watch out, too, for survival horror Resident Evil Village, basketball game NBA 2K21, puzzle platformer Sackboy A Big Adventure, stealth title Hitman 3 and the long-awaited Oddworld Soulstorm. Racing game Gran Turismo 7 and Marvel's Spider-Man: Miles Morales are among the first PS5 exclusives.

Do I need to ditch my old games, then?

No. The PS5 is going to be backwards compatible with a range of PS4 titles, and there is talk that it may use the online streaming service PlayStation Now, which will also open up PS2 and PS3 games. It's interesting to note that any games seeking PS4 certification now have to show that the game will also run on the PS5, so you don't need to worry about investing in future titles. What's more, Sony says that any backwards-compatible games "will run at a boosted frequency on PS5", allowing them to "benefit from higher or more stable frame rates and potentially higher resolutions".

Are there new peripherals, too?

Sony has announced an HD camera with dual 1080p lenses, the idea being that you can video yourself playing games and broadcast the footage online. A Pulse 3D wireless headset is also being launched, which includes dual noise-cancelling microphones as well as 3D audio support. Two DualSense controllers can be powered up at the

same time in a single, new charging station (although you can also use a USB-C cable) and a remote control is being offered with a built-in microphone for those moments when you want to put the games down and access films or streaming services.

But it still looks like a router, doesn't it?

Yes, it does. And it's a beast of a machine too, said to be larger than the rival Xbox Series X and dwarfing the Xbox One X and PS4 Pro – this much power needs good ventilation. But the stand is removable and can be repositioned so the PS5 lays flat. This means it can fit inside a media cabinet under your television so you can stash it away if you find the design a little too conspicuous.

Several new peripherals are promised including a remote, a headset and a charging station



DITCH WEBSITES FOR APPS!

COVER
FEATURE

Mobile apps can transform your phone or tablet into a multi-purpose device in a way that no website can. Jane Hoskyn reveals the best free apps that put their sister sites to shame



Remember when your phone was just a phone? That device in your hand is now a barcode scanner, two-sided video camera, dictation machine, live broadcasting tool, offline TV library, audio and video editor, custom news ticker, navigation device, personal shopper and more – all thanks to free apps.

Unlike websites, apps embrace all the capabilities of your phone or tablet, from the touchscreen to notifications. No wonder developers are falling over

each other to create trailblazing apps, which have long since surpassed websites in popularity and continue to do so – even in a year that we’ve mostly spent locked indoors.

In this feature, we reveal our favourite website-beating apps for Android and iOS, all newly updated and free to download. All is not lost for websites, though – we also explain why apps aren’t always the most private choice, and how to easily switch to the occasional mobile site.

Shopping & Social Apps



Scan barcodes to list items on eBay

Selling your stuff on eBay is much easier these days, not least because the app (bit.ly/eBay505) automates half the work for you. Go to Selling, 'List an item', then tap the barcode and hold your device's camera over the item's barcode. We tried this with an old, obscure book from a charity shop, and the app got an instant match.

Notifications make the app extra useful, too, but choose wisely (via 'Apps & notifications' or Notifications in your device settings), because eBay will batter your mobile with recommendations for "items you might like", given half a chance. Useful

notifications include a heads-up when new listings match your saved searches, and an alert that a buyer has paid, so you know it's time to head for the Post Office.

Scan a book's barcode with your phone's camera to list it quickly on eBay

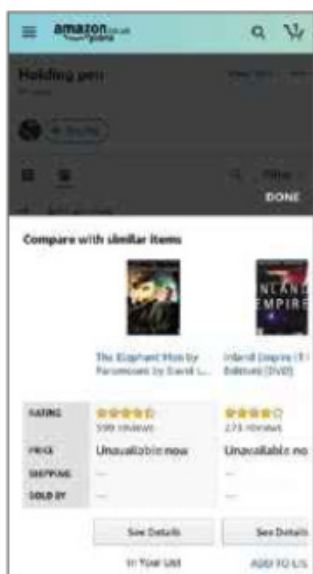


Take photos to find the best price on Amazon

Amazon's Buy Now button and 1-Click purchase process make it far too easy to spend money via its website, but Amazon's Shopping app (bit.ly/amshop505) makes it even simpler.

The app's search bar makes full use of your device's camera and microphone, with a photo search icon next to voice search. Take or upload a photo of a product in a shop window, and the app will

Scan products and barcodes to search Amazon - it makes shopping almost too easy!



tell you whether you can buy it (or similar) from Amazon and for how much. Or use your camera to snap a barcode to find matching listings and similar items. You can then complete any Buy Now purchase with a quick swipe, so your order will be on its way before the kettle has even boiled. Naturally, shop staff won't thank you for doing this, especially in the current economic climate, so be discreet.

Your Amazon wish lists also get a few app-only features, but they're well-hidden. Each wish list item is equipped with a 'Compare with similar items' option (under its three-dot menu) - handy for finding cheaper substitutes for your desired items, or gifts based on someone's shared wish list. Oddly, wish lists don't have a simple Share button; instead there's a 'Send list to others' option in each list's menu.



Split your trip to save money with Trainline

Train journeys just got slightly less overpriced, thanks to a new Trainline feature that's only available in the app (bit.ly/trainline505). 'SplitSave' automatically divides your trip into multiple tickets to comprise the lowest possible total, without making any changes to your journey. Find out more at bit.ly/split505.

The app also gives you instant access to digital tickets (print or download to any device) or mobile tickets (which you need that specific device to use), both of which dodge the hassle of ticket machines and counter queues. You can also get live travel updates in the app, and assorted notifications such as price and delay alerts.

Unlike its website, Trainline's app automatically offers to split your journey into cheaper tickets

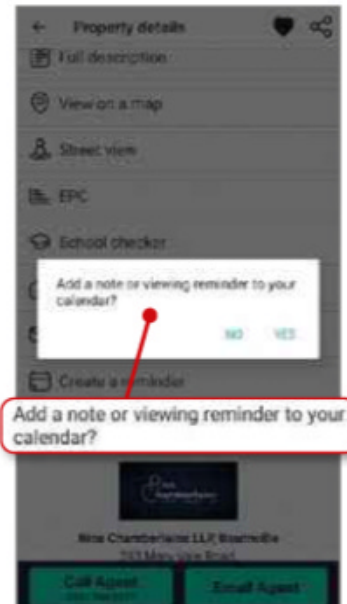


Save property viewings to your calendar from Rightmove

Many of the cleverest features of the Rightmove app (bit.ly/rightmove505) have now appeared on the website, too,

Rightmove's app lets you add estate agents to your calendar and contacts with ease

including virtual 3D tours and Street View. But only the app lets you add date reminders (such as viewings) directly to your default calendar; call the estate agent with one tap from any property; and take virtual tours in VR mode. Annoyingly, there's no Download button for saving a listing, or even photos and floorplans - you just get the usual Share button. But you can, instead, take a screenshot to save any image directly to your device's gallery.

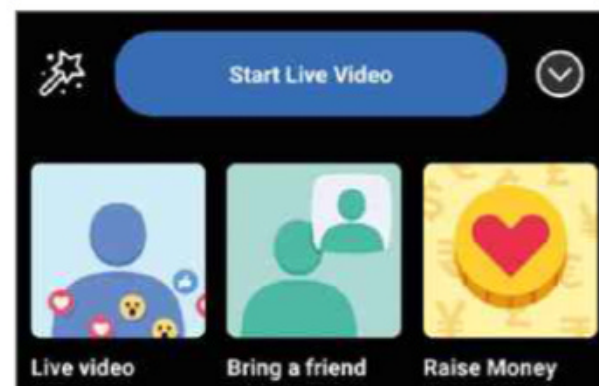


Live-stream to your Facebook friends

Facebook lets you live-stream to your friends or the world from wherever you are, thanks to the Live button that now takes pride of place in the app (bit.ly/face505). Live video broadcast is available via the website, too, but it's buried in a menu and doesn't have the app's range of filters and functions, such as the ability to switch between front and rear cameras.

A more mundane but arguably more useful advantage of the app is its ability to upload photos and videos directly from your device to your albums, timeline and friends. It's equally easy to save a photo (any public picture, as well as your own) back to your device, and you can also share your friends' posts via other apps such as WhatsApp (tap Share, then 'More options').

The Facebook app's menu is a trove of mobile-only features, including dark mode, local weather, a Wi-Fi finder and a Code Generator for using two-factor authentication on a new device.



Broadcast live via Facebook's app and switch between front and back cameras



Video & Audio Apps

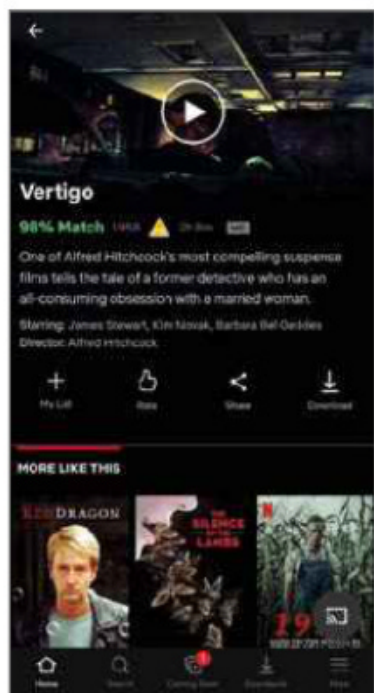
Automatically download Netflix episodes

Netflix lets you download films, TV episodes and entire series to watch offline – but only via its mobile app (bit.ly/netflix505), not its website. If your device has a Smart Downloads option in its App Settings, you can get Netflix to delete the episode you’ve just watched and download the next one automatically, so you don’t have multiple episodes cluttering your device. Expiry times differ, but if a film or episode is set to vanish in less than a week, it’ll say so on your Downloads tab, along with its file size.

You can configure storage location and quality in App Settings, and enable

notifications (including Remind Me alerts when your most-anticipated shows become available); switch on mobile data downloads; and run an internet speed test.

Netflix is a great website, but only its app lets you download films and shows to watch on the go



Download Amazon Prime Video series with one tap

The Prime Video app (bit.ly/prime505) makes Amazon’s huge streaming library feel less cluttered than the website, even on a tiny phone screen. For example, rather than scrolling through a ‘Free to me’ page, the app has a ‘Free to me’ toggle that instantly filters out paid-for items throughout the app.

Each TV show’s main Download button automatically downloads the entire season, but you can swipe down to get individual episodes instead. Downloaded films and episodes retain all Amazon’s playback features, including subtitles and ‘X-Ray’ details from IMDb: simply tap the screen to overlay the player with info about a scene, including cast, characters and music.

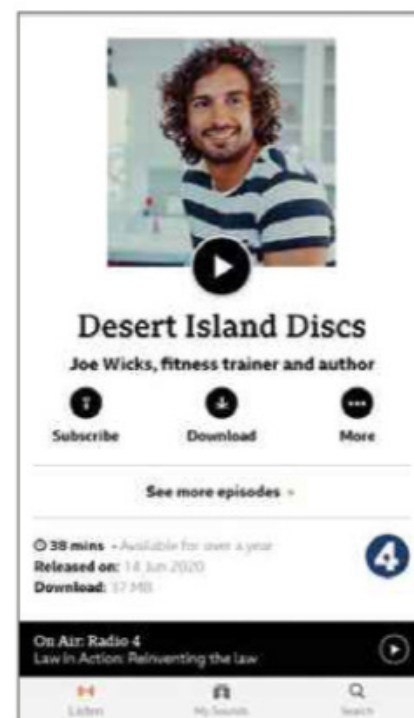
Amazon Prime Video’s Download button lets you save a whole season, but you can download a single episode, too



Nod off to offline radio shows in BBC Sounds

The BBC Sounds app (bit.ly/sounds505) lets you subscribe to radio shows, just like podcasts, and then download episodes to catch up with on the go. Unlike the Beeb’s podcasts, downloaded shows come with all music intact – no clipped-out songs to ruin the mood in *Desert Island Discs*. The app’s audio player automatically continues on to a radio show’s next episode when you’re streaming, and has a sleep timer so the app nods off when you do.

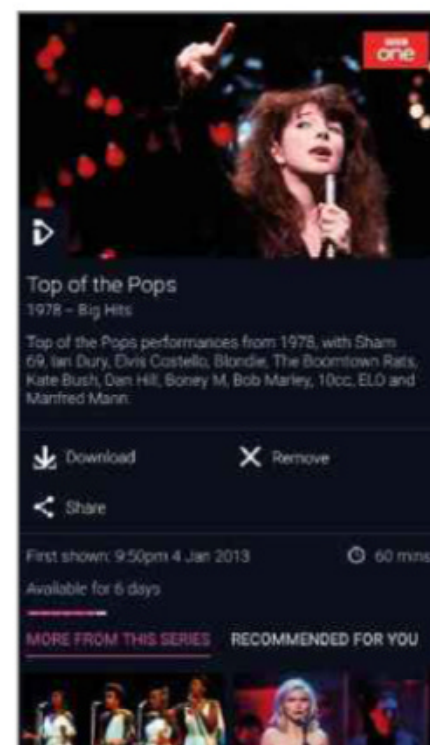
BBC Sounds lets you download radio shows with all the music intact



Get a 10-second skip button in BBC iPlayer

Unlike Netflix, Amazon and Sounds, the BBC iPlayer does let you download TV shows via its website. However, it’s a somewhat convoluted process that requires installing extra software. There’s no such hurdle-jumping with the app (bit.ly/iplayer505), which lets you download films and episodes, and sends a notification when they’re due to expire. The app is also a playground for BBC developers, who have helpfully added useful “experimental” features such as a 10-second Skip button, which you can enable by ticking New Video Controls in the Settings.

The BBC iPlayer app beats its sister website on downloads, but it can’t match Netflix for features

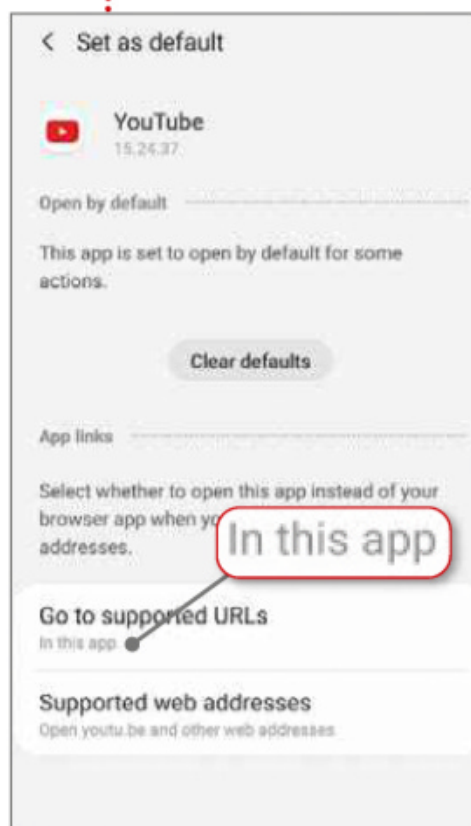


FORCE YOUTUBE LINKS TO OPEN IN THE APP

Despite letting you install some excellent apps, Android devices are hopelessly devoted to websites. Tap a URL in a message or post, and it’ll probably open as a ‘mobile website’ in a browser, even if the link was a YouTube video, BBC News story or other item that would work much better in the appropriate app.

Happily, you can change this with a Settings tweak. Steps differ between devices, but they’ll be something like this: go to ‘Apps & notifications’, ‘Default apps’, ‘Set as default’, and enable ‘Open links in apps’. To see which type of links each app supports, tap it in the list, then ‘Supported web addresses’. (The YouTube app opens youtu.be and m.youtube.com links, as well as youtube.com, for example.) Under ‘Go to supported URLs’, select ‘In this app’.

To block an app from opening links in its own shoddy in-app browser, you’ll need to tweak its own settings. In Twitter, for example, go to ‘Settings and privacy’, ‘Display and sound’ and untick ‘Use in-app browser’.





Use Freeview as a mobile streaming hub

Like the Freeview website (freeview.co.uk), Freeview's app (bit.ly/freeview505) is an interactive TV guide

for all the UK's free channels. But only the app lets you filter the huge TV guide to only show your favourite channels (double-tap a channel to favourite it) and set a reminder by tapping a show that's on later. When you tap a current

Open live streams in other apps via Freeview, which even has app download shortcuts



broadcast, it automatically opens a live stream in the relevant app (such as iPlayer), or offers a 'Get' button for installing the app you need.



Use YouTube's mobile app on any smart TV

Forget the cumbersome cursor-based search of YouTube's TV app and cast the vastly superior YouTube mobile app (bit.ly/ytube505) to your TV instead. It's easy to set up the link – simply load a video in the app and tap the Cast icon (a rectangle with radiating curves), then select whatever TV device it can detect (for example Roku, Chromecast or smart TV). This will work on a friend's smart TV, too. You can then play, pause and navigate using your device or the smart TV remote.

Casting isn't the only YouTube app

feature you won't find on the TV app or website – it also lets you download videos with one tap to watch offline, and even set a reminder that it's time to go to bed. To configure downloads and TV casting, tap your profile photo then open Settings. Here, you can also set a data-usage limit and – if you happen to have a VR headset – enable VR mode, then slot your phone in the headset and escape into a video.

YouTube's app isn't just better than the website, it's also better than the TV app – so cast it to your TV with one tap



Office & Productivity Apps



Scan documents straight to Google Drive

Adding photos and documents to Google Drive is much easier via the app (bit.ly/drive505), thanks to the built-in scanner that works with your device's camera. Tap the plus sign and press Scan, then scan the item, edit it using the built-in tools if you want, and then tap Save. Documents are saved as PDF by default, and all changes are synced across devices.

The app also makes easy work of saving photos, videos and other items for offline access. Tap an item's three-dot button, then press 'Make available offline' or Download. If you've struggled

to save videos to your device using Google Photos, which has a 'video is processing' bug that can keep you in download limbo for days, then download them via the Drive app instead.

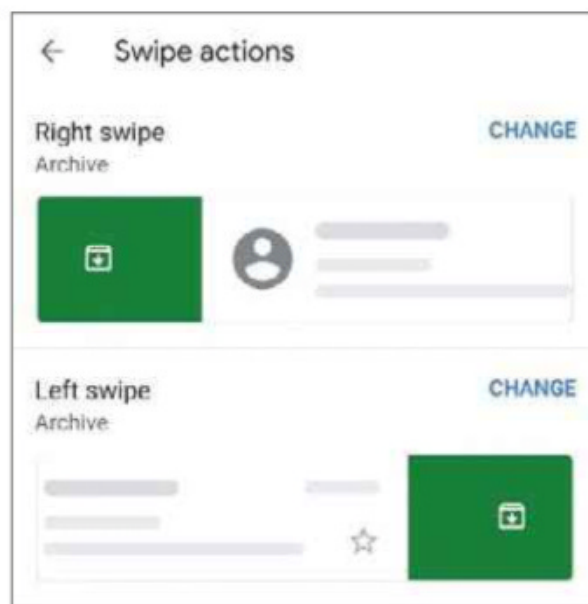
Turn your device's camera into a PDF document scanner with Google Drive



Swipe a message to archive it in Gmail

Gmail's app (Android bit.ly/gmail505, iOS bit.ly/gmailios505) now lets you swipe messages into oblivion (well, into your Archive), similar to swiping away a person in a dating app. You can customise your left and right swipes to do other things, too, such as delete, mark as read or unread, snooze or move to a specific label. To configure your swipes, open the menu, then Settings, 'General settings', 'Swipe actions'.

If you juggle email apps, you can combine them and set up advanced swipe actions using the free email app



Set Gmail's app to archive, delete or label a message with a right or left swipe

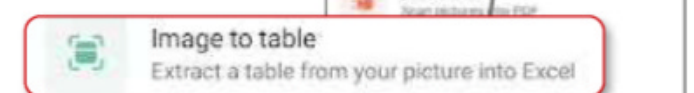
Spark (sparkmailapp.com), which supports Gmail, Yahoo and Outlook.



Get all Microsoft's office tools in one free app

Microsoft's new Office app (bit.ly/officeapp505) combines Word, Excel and PowerPoint in a single free integrated app. You may not get as much screen space as you do with their web-based versions, but you do get app-only tools such as OCR (you can even photograph a list to convert it to an Excel spreadsheet); PDF scanning, signing and converting; and import and export with other apps, including Dropbox and Google Drive. Voice dictation is coming soon, so you can use your phone as a dictaphone and have Word transcribe for you.

Microsoft's new all-in-one Office app even lets you turn a photo into an Excel spreadsheet



News & Information Apps



Download your curated Wikipedia collection

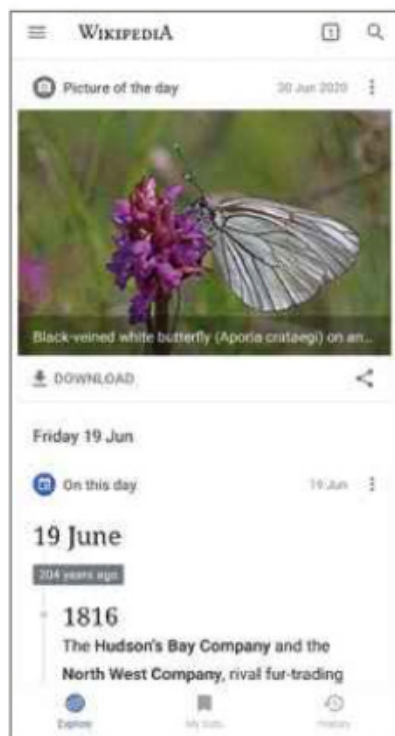
Wikipedia's website is an ever-expanding joy, and lets you download pages for printing or as a PDF – but the app (bit.ly/wikiapp505) still beats it hands down.

The Explore button loads a customisable rabbit hole of photos of

articles load in new tabs, so you can easily have several pages on the go at once.

When you're reading, a swipe-in sidebar lets you skip quickly to any section and explore external links. Page content is searchable by voice as well as text, and fonts and themes are customisable for easier reading. Tap a bookmark icon to add an article to one or more custom reading lists, all saved for offline access and – if you have a free Wikipedia account – synced across your devices.

