WINDOWS 10's NOVEMBER UPDATE

Discover its best new features before everyone else p54

WebUser

Issue 488

13 - 26 November 2019

Best software / New apps / Snail in the coffin

STOP LEAKING YOUR IDENTITY

Detect and plug the holes in your online privacy – before it's too late p40

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Issue 488

Plug your holes against hackers

I've read about burglars who break into people's homes, find nothing worth stealing and do a spot of housework to make a point. "They made the beds, vacuumed the rugs and scrubbed the toilets," reported one 'victim' (bit.ly/house488). I wonder if hackers might be similarly helpful on infiltrating my dull online accounts, perhaps tidying my inbox and fixing contrast problems in my photos. Sadly, they're more likely to use information gleaned from security breaches for nefarious purposes, which means that even minor hacks can have major consequences.

In this issue's cover feature, we explain how to discover exactly what data you're inadvertently leaking online, so you can stop hackers building a profile of you and stealing your identity. From detecting if your passwords have been compromised to reviewing your account security settings and plugging holes in your browser, we've got all the advice you need to lock down your privacy against unwelcome guests.

Robert Irvine, Editor
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#webuser

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WHY YOU NEED A TILE TRACKER Never lose ANYTHING again p38

Average sales, Jan-Dec 2018, 26,519 copies per issue

5 Things you'll learn this issue

1 How to compare maps of any two towns or cities around the world side by side **page 17**

2 How to quickly hide any running program and remove its entry from the taskbar **page 29**

3 How to force Chrome to use its secret dark mode on every website you visit **page 32**

4 How to disable the touchpad on your laptop to avoid accidentally activating it **page 67**

5 How to allow specific phone calls when your phone is in Do Not Disturb mode **page 71**

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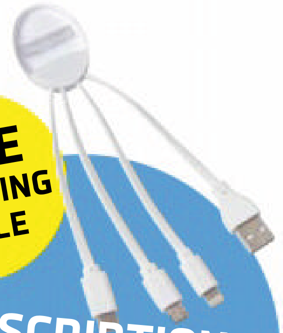
Contents



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ISSUE 488 13 - 26 NOVEMBER 2019

COVER FEATURE

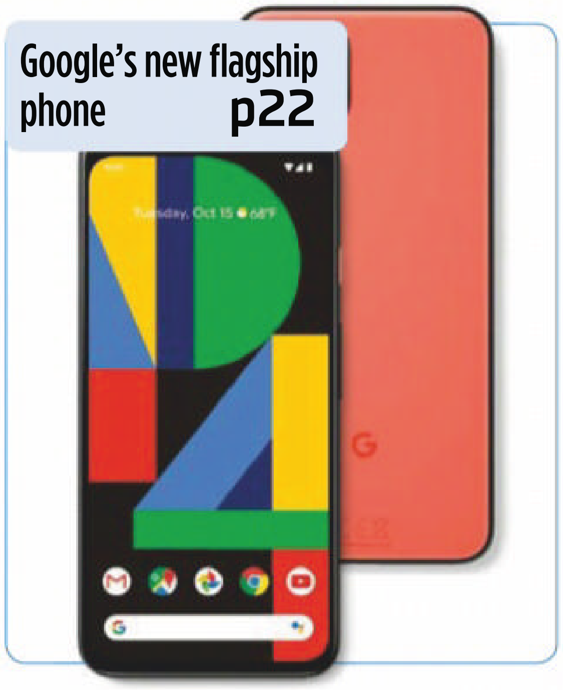
STOP LEAKING YOUR IDENTITY

Protect your data and plug the holes in your online privacy

p40

The latest expert tips for mastering WhatsApp p48

Use tracking tags to keep tabs on your stuff p38



Google's new flagship phone p22

IN DEPTH Articles on the latest tech topics

38 FAQ
Our guide to Tile trackers

40 COVER FEATURE STOP LEAKING YOUR IDENTITY
Easy ways to secure your data and privacy

46 Rename everything
Personalise your hardware

48 Secret hacks for WhatsApp
Get the most from the messaging app

50 Free office suites
The best software for your home office

REVIEWS Apps, sites and products on test

14 Best New Websites
Buy household items from Dunelm's new site

22 Product Test
- Google Pixel 4
- Echo Dot with Clock

28 Best Free Software
Edit images using Picture Window Pro 8

32 Best New Browser Tools
Discover what's new in Chrome 78

34 Best Free Apps
Google's new digital wellbeing apps

www.webuser.co.uk www.facebook.com/webusermagazine www.twitter.com/webusermagazine

FAVOURITES Must-read regulars

6 What's New Online
Create a game with Giphy Arcade

8 Need to Know
This fortnight's top tech news stories

12 Stay Safe Online
Security advice for PC and mobile

18 Build a Better Site
Expert tips, tools and practical help

20 What to Watch Online
Films and TV shows you can't miss

26 Best Buys
Our pick of the best new products

37 Take a Screen Break
Guess the emoji proverbs

Arcade
Featured Playlists
BENNO WORLD
BIG BOY MASHUP
GIMME SPACE
WENDY'S WORLD

Create a game in minutes, play it in seconds p6

60 Broadband Deals
Find the best-value package for you

72 Inbox
Tell us your views and opinions

74 Page 404
Barry stamps out snail mail

Practical WebUser

Workshops, tips, projects and problem solving

16 pages

52 Workshop 1
Discover the new iPadOS

54 Workshop 2
What's new in the Windows 10 November update

56 Workshop 3
Record your screen from a browser

57 Workshop 4
Manage your podcasts on Android

58 Weekend Project
Play old games on a Windows 10 PC

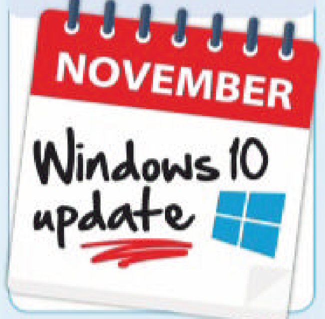
64 Web User Masterclass
Speed up Windows startup

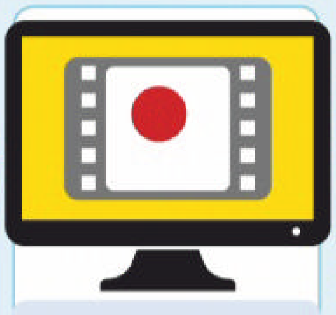
66 Ask the Expert
All your technical questions answered

69 Readers' Helpdesk
Solve other readers' problems

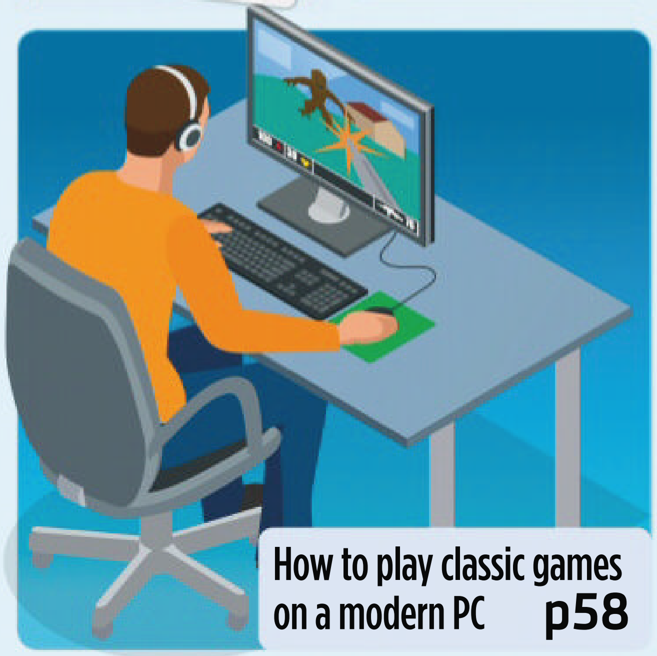
70 Readers' Tips
The best tips from our readers

Try Windows 10's new tools p54





Record your screen online p56



How to play classic games on a modern PC p58

EDITORIAL
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WEB USER
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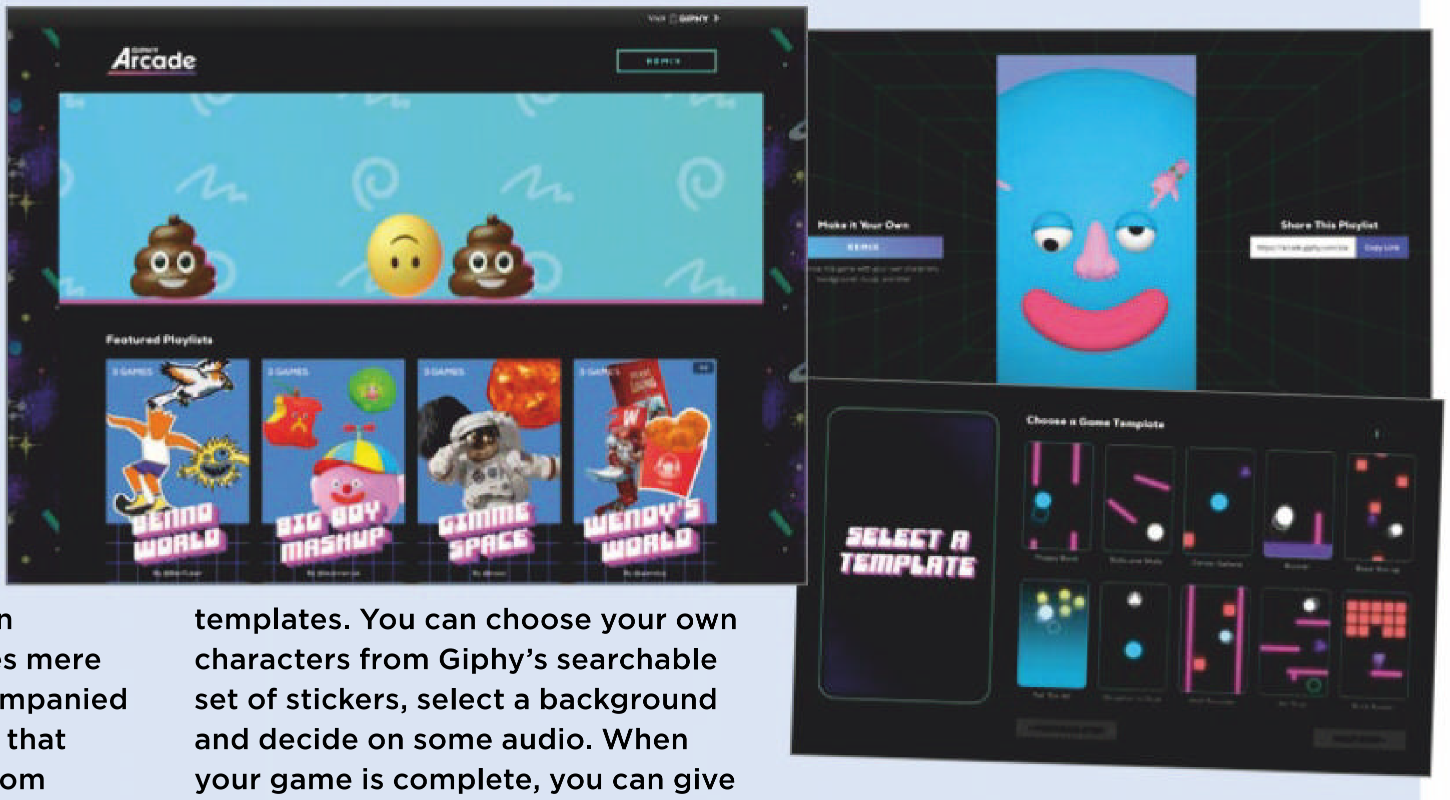
Create your own games with Giphy


GIPHY
Arcade
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BEING WORLD
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GIMME SPACE
WENDY'S WORLD
Make it Your Own
REMIX
Share This Playlist
Copy Link
SELECT A TEMPLATE
Choose a Game Template

The popular GIF search engine Giphy has launched a new platform called Arcade, which lets you play and share micro-games featuring retro-style graphics and stickers.

Many of the games are clones of classics, such as Breakout and Asteroids – you simply visit the website on your PC or mobile device, choose a title and drag or press on the screen to move the main characters. Each game takes mere seconds to play and is accompanied by music and sound effects that could have come straight from the 1980s.

What makes the service most intriguing, however, is the ability to remix the games and create titles from scratch by selecting one of 10 templates. You can choose your own characters from Giphy's searchable set of stickers, select a background and decide on some audio. When your game is complete, you can give it a title before having a play.

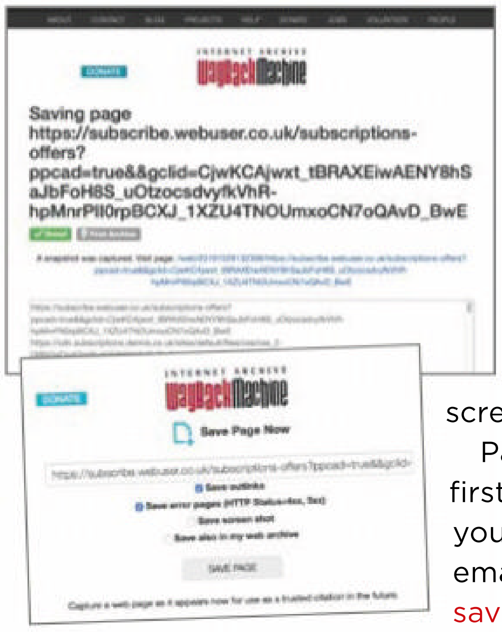
The entire creation process can take less than a minute to complete and the results can be shared with others. Players are then free to remix and share your game, increasing the level of engagement. We expect more templates, games and options to appear as time goes on.

arcade.giphy.com

Quickly save web pages to the Internet Archive

web.archive.org/save

Users of the Internet Archive's Wayback Machine manually submit millions of web pages for archiving every day. This freezes a page in time and makes it available for subsequent viewing via the archive – an invaluable service for anyone looking for an earlier version of a website.