Wikipedia's Android code is open-source, so you can edit the app as well as its articles (bit.ly/wikicode505). An easier way to help the app evolve is by installing the beta (bit.ly/wikibeta505) alongside the standard version.



the day (all free to download), trending and topical articles, and more. Use the menu to add and remove Explore sections in 'Customize the feed'. New

Wikipedia's app is a treasure trove of free downloads, including photos and articles that you can organise into collections

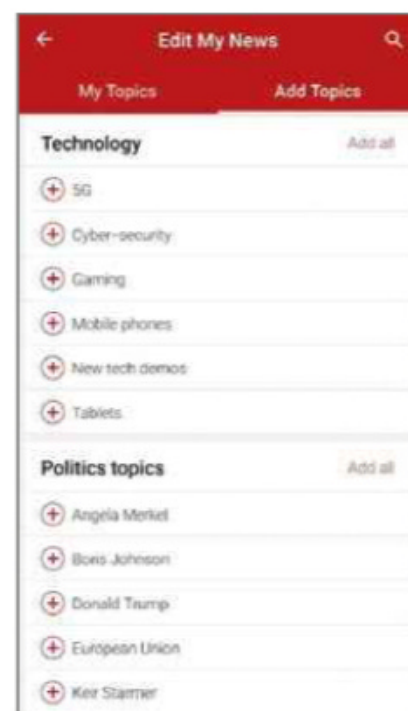


Get customised BBC news flashes

The BBC News app (bit.ly/bbcnews505) is a much more personal offering than the website. The app is centred

Choose BBC News topics to get more of the news you want, and none (well, less) of the news you don't

around a My News tab, which you can fill exclusively with the categories that interest you, and sort into priority order. So, if you want to read national and international news about dogs, first thing every day, and never hear anything about Brexit again, this is the app for you. Numerous notifications are on offer, with Breaking News being the most useful one to keep you informed when you're out and about.



Scan photos and documents with MyHeritage

Your mobile device's gallery, camera and easy access to family members on Facebook and other apps makes it the ideal place to build your family tree, which the MyHeritage app (bit.ly/heritage505) takes full advantage of. You can create a tree of up to 250 people for free (you do have to create an account, though) and you can then hit the ground running with the in-app scanner that captures family photos, documents and mementoes, then adds them straight to your tree.

Photo upload takes a minute or two (we thought it wasn't working, but it's just a bit slow), then sends a notification when they're ready. The built-in Photo Enhancer is specially designed to make very old photos and scans look clearer, and you can sort them into albums for sharing via other apps.



Scan family photos and mementoes directly to your family tree

PROTECT YOUR PRIVACY WITH A BROWSER APP

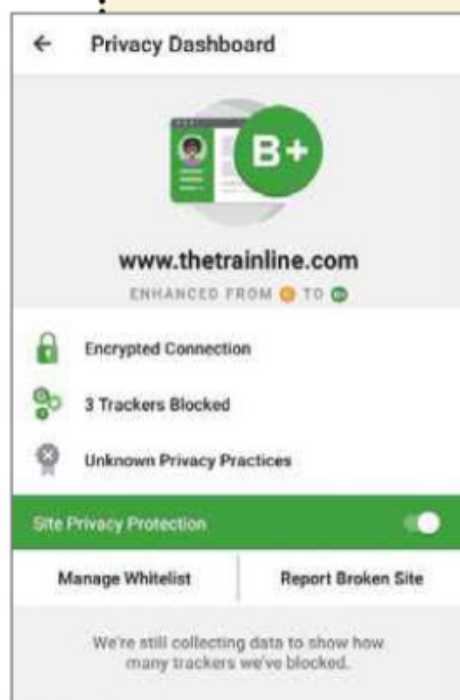
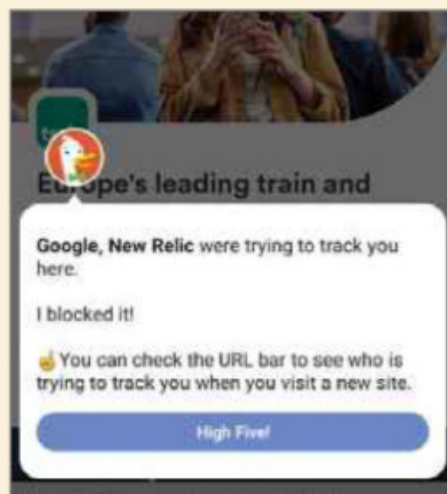
Apps do have a downside: privacy. By default, your device makes it easy for companies to track your location, preferences, habits and even contacts, as you'll know if you've bothered to check some apps' eye-opening permissions. No wonder companies love to throw money at apps rather than websites. So if you're privacy-conscious, it's sometimes worth using a website in a privacy-focused mobile browser instead of an app.

DuckDuckGo Privacy Browser (duckduckgo.com/app) automatically improves any site's

privacy rating by forcing encryption and blocking trackers. It then reveals the damage (including which trackers it blocked – Google is a regular offender) on a Privacy Dashboard.

Private browser Tor (Android, bit.ly/torapp505) offers complete privacy by encrypting all data, blocking cookies and trackers, and bouncing data around the world to disguise your location. It can't load pages instantly, but it's much faster to install and use on your mobile device than your computer.

The big browsers do their bit, too. Firefox (bit.ly/firefox505) and Chrome (bit.ly/chrome505) both offer incognito modes in their apps. Firefox's app has excellent mobile-only features such as streaming content to your TV, and Chrome's app automatically runs a web search for any word you long-tap, and lets you download all sorts of content for offline access.





Turn yourself into a work of art in Google Arts & Culture

The Google Arts & Culture website (artsandculture.google.com) is an amazing resource for exploring galleries and museums around the world in your browser, rendering artworks in stunning quality. Incredibly, the app is even better, thanks to some fun additional tools. These include Art Transfer, which lets you take or upload a photo to transform it into a work of art in the style of artists including Van Gogh, Munch, Warhol, Da Vinci and Kahlo; and Art Selfie, which matches your face to a famous portrait.

We also love Art Projector, which shows you how artworks from the app look in actual size on your floor; and Color Palette, which lets you find masterpieces that match the colours in your photos.

To access these tools, install the free Arts & Culture app for Android (bit.ly/artsdroid505) or iOS (bit.ly/artsios505),

and tap the camera button.

Google Arts & Culture's app offers fun ways to play with your face



EVEN PHOTOSHOP IS BETTER AS A MOBILE APP

When pro photo-software king Adobe starts releasing its best new tools for mobile only, then you know apps are winning the software war.

Photoshop Camera (bit.ly/pscam505) has just launched on iOS and certain Android devices (more coming soon), bringing elaborate filters and live custom lens effects directly into the device's camera. The app is completely free and has no web-based or desktop equivalent. See Best Free Apps on page 34 for details.

Even Adobe's traditional software works better on high-definition tablet screens. The Photoshop Express app (bit.ly/photoshop505) has just added new filters and custom watermarks, while Lightroom (bit.ly/lightroom505) offers professional tools such as a healing brush and perspective adjustments. Both are free, unlike the pricey desktop programs.



Download directions for entire cities in Google Maps

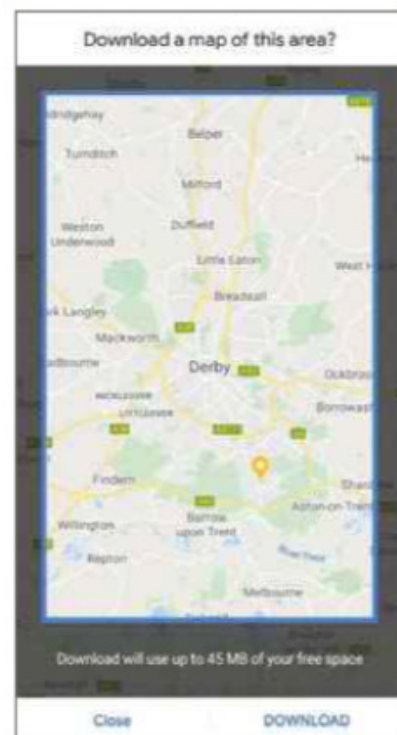
The Google Maps app (Android bit.ly/mapsdroid505, iOS bit.ly/mapsios505) got a big update in spring, with a new "location pin" icon, and Contribute, Updates and Saved tabs that were previously hidden in Settings. However, its best mobile-only feature has been around for yonks: you can download richly detailed maps of an entire area, then search them by voice and get spoken navigation offline.

The Download button is curiously hidden: search for a place or postcode, then tap the place name under the map (above Directions), then tap Download and adjust the area outline if you want. To manage downloads and configure storage settings, tap your profile photo, then 'Offline maps'.

The app also lets you set up voice

navigation (you can set it to carry on during phone calls, if you want); receive ETA notifications while you're driving; display Live View when you tilt your phone while out walking; and even keep north at the top of maps as you pan around, so it effectively works as a compass. ■

Select an area in the Google Maps app, then save every element, including voice navigation



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Fix ALL your Wi-Fi problems

Although home Wi-Fi works perfectly most of the time, there are numerous ways it can go wrong. **Wayne Williams** provides simple solutions to the most common Wi-Fi woes

❗ Connected to Wi-Fi but no internet

One of the most frustrating wireless woes you can encounter is when you connect your PC or laptop to your Wi-Fi network, but find you can't get online. There are a few things you can try – the first is to reboot your computer and router and see if that solves the problem. If it doesn't, or you don't want to reboot just yet, another option is to run Windows' Network Troubleshooting tool, which can diagnose and fix various connection problems. Go to Settings, Update & Security, Troubleshoot, Internet Connections and follow the instructions. Running the tool as an administrator can help troubleshoot otherwise hidden issues.

If that doesn't fix the problem, type `cmd` into the Windows search box and press Enter to launch the Command Prompt window. Type the following commands, pressing Enter after each one:

```
netsh winsock reset
ipconfig /release
netsh int ip reset
ipconfig /renew
ipconfig /flushdns
```



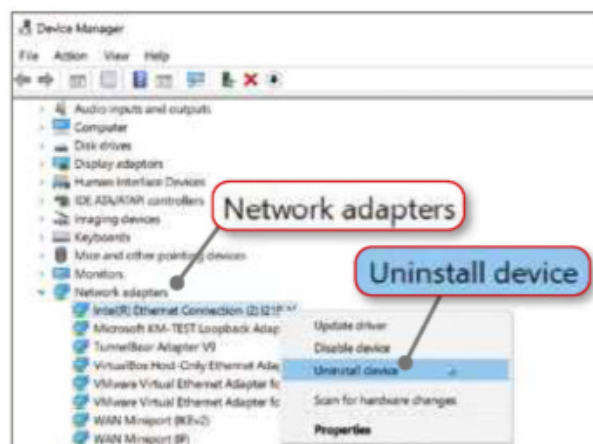
Windows' Network Troubleshooting tool can help you fix connectivity problems

❗ Windows can't connect to your network

If Windows reports that it can't connect to your wireless network, the solution is to uninstall the network adapter driver and let Windows reinstall it. This isn't as risky as it sounds and is relatively easy to do.

Right-click (not left-click) the Start menu or press Win+X on your keyboard, then select Device Manager. When the Device Manager window opens, expand the Network Adapters section by clicking the little down arrow and find your adapter. There may be several listed, especially if you use a VPN or have virtualisation software such as VirtualBox installed. Right-click the correct adapter and select 'Uninstall device'. Confirm that you want to do this if prompted.

Once the driver has been uninstalled, restart your PC. When Windows loads, it will automatically reinstall the driver and that should solve the problem. If you have to keep doing this, it's worth seeing if there's a different driver on the manufacturer's support site that you can install, or consider buying a new adapter.



Uninstalling and reinstalling your network adapter driver can get you back online

❗ No wireless networks shown

An apparent absence of networks to connect to may seem like a serious problem, but it's usually easy to solve. Make sure you're in range of your network and click the Network icon on the right of your taskbar. If the Wi-Fi quick action in the bottom-left of the Network window is off, click it to turn Wi-Fi back on. Alternatively, if you see your device is in Flight mode, select this option to turn it off. Another approach is to simply restart your router and/or Windows.

In most cases, these steps should be enough to get the missing network to appear. If not, try updating or removing and reinstalling your network adapter as explained previously. If you desperately need to get online, you can try turning on your phone's hotspot (usually under Network & Internet settings in Android or iOS) and connect to that.

If none of this works, try changing your wireless adapter's region. Open Device Manager (see previous tip, left) and expand the Network Adapters section, then

Check that your Wi-Fi is switched on if no networks appear to be available





Fix your Wi-Fi problems

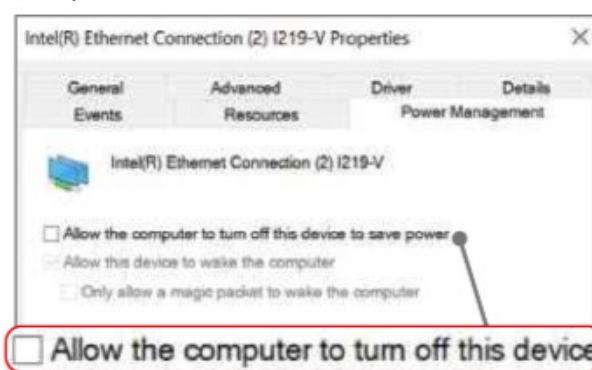
Switching to a less busy option through your router settings could make a big difference to your speed.

You should also check the signal strength at different times of the day, to see if there are any noticeable changes. If there's no obvious cause, your router may have a problem and need replacing.

Wi-Fi connection keeps dropping

If you're connected to the internet one moment but not the next, the problem could be caused either by your adapter trying to switch to a different network or a problem driver. It could also be a problem with your network adapter's power-management settings.

To fix this, open Device Manager, expand the Network Adapters section, right-click your network adapter, select Properties and go into the Power Management tab. Untick the option to 'Allow the computer to turn off this device to save power'. That might solve the problem.



Adjusting power-management settings can prevent your Wi-Fi from dropping

Your firewall is blocking your connection

A firewall is designed to keep your PC safe from malicious activity by blocking or allowing incoming and outgoing traffic. Windows Security comes with its own firewall, or you can install one from a third party. The Windows Firewall offers a useful degree of protection, but occasionally it can get



Temporarily disabling the Windows firewall can help you get online if blocked

overzealous and block all web access.

If that happens, you can fix the problem by typing `cmd` into the Windows search box, right-clicking the Command Prompt entry and selecting 'Run as administrator'. At the command prompt, type:

```
netsh advfirewall set allprofiles state off
```

Press Enter. This will disable the firewall and you will hopefully be able to get online once more.

When you want to enable the firewall again, repeat the process but type:

```
netsh advfirewall set allprofiles state on.
```

Your antivirus is blocking your Wi-Fi

Antivirus software is designed to keep you safe, but sometimes – as with the firewall – it can inadvertently kill your internet access. If you're not sure which antivirus software you have running, or you have more than one installed, Windows 10 can reveal the details.

Type `Windows Defender Security Centre` into the Windows search bar and press Enter. Click the 'Virus & threat protection' entry on the left. This displays all the currently active security software on your PC and lets you open each program so you can disable it and try to get back online.



Security software can sometimes stop you connecting to your Wi-Fi network

Wi-Fi stopped working after an update

Microsoft rolls out major feature updates for Windows 10 twice a year, along with numerous other smaller updates designed to fix bugs and boost

right-click your network adapter and select Properties. Click the Advanced tab, select 'Country and Region' and set your location. If you don't see 'Country and Region' in the list, this option may not be available for your adapter.

Wi-Fi is slower than it should be

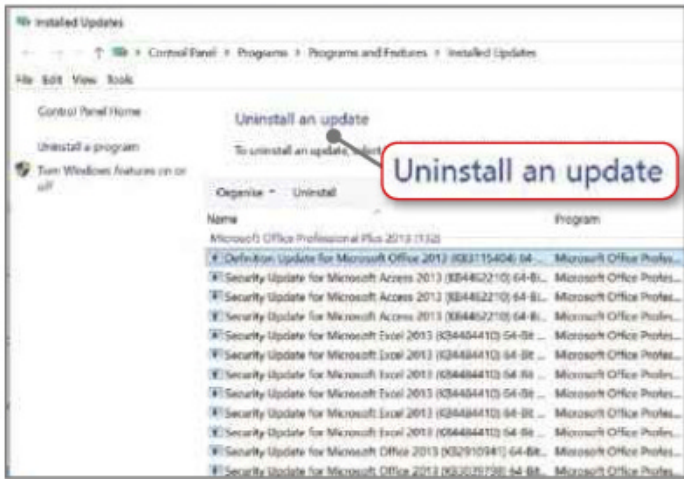
If your wireless connection seems slow, and speed tests bear this out, try connecting a desktop PC or laptop to your router using an Ethernet cable, then compare the speeds to identify whether the problem is with your router or your ISP.

If there's a big difference in the speed results, install the excellent free tool WinFi Lite (www.helge-keck.com) to carry out some troubleshooting. The software's Channel Utilisation column shows you which channels in your vicinity are the most congested (as well as other interesting information about your neighbours' Wi-Fi, such as their network names and connection speeds).



Discover which channels your neighbours use for your Wi-Fi, to avoid congestion

Fix your Wi-Fi problems



Uninstall a Windows update if you believe it to be the cause of your Wi-Fi woes

security. Unfortunately, as we explain in our feature on the opposite page, updates can sometimes introduce problems of their own. If you're sure a rogue update is responsible for your woes, try removing it or rolling back to a previous version.

To uninstall the update, open Settings, click 'Update & security', then 'View update history'. This displays all the updates on your PC. Click the 'Uninstall updates' link and, in the new window that opens, select the suspected culprit and click Uninstall.

Google Wifi can't connect

Google Wifi is a mesh system that provides blanket home Wi-Fi using a series of nodes. When you move about with a connected device – such as a phone or laptop – from one room to another, it will seamlessly switch wireless points to ensure you have the best connection at all times. But if one of these nodes stops working, you won't have the speedy internet coverage you'd normally enjoy.

To fix this problem, open the Google Wifi app on your phone and check to make sure all the Wi-Fi points are active.



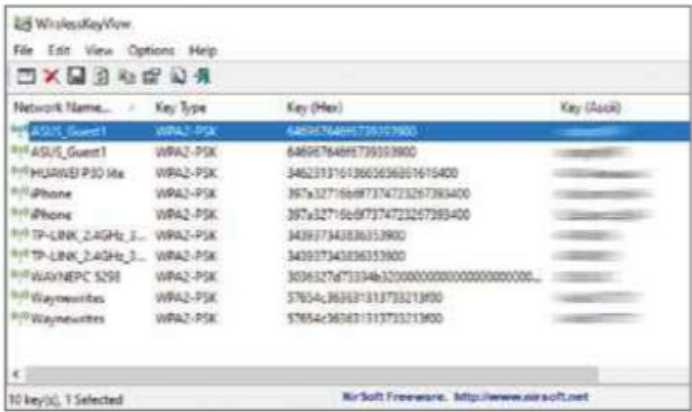
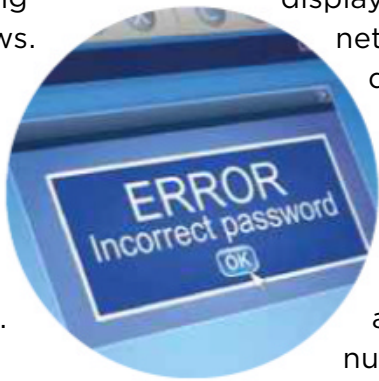
Ensure that all the points in your Google Wifi mesh network are working properly

Tap the Shortcuts button in the top-right corner and run a Network check. This will ensure you're connected to the internet, compare the connection quality between points and test the Wi-Fi. If there's a problem, open Network & General on the Shortcuts screen, tap Wifi Points and select Restart network.

Forgotten Wi-Fi password

New wireless routers come with a default network name (SSID) and password that you use to get connected quickly. For security purposes, you should change this to something unique. If you forget your login details (or have lost the piece of paper you wrote them down on), there are two options available to you. You could simply reset the router by pressing down on the reset button or by poking a paperclip into the reset hole for 30 seconds or so. However, this is quite a drastic step to take and you may be able to recover the missing details directly in Windows. This can be done manually through the Network Internet Settings, but a quicker solution is to use WirelessKeyView from Nirsoft (www.nirsoft.net).

You need to go online to download this in the first place (it's worth keeping it stored on a USB stick), then run it on the target machine



Recover forgotten Wi-Fi passwords using WirelessKeyView from Nirsoft

and it will display all the networks stored on that PC. Details revealed include Network Name, security type, password and adapter name. Right-clicking a password lets you copy it in ASCII (text) format. While you're using WirelessKeyView, you can delete any networks that are no longer relevant.

Your password is incorrect

If you think you have the correct password, but Windows disagrees and displays an error message saying 'The network security key isn't correct', do as suggested and try entering it again, making sure you haven't accidentally pressed the Caps Lock button. Wireless passwords are case-sensitive and often use a mix of upper- and lower-case letters and numbers, so make sure you type it correctly and haven't muddled up any Os and 0s (zeros) or lowercase 'L's, capital 'I's or number 1s. ■

IS YOUR ISP THROTTLING YOUR INTERNET?

ISPs can deliberately throttle user traffic (limit your bandwidth and speed) for a variety of reasons, such as network congestion, data caps being reached and use of network-taxing activities, such as streaming and BitTorrent downloading. You can check if this is happening by running Ookla Speedtest (www.speedtest.net).

Start by running a standard test, then run another using a VPN and compare the differences. If your VPN is faster, then your ISP is throttling your connection. However, there are some things to be wary of: you need to use a reliable, fast VPN because a free one may limit your speeds more than your ISP; and you must connect to

the nearest available server.

For a second opinion, Cloudflare also offers an excellent, recently updated web-based speed test at speed.cloudflare.com. This measures your download speeds, latency and jitter, and provides a detailed breakdown to help you identify problem areas.



BLOCK AUTOMATIC UPDATES



Automatic updates keep software secure and stable, but can sometimes cause problems, too. **Robert Irvine** explains how to update manually

WINDOWS

Windows updates frequently cause problems – just last month, two buggy updates disabled printing, forcing Microsoft to rush out patches. To avoid potentially troublesome updates, you can ‘pause’ them via the Update & Security section of Windows 10’s Settings app. Select Windows Update and click ‘Pause updates for seven days’, or click ‘Advanced options’ and choose to delay them for up to 35 days.