INTERNET ARCHIVE
WaybackMachine
DONATE
Save Page Now
Save outlinks
Save error pages (HTTP Status=4xx, 5xx)
Save screen shot
Save also in my web archive
SAVE PAGE

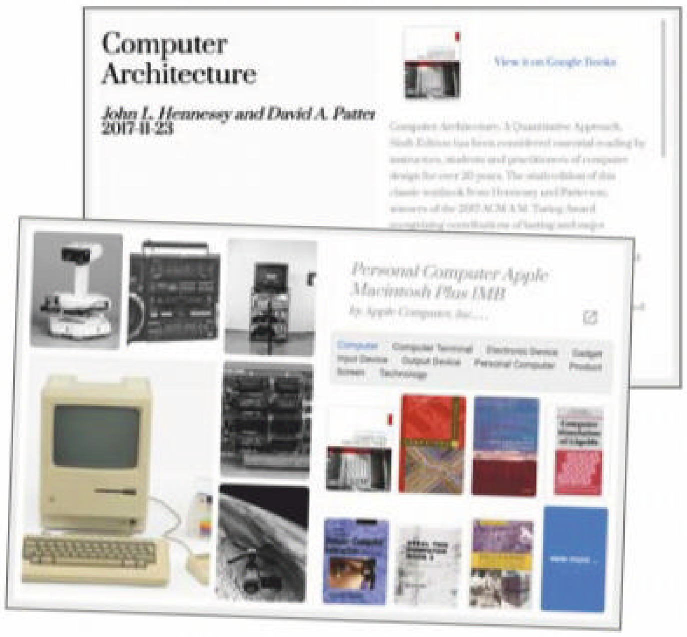
Saving page https://subscribe.webuser.co.uk/subscriptions-offers?ppcad=true&&gclid=CjwKCAjwxt_tBRAXEiwAENY8hSaJbFoH8S_uOtzocsdvyfkVhR-hpMnrPlI0rpBCXJ_1XZU4TNOUmxoCN7oQAvD_BwE

Capture a web page as it appears now for use as a trusted citation in the future

The archiving process has now been made easier – when you visit the Save Page Now section and enter a URL, just click Save Outlinks to capture the page and all linked pages and embedded resources, including the HTML, JavaScript and images, along with a screenshot of the archived pages.

Pages being archived for the first time are now flagged up and you can also archive pages via email, by sending them to savepagenow@archive.org. The Wayback Machine is keen to encourage more archiving by introducing leaderboards for a more competitive edge.

Explore stories using an image


View it on Google Books

Computer Architecture

John L. Hennessy and David A. Patter
2017-11-23

Personal Computer Apple Macintosh Plus IMB
by Apple Computer, Inc....

bit.ly/stories488

A picture paints a thousand words and it seems Google Arts & Culture is taking this literally. To celebrate the 15th anniversary of Google Books, it is inviting you to flick through a virtual tome of facts and random images. By clicking a photo, the experiment will use machine learning – notably via the Google Cloud Vision API and Natural Language Processing – to connect the image to content from Google Books. It'll then give you some recommendations.

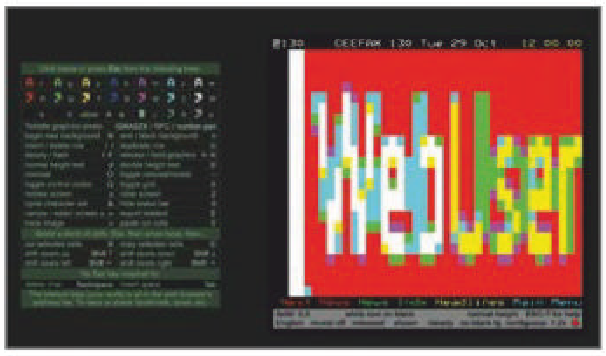
Selecting View More shows an even larger number of suggested reads, each of which is accompanied by a synopsis and a link to Google Books. When you click through, you can see where you can make a purchase. It's also possible to search for the book in libraries and see more work by the author.

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

Convert photos into Teletext images

bit.ly/teletext488

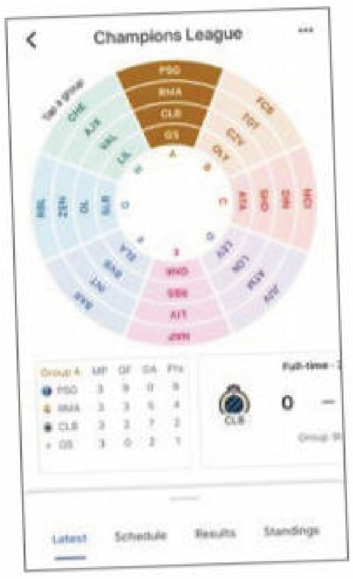
By dragging an image file into the blue box within this primitive-looking tool, you can create a blocky image that can then be instantly imported into one of two online Teletext editors. Sharp images work best and your work within the editors is saved as the URL you've landed at, to make it easy to share.



Follow Champions League football

news.google.co.uk

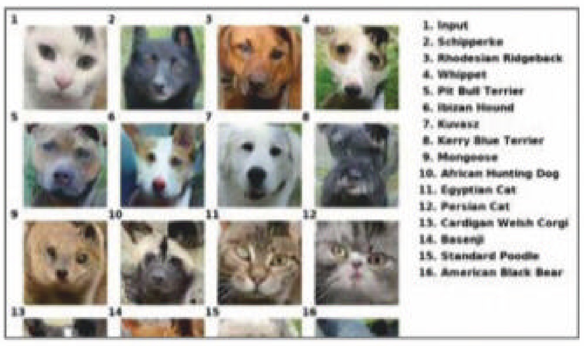
Although it kicked off after the start of the tournament, Google News' new Champions League hub should prove a winner with football fans. It lets you see the latest results, tables and imminent fixtures, and provides a wealth of media reports on matches and individual clubs, along with a selection of relevant tweets. The service works via the web, as well as in the Google News apps for iOS and Android (the app has an interactive wheel that lets you view specific groups). To follow the action, type 'Champions League' into Google News and select the entry marked 'topic'.



Put your pet's face on another animal

bit.ly/pet488

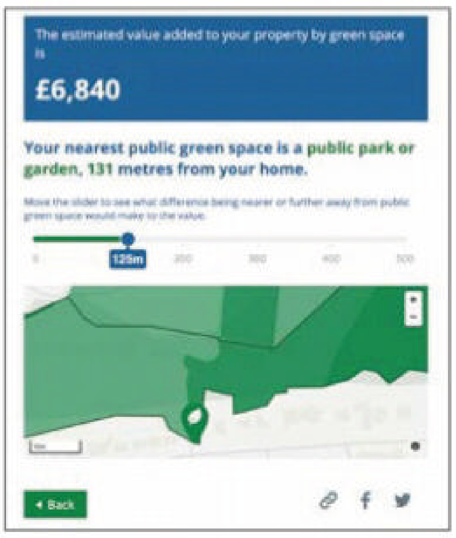
Ganimal is a quirky AI tool from Nvidia that uses a generative adversarial network (or GAN) to recreate your pet's expression and pose on other mammals – a tricky and impressive technological feat but, from a user perspective, as easy as uploading a photo of your pet and selecting Translate. The tool has been tested on Firefox and Chrome (we found it didn't work in Safari), and you can also read the academic paper and download the code from GitHub.



See how green space affects property prices

bit.ly/green488

According to the Office of National Statistics, living near public parks, gardens and playing fields increases the value of a property. To see the amount of money green space adds to the price of your home, enter your postcode and property price into this tool, then move the slider to see how much difference it would make if you lived further away.


The estimated value added to your property by green space is

£6,840

Your nearest public green space is a public park or garden, 131 metres from your home.

Move the slider to see what difference being nearer or further away from public green space would make to the value.

NEW VOICE COMMANDS

Move your music around

If you have more than one Google smart speaker, and have assigned a room to each device, you can choose where your music plays. Say "Hey Google, move the music to [room]".

Delete Siri recordings

Upgrade to iOS 13.2 and you can delete your Siri history. In your iPhone's settings, Tap Siri & Search, Siri & Dictation History and select 'Delete Siri & Dictation history'.

Get quick inspiration

Suffering from creative block? Say "Alexa, open Adobe Inspiration Engine" to enjoy inspiring quotes and creative exercises. You can also discover what kind of creative type you are by taking a probing quiz.

Create a pub-name crawl

bit.ly/pub488

There are 339 pubs in the UK called the Red Lion, 258 Royal Oaks and 10 Golden Balls. Select a name and see how many miles you'd need to crawl to sup in them all. Each one is mapped and listed with its address.

Grab a macOS screensaver

bit.ly/mac488

Podcaster Adam Garrett-Harris has curated an impressive set of Mac screensavers, including clocks, the Star Wars scroll, a Matrix-style animation and videos of aquariums. Most can be downloaded for free.

Download a 3D moon map

bit.ly/moon488

Designed to be used with 3D rendering software, this set of moon maps has been created using data from NASA's Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter. They represent a detailed picture of the lunar surface, with accurate topography down to a level of 100 feet.

Need to Know

Twitter bans political ads ahead of General Election

Credit: chrisdorney / Shutterstock.com

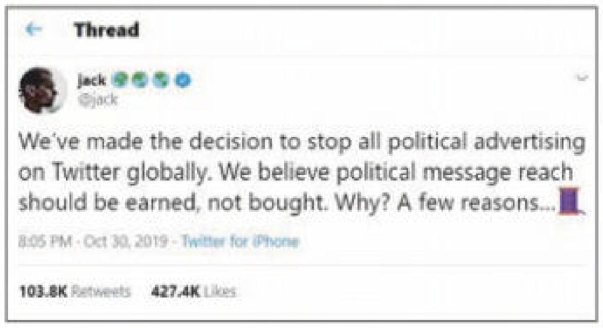
What happened?

Twitter has confirmed that it will ban political advertising amid criticism of the impact of social networks on democracy, but Facebook doesn't look set to follow its rival's lead.

Twitter's plans were revealed in a series of tweets by co-founder and CEO Jack Dorsey, saying: "We believe political message reach should be earned, not bought". Part of the motivation, he said, was the company's efforts to address misleading messages and fake news in politics, which is made especially problematic if politicians and their followers can simply pay to spread a targeted message that says whatever they want. "It's not credible for us to say: we're working hard to stop people from gaming the system to spread misleading info, but if someone pays us to target and force people to see their political ad... well... they can say whatever they want." He ended that tweet with a winking emoji.

Twitter will not only ban candidates from taking out ads during an election, but all adverts relating to political issues, though it's not clear exactly what that means. Dorsey said the move was to avoid issue-led ads being used to circumvent the political ad ban because a politician or their supporters could buy ads promoting their stance on a partisan issue – Brexit in the UK or gun control in the US, for example. There will be a few exceptions, with Dorsey noting that ads in support of voter registration will be allowed.

The move immediately sparked questions about whether rival social network Facebook would follow suit but, so far, the answer is a resounding 'no'. Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg said on a company conference call that the social network would continue to accept political advertising, despite the format only contributing 0.5% of the company's revenue.



We've made the decision to stop all political advertising on Twitter globally. We believe political message reach should be earned, not bought. Why? A few reasons...

8:05 PM · Oct 30, 2019 · Twitter for iPhone

103.8K Retweets 427.4K Likes

Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey tweeted plans to ban political ads on the social network

Zuckerberg's argument is that political ads are useful tools for smaller, emerging parties and groups, giving challengers a voice against incumbents who already have a substantial base of followers. Whether or not that argument holds weight, it seems Facebook will continue to allow paid-for political ads for the UK general election on 12 December.

How will it affect you?

The full details of Twitter's political ad ban will be unveiled in mid-November, with enforcement beginning on 22 November, which suggests parties and contenders in the UK's general election can advertise for the first few weeks on Twitter but will then have to halt that aspect of their campaign.

Of course, politicians and their supporters can still campaign on the site by relying on die-hard supporters sharing and retweeting their messages. But, after the 22nd, they will no longer be able to pay to target specific groups of people, so you shouldn't see any political ads from someone you don't follow. None of this will stop people spreading propaganda and misinformation but at least they'll have to convince others to share it before anyone else sees it, which will hopefully limit and slow the spread.

There are, however, concerns about the impact of the ban on smaller parties and groups, who may struggle more to get their message out. Social media is an effective advertising tool that they've now lost. Dorsey argues that plenty of social movements have reached a "massive scale" without any advertising, but doesn't name any examples.

What do we think?

This probably won't have a big impact on the general election, though we look forward to any research on the effect of this attempt to clean up social media for politics. Twitter feels very important when you're on it – and many journalists are – but with 16 million UK users (according to the London School of Economics), it's much less popular than Facebook, with its whopping 42 million UK users, which must surely cover most voters in this country.

Facebook has so far refused to block political ads, but Twitter's efforts may increase the pressure on it to do so, which we think would be good news for everyone. As Dorsey notes, social media has an impact on our democratic infrastructure and we should take the time to understand its effects.

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

WhatsApp adds Android fingerprint unlocking

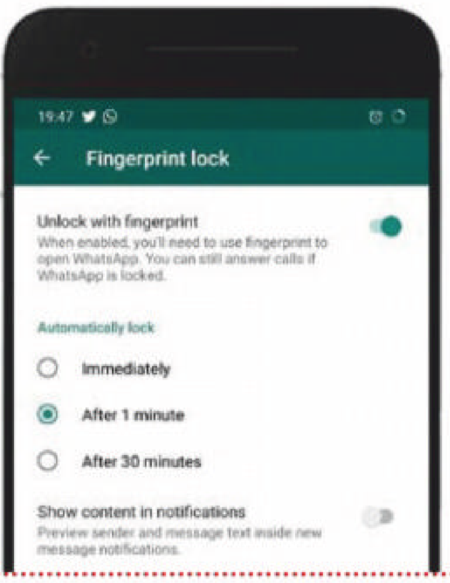
What happened?

Tired of tapping a PIN into your phone to protect your WhatsApp chats? If your Android phone has a fingerprint scanner, you can now use it to keep nosy parkers from reading your private conversations, though this comes months after the same feature was introduced in the iOS version of the app.

The new feature means you use your smartphone's fingerprint scanner to open the app, even after unlocking your phone, which makes it impossible for someone else to pick up your handset and read your messages. So far, there are no plans to add facial recognition for phones that support it.

How will it affect you?

Fingerprint unlocking will work on all versions of Android with a scanner, provided WhatsApp has been updated to at least version 2.19.222. To enable the feature, open WhatsApp and go to Settings, Account, Privacy. There, you'll see a 'Fingerprint lock' page, which lets you turn on the feature and set a length of time before the app automatically locks – immediately, after one minute or after half an hour.