More drastically, you can disable the Windows Update service altogether, though this can cause

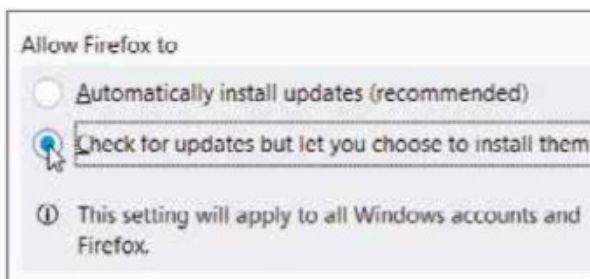
security and stability issues. Press the Windows key+R to open the Run box, type `services.msc` and press Enter, then right-click the Windows Update entry in the Services list and choose Properties. On the General tab, select Disabled from the ‘Startup type’ menu and click OK. Alternatively, choose Manual to install updates yourself.

An even simpler solution is to download Windows Update Blocker (bit.ly/wubl497), which lets you disable or enable automatic updates at the click of a button.

BROWSERS

Web browsers update automatically to add new features and protect against the latest threats, but if you prefer to update manually, you can usually disable auto-updates, even if only temporarily.

With Chrome, you’ll need to turn off Google Update, which you can do through `services.msc` (see previous tip). Right-click both Google Update Service entries, choose Properties and select Disabled or Manual from the ‘Startup type’ menu (choose Automatic to



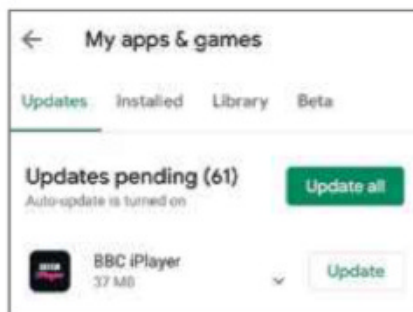
enable updates again).

Firefox doesn’t let you block updates, but you can opt to install them manually. Click the three-line menu button, choose Options, General, then scroll down to Firefox Updates and select ‘Check for updates but let you choose to install them’.

To prevent Edge from updating to the latest Chromium-based version, download Microsoft’s own Blocker Toolkit from bit.ly/blocker505. Extract the files to a folder on your PC, then double-click the one called `EdgeChromium_Blocker.cmd`.

MOBILE APPS

A frequent complaint in both the Android and iOS app stores is that “this app worked fine until it updated”. If you’re not bothered about having the latest version, you can stop your apps updating automatically. On an Android device, open the Play Store app, tap the three-line menu in the top-left



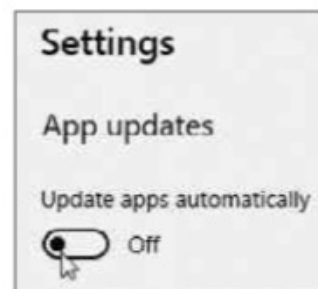
corner and choose Settings. Tap ‘Auto-update apps’ and select ‘Don’t auto-update apps’. To update apps manually, choose ‘My apps & games’ in the Google Play menu, then tap ‘Check for updates’ and either select ‘Update all’ or update apps individually.

On an iPhone or iPad, go to Settings, [your name], iTunes & App Store and

turn off App Updates. To update apps manually, open the App Store, tap Today at the bottom of the screen, then tap your profile icon at the top. Scroll down to see pending updates and either tap Update next to an app or choose Update All.

WINDOWS APPS

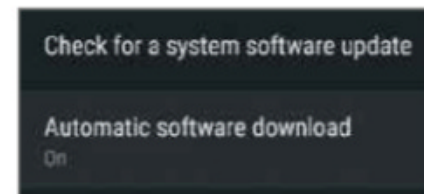
To stop Windows 10 apps updating automatically via the Microsoft Store, click the three-dot menu in the top-right corner of the Store app, choose Settings and switch off ‘Update apps automatically’. To update apps manually, select ‘Downloads and updates’ in the menu and either click ‘Update all’ or select specific apps to update.



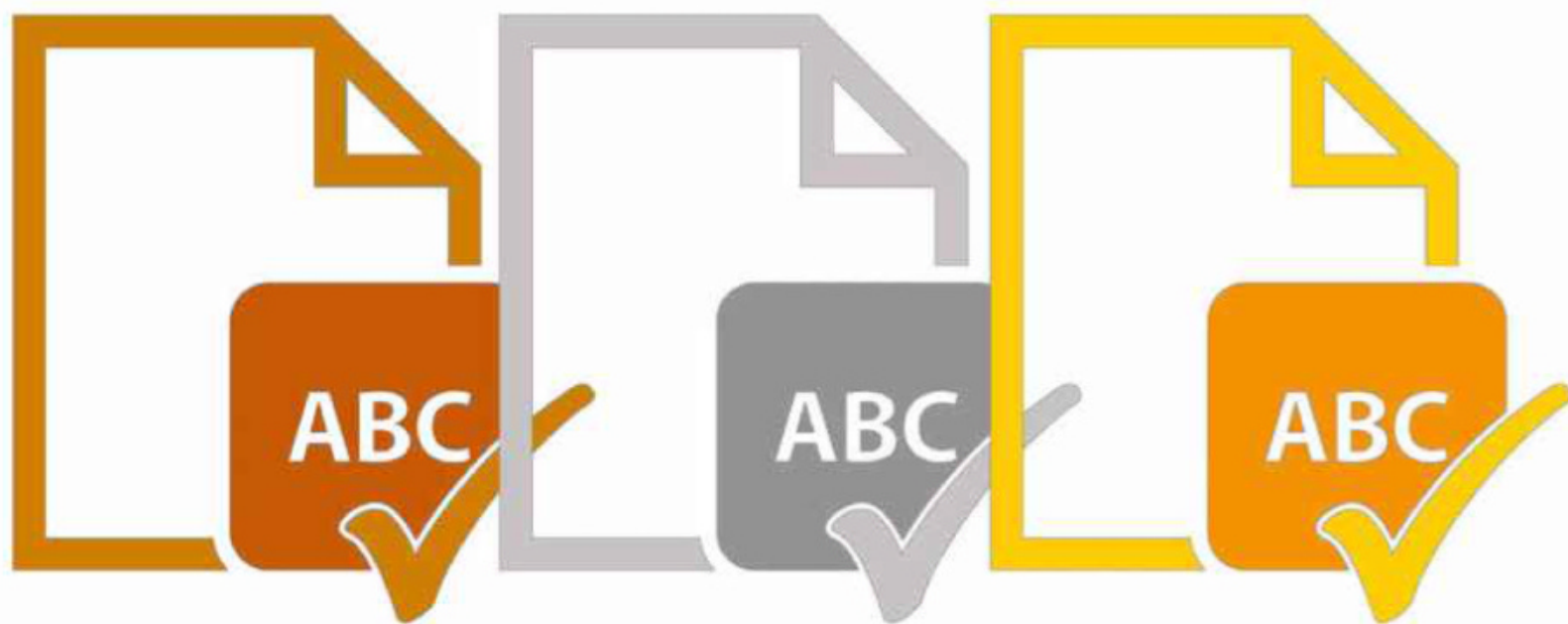
For traditional desktop programs, you’ll need to look in their settings to find the option for disabling auto-updates. In CCleaner Pro, for example, go to Options, Updates and deselect ‘Apply these updates automatically’.

SMART TVS

Automatic updates on smart TVs have been known to cause problems, such as blocking access to BBC iPlayer and trapping the TV in an update loop. Fortunately, it’s simple to disable this option and update your TV’s software manually, though the exact steps will vary depending on your make and model. On a Samsung TV, for example, select Settings in the bottom-left corner of the Home screen, choose Support, Software Update and switch off Auto Update. On a Sony model, go to Settings, ‘System software update’ and turn off ‘Automatic software download’.



Best free spelling & grammar checkers



Andy Shaw tests six grammar-checking tools by using them with a piece of writing that's deliberately riddled with common mistakes

Grammarly | www.grammarly.com | ★★★★★
FEATURES ★★★★★ PERFORMANCE ★★★★★☆ EASE OF USE ★★★★★

**WebUser
GOLD
AWARD**

What we liked:

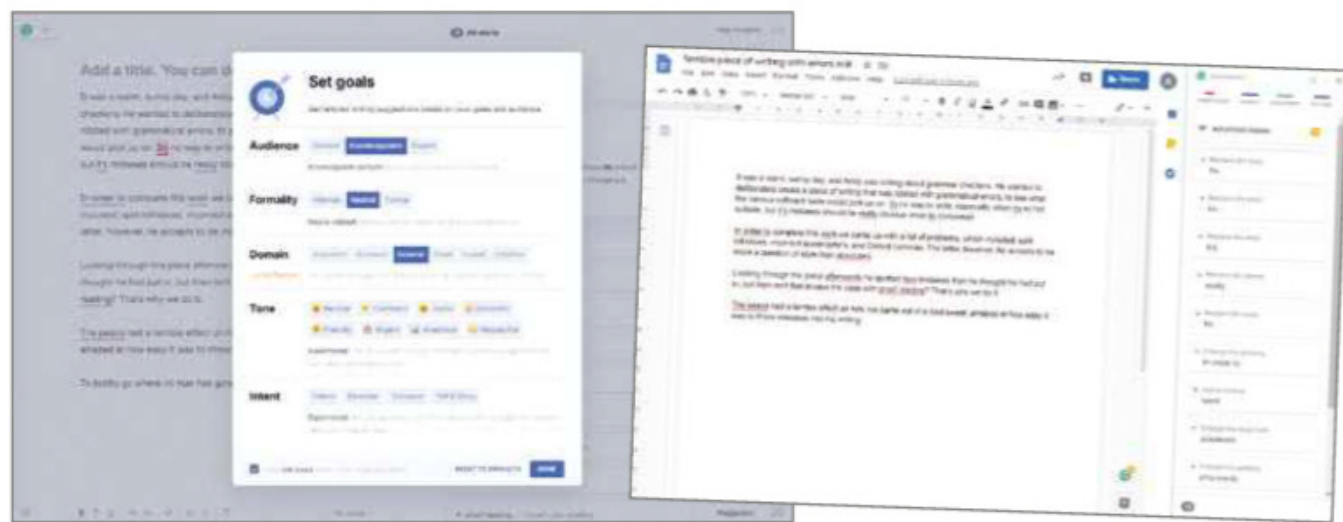
Sign up for Grammarly and it quizzes you on the type of writing you do and how you'd like to come across.

It's a reassuring start, creating the impression of a capable and sophisticated language-analysis tool.

Once you're up and running, you can install the browser extension. This sits in your toolbar and leaps into any box you type into – from forms to Facebook – to provide an instant warning of any potential errors.

For longer pieces of writing, clicking the icon copies the text you've written to a Grammarly window, which is layered over your current work. The software scours the text's spelling and grammar, and underlines any mistakes it finds. Standard grammatical errors are underlined in red but other colours are used for more subtle improvements: blue for 'clarity', green for 'engagement' and purple for 'delivery'.

The checker spotted a good handful of our mistakes, including all the its/it's problems, a homophone (though it didn't know how to replace it and simply suggested removing it) and one of two grocer's apostrophes. It also noticed that we used 'fewer' incorrectly.



This was the most impressive of the free offerings by some margin. However, it ignored the less heinous crimes of split infinitives and Oxford commas.

Integration into Google Docs is still in beta but it seems to be working smoothly, letting you access the tool in a sidebar. Windows Office users get an add-on but it doesn't integrate directly with Microsoft's online tools. There's also a Windows version, so you can effectively run it alongside any writing software you use.

How it can be improved:

The free option is constantly reminding you that switching to Premium (£110 per year) would provide even more feedback, and taunts you by listing the

number and types of mistakes it's hiding from you. Compared to the performance of its rivals, though, we found the free version impressive enough.

OUR VERDICT

Grammarly was the clear winner in this test, spotting the most mistakes in our deliberately terrible piece of writing. It wasn't perfect, which shows that you should never rely too heavily on this type of software because nothing replaces reading through your work a few times – or getting someone else to. But for spotting common writing errors, Grammarly can't be beaten.

Microsoft Editor | bit.ly/msedit505 | ★★★★★

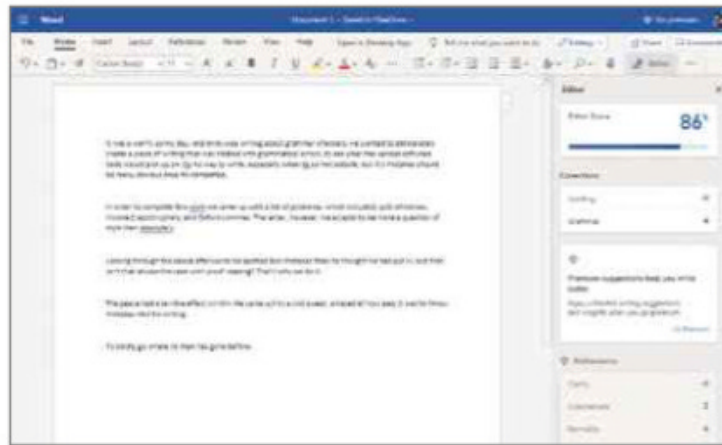
FEATURES ★★★★★ PERFORMANCE ★★★★★ EASE OF USE ★★★★★

**WebUser
SILVER
AWARD****What we liked:**

Microsoft Editor is a relative newcomer, despite the company supplying PCs with office programs for decades. The tool is integrated into Microsoft's online Office software, and is available as a browser extension to operate on all other websites you type on.

It's relatively low key, so its results don't appear in Word Online unless you summon them from the large button that now dominates the toolbar, but at least it doesn't bug you if you don't want it to. In other windows, it won't appear unless you make a mistake, so you don't get the annoying animated icons most of the other tools place in your typing view.

When making corrections, it gives you a percentage score for how good your writing is. This is of questionable value but, if you like the idea of being graded by a computer every time you touch the keyboard, the option is available.

**How it can be improved:**

Microsoft Editor spotted a handful of our mistakes, but not enough. It only saw half of our its/it's errors and one of the grocer's apostrophes, leaving plenty of problems in our test passage untouched.

OUR VERDICT

Microsoft's spelling and grammar tools have never been fine-tuned enough to rely on entirely, and this latest incarnation is similarly modest. However, it's not as in-your-face as some rivals and it integrates nicely with Microsoft's other tools.

LanguageTool | languagetool.org | ★★★★★

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

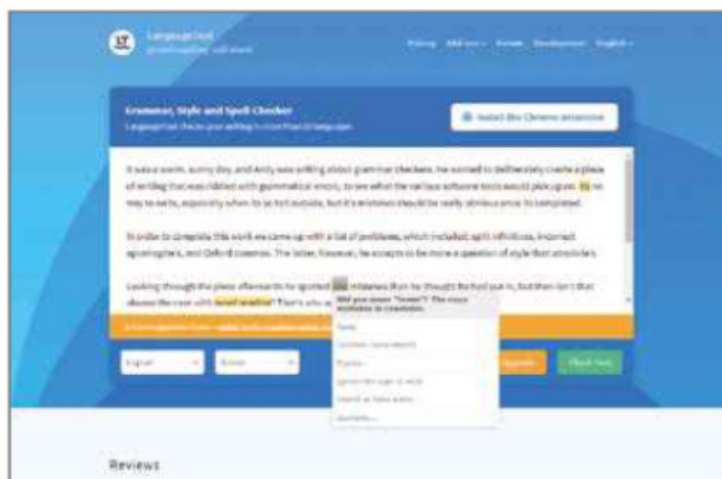
**WebUser
BRONZE
AWARD****What we liked:**

When LanguageTool spots a mistake, you simply click the highlighted error for a polite "Did you mean...?", which not only makes it feel less like it's just guessing but also provides you with an alternative that might fit better.

You can use the tool by visiting the LanguageTool website and pasting in your text, but there's also a Chrome extension that neatly integrates the service into any website you can type in, including Google Docs. Although it doesn't work with Word Online, it handily takes you straight to its Office add-on, which works fine.

What we didn't like:

All this would be great if LanguageTool was better at spotting errors. While it managed to spot the fewer/less anomaly in our test piece, it only picked up one of the its/it's errors and missed



several other slips. Tantalisingly, it suggested that it would show us a few more if we upgraded to premium (£4.92 per month), but it failed to recognise anything like enough errors to make this upgrade worthwhile.

OUR VERDICT

LanguageTool is simple to use, particularly if you just want to dip in occasionally to check your writing. However, its inability to spot errors is disappointing.

BEST OF THE REST**Slick Write**www.slickwrite.com

Clicking Slick Write's toolbar button in Chrome transfers any text you're working on to www.slickwrite.com, where it's pasted into the site and analysed. We were impressed that it spotted our split infinitives, but it only managed this by flagging every adverb in the piece. It also failed to spot our its/it's errors, or any of the other things we'd deliberately dropped in, though it did flag one or two other slips. However, it's disappointing that it appeared to highlight so much yet accurately point out so little.

**Linguix**linguix.com

Linguix has a Chrome extension that checks everything you type in your browser, and also adds extra checking to Google Docs (but not Word Online). If you don't want to burden your browser with an extra add-on, you can copy any text over to Linguix's interface to have it checked within its own editor. However, it failed to spot many of our problems, identifying only one of four its/it's, a typo and the fewer/less mistake.

**NounPlus Grammar Checker**www.nounplus.net/grammarcheck

Should you trust a grammar checker if its own website declares that it's "one of the most comprehensive and extensively detailed tool you will find and that too for free"? Pasting this sentence into its own checker flagged up the singular 'tool' problem but ignored the mess at the end. Best avoided.





Practical WebUser

16 pages of workshops, tips, projects and problem solving

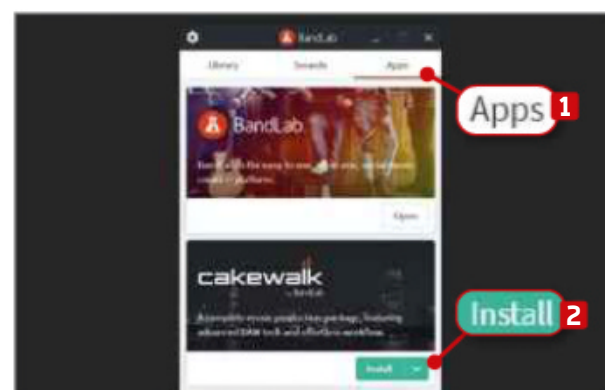
Create music with Cakewalk

Cakewalk is an advanced free digital audio workstation for recording, editing and producing audio projects. Here's how to get started

Cakewalk: bit.ly/cakew505 | ⌚ 20 mins | 🖥️ 7, 8, 10 (64-bit only)

Cakewalk has been around for decades in various forms. The software debuted in 1987 for DOS and became available for Windows 3.0 in 1991. It was killed off by then-owners Gibson in 2017, but brought back a few months later by new owners BandLab Technologies. The current incarnation - Cakewalk by BandLab - is an entirely

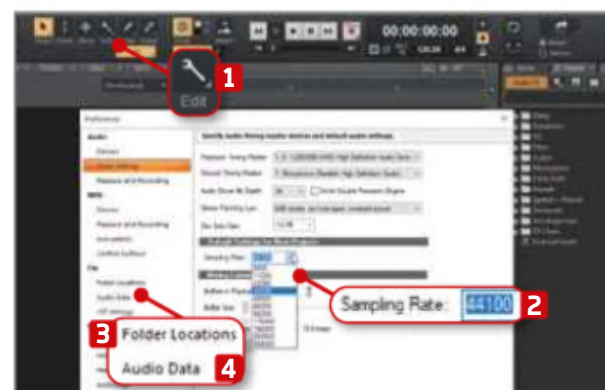
free version of Cakewalk's previously paid-for SONAR Platinum DAW (which used to cost £399) and lets you build your own songs from scratch. While it's designed for making music, you can also use it to create professional-sounding podcasts and other audio projects. There's a lot to master in Cakewalk, but our guide explains the basics.



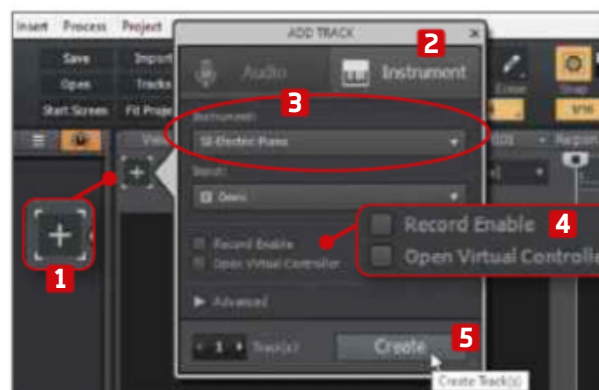
1 Create a free account, then set up a profile, adding a photo and changing your username to something more memorable. Once that's done, log into the software. The next step is to download the program. Click the Apps tab at the top, **1** then click Install under the Cakewalk entry. **2**



2 Select the add-ons you want from the Studio Instruments Suite (recommended), Drum Replacer, Theme Editor and Melodyne, then click Install. Afterwards, click Open and set up your input **1** and output **2** devices. Set Basic as your workspace on the next screen and click Done. The start screen loads.