Unlock with fingerprint ●

When enabled, you'll need to use fingerprint to open WhatsApp. You can still answer calls if WhatsApp is locked.

Automatically lock

○ Immediately
● After 1 minute
○ After 30 minutes

Show content in notifications ○

Preview sender and message text inside new message notifications.

If your phone starts to ring with a WhatsApp call, there's no need to fiddle with a fingerprint because you can answer calls without unlocking the app.

What do we think?

It makes sense for apps to use advanced security features such as fingerprint recognition, not least because it makes them faster to unlock and saves you having to memorise yet another PIN or password. But it's worth remembering that this only protects you from someone picking up your phone and reading your messages, not against hackers cracking the app and accessing your data, and it won't stop WhatsApp suffering security breaches and flaws. The new option is worth enabling, but you should also turn on two-factor authentication if you haven't already – for WhatsApp and other apps and accounts.

See our feature on page 48 for more secret tips for WhatsApp.

Firefox blocks sideloading of extensions

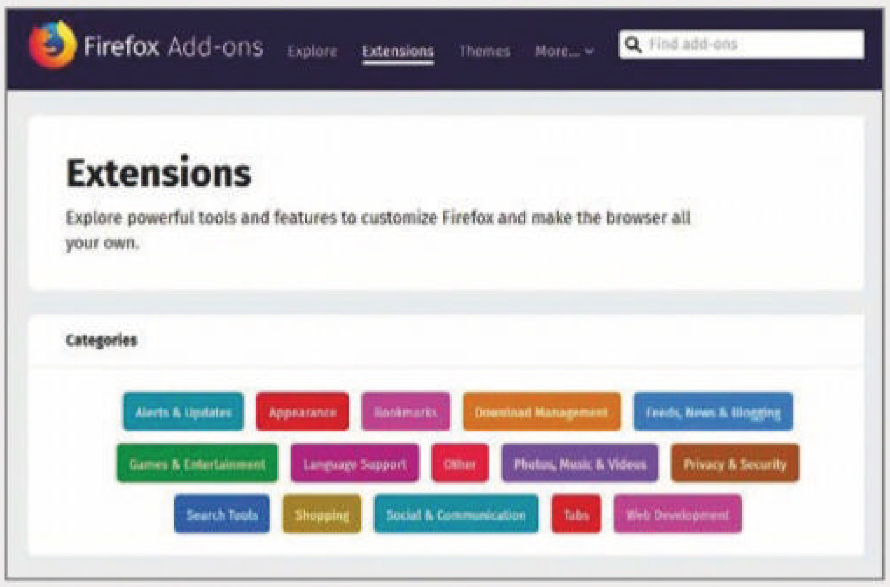
What happened?

Browser developer Mozilla is set to end support for sideloading extensions into Firefox to combat security threats from unofficial sources.

Most Firefox extensions are installed via the official Mozilla Add-ons repository (addons.mozilla.org) but you can also get them from other sources. Sometimes, the only way to get a certain add-on is to download it to a specific location on your PC, but this means the extension runs on all instances of Firefox on that computer, even on user profiles that haven't actually installed the tool. That's a problem if the extension contains malware or causes compatibility issues with the browser, and means that other Firefox users on your computer may not be able to find and delete the extension.

How will it affect you?

Firefox will stop support for sideloading extensions over two phases. In version 73, it will still accept sideloaded files but they'll be moved to the user's individual profile and installed as a regular add-on, so you won't lose any of your sideloaded add-ons. Version 73 is in beta release, as of the beginning of December, with the stable version following in February 2020. In the next version of the browser, scheduled for release in March, sideloading will be completely unsupported and users will get the ability to delete installed sideloaded extensions more easily.



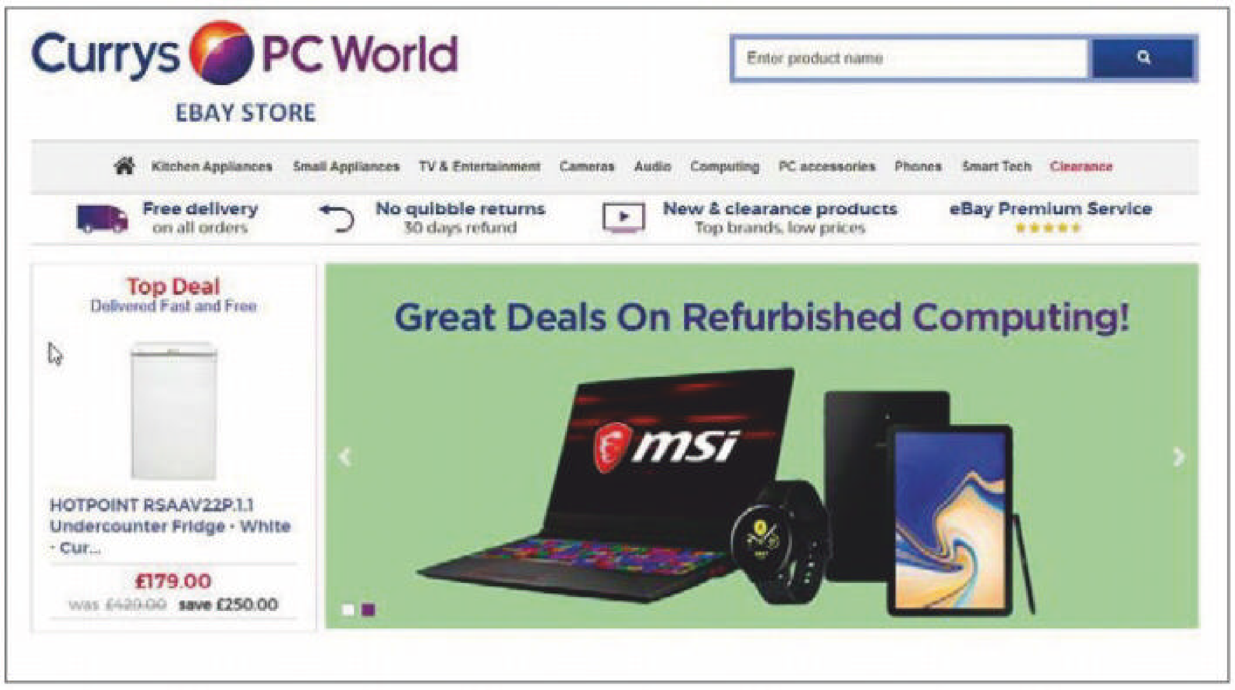
Extensions

Explore powerful tools and features to customize Firefox and make the browser all your own.

What do we think?

This move will catch a few users out, but it's a better way to manage browser extensions going forward and follows a similar decision by Google last year to block add-ons from outside the Chrome Web Store. By making the shift in two stages, no-one should lose an add-on they want to keep, but plenty of users will be able to get rid of those that were installed by someone else using their computer. It's a sensible solution to a small problem that has been causing a lot of headaches.

Currys PC World customers scammed via eBay



What happened?

Customers who purchased items from Currys PC World's eBay shop may have made an expensive mistake, after hundreds of payments were redirected by scammers on 19 and 20 October. Criminals were able to gain access to Currys PC World's eBay account where they changed payment information for certain listings to funnel the cash straight into their own PayPal account.

The scam is believed to have hit around 600 customers, and included listings for popular consumer items such as the new iPhone 11. Since the email address used by the fraudsters' fake PayPal account was similar to the official Currys PC World email address, few victims took any notice. That meant customers made their payments to the con artists rather than the retailer.

While we're all becoming used to the regular signs of an online scam – clues such as incorrect spelling and poor grammar – the fact that criminals were able to gain access to a real account would have made this case particularly difficult to spot and avoid.

How will it affect you?

If you're one of the unlucky 600, then take comfort because your money should be returned to you soon. PayPal has been reversing the transactions, and advises that any customers who don't see the money reappear in their account should raise a case through using the 'item not received' query.

For everyone else, there's still an important lesson to be learned: we need to be more vigilant than ever against online fraud. While it might be easy enough to ignore obviously fake accounts or phishing emails, scammers are getting more sophisticated by the day. Always double-check all payment details when transferring money, even if it's a routine transaction.

What do we think?

Currys PC World and eBay have acted reasonably quickly in shutting down this scam but it should never have occurred in the first place and there are serious questions that need to be answered. How did criminals get access to a national company's eBay account? How was the payment information changed without anyone noticing? It hints at a worrying lack of security, and it's critical that the tech retailer launches a thorough investigation to find out how this happened and how it can be avoided in the future.

This news also highlights one of the real benefits of shopping with PayPal: its consumer protections have made it relatively easy for anybody affected by scams to get their money back.

FIRST LOOK

Amazon Echo Buds

bit.ly/echobud488

First Apple, then Microsoft and now it's Amazon's turn to jump on the earbud bandwagon. The launch of its Echo Buds has been somewhat overshadowed by the near-simultaneous release of Apple's new, upgraded AirPods. However, despite having its rich and bassy thunder stolen, Amazon's first foray into smart earbuds is largely a success.

The Echo Buds buck the all-white trend for earbuds and are only available in black. Amazon's Echo smart speakers have been praised for their excellent sound quality and this carries over to the Echo Buds. Audio quality is crisp and clear, and the buds employ Bose's noise-reduction technology, though it's a far cry from the Apple AirPods' new noise-cancelling feature.

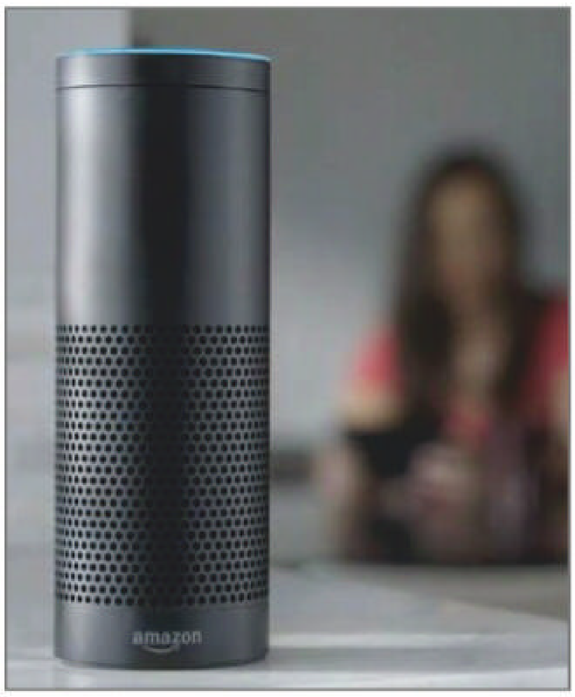
As you'd expect from Amazon, Alexa lives inside the buds. The smart assistant can be summoned with the wake word, thanks to the microphone buried within the shell. You can turn this off if you don't fancy having Alexa eavesdrop on you while you listen to podcasts, but be warned: switching off the microphone means you can't use the Echo Buds for calls. If you'd rather go Alexa-free, just ignore the terms and conditions of the Alexa phone app and connect via Bluetooth instead. Despite the voice assistant's appeal, it's not essential to the Echo Bud experience.

While the design of the Echo Buds is sleek and comfortable, Amazon has made an odd choice with the charger, which is powered by MicroUSB rather than the newer, faster USB-C – and there's no wireless charging option, either. For serious tech-heads, that may make them a less attractive proposition but, for most everyday users, it's unlikely to be a deal-breaker. Playback lasts around five hours on an average charge.

Compared to the Apple's £249 price tag for its AirPods, Amazon's Echo Buds are a bargain at just £119, and we suspect they'll be further discounted for Black Friday.

WHAT'S THE RUMOUR

Are smart speakers still spying on you?



Hackers may still be able to eavesdrop on your conversations via smart speakers, rumours suggest. Eavesdropping vectors and phishing scams, which get users to hand over private data, were first discovered in both Amazon Echo and Google Home devices in 2018.

You'd assume that by now the companies would have figured out how to prevent this from happening. Yet two researchers from hacking consultancy Security Research Labs assert that criminals are continuing to gain access to user data and conversations.

It seems that third-party apps could be to blame. Google and Amazon both offer back-ends to developers to create Home- and Alexa-based apps. When cybercriminals add the � symbol to the back-end, it forces the smart speaker to remain silent but active, as hackers listen in. Users are then asked for data, such as passwords, under the guise of checking your Google or Amazon credentials.

It's thought the issue lies with Amazon and Google's app-vetting services. While apps are checked for net nasties in the first instance, it's unclear whether subsequent updates – which may contain these malicious lines of code – are also scanned.

Neither Google nor Amazon has confirmed the rumour but they do state, more generally, that countermeasures are already in place and that no device will ever request your password.

LIKELIHOOD RATING

✓✓✓✓✓

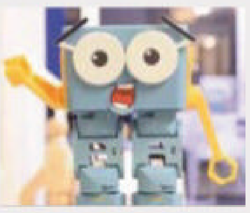
Google and Amazon's non-denials are suspicious and, thanks to 2018's litany of hacks, we know the spying is possible. It's such a simple hack, too, so we expect both companies to feel embarrassed. As well they should – this is our data, after all. However, we don't doubt they both take corrective steps each time a breach like this is found. But, for now, when you see the light on your smart speaker stay on, be aware that someone may be eavesdropping on you.

What's new on Kickstarter

Our favourite new project on the crowdfunding site

Marty the Robot

bit.ly/marty488 | **From £110**



Meet Marty, a robot designed to help kids learn how to code. Program this expressive automaton to walk, dance, shake hands and play sounds using Python, JavaScript and even your Raspberry Pi. Marty is filled with sensors and motors to keep him on the go. The kit comes with a variety of accessories, including grabbing hands, which can also be coded. If you opt for the lowest-priced pledge, you'll have to assemble the robot yourself – but then, that's half the fun. Prices start at £110 for the full kit and pledges of £140 get you a pre-assembled Marty, while £175 includes every accessory.

WEBOMETER

WE LIKE...

↑ Revamped Edge browser gets new logo

Microsoft has unveiled the new logo for its upcoming Chromium-based Edge browser, which is deliberately designed to look different from Internet Explorer. The icon was revealed in an 'Easter egg' hunt in the Edge Insider channel.