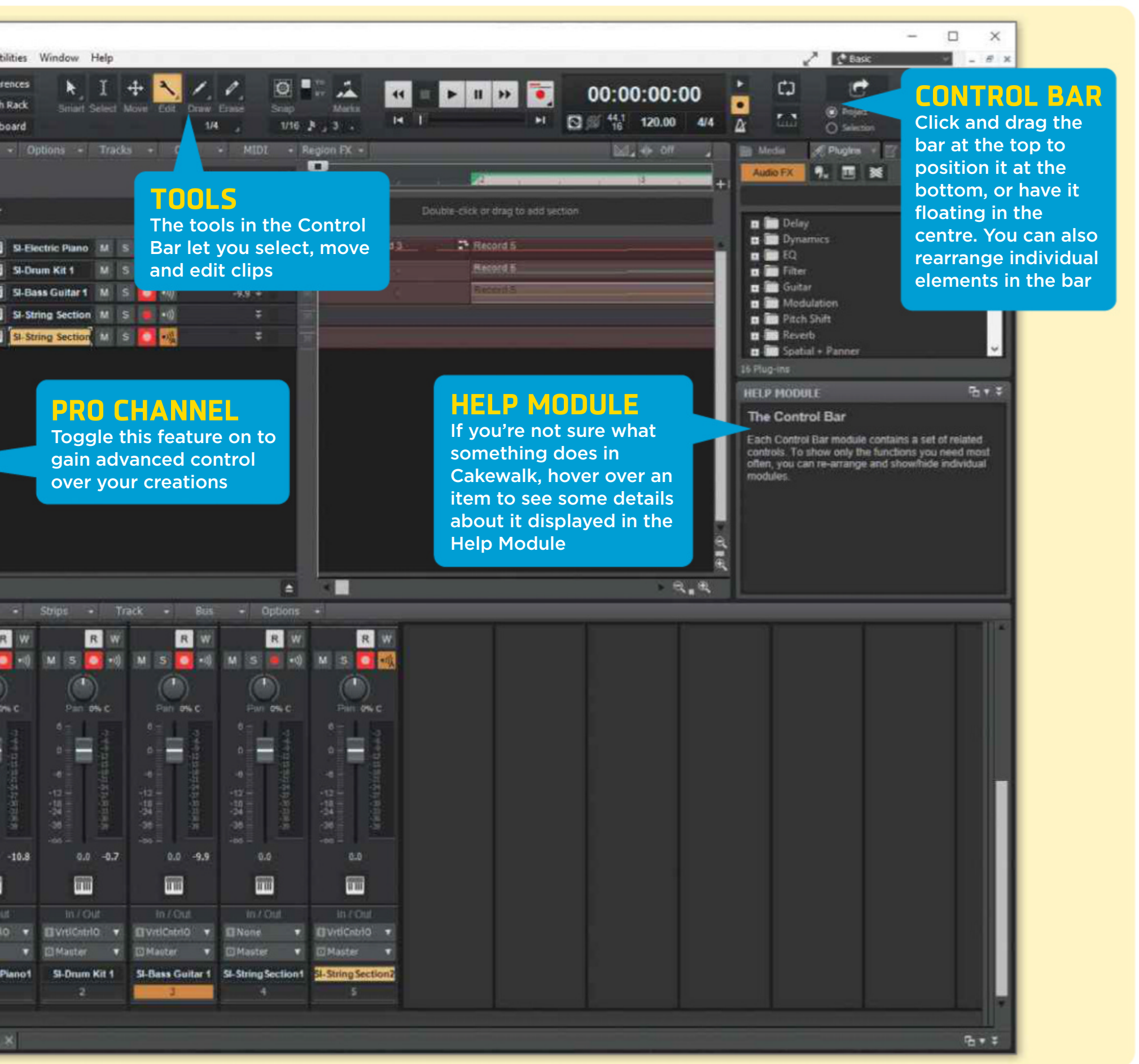
3 Click the Empty Project.cwt tile, then go to Edit **1** and choose Preferences to configure the software. Click Driver Settings. If you're making music, set the sample rate to 44100Hz (the default) or 48000Hz. **2** Change where to save to under Folder Locations **3** and adjust the recording quality under Audio Data. **4**



4 Click the Add Track button **1** at the top of the workspace menu. You can record something live from your mic or line-in but, if you are making music from scratch on your PC, click Instrument **2** and select one from the drop-down menu. **3** Tick Record Enable and Open Virtual Controller, **4** then click Create. **5**



5 The instrument you chose opens, **1** along with the virtual controller for it. **2** You can use this controller to play notes with your PC keyboard. Click the Record button **3** or press R to start recording, then play the instrument. When you've finished, click Stop **4** or press the spacebar.



6 Press the Play button **1** or press the spacebar again to hear your recording. You can now play and record another instrument to add to your song. Click the plus sign again, then choose a different instrument and repeat the process. The new recorded track appears below the first one. **2**



7 Add as many tracks playing different musical instruments as you want, then click the Console button. **1** Controls for each of the instruments appear and you can use these to adjust the volume **2** of each item. You can also pan (left and right distribution) **3** and mute or solo (play in isolation) a track. **4**

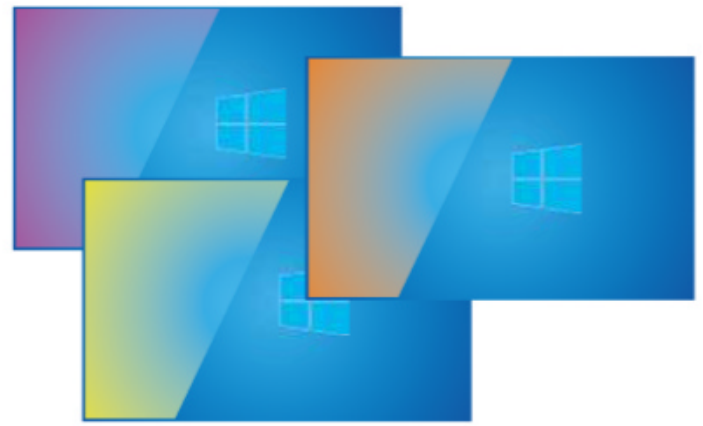


8 When you've created your musical composition, click Save **1** to save the project for further editing in the future or click the Export button at the far right **2** and choose the audio file format you want. **3** You can also export it to MIDI or OMF (Open Media Framework) formats. **4**



Hack and improve your Windows 10 desktop

UltWin: www.ultwin.com | ⌚ 20 mins | 🏠 7, 8, 10



EXPERT TIP

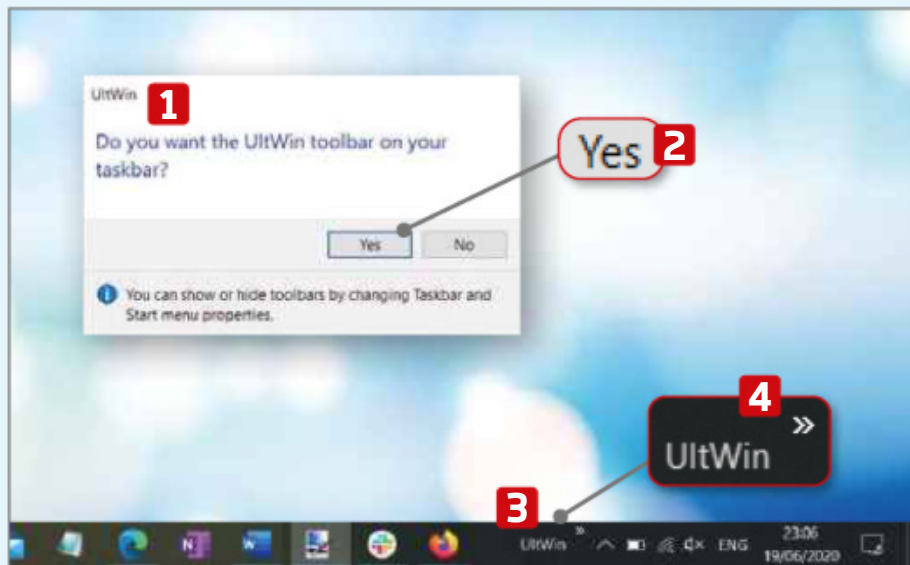
Steve Clark says

By unlocking the taskbar, you can resize it and place the UltWin thumbnail entirely within the bounds of the taskbar, rather than hovering above it. If you have any problems installing the program, such as no 'associated app' available to run the installer, go direct to www.ultwin.com/dls/UltWinSetup.exe to start the download automatically. Alternatively, get a copy from the excellent Major Geeks website at bit.ly/ultwin505.

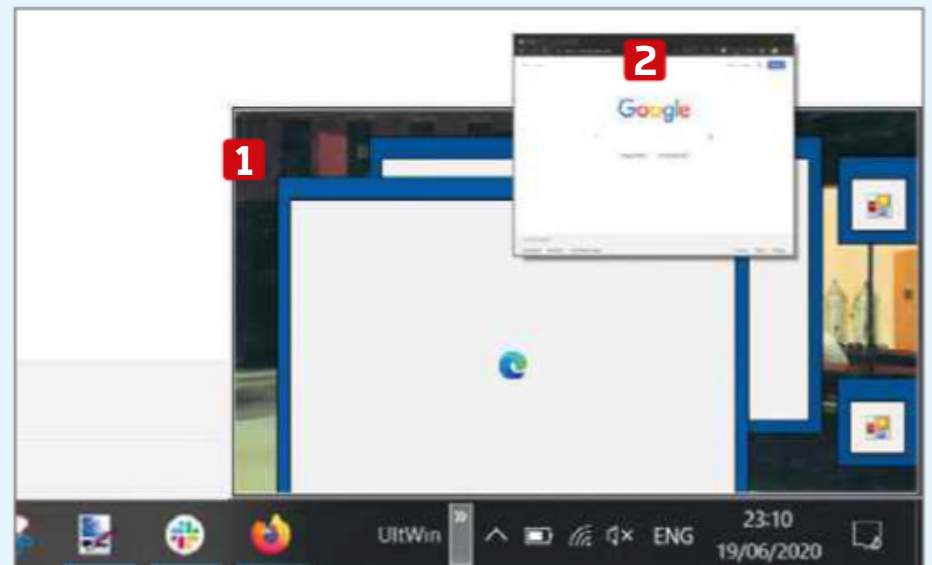


If your Windows desktop is frequently a cluttered patchwork of overlapping windows, UltWin can transform it into an efficient workspace. It lets you quickly switch from one window to another without having to master the clunky keyboard shortcuts that Windows uses to cycle through open windows. Activate the program by clicking a double-arrow to display a miniature Desk View thumbnail to move, resize and focus on any window, whatever you're doing on the main screen. You can also create virtual views for up to two extra monitors.

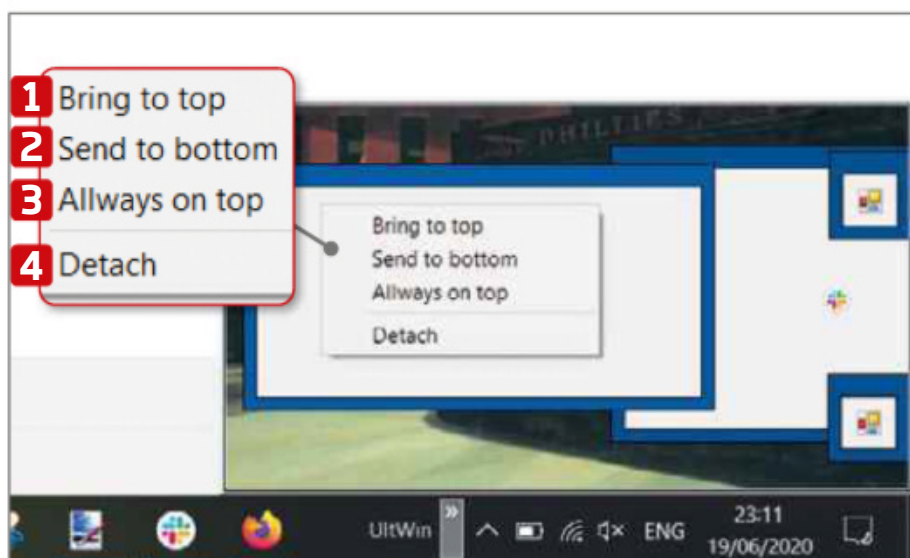
As an added desktop-hacking bonus, we look at WindowTop, which adds useful tools to windows, including a transparency tool that lets you click links in windows that are hidden behind other windows.



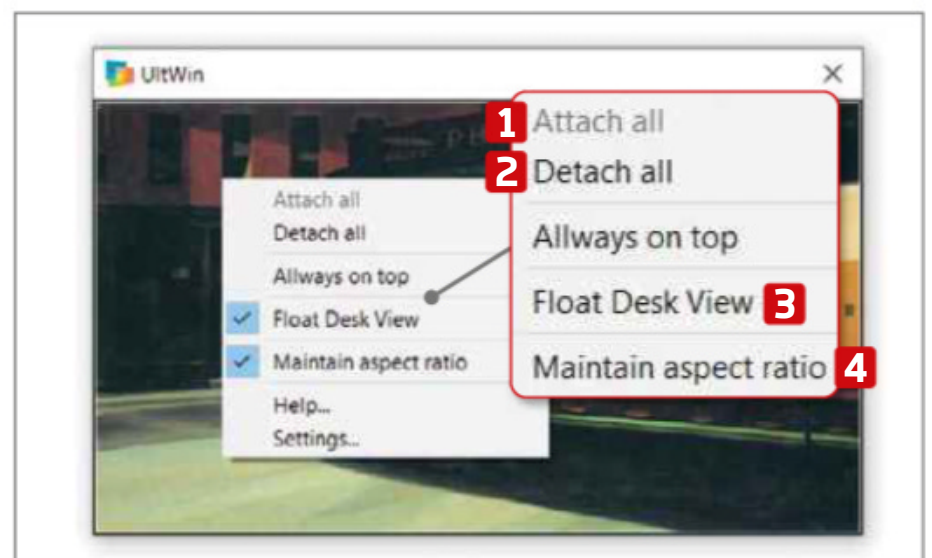
1 When you first run UltWin, you're asked, 'Do you want the UltWin toolbar on your taskbar?' **1** Click Yes **2** or you won't be able to use the tool as intended. UltWin resides on the right-hand side of the taskbar. **3** Click the double-arrow **4** to display the current desktop and any window not currently minimised or maximised.



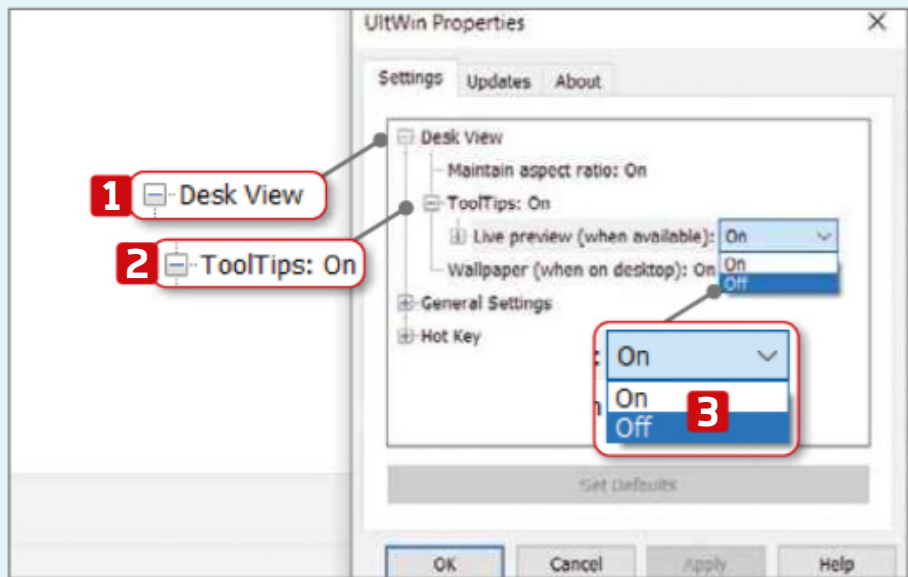
2 Any windows displayed in the UltWin thumbnail **1** can be dragged, dropped and resized, with changes you make replicated on the desktop. Hovering over the centre of a window displays a 'live preview', **2** while double-clicking brings the window to the front on your desktop. You can adjust the size of UltWin's thumbnail by dragging its edges.



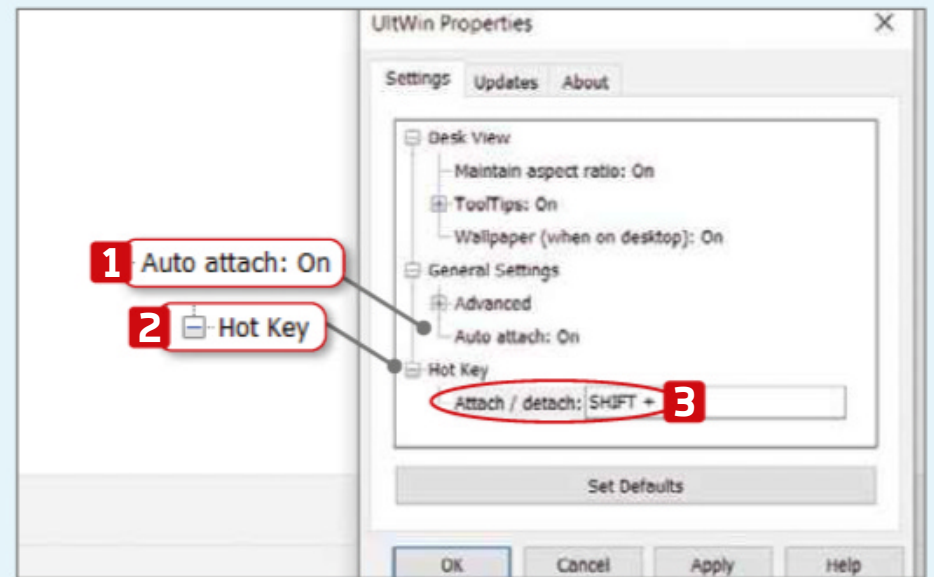
3 Right-clicking a window brings up four options: 'Bring to top' **1** brings the window to the forefront, 'Send to bottom' **2** moves it behind any other open windows and 'Always on top' **3** keeps it in full view at all times. 'Detach' **4** removes the window from the desktop preview but it remains open on your actual desktop.



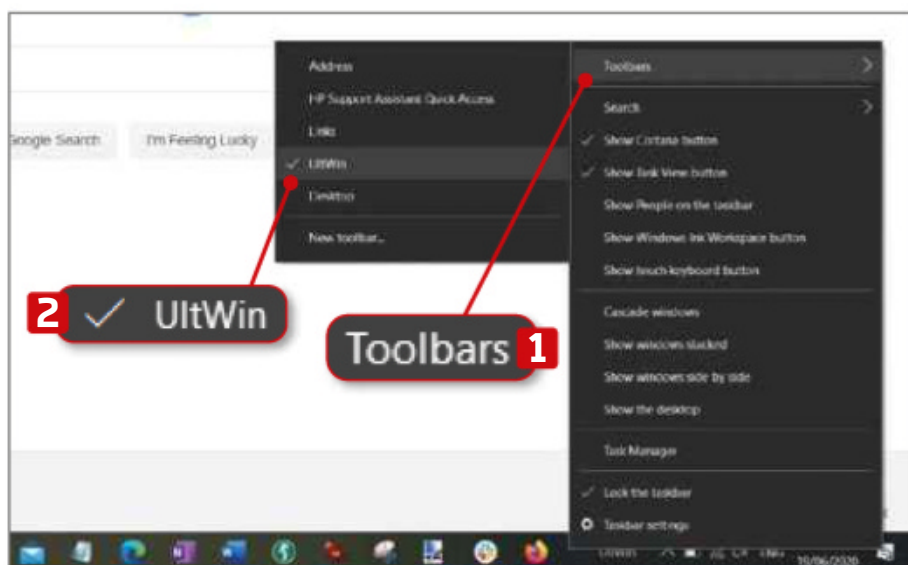
4 Right-click the UltWin desktop background for a different context menu. To ensure all windows are displayed in the thumbnail, choose 'Attach all'; **1** or remove them all with 'Detach all'. **2** Float Desk View **3** lets you move the UltWin pane around the screen instead of anchoring it to the taskbar. You should keep 'Maintain aspect ratio' **4** switched on.



5 From the right-click context menu, click Settings. Expand Desk View, **1** followed by ToolTips. **2** You can switch off the live previews by choosing the option from the drop-down menu. **3** Below this is an option to remove your desktop wallpaper from the UltWin thumbnail, although this didn't work well for us.



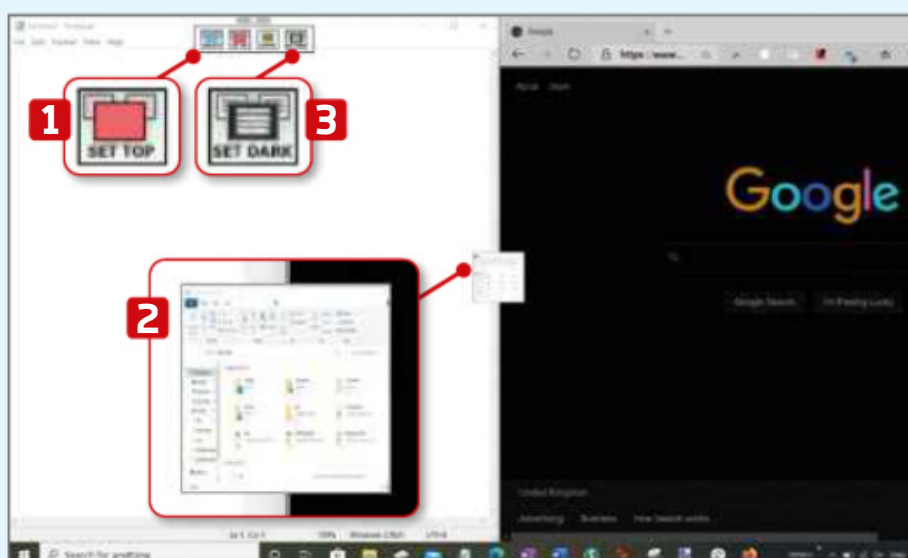
6 More useful for managing windows is 'Auto attach', **1** located under General Settings. Click this to prevent or allow all windows to appear in the thumbnail. Hot Key **2** lets you create a keyboard shortcut for attaching and detaching windows. To set this, press and hold either Ctrl or Shift, followed by a number or letter. **3**



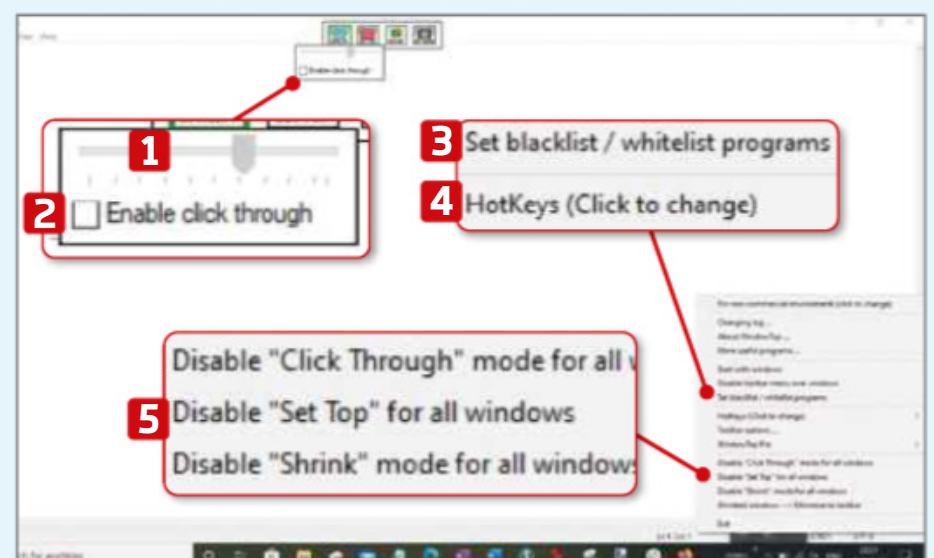
7 If you've finished using UltWin or want more space on the Taskbar, hide it by right-clicking the taskbar and hovering over Toolbars. **1** Click UltWin in the list **2** to clear the tick and it will disappear from your taskbar. Bring it back by repeating this step.