↑ Photoshop now available for iPad

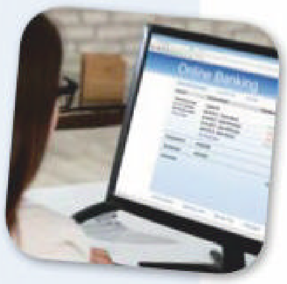
Adobe Photoshop has finally arrived on the iPad, a year after it was announced. The professional image-editing software is free to use for 30 days, after which you'll need a Creative Cloud subscription to continue using the app.

WE DON'T LIKE...

↓ Warning over malicious Android app

Android users have been urged to uninstall an emoji keyboard app called Ai.type, which delivers invisible ads and secretly signs victims up for premium digital services. The app has been downloaded more than 40 million times.

↓ Customers left cashless by online banks



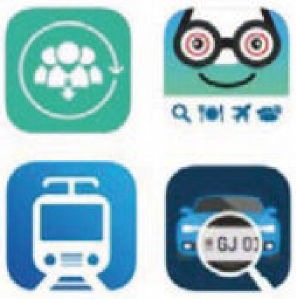
Online banking services have been criticised by MPs for an "unacceptable" level of crashes and disruption to customers, who are being left "cashless and cut off". The banks now face more regulation and increased financial levies.

Stay Safe Online

News about the latest threats and advice from security experts

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

Trojan malware found in 17 iOS apps



Apple has removed 17 malicious apps from its App Store and advised iPhone and iPad users to uninstall them immediately. The apps were discovered by mobile security company Wandera, which found them to contain a form of Trojan called 'clickware'. This is designed to open web pages and click ads in the background without the user's knowledge.

The 17 apps span a variety of categories including video, fitness and travel, and were all developed by AppAspect Technologies Pvt. Ltd, a company based in India. They receive commands from a control server to surreptitiously load adverts, open websites and even change device settings to subscribe users to expensive services.

"Clicker Trojan is a well understood class of malware that performs ad fraud by making frequent connections to ad networks or websites in order to artificially inflate visitor counts or to generate revenue on a pay-per-click basis," said Wandera.

The full list of infected apps can be found at the link below.

bit.ly/clickware488

NordVPN hit by security breach

NordVPN has admitted that it was hacked in March 2018. The VPN service said that an expired internal private key – a tool that provides and secures machine identity – became exposed, allowing the attacker to set up insecure NordVPN imitation servers.

By exploiting a remote management system, the hacker managed to gain access to one of NordVPN's servers, which had only been active for about a month. This server gave the hacker access to some of the encryption keys that secure NordVPN user data.

The company said that: "No user credentials have been intercepted. No other server on our network has been affected. The affected server does not exist anymore and the contract with the server provider has been terminated."

While the breach occurred more than a year ago, NordVPN only discovered it "a few months ago", and did not reveal its existence until recently due to security concerns. In the wake of the breach, NordVPN said it is "taking all the necessary means to enhance [its] security".

bit.ly/nordvpn488

Security Helpdesk | Your questions answered by security specialists

THIS ISSUE'S EXPERT: Vladimir Kuskov, security expert at Kaspersky (www.kaspersky.co.uk)

Q How worried should we be about the rise of 'stalkerware' (bit.ly/stalker488)?

Peter Hendricks, Twitter

A So-called stalkerware apps make it possible to intrude on your private life. By using them, an abuser can access their victim's messages, photos, social media, geolocation and audio or camera recordings (in some cases, this can be done in real time).

Unlike legitimate parental-control tools, stalkerware apps run hidden in the background, without a victim's knowledge or consent. They are often promoted as software for spying on a partner and may need to be installed manually on the victim's phone, so the abuser needs physical access to the device.

At Kaspersky, we have in the last few months increased the ability of our products to detect stalkerware, and will continue to do so as we support the fight against stalkers.

> "Stalkerware apps run hidden in the background, without a victim's knowledge or consent"

To avoid being monitored by stalkers, Kaspersky recommends:

- Blocking the installation of programs from unknown sources in your smartphone's settings
- Never disclosing the password or passcode to your mobile device, even to someone you trust
- Never storing unfamiliar files or applications on your device, as they could harm your privacy
- Changing all security settings on your mobile device if you are leaving a relationship
- Checking the list of applications on the device to find out if suspicious programs were installed without your consent
- Using a reliable security solution, such as Kaspersky Internet Security, to detect spyware programs aimed at invading your privacy on your phone.

msi
intel
CORE i7
10TH GEN

CREATE TIMELESS MOMENTS

THE ULTIMATE 6-CORE PROCESSOR FOR FAST-PACED CREATORS

Prestige 14 / 15

TRUE PIXEL DISPLAY (Optional)

THUNDERBOLT™

10 hrs Productivity up to 10 hrs

| UP TO 10th GEN. INTEL® CORE™ i7 PROCESSORS |
| WINDOWS 10 HOME / WINDOWS 10 PRO |
| UP TO NVIDIA® GEFORCE® GTX 1650 |

WHERE TO BUY

MSI.COM

SCAN
Scan Computers
www.scan.co.uk
0871 472 4747

BOX
Box Ltd
www.box.co.uk
0121 202 0030

Scan Computers / www.scan.co.uk / 0871 472 4747
Box Ltd / www.box.co.uk / 0121 202 0030
Scan Computers / www.scan.co.uk / 0871 472 4747

Scan to Learn more

*Intel, the Intel Logo, Intel Inside, Intel Core, and Core Inside are trademarks of Intel Corporation or its subsidiaries in the U.S. and/or other countries.
*Product features and specification may vary by model.

Best New Websites

Site of the Fortnight

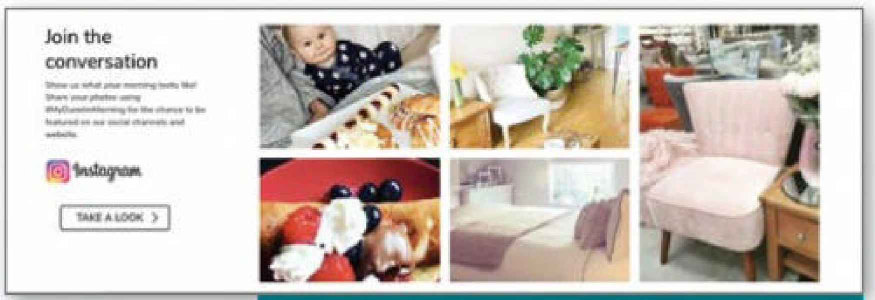
SHOPPING **RELAUNCH**

Dunelm

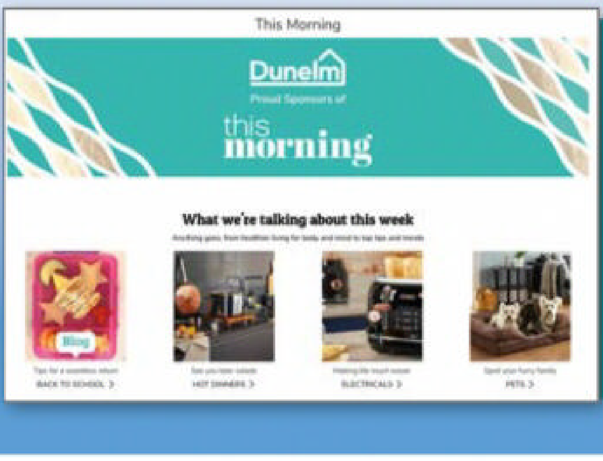
www.dunelm.com

Dunelm's new website has been planned since the company acquired Worldstores – the UK's largest online home and garden retailer – in 2016, and it promises easier, faster shopping with added style and inspiration. The appealing images, clean, responsive design and manageable number of featured homepage products create a sophisticated feel, while a drop-down navigation bar lets you find categories in a flash and the filters cover an exhaustive set of options. Product pages are beautifully laid out, with expandable sections and plenty of detail. Checkout is also swift, with just a few required clicks and PayPal acceptance.