8 WindowTop (windowtop.info), available in standard and portable versions, is another tool that brings more versatility to your desktop. With the program running, hover your cursor to the top of a window or the desktop to reveal an arrow. **1** This reveals four options: **2** Opacity, Set Top, Shrink and Set Dark.



9 Clicking Set Top **1** ensures your current window remains at the front and centre of your screen. Shrink reduces the current window down to a thumbnail. **2** You have to click the tiny window to restore it. Set Dark **3** puts every app and program into dark mode – one click and colours are inverted.



10 Opacity turns windows transparent. Hover over it to display a slider **1** to alter the transparency. Tick 'Enable click through' **2** to click links in background windows. Click the WindowTop icon in the notification area to open the settings, where you can blacklist/whitelist programs, **3** assign keyboard shortcuts **4** and disable functions. **5**



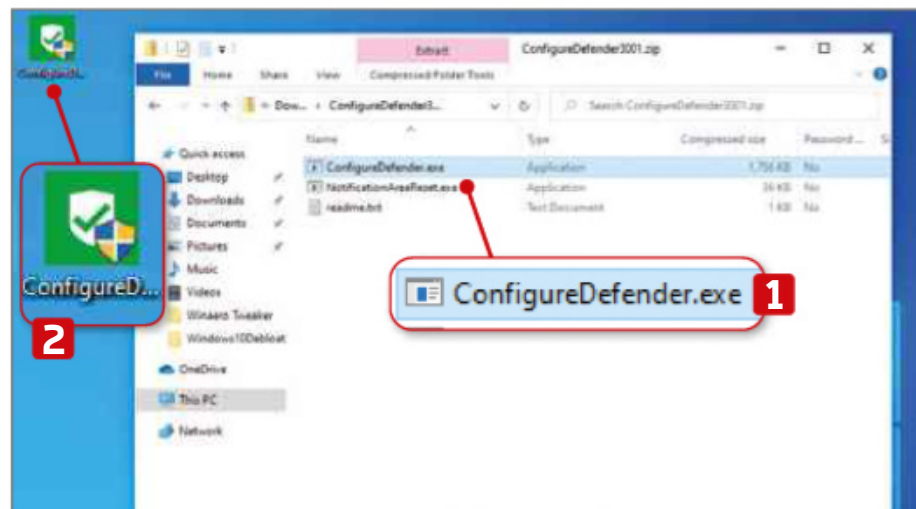
Configure Defender's settings with one tool



Windows Defender does a decent job of keeping Windows safe but it has one serious flaw: its settings are spread all over the place. ConfigureDefender brings access to these settings together in a single interface, so

you don't need to work out whether the options you're looking for are nested among other Windows tools in the Settings app or hidden in the depths of the Registry.

ConfigureDefender: bit.ly/condef505 | ⌚ 10 mins | 🖥️ Windows 10



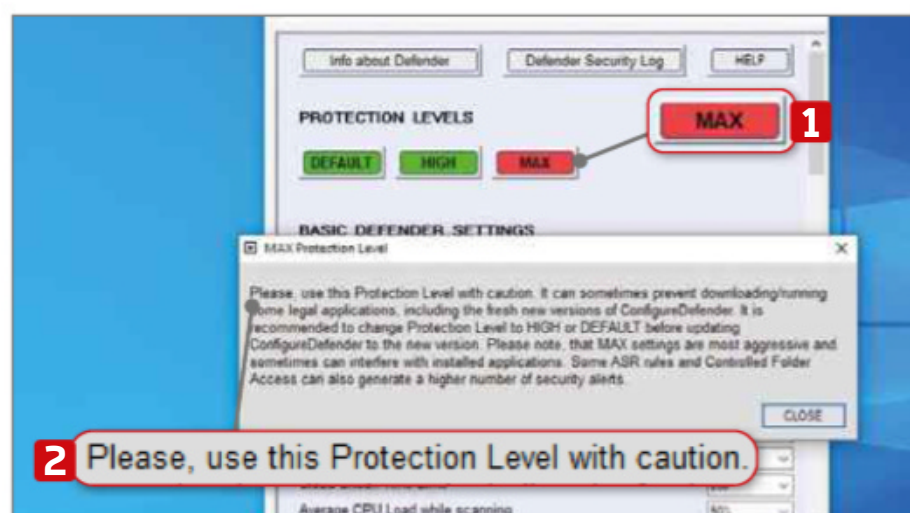
1 The easiest way to get the software is to download it from MajorGeeks at bit.ly/condef505. It's also worth checking if a newer version is available from the developer's GitHub page (bit.ly/cdgh505). **1** Unzip the ConfigureDefender.exe file to your desktop or another convenient location. **2**



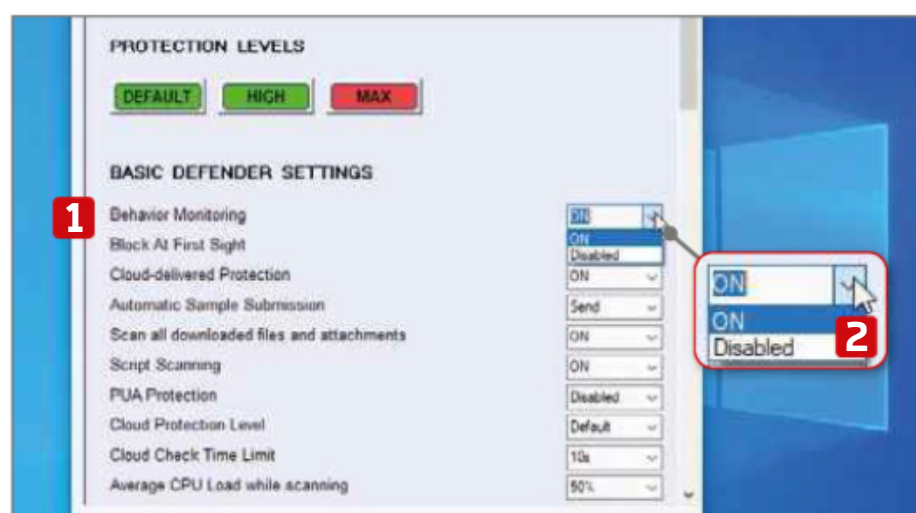
2 Double-click to run the software. There are three basic settings: Default, High and Max. Default **1** is how the system is set when Windows is first installed, so you can always fall back to this if something isn't right. After making any changes, click Refresh **2** and restart your computer.



3 To get extra protection, click High. **1** This is the recommended level if you want enhanced security that operates beyond Microsoft's basics. The setting leaves a few features switched off because they are known to trigger unnecessary false positives.



4 The Max setting **1** sounds tempting but should only be used if you want to lock down your settings. Once it's activated, the only way to make future changes is through ConfigureDefender. It might also interfere with perfectly safe apps and downloads. It comes with its own warning. **2**



5 As you switch between the Default, High and Max presets, the settings listed below **1** change. If you're confident that you know what these settings do, you can configure them manually. Most settings are either ON or Disabled. **2**



6 Some menus include an 'Audit' option **1** that logs what happens when the setting is activated. This lets you check how the setting is working and whether it's clashing with anything. You can check the log by clicking the Defender Security Log button, **2** which opens in Notepad.



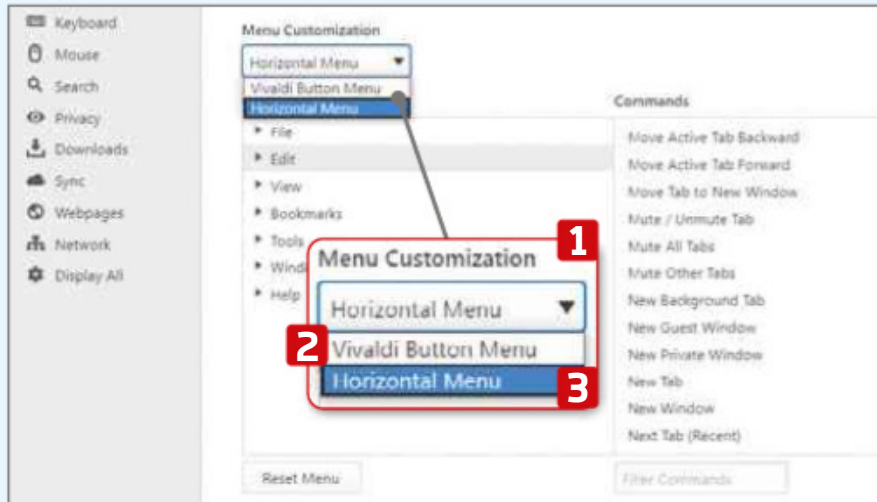
Try Vivaldi's custom menus and note manager

The latest version of Vivaldi (3.1) introduces menu customisation, which lets you add lots of new commands to the Vivaldi button, from Mute All Tabs to Page Zoom. This brilliant tool lets you personalise the

browser to suit your needs, making it vastly more convenient. Vivaldi's Notes Manager has also received an upgrade, which provides the text editor with some useful extra features.

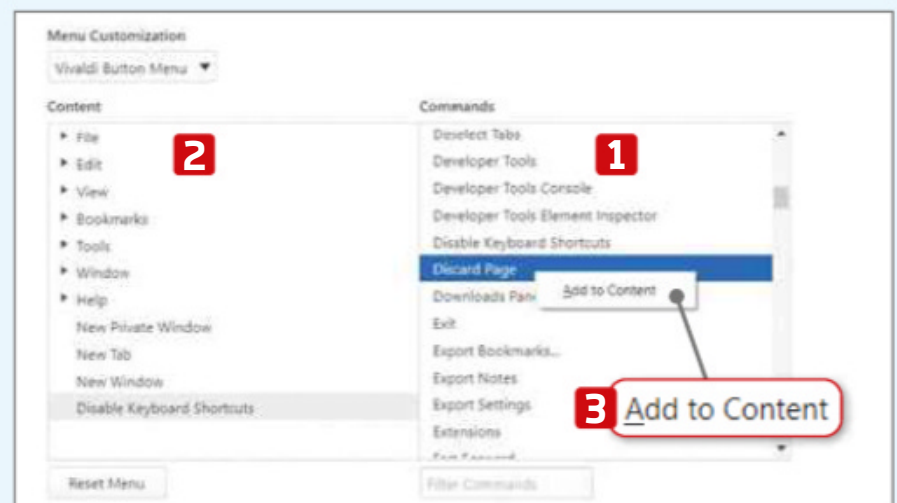
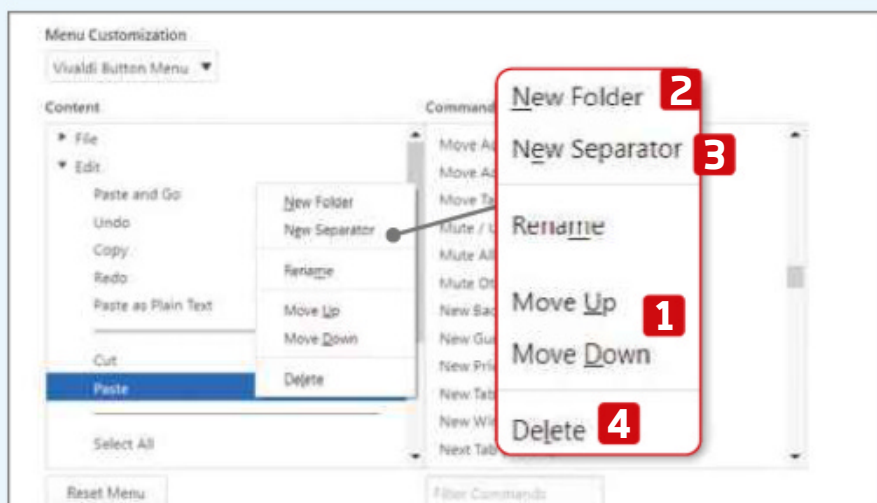


Vivaldi: vivaldi.com | ⌚ 10 mins | 🖥️ 7, 8, 10 🍏 macOS 10.10+ 🐧



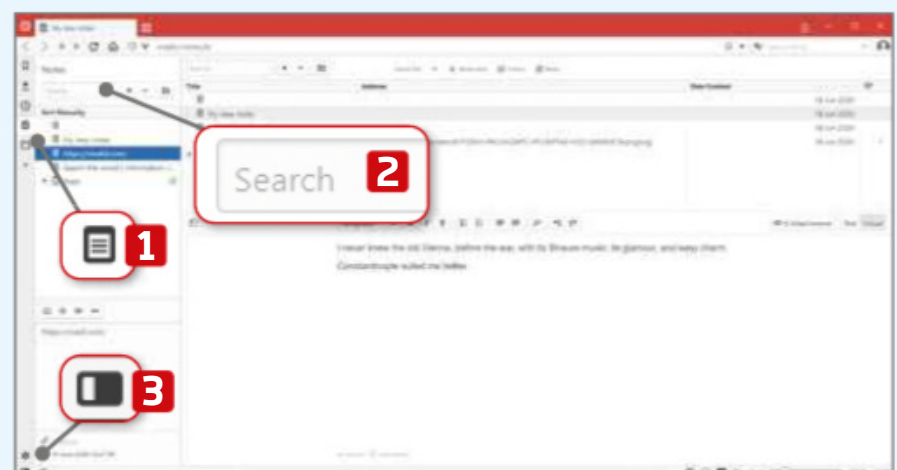
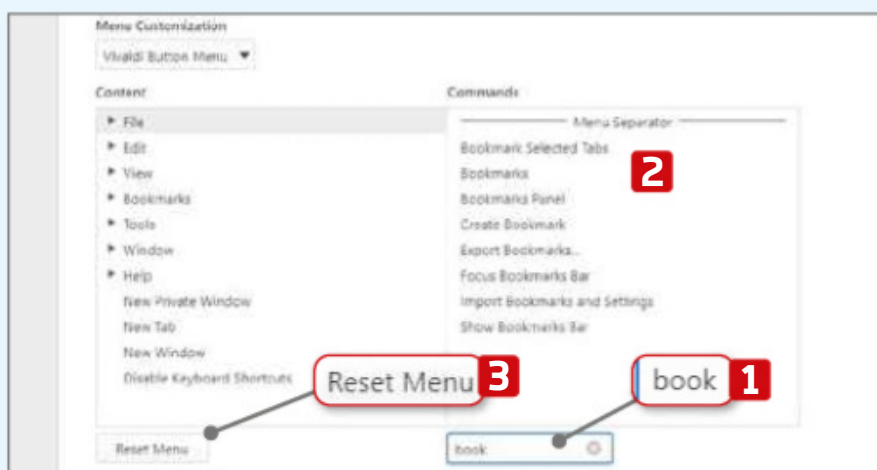
1 Begin by clicking the Vivaldi button, Tools, Settings, then Appearance and scroll down to Menu Customization. **1** Click the drop-down menu to set up custom menus for both the Vivaldi Button **2** and the Horizontal Menu, **3** which spreads options along the top of the browser window.

2 The Content panel **1** displays the main menu options **2** shown when you click the Vivaldi button (or see displayed horizontally across the top of the browser). Click the down arrow **3** to see options within them. **4** The Commands panel **5** shows additional options you can add.



3 To rearrange the Content subcategories, drag and drop them within the panel or right-click an option to perform the action via the context menu. **1** You can also create new folders, **2** add menu separators **3** and delete options. **4** Right-click the main menu name to rename or reset it.

4 To add more menu functions to the Vivaldi button (or across the top of the browser in Horizontal View), drag and drop items from the Command panel **1** to the Content panel, **2** either as a standalone entry or as a submenu item. Alternatively, right-click to 'Add to Content'. **3**



5 The Commands list is very long so Vivaldi has helpfully added a search field for quick navigation. **1** Start typing a menu option, such as bookmark, to filter the results. **2** The Reset Menu button **3** gets rid of your customisations and returns everything to the default.

6 Notes Manager can now be accessed at the top of the Start page and via the sidebar. **1** Keyboard shortcuts are supported, a search box has been added **2** and full-screen view can be toggled on and off. **3** Highlight text on websites and right-click for the option to 'Copy to Note'.

Weekend Project

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



How to...

Automate your home to do everything for you

Wayne Williams explains how to unify your smart devices, to create a smarter smarthome setup that does everything you need



When it's done right, automating your home with smart devices can save you significant time and effort. Instead of getting up to turn the lights on or off, you can just speak your request. Getting a bit chilly or too warm? Adjust the temperature in your home with an app.

There's a wide range of home-automation tools and devices you can buy and install, depending on how futuristic you want your setup to be. To make your smart home truly smart, however, you need to set up routines that automate everything for you, such as turning down the heating when you go out or turning on the lights when it starts to get dark.

In this Weekend Project, we explain how to take your home's automation to a whole new level.

What you need

There are several web-based services you can use to automate tasks, but one of the most powerful is Switchur (switchur.com). This free tool ties together other popular services, so you can combine them to perform more advanced actions by connecting commands.

It works by creating a "Switchboard" to keep track of specific conditions, such as your location, the day of the week, the time of the day, the current temperature indoors, the weather conditions outside

and so on. These elements are used as real-time connections to your own smart devices using IFTTT (ifttt.com), Microsoft Power Automate (flow.microsoft.com) or Zapier (zapier.com). Each of these services has its own strengths, and Switchur lets you benefit from them all.

How Switchur works

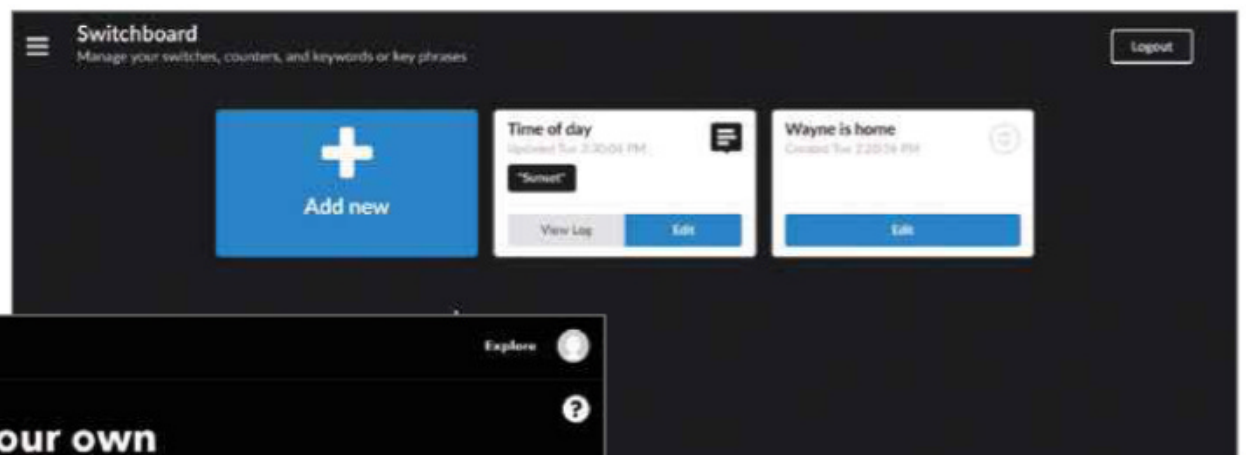
Once you've mastered Switchur, the possibilities are only limited by your imagination and the devices you own. Switchur provides the following

examples, to give you an idea of the kind of actions it can perform:

- Turn on the living room smart lights when it's "dark outside" AND either "you are home" OR "your partner is home".
- Automate your smart coffee machine to brew at different times depending on whether it's "weekend vs weekday" AND "you are home" AND "you have no early appointments".
- Have your Roomba commence the cleaning cycle when "it is a weekday"



Switchur's Switchboard screen displays all the Switches, Counters and Keywords you've created



IFTTT connects triggers to actions by using 'recipes' - if X happens, then do Y

AND "you are not home" AND "your partner is not home".

Switchur's Switchboards are constructed using Switches, Counters and Keywords: a Switch is an on/off state (such as "I'm at home" or "I'm not at home"); a Counter is a number (up to two decimal places); and a Keyword is text (up to 100 characters). For example, you might create a Keyword that determines the time of day ("Sunset") and a Switch that says if you're home or not, then use this to turn the lights on when it gets dark and you or another family member arrive home from work.

Before you can get started with Switchur, you'll need to create a free account by entering your name, email address and a password, or by logging in using either your Google or Facebook credentials.

Switchur Switchboard and Automation creations can get very complicated, but the basics are easy to understand.

Use Switchur with IFTTT

We're also using IFTTT in this Weekend Project, so sign up for a free account at ifttt.com, if you don't yet have one. In our Mini Workshop, below, we show you how to link Switchur and IFTTT together, and use them to switch your lights on when you arrive home at the end of the day. The next step would be to create a similar item for bedtime, so the lights turn off when you retire for the night.

In the 'Create an Automation' workshop on page 61, we look at turning on Philips Hue bulbs, but you can replace this with any other supported range. Not all Wi-Fi enabled lights can be controlled in IFTTT, and some may be found under a different brand name or service, so check

this before you spend time setting up something that stalls at the most important step.

Add more options

Our workshop, below, guides you through the most basic type of configuration, and you could just as easily carry out the same example entirely in IFTTT, by setting the "This" as Sunset in Weather Underground and "That" as turn on the lights. However, incorporating Switchur lets you add many more options. As well as turning the lights on when you get home and off at bed time, you could have the routine only run when someone is at home, or when someone *isn't* at home, which could be useful for deterring burglars.

Because Switchur is designed to expand what IFTTT offers, you need to have at least two Switchboard items



MINI WORKSHOP | Create a Switchboard using Switchur and IFTTT



1 Once you're logged into Switchur, you're taken to an empty Switchboard dashboard. We're creating a Switchboard that controls when the home lights come on. Click the blue 'Add new' tile, **1** then give your creation a name, such as 'Time of day'. **2** Click Keyword, **3** then click Create. **4**







2 Switchur generates a link. Click the clipboard button next to it to copy it. Next, switch to IFTTT, click your avatar in the top-right corner and select Create. We want the lights to come on at sunset. Click +This and search for Weather Underground. Click its tile, then click Sunset. Search for your location **1** and click 'Create trigger'. **2**



3 Click +That and search for Webhooks. Select the tile, click 'Make a web request' and paste the link generated by Switchur. **1** Change the 'ABCxyz' part of the link **2** to 'Sunset', then change the Method to Post **3** and click 'Create action'. **4** Rename your action Sunset, then disable notifications and click Finish.

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	Provider	Package name	Monthly price	Contract length	Broadband speed	Allowance	First-year cost*
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2	 sse	SSE: Unlimited Fibre + Line Rental Only	£22.00	18 months	35Mbps avg. speed	∞ unlimited	£264.00
3	 sse	SSE: Fibre Plus + Line Rental Only	£26.00	18 months	63Mbps avg. speed	∞ unlimited*	£312.00
4		Virgin Media: Big Bundle + Fibre Broadband + Weekend Calls	£29.99 (£59 after 12 months)	12 months	108Mbps avg. speed	∞ unlimited	£359.88

Terms & Conditions apply - see ISP sites for details

* Fair-usage or restriction policy applies.

Data supplied by www.broadbandgenie.co.uk. Correct as of 19 June 2020.

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

**SNEAK
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Computer
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- **STOP YOUR MONITOR HURTING YOUR EYES** Set it to change brightness automatically

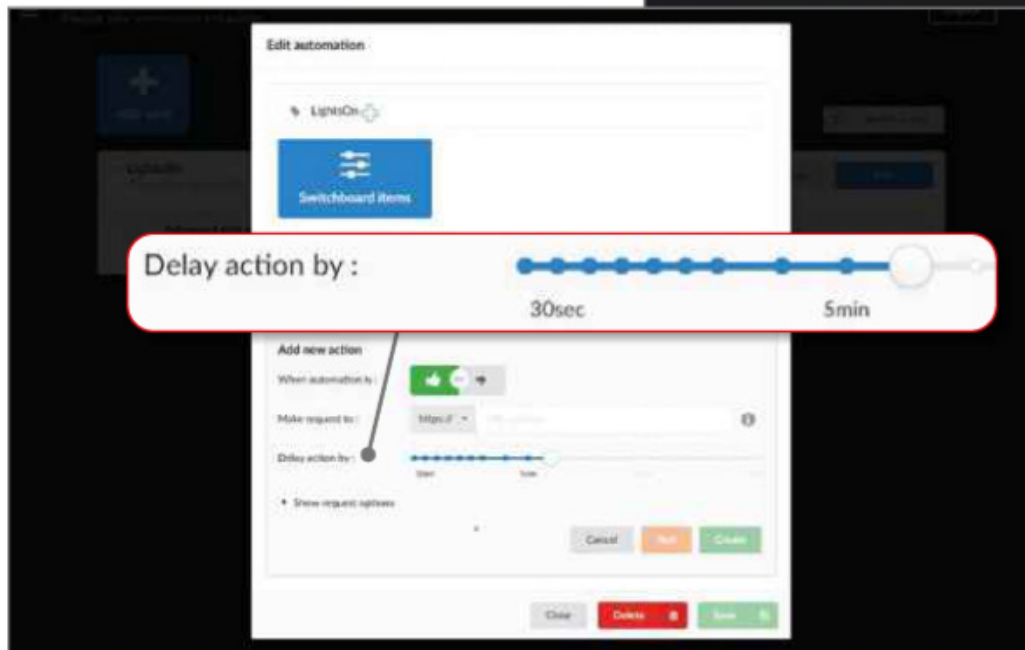
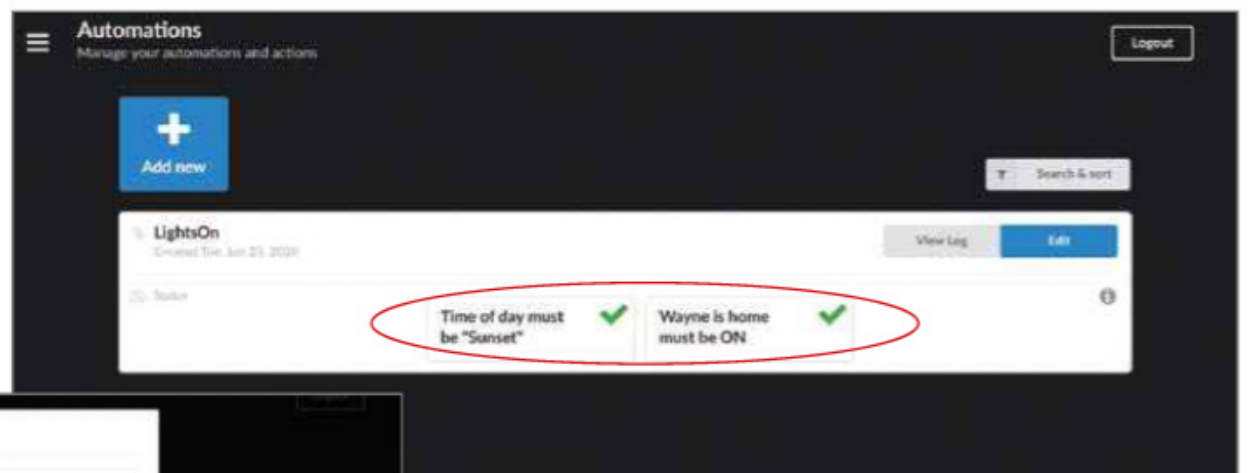
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This Automations Screen shows that both of our conditions are currently being met



If you don't want an action to occur immediately, you can introduce a customisable delay

rule builder, there is a button you can click that checks each expression, changing the setting to a thumbs up or thumbs down.

The Edit Automation screen lets you delay an action by a set amount. This can be anything from 30 seconds to 15 minutes, which can be useful if you've set the lights in one room to come on when you get home, but have other things to do before you go into that room – such as remove your coat and shoes, and make a drink.

before you can create an Automation. For our second Switchboard item, we created one for when we are at home, selecting Switch instead of Keyword this time, because the options are basically just yes (we're at home) or no (we're not at home). We then set up an IFTTT applet to use the service's Location tile to link to our phone and our home address, so it knows when we're there.

Advanced customisation

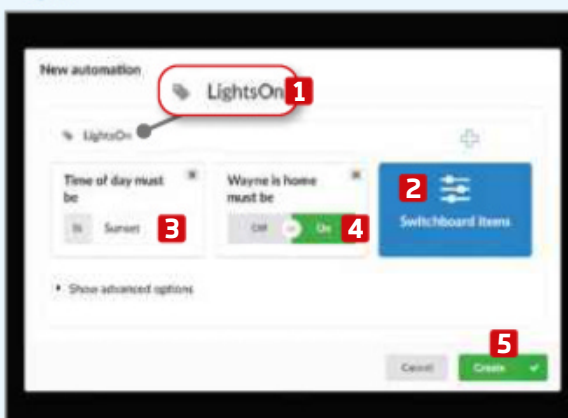
Once you've created your Automation and tried it out to make sure it works, you can customise it further to add additional elements. Perhaps you don't want the lights to come on when you're watching Netflix, for example. If you've used the basic rule builder, the Automation screen shows a tick or a cross next to each proposition. If you used the Advanced

Confused or stuck?

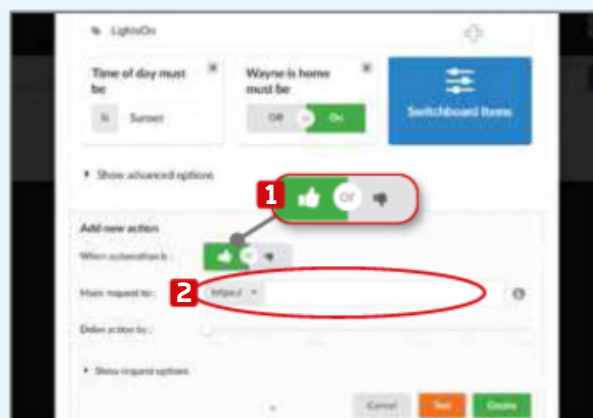
Switchcur isn't the most intuitive of tools. It isn't difficult to use but, if you make a mistake, then working out where the error occurs requires a bit of back and forth. You can read a more detailed guide to setting up the same automation we've covered at bit.ly/switchcur505. Click the different thumbnails to see how to create each Switchboard. ■



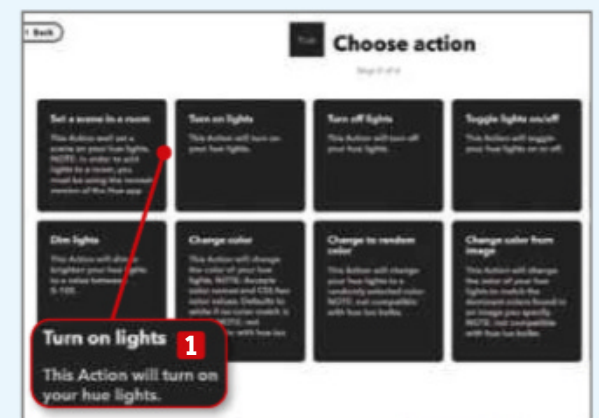
MINI WORKSHOP | Create an Automation in Switchcur



1 Once you've created your Switchboards, click the menu button and open the Automations section. Click the '+Add new' button and name it `LightsOn`. **1** Click the 'Switchboard items' tile **2** and choose the Switchboards you require from the list. Our time of day is 'Sunset' **3** and the 'Wayne is home' value is On. **4** Click Create. **5**



2 Go to IFTTT's webhooks page (bit.ly/whooks505), click Documentation and copy the event trigger URL. Back in the Switchcur automation, click Add Action, click the thumbs-up button **1** and paste the link. **2** Replace [event] with `LightsOn` and click Create. Click Add Action again to add the thumbs-down option and add Lights Off.



3 Back in IFTTT, create a new applet, then click +This and search for and select Webhooks. Click the 'Receive a web request' tile, enter `LightsOn` as the name and click 'Create trigger'. Click the +That option, search for Hue, select Philips Hue and choose 'Turn on lights'. **1** Customise it and click Create Action. Rename it, disable notifications and click Create Action.

NEXT ISSUE

How To... Set up a Tor proxy to use with any device

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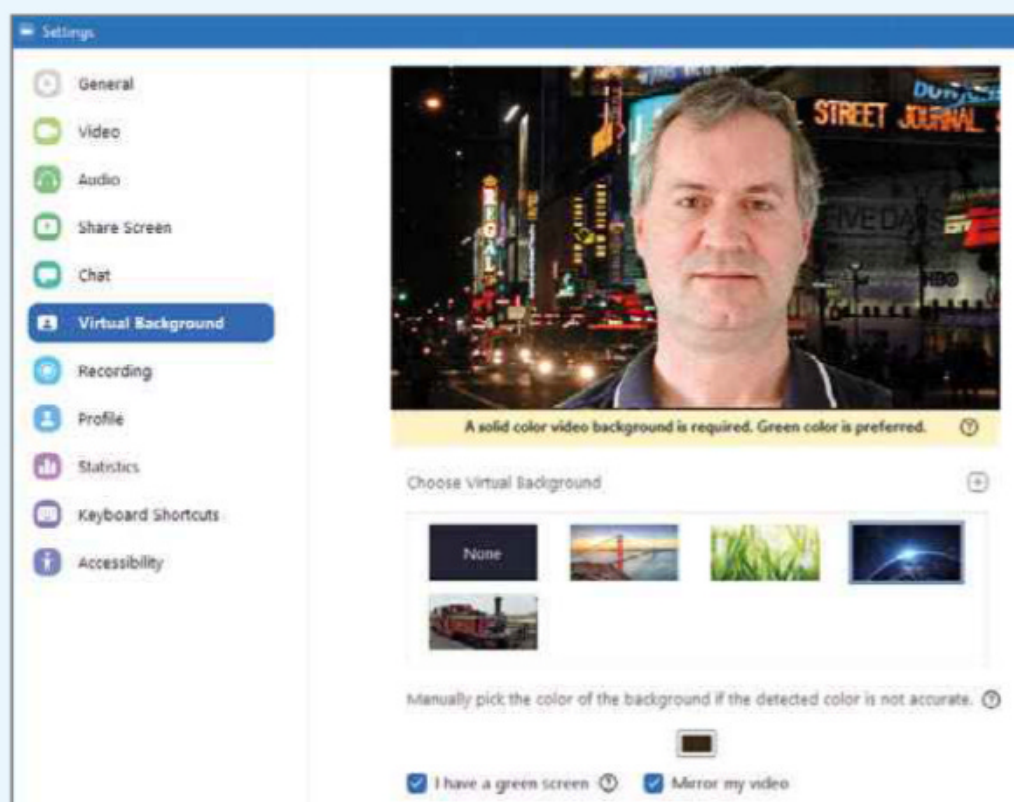
Become a Zoom video-chat master by following our expert tips

Add a virtual background to your Zoom session

You can have a lot of fun with your video chats in Zoom (zoom.us) by adding a virtual background. The technology works in much the same way as a 'green screen' used by film makers, where the action is shot against a bright green background, which is then rendered transparent and replaced with a different image.

In a similar fashion, you will have to position yourself in front of a plain background (doesn't have to be green) - maybe by hanging a sheet behind you. Click the cog icon in the software (it doesn't work with the mobile app) and choose Settings, then Virtual Background. Your desktop wallpaper may appear, but click the plus button and you can select one of the photos on offer.

Here's a crafty trick: use your PC's webcam to take a photo of yourself sitting in front of your computer as if in a video call. You can then set it as the virtual background and walk away from a boring meeting. It will look like you're still there!



Position yourself in front of a plain background, then select a photo to make it look like you are in a different location

Look your best in chats

There's no pressure to look your best when chatting to a family member or best friend, but you may feel differently about work meetings or job interviews.

Open Zoom on your computer and click the cog icon to access the Settings. Select Video on the left and, in the My Video section, select 'Touch up my appearance'. This filter smooths skin tones and softens the lighting to enhance your appearance. It's also available in Zoom's phone app settings, at the bottom of the Meetings section.

On a computer, you can click the Advanced button at the bottom of the Video section and choose 'Enable

de-noise' to further improve the video quality.

Take care when you share

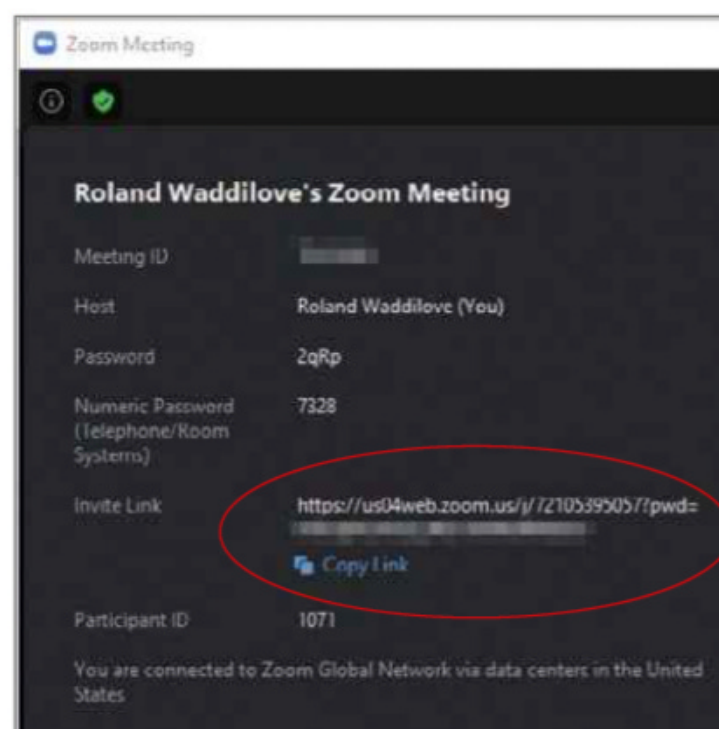
Start an instant video meeting by clicking the button in the Zoom desktop app. Now click the 'i' in the top-left corner to show the meeting details, then click Copy under the Invite Link and send it to whoever you want to chat with.

Zoom meetings are password-protected by default, but the invitation link bypasses this security step so you need to be careful how you share it. For example, don't post the link on social media, such as on a friend's Facebook page, where all their friends could see it. Worse still, if posts are set to public, the whole world could access your meeting without needing a password.

Instead, send the meeting URL via private messaging.

Email isn't perfect, but it's much safer than public social shares. The best method is to use an encrypted messaging service.

Alternatively, log into zoom.us in a browser and open Settings in



Copy the link in a meeting to invite other people, but share it privately, not publicly

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.



your account. Find 'Embed password in invite link for one-click join' and turn off the switch. The URL can then be shared publicly, because anyone joining the meeting will be required to enter the password.

To share the password, send it separately, preferably in a messaging app. This may seem like extra hassle but it makes your meeting a lot more secure.

Add contacts to Zoom

A better way to start an instant meeting is to set it up via your contacts. Open the Zoom app, click the Contacts icon, then the plus button and enter the email addresses of people you want to video chat with now or in the future – relatives, friends, work colleagues and so on. They are notified in their Zoom app and can accept or decline the contact.

You can now call someone by selecting their name in Contacts and clicking 'Invite to Meeting'. There is no need to share a URL so no one else can see the invitation.

Make people wait quietly

Open Settings in your account at zoom.us. On the Meeting tab, scroll down to 'Join before host' and turn off the switch to prevent people from joining scheduled meetings before you. This is particularly useful when chairing Zoom sessions with several people who may not know each other, such as a work or club meeting with a specific agenda.

Near the bottom of these settings, turn on 'Waiting room'. When you start a meeting, click Participants in the toolbar of the Zoom video window. A side panel opens showing people waiting to enter the meeting. Move the mouse over them and click Admit (or Remove, in the case of 'Zoombombers' who somehow got your invite without your knowledge). A pop-up notification appears in the video window when people arrive.

If you regularly have meetings with a chatty group who end up talking over each other, scroll through the settings and look for 'Mute participants upon entry'. They won't be able to talk until you unmute them.



Make people wait before entering and choose to admit or remove them

TAKE IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL

More advanced tips for when you're feeling brave

Make people sign in

Participants wanting to join a meeting just need a shared URL and can even take part via an incognito browser window. If you're worried about unwanted visitors gatecrashing your meeting, you can tighten Zoom's security by making the participants log in.

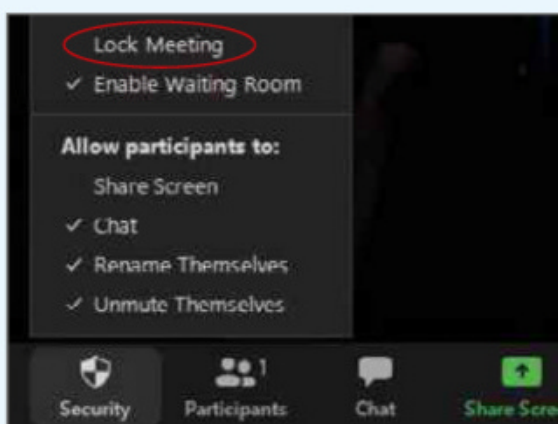
At the zoom.us website, sign in and open Settings. On the Meetings tab, scroll down and switch on 'Only authenticated users can join meetings from Web client'. This means only people who have a Zoom account can join your sessions.

Kick out and lock out

If you are chatting with a group of people and someone is causing problems, put them in the waiting room to cool off. Click Participants in the toolbar to show the side panel, move the mouse over their name and click More, then 'Put in Waiting Room'. A message on their screen tells them to wait until the host lets them back in.

You can message people in the waiting room by clicking Message at the top of the Participants panel. If you want to permanently kick them out, mouse over the participant in the panel and click More, Remove.

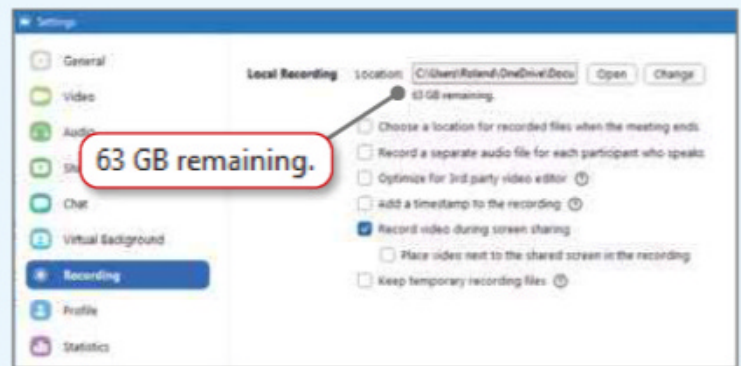
Always remember to click Security and lock the room once everyone has arrived to keep out uninvited people.



Make people wait before entering, then lock the room once everyone is in

Change the recording location

Video conversations can be recorded, which is useful if you need to refer to them later. The recordings are saved to the Documents folder by default, so be aware if you have set OneDrive as your default Documents folder because although this is normally a



Choose a video recording location that has plenty of disk space

great option for syncing Documents and desktops across two or more computers, a video recording of a long meeting will consume OneDrive storage space at a rapid rate.

In the desktop app, click the cog icon, choose Settings, Recording. Click Change and select a different location, such as the Videos folder.

Solve Zoom video problems

Click the cog icon to open Settings and select the Video section. Click the Advanced button in the bottom-right corner. The default configuration is usually fine but it's worth trying some of the alternative options if you're having trouble with video.

Try disabling the hardware acceleration options. Then try each of the different options under Video Rendering Method, Video Rendering Post Processing and Video Capturing Method. One setting may work better than another.

Solve Zoom audio problems

Zoom is good at working out how to set up the audio for chats, but if you have problems, open Settings and select the Audio section. Click the Speaker and Microphone drop-down menus and see if there are other options. Select them and click the Test buttons to see if they work.

Rename yourself and others

Start a meeting in Zoom and click Participants to open the side panel. Mouse over any person, including yourself, and click More, then Rename. The name can be changed just for this meeting or for all meetings. You could change it to show your location, such as 'John at Work', Dad, Mum, Grandad, 'John Smith CEO' or whatever is appropriate.

Click Security in the video window toolbar and choose whether to allow or prevent renaming.

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



MOBILE

Connect an Android device to a Windows PC

Q I'm having trouble sharing files between my phone and my PC. I have an HP Z400 desktop PC that runs Windows 10. It used to be an office PC, so it doesn't have Wi-Fi or Bluetooth capability, but it connects to my router via Ethernet. I also have a Samsung Galaxy S5 smartphone with VLC and two file managers (File Manager and X-Plore), both of which have worked well in the past.

I use my Microsoft account and password to log into Windows 10 on my PC, and this works fine. I have many media files on my hard drive, which in the past I've copied to my phone using X-Plore or File Manager.

File Manager finds my PC on the network, but only lists it as a computer name. When I select it, File Manager brings up a login screen and asks me for a password. My PC doesn't have a password but File Manager won't let me log in without one. VLC does the same thing.

X-Plore doesn't even find the computer by name. Instead it gives me an IP address under the LAN option. When I select this, however, it doesn't connect to my PC. All I see is a spinning circle.

When I try using X-Plore's FTP option, it prompts me to add a server and then asks for a password again. The same happens with the SSH File Transfer option. X-Plore's Wi-Fi file-sharing option returns an IP address but nothing else, and the DLNA option simply gives me a spinning circle.

Is there any way to connect my mobile phone to the media server on my desktop without setting up a

password? I'm worried that setting a password would affect my current login process.

John Holt, via email

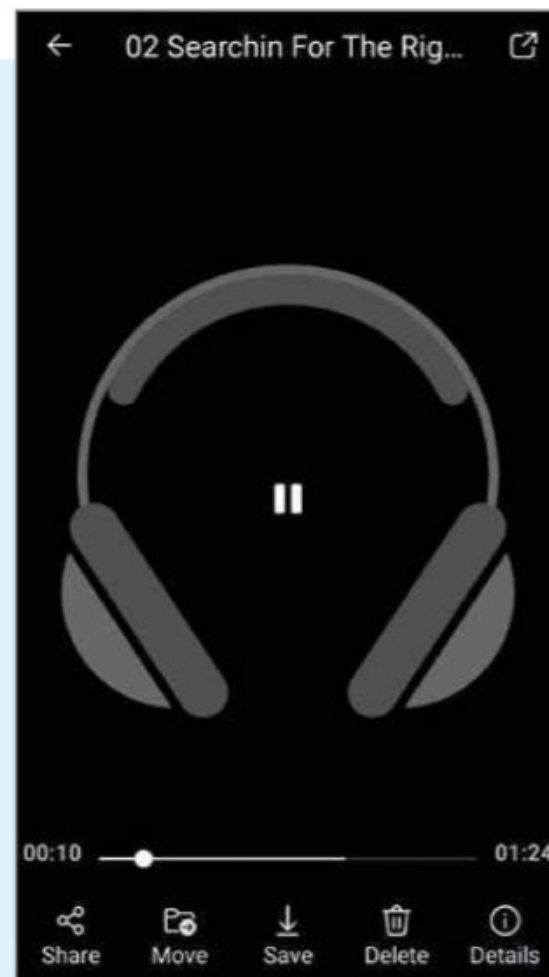
A Even though it's been possible for decades, making a network connection between a computer and other devices is still one of the trickiest things to do. The main problem is getting devices with different operating systems to communicate with each other. This is especially difficult when one of the operating systems is old and the other is relatively new, because they may use different networking standards. Your Samsung Galaxy S5 probably runs Android 6 at best, whereas Android 10 is the latest version. This could be one of the problems you're facing.

We'd start by lowering your security in Windows. Open the Control Panel and choose Windows Defender Firewall. Use the link on the left to switch it off.

Open the Control Panel's 'Network and Sharing Center' and, on the left, click 'Change advanced sharing settings'. In the 'Private (current profile)' section, select 'Turn on network discovery', tick the option below it and select 'Turn on file and printer sharing'.

Expand the All Networks section and select 'Turn on sharing so that anyone with network access can read and write files in the Public folders'. You may need to try both options in the 'File sharing connections' section, because it's hard to say which encryption setting will work. In 'Password-protected sharing', select 'Turn off password-protected sharing'.

Under 'Media streaming', click



Stream music, videos and photos from OneDrive to your phone using the OneDrive app

'Choose media streaming options' and switch it on. Save your changes, then restart Windows and try using the file managers on your phone again.

An alternative is to save your media files, such as photos, videos and music, to folders in OneDrive on your computer. If you then install the OneDrive app on your phone, you can view your photos, watch videos and listen to music. OneDrive streams your media straight to your phone, so you don't even need to have your PC switched on. OneDrive doesn't support as many file formats as VLC, but it works with most common types. You may need to buy extra OneDrive storage for your media files, but 100GB costs just £1.99 a month.

WINDOWS

Fix a persistent update error

Q My PC has been trying to install an update for "Microsoft Office File Validation add-in" but every time I download it, I get the error message

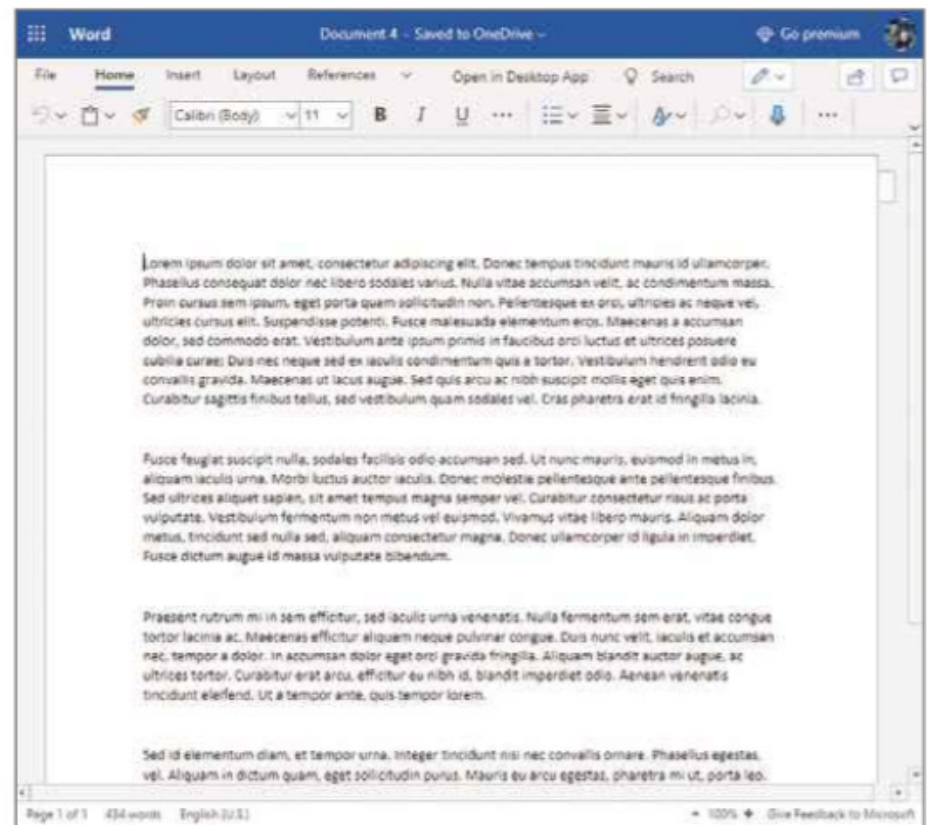
0x8024002d. I've searched online for an answer but nothing has worked. I have no problems with Microsoft Office but this update request is annoying. Any idea how to solve or remove it?

Gordon Cook, via email

A This error seems to affect old versions of Microsoft Office up to and including Office 2010, which are no longer supported. As we don't experience this error, it's not something we can test, but it may involve .NET 3.5.



Turn Windows features on or off in the 'Programs and Features' section of the Control Panel



If you don't want to pay for the full Office suite, Microsoft Word Online is perfectly adequate for most word-processing tasks

Open the Control Panel and click 'Programs and Features'. In the panel on the left, click 'Turn Windows features on or off' and, in the new window that appears, clear the box next to .NET Framework 3.5. Click OK, then restart Windows. When your PC has restarted, go back to the .NET Framework 3.5 setting, click the tickbox to enable it, click OK and restart Windows again.

If an update repeatedly fails, you can always hide it from Windows Update. Go to bit.ly/trou505 and locate the link to the Windows troubleshooter that lets you show or hide updates. Clicking this downloads a file called 'wushowhide.diagcab'. Double-click it and follow the instructions.

OFFICE

Use Word 2010 on a Windows 10 PC

Q I used to have Microsoft Word 2010 on my Windows 7 PC, but I upgraded the operating system when Microsoft stopped supporting it. When I installed Windows 10, however, it didn't come with Word. I still have the product keys for Windows 7 and Office 2010 (though not the disc), so is it possible to download Word to Windows 10 without paying for it again?

Philip, via email

A If you upgrade your computer from Windows 7 to 10, your software licences should remain valid, which means you can continue to use the software with your new operating system. However, if you perform a clean installation of Windows 10 or buy a new computer, your old licences are no longer valid unless they specifically

allow you to install the software on more than one device. For example, Microsoft used to sell a three-licence Home and Student edition of Microsoft Office, and if you had used only one of those installations on your Windows 7 PC, you might still have two remaining.

Your best option is to visit Microsoft's Office 2010 download page at bit.ly/office505, enter your licence key and see if it offers you a download link. If it doesn't, you still have several options. One is to use the free online versions of Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint and

HARDWARE

Check a laptop for signs of life

Q I bought a reconditioned Dell Latitude E7440 laptop a year ago, which has just come out of warranty. It came with Windows 7 installed but I upgraded it to Windows 10. I hadn't used it for a few months, but when I switched it on recently it wouldn't work. The On button lights up but nothing else happens. Is it a goner? I paid around £300 for it but don't want to throw good money after bad to get it repaired if it's not worth it.

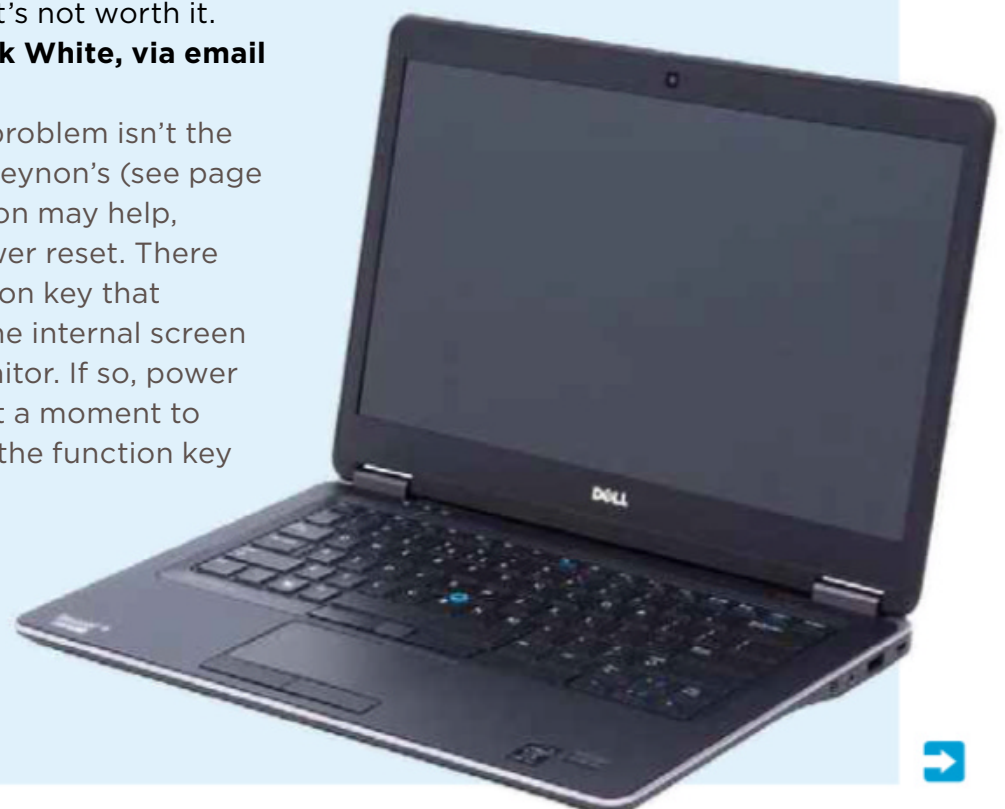
Patrick White, via email

A Although your problem isn't the same as Peter Beynon's (see page 68), the same solution may help, which is to try a power reset. There may also be a function key that switches between the internal screen and an external monitor. If so, power on the laptop, give it a moment to start up, then press the function key

If your laptop screen isn't working, check whether it's just the screen by connecting an external monitor

to see if the screen comes to life.

If not, there may be a hardware fault. The obvious question is whether the computer is dead or the screen simply isn't working. The best way to find out is to plug in an external monitor. If you don't have one, ask a friend or even a local computer store. If it works, you can then choose between having the screen repaired or buying an external monitor.





other Office apps at office.com. These are more than adequate for home and casual use. Another option is to use an alternative office suite. For example, if you upload Word files to Google Drive, you can open and edit them in Docs at docs.google.com.

If you prefer an offline option, try LibreOffice (www.libreoffice.org) or PolarisOffice (www.polarisoffice.com). These free office suites run on Windows PCs and let you load and save files in Microsoft's formats.

HARDWARE

Stop a recurring repair failure

Q When I switch on my Dell laptop, I sometimes see a message telling me that it's 'Preparing Automatic Repair', followed by a Recovery Screen with the fault 0xc00000e9. It then presents me with four options. Pressing Esc takes me to a Settings screen and, after pressing Exit, the computer boots and runs normally. At other times the PC boots first time. Plugging in a USB hard drive makes no difference. Any advice would be appreciated.

Peter Beynon, via email



When serious problems occur, try resetting Windows. You should be able to do this while keeping all your files

A We hope you're using that USB drive to create a full system backup of your PC in case the problem

becomes permanent. Don't forget to create rescue media, too, such as a bootable CD or USB memory stick. MiniTool ShadowMaker (www.minitool.com) is a free tool that can do all this.

Other people have reported this problem but there isn't a single fix that works for everyone. First, try shutting down the laptop, unplugging everything and removing the battery. Hold down the power button for 15 seconds, then replace the battery, plug in the power and restart the computer.

Another possible solution is to switch on the laptop and press F12 when the Dell splash screen appears. Select Diagnostics from the menu and choose the option to run a full diagnostic test, which can take up to 40 minutes. See if this finds any problems. Some people have said that simply running the test appears to solve the problem. If the test reports an error code, enter it at bit.ly/dell505 for more information.

Reinstalling Windows has helped a few people. Open Settings, choose 'Update & Security', then Recovery. Under 'Reset this PC', click the 'Get started' button, then choose the option to keep your files.

One final option is to download and reinstall the operating system for your Dell computer. Use the tool provided and the instructions at bit.ly/dellinst505. Don't attempt this until you've made a complete backup of your hard drive, however, because the process may erase all your personal files.

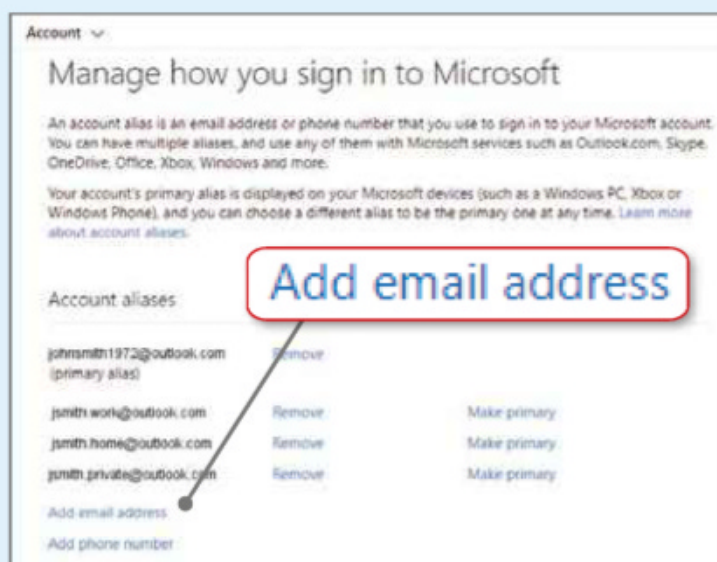
EMAIL

Create extra Outlook email addresses

Q I've had my Outlook email account for ages and can access it in my browser or using the Mail app on my PC. A long time ago, I created an extra email address, which means I have two email addresses for one account. I no longer use the second address, so I'd like to rename it or delete it and create a new one, but I can't remember how I created the extra email address in Outlook or the Mail app. Is this option still available?

James Wilson, via email

A Microsoft moved this feature from Outlook to your Microsoft account, and it's well hidden. Go to Outlook (outlook.com) in a browser and click the cog icon, then 'View all Outlook settings'. On the Email tab, select 'Sync email', then 'Manage or choose a primary alias'. This takes you to account.live.com/names/manage.



Create extra email addresses in your Microsoft account to use with Mail or Outlook

Here, you'll find a list of all the email addresses connected to your account. An email addressed to any of them will land in your Outlook inbox. There are also Remove links and an 'Add email address' option to add more.

When you've added one or more email addresses, you can select which one to show in the From field when you write an email. This works in Outlook online as well as the Mail app on your computer.



This fortnight, Roland has been spending time with Google Maps, finding new places to explore when lockdown ends



Readers' Helpdesk

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

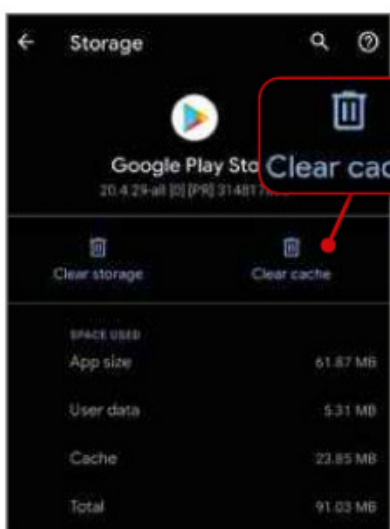
MOBILE

Fix Android apps that won't download

Q When I try to download certain apps, Google Play refuses to cooperate. It doesn't happen with every app but it's certainly become more common. I've tried clearing out junk files, old apps and unplayed games to make space, but that hasn't helped.

Michael Jones, via email

A This is a common problem. First, check your settings and permissions because it's easy to accidentally cause conflicts like this. Next, clear Google Play's history. This isn't guaranteed to work, but some people say it's helped. To do this, open Google Play, tap the



If you have trouble downloading apps and games, try clearing Google Play's cache

menu button and open Settings. Scroll down to 'Clear local search history'.

Your final option – and the one that's most likely to have an effect – is to clear the Google Play cache. Shut down the app fully, then open your phone's settings and tap 'Apps and notifications', then the Google Play app. Go to 'Storage & cache' and choose 'Clear cache'.

If you still can't get your apps and games, sign into the browser version of Google Play (play.google.com), then direct the app download to your phone.

Steve Clark, Features Writer

SOFTWARE

Share remote PowerPoint presentations

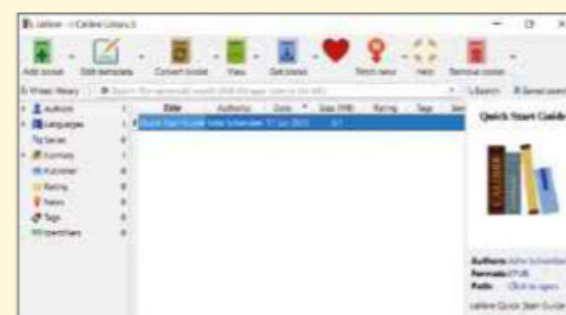
Q I want to give a remote presentation online using Microsoft PowerPoint but I only have one monitor. Is there a

READERS RESPOND

EBOOKS

Convert ebook files for your Kindle

A Helen Garraway asked for a way to convert miscellaneous ebook files to load to a basic Kindle (Issue 502, bit.ly/webuser502). The method I've used for years is to run Calibre (calibre-ebook.com), the well-known eBook reader. Using its command buttons, it takes seconds to convert most book formats. Files are saved in the Calibre library, in the same folder as the original file. Using Windows, right-click the original book and click 'Open with', then choose Calibre. Once



Calibre helps you manage your ebook library, whatever format they are in

the conversion is completed, you can upload the file to your Kindle via USB or email it to your Kindle address. To clear the Calibre record, highlight the book title and select 'Remove Books'.

Graham Watson, 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.

HARDWARE

Q My Fitbit screen sometimes goes completely blank. The buttons still vibrate when pressed but there's nothing on the screen. How can I fix it?

Phil Jarvis, via email

way I can show the slides in presentation mode (which is full screen) while also maintaining control over the presentation software and all other participants.

Geoff, via email

A There are two options you can try to simultaneously share and manage PowerPoint presentations. The first is to turn your single monitor into a split screen. First, press and hold the Windows key, then use the left and right arrow keys to set PowerPoint to one side of the screen. You can also use the mouse to drag the PowerPoint window to one side of the screen.

Alternatively, you can present PowerPoint in a pop-out window. Open your presentation and click the Slide

SECURITY

Q Is it possible to use a VPN on my Xbox One (or any games console, for that matter)? If it is, which is the best one to use?

Jeremy Richards, via email

Show tab. Click Set Up Slide Show and select the option 'Browse by an individual (window)'. Your presentation now shows in a pop-out, rather than full screen.

Many applications let you screen-share just this window, which should solve your problem.

Steve Clark, Features Writer



Share your screen without losing sight of everything else

Your Top Tips

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



TOP TIP

BROWSERS

Add extra keyboard shortcuts

I'm forever frustrated by the lack of keyboard shortcuts in browsers. I use them in just about every other program, so why am I restricted in Chrome?

For anyone feeling similarly frustrated, I recommend the Surfingkeys add-on, available for Chrome (bit.ly/skch505), Firefox (bit.ly/skff505) and Edge (bit.ly/sked505). The extension provides a phenomenal number of shortcuts for all kinds of actions, such as opening multiple links in a new tab, which is particularly useful if you find yourself without a mouse.

It's not immediately apparent how to use the extension. My advice is to press Shift+? to bring up a full list of available shortcuts.

If you want to get started right away,

	Mouse Click
cf	Open multiple links in a new tab
gf	Open a link in non-active new tab
gi	Go to the first edit box
f	Open a link, press SHIFT to flip overlapped hints,
fs	Display hints to focus scrollable elements
im	mouse out last element
af	Open a link in active new tab
C	Open a link in non-active new tab
<Ctrl-h>	Mouse over elements.
<Ctrl-j>	Mouse out elements.
i	Go to edit box
I	Go to edit box with vim editor
O	Open detected links from text
<Ctrl-i>	Go to edit box with vim editor
q	Click on an image or a button

Surfingkeys gets you around the web faster than ever before

press the 'F' key on any web page. This highlights every link on the page and assigns a corresponding letter that you can press to open the link.

Katie Cousins, via email

a toolbar appears at the top. Hover the mouse over each button to see what it does. It can capture the whole screen, a window or a section drawn by you (either rectangular or freeform).

Will Evans, via email



Switch this setting on to add more power to the Print Screen key

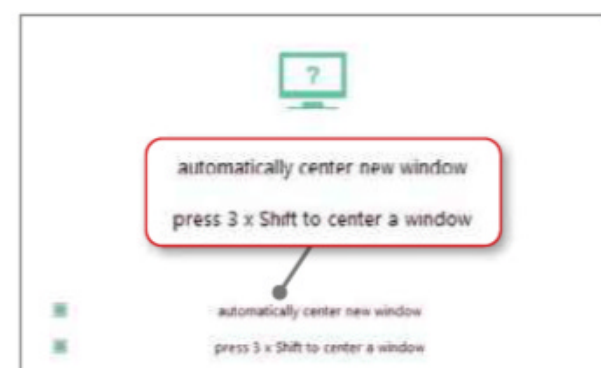
SOFTWARE

Centre any window with ease

To restore some order to your desktop, try Windows Centering Helper (bit.ly/helper505). It's a lightweight, hands-off tool that moves windows to the centre of your screen.

Visit the website, then hover over Windows Centering Help. You then have the option to download the installer or a portable version. Once installed, set the only two options available to you: 'automatically center new window' and 'press 3 x shift to center a window'. And that's it. You can more or less forget the program is even running, because any window you open will remain centred and, if you move it, a quick triple-press of the Shift key re-centres it again.

Graham Thomas, via email



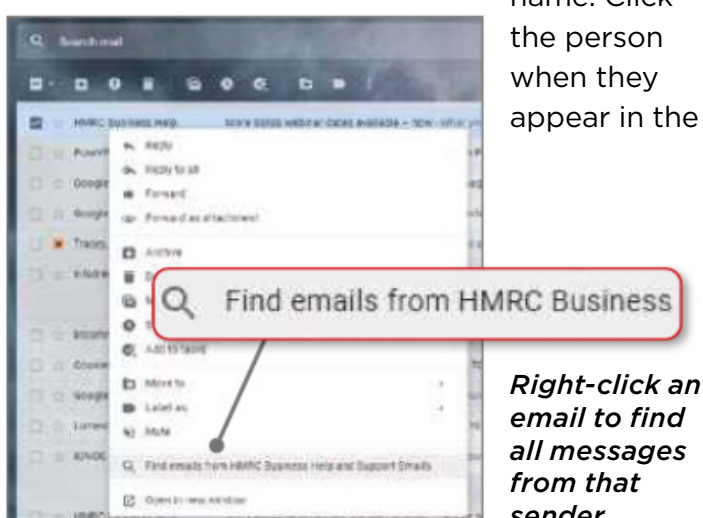
This handy program centres every window you open

EMAIL

Find emails faster

In Gmail, if you want to see all correspondence from a particular person or company, click the search box and type their name. This shows all messages from, to and containing the name.

If you only want to see messages you've received from them, type **from:** in the search box and start typing their name. Click the person when they appear in the



Right-click an email to find all messages from that sender

search suggestions list below.

An even quicker method is to right-click an email in your inbox and select 'Find emails from'. This displays a list of all the messages received from that person, but doesn't include emails you sent to them or messages that contain their name. To refine your search further, add a keyword or two in the search box.

Jason Davies, via email

WINDOWS

Get more Print Screen options

Pressing the Print Screen key lets you take a screenshot, which can then be pasted into a photo editor or elsewhere. You can expand this function to provide a menu of screen-grabbing options by opening the Settings app in Windows 10 (Windows+i) and opening the 'Ease of Access' section. Select Keyboard on the left, then turn on the switch under 'Print Screen shortcut'. Now, when you press the Print Screen key, the screen dims and



WINDOWS

Find a secret hobbit hole

My hearing isn't too good these days, so



In a nod to Tolkien fans, this hobbit hole is hidden in Windows 10's Settings

I was looking at the 'Closed captions' setting in Settings, Ease of Access.

I found a hobbit hole! It's not Bilbo Baggins' hobbit hole, so maybe it's one of the others from *The Lord of the Rings* films. Frodo's?

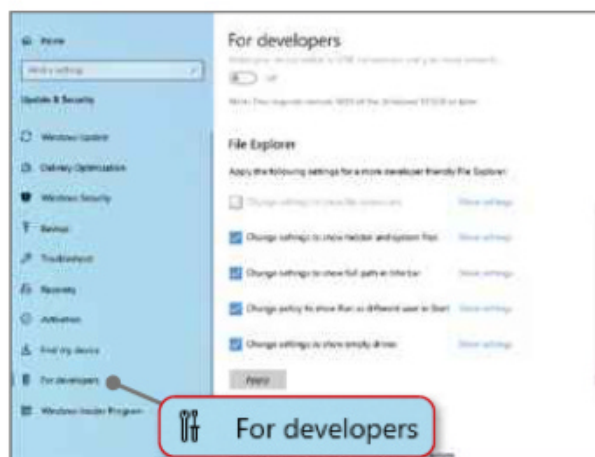
Harry White, via email

WINDOWS

Try options for developers

Every major Windows update (the spring and autumn ones) moves a few more options from the Control Panel to the Settings app. For example, there's a new section for File Explorer that lets you change some common settings, such as showing file extensions, hidden files and system files. To find it, open the Settings app, click Update & Security, then find 'For developers' in the side menu.

Mark Johnson, via email



File Explorer settings are now available from the Windows 10 Settings app

WINDOWS

Quick copy and paste in Command Prompt

There's a super quick way to copy and paste text in the command prompt. Open a Command Prompt window by pressing Windows+R and entering `cmd`. Click the icon in the top-left corner of the window and select properties. Then, on the Options tab, tick the Quick Edit Mode box and click OK.

Now, click and drag the mouse over any text in the Command Prompt window and press Enter. Right-click anywhere and the highlighted text is automatically pasted, as if you'd typed it. For example, enter `dir` to see a list of files and folders. Press the up arrow key

to show the previous command and press space. Click and drag over a folder name and press Enter, then right-click the mouse and press Enter to execute the command. Note that if a folder name includes a space, this needs to be enclosed in quotes.

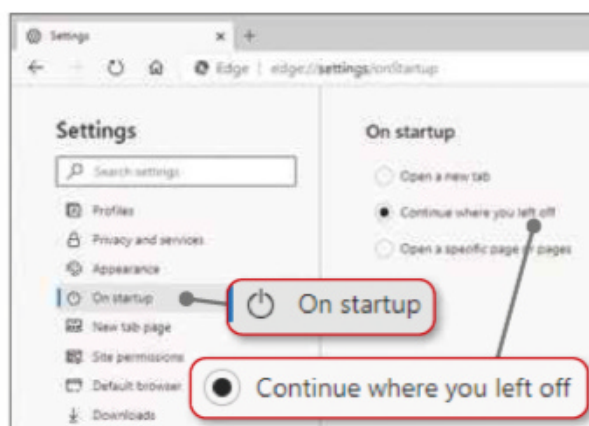
Daniel Taylor, via email

BROWSERS

Remember tabs in Edge

You missed a trick in replying to Julian Fowler (Ask The Expert, Issue 503) about retaining open tabs when you close the browser. Like most browsers, Edge has an option in the 'On startup' section of its settings to 'Continue where you left off'. It saves a list of the tabs you have open when shutting Edge down and restores them the next time you use it. I've found that it occasionally forgets them, but works fine most of the time.

Tony Allaway, via email



Pick up where you left off with this Microsoft Edge setting

BROWSERS

Create custom Chrome cursors

Windows gives you the option to customise your cursor but its abilities fall far short of the 'Custom Cursor for Chrome' browser tool (bit.ly/cursor505). Click the extension's toolbar button to switch your boring white arrow for something more exciting. Options include all manner of colours, jokey pointers such as bacon and eggs, and cartoon characters including the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, Popeye and Tom & Jerry. Honestly, it would take a day to list all the different themes.

My favourite feature is the option to upload your own images and turn them into cursors. For best results, the developer advises that pictures should be 32x32 pixels on a transparent background.

H Frye, via email



Pick a cursor to suit your mood or create your own

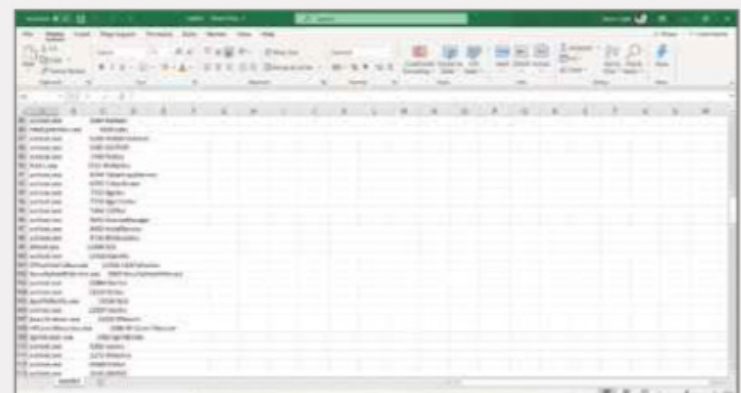
BLUNDER OF THE FORTNIGHT

SOFTWARE

Jump to Excel's last row

I know I'm not alone in thinking spreadsheets are as clunky today as they always were. Unfortunately, due to my job, I'm stuck using very long and complicated ones. That means a lot of time wasted as I manually scroll up and down the page to reach the first or last row. My mouse wheel must've clocked up thousands of miles at this point! However, it turns out that keyboard shortcuts are a much easier way to navigate Excel (and, I'm told, it also works in other spreadsheet programs, such as Google Sheets and LibreOffice Calc).

To move to the last row before a blank row, press Ctrl+Down. To go to



If you have a large spreadsheet, hold down Ctrl to navigate to its extremities

the first row, press Ctrl+Up. Ctrl+Home moves you to the first left-hand cell on your spreadsheet, while Ctrl+End jumps to the final row on the right-hand side. I can't believe I've been scrolling manually for all these years!

John Barnes, via email

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



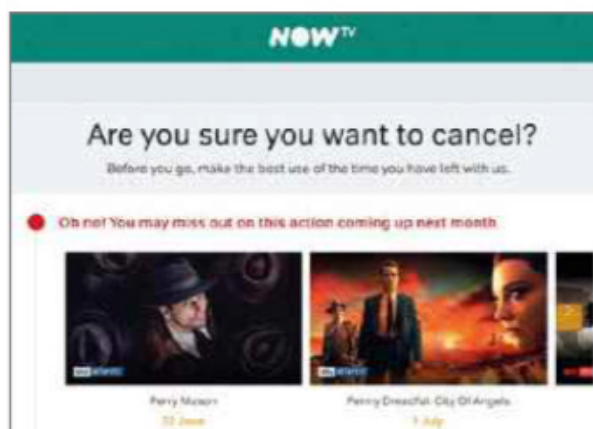
Star Email

Persistence pays off when cancelling subs

It's not just Sky TV that's reluctant to let go of your bank account; its sidekick Now TV is just as keen to keep your custom.

A couple of years ago, just before Christmas, I bought a Now TV stick with a three-month subscription to the Entertainment Pass for the princely sum of £15. My reason was simple – it provided a cheap way to get iPlayer and other streaming services on a 'dumb' TV.

Of course, to use the pass over the holiday period required signing up for the eventual Direct Debit. Three months later, I tried to cancel my Now TV account but found that removing



my patronage was hidden well out of sight, calling for a high degree of persistence to reach the escape button.

What followed was like an Ealing comedy: "Are you sure you want to leave?" – Yes. "Are you really sure you

want to leave?" – Yes. "How does three months at £4.99 sound?" – No thanks.

"How about £3.99?" – Hmm, okay.

Believe it or not, I'm still with Now TV and by playing their game, I now pay the bargain price of £1.60 per month until the end of this November, with another free six months added because of the coronavirus lockdown! Sometimes perseverance pays off.

I've yet to speak to anyone at Now TV because everything was accomplished online. It will be interesting to see if next year they actually offer me money to stay with them – you never know!

G Wyllie, Greengairs

Back Issues disc winner



Haggle a better Sky deal

With reference to the Star Email from Dr David Cross in Issue 503 ('My experience with cancelling Sky TV').

I telephone Sky and my energy company every 12 months or so, and always get the deal that I want.

My Sky bill was set to go up to £75 for TV, broadband and phone. When I called and said that I was cancelling and going elsewhere, Sky gave me a new package straight away, with even more TV channels (plus Netflix), better broadband and the same phone tariff for £50.

I also called my energy company and asked why my charges were going up. When I said I was leaving, they offered me a new deal at half the cost, which still keeps me in credit.

Doug Seabury, via email

5G fanatics can't have everything their way

With regards to Barry 'Barmy' Collins and his Page 404 rant in Issue 503 ('Glastonbury is off its rocker over 5G'), it's sad to see someone I respect attack certain residents of Glastonbury.

Perhaps the COVID-19 virus has got to Barry at last? He thinks that nobody without 'establishment-sanctioned' credentials is worth listening to – that scientific data belongs exclusively with people who got where they are by

observing official narratives, and woe betide anyone who does not fit in and dares to think for themselves.

Look at the money and the politics surrounding 5G. Look at the demand by ignorant speed freaks for faster uploads and downloads for their stupid little devices. Do you really think we should cater to these people just so they can play with their toys wherever they please?

Sorry, but no. If you don't like the lack of availability of 5G, then go elsewhere.



Do not have a screaming tantrum and throw your toys out of the pram.

Regardless of one's opinions of 5G, it is local communities that have to decide if they want something or not. It's not for jackbooted little tyrants to demand that everyone does things their way.

So, am I getting through to the 5G fanatics? Or are they so self-righteous – and so sure of the science that most of them know nothing about – that they just listen to official narratives?

Christopher Silverthorne, Wolverhampton

Quiz Answers: Issue 504

1 **Little Red Rooster**



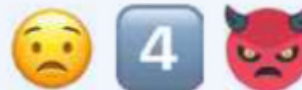
2 **Paint It Black**



3 **Jumpin' Jack Flash**



4 **Sympathy for the Devil**



5 **Wild Horses**



6 **She's a Rainbow**



WINNER!

Well done to **Stephen Robertson** who wins a Web User Back Issues Disc



WAYBACK MACHINE

2008



Don't sneer at 5G doubts

I have just read Barry Collins' column in Issue 503 of *Web User*. I'm very sorry that you feel you have to insult people who have genuine doubts about a new and unproven technology such as 5G. I don't know, for example, Dr Andrew Tresidder, but I can see that he is well-qualified, and that flower remedies have a long and well-accepted part in 'unconventional' medicine.

I am very sorry to read an article in a magazine that I usually find very informative exhibiting what I can only describe as a 'sneering attitude'.

Jerry Baker, via email

Why the fuss about *Little Britain*?

I don't understand all this fuss about *Little Britain* and other TV shows being removed from streaming services. It was never funny in the first place and I doubt many people bothered to watch it on Netflix or iPlayer in the last 10 years. It



was the same one-joke sketches every episode, and puerile rather than perceptive. There are lots of far superior British comedy series to watch, such as *Detectorists*, *This Country* and *Friday Night Dinner*.

Besides, now that charity shops and CEX are open again, you shouldn't have much trouble finding old DVDs of *Little Britain* for less than a quid!

Andrew Bryant, via email

Erase your old passwords by hand

Like Tom Palmer (Inbox, Issue 501, 'Simplicity is the key to password storage'), I, too, prefer the handwritten method of storing passwords. To make things even simpler, I use an address book and write my passwords in pencil. This means that changing them is just a simple matter of rubbing them out and writing in the new passwords. And, of course, I store the address book securely and away from the computer.



Sylvia Chubbs, Orpington

What you say...

DO YOU THINK AMAZON'S DOMINANCE OF ONLINE SHOPPING NEEDS TO BE CHALLENGED (bit.ly/amazon505)?

Amazon, like Microsoft, Apple, Samsung and others, is an example of a good business model. Should we punish good business models? Don't forget that Amazon is not only a resale giant, but also a gateway for smaller companies to reach a larger audience. In that respect, it is similar to eBay, Wish and other such sites.

Anthony Higham

The only way to challenge Amazon's dominance is for another company to offer an equal or better service. That said, the EU and UK do need to look at how these companies are taxed.

John Scott

If they actually succeeded in stopping Amazon's dominance, another company such as Alibaba would step in to fill the gap. Most people just want quick and easy shopping with cheap or free next-day delivery. Smaller companies cannot compete on a large scale, so their only hope is dealing with local custom.

Rich Grove

No, if Amazon can sell so cheaply and still make a profit, then good on them. The EU just wants money from them as a fine for their business model.

Dean Stockton

Yes, it seriously does. They have too large a monopoly on stuff online and put independent shops out of business. The simple solution is to buy elsewhere.

Jack Gold

Yes, hammer Amazon.

Andrew Wakeman

There goes the EU again, looking into giant companies on our behalf. I'd be happy if Amazon paid the taxes they should, but it's our government that needs to close that loophole.

Caroline Chapman

WHAT'S THE OLDEST WORKING GADGET YOU STILL OWN (bit.ly/gadgets505)?

An original PlayStation. Still going strong.

Paul Richardson

A Panasonic radio cassette player I bought in 1979. I may well have something older, but that's off the top of my head, as it's used daily!

Andy Parsons

I've got a Nokia 8210 and 8310, plus other old phones.

Athol A Witter

A Sony Discman, a Game Boy and a Game Boy Advance

Jason 'Boz' Bowyer

The wife. Going on 30 years now.

Kenny Hutchison

MICROSOFT RELAUNCHED THE EDGE ADD-ONS STORE (see page 14). WHAT'S YOUR FAVOURITE EXTENSION?

An ad blocker is the most essential add-on for me.

Eff Clarke

I wouldn't go anywhere online without uBlock Origin. Turning it off on a website shows that there are now more annoying ads than ever.

Paul Giddings

My favourite extensions are LastPass and Google Translate.

Derek Sutton

I don't use extensions because they slow down your browser and some of them are dodgy and steal your data.

Michael Winger

! Page 404



Barry Collins ponders the effects of a cut to Apple's App Store earnings

Have Apple's 'gangsters' got too greedy?

You've got to hand it to the chief technology officer of software firm Basecamp. Not only is the company brave enough to launch a new email service that costs \$99 a year when most major rivals are free, but it's branded the biggest tech company in the world "gangsters". There are lawyers eagerly browsing luxury car brochures in Cupertino.

Why is Basecamp so upset with Apple? For the exact same reason that Spotify, Amazon and now the EU's competition authorities are: the 30% cut that Apple demands for sales made via an iPhone or iPad app. Apple is now facing a Microsoft-style competition probe from the EU authorities, which could well result in that juicy cut from app sales being, well, cut. That may not be good news for Apple customers.

To understand why, let's look at Apple's business model. If you want your app to appear in Apple's App Store (try saying that when you've had a few

beers), you not only have to hand Apple 30% of the price of the app itself, but 30% of the first-year takings from any subscriptions or other digital goods you sell via that app, dropping to 15% for the second year onwards for subscriptions.

This has infuriated many of the great and good of technology. Ever tried buying an ebook via the Kindle or Amazon apps on an Apple device? Well, you can't, because Amazon doesn't want to give Apple 30% of the proceeds. Oddly, you can order them via the Amazon website in the Safari web browser – go figure. Spotify was so sick of Apple leeching 30% of new subscriptions that it filed a complaint with the EU, which has triggered the aforementioned investigation.

“Spotify was so sick of Apple leeching 30% of new subscriptions that it filed a complaint with the EU”

But nobody has got quite as shirty as David Heinemeier Hansson, the CTO of Basecamp, who launched that extraordinary attack on Apple in a sizzling series of tweets. “There is no chance in bloody hell that we're going to pay Apple's ransom,” he tweeted, after being informed by Apple that the company either hands over 30% of its

revenue for the new email app or faces having it ejected from the App Store. “I will burn this house down myself before I let gangsters like that spin it for spoils.

This is profoundly, perversely abusive and unfair.”

I approached Apple for comment on both the EU investigation and the Basecamp CTO's comments, but it hadn't responded at the time of going to press. It certainly feels like a moment of reckoning is coming for Apple, although that moment may be many years away once the inevitable appeals are filed and heard – assuming Apple's even found guilty in the first place.

If it is, I'd hold off dancing the victory jig around the back garden. The App Store is enormously lucrative for Apple – it generated \$519bn of revenue in 2019, according to Apple's own figures, although the slice that Apple takes its 30% cut from is worth only \$61bn, the company claims.

That's still tens of billions of dollars of revenue being placed in jeopardy, which is money that Apple won't be keen to surrender. Might your iPhones and iPads get a wee bit more expensive to counter any drop in App Store revenue? I wouldn't be the least bit surprised if they did.



Illustration: Andrew Torrens

WebUser

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GET THE NEXT ONE EARLY!

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 13 July (8pm)***, you'll receive it through your letterbox before it's available in the shops!

What's inside the next issue:

COVER FEATURE: DON'T PAY FOR SKY & VIRGIN TV

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- Set up your own Tor proxy server
- Reclaim your photos from the web

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