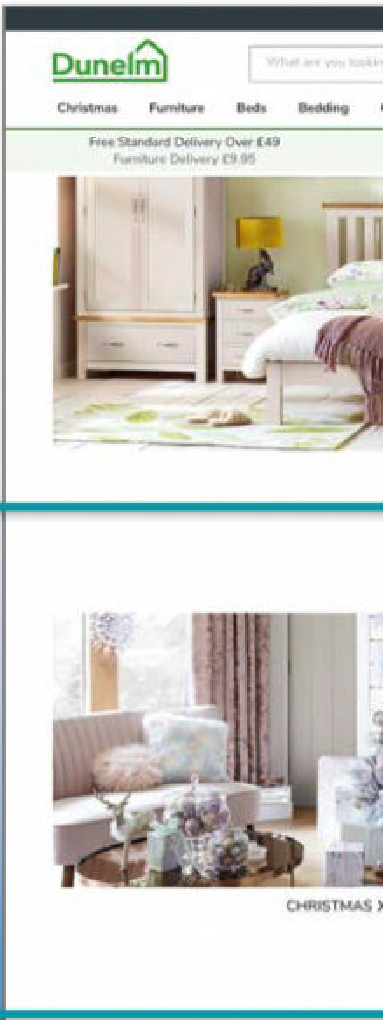
Our rating ★★★★★

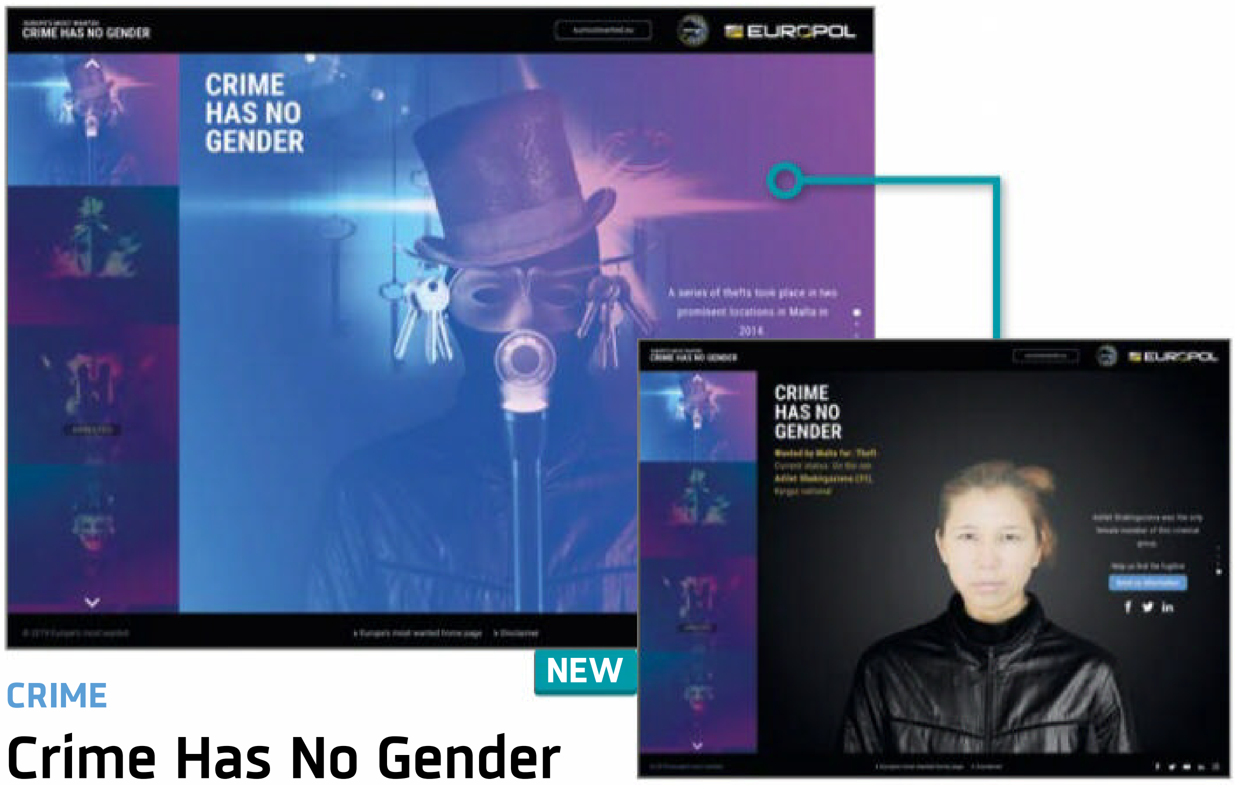

Join the conversation
Instagram
TAKE A LOOK

SOCIAL MEDIA
The company encourages customers to take photos of its products and tag them #MyDunelmMorning


This Morning
Dunelm
Proud Sponsors of
this morning
What we're talking about this week
Blog

FIND INSPIRATION
When Dunelm items are featured on *This Morning*, you can easily view and buy them online


Dunelm
What are you lookin
Christmas
Furniture
Beds
Bedding
Free Standard Delivery Over £49
Furniture Delivery £9.95
CHRISTMAS


CRIME HAS NO GENDER
EUROPOL
A series of thefts took place in two prominent locations in Malta in 2016
CRIME HAS NO GENDER

NEW

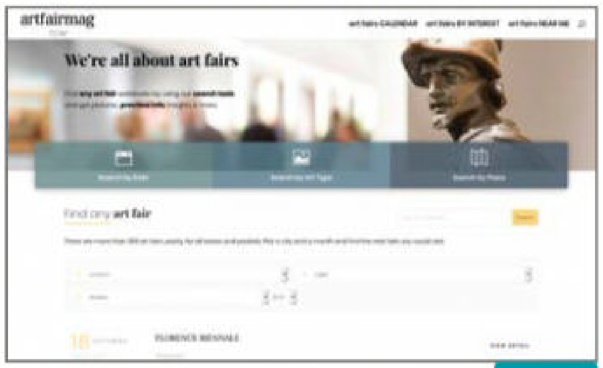
CRIME

Crime Has No Gender

bit.ly/crime488

Highlighting that women are just as capable as men of commiting serious crimes, this interactive website from Europol uses innovative means to unveil the policing agency's most wanted suspects: click a picture of a masked fugitive and scroll to read about their crimes. By the end, each face is revealed, with 18 of the 20 suspected criminals being female (a 21st has already been arrested). Although the details provided lack depth, the stylish site hopes to encourage visitors to submit information via an online form. It also makes it easy to share the felons' profiles on social media as it seeks to engage the internet in EU-wide man- (and woman-) hunts.

Our rating ★★★★☆


artfairmag
We're all about art fairs
Find any art fair

NEW

ART

Art Fair Mag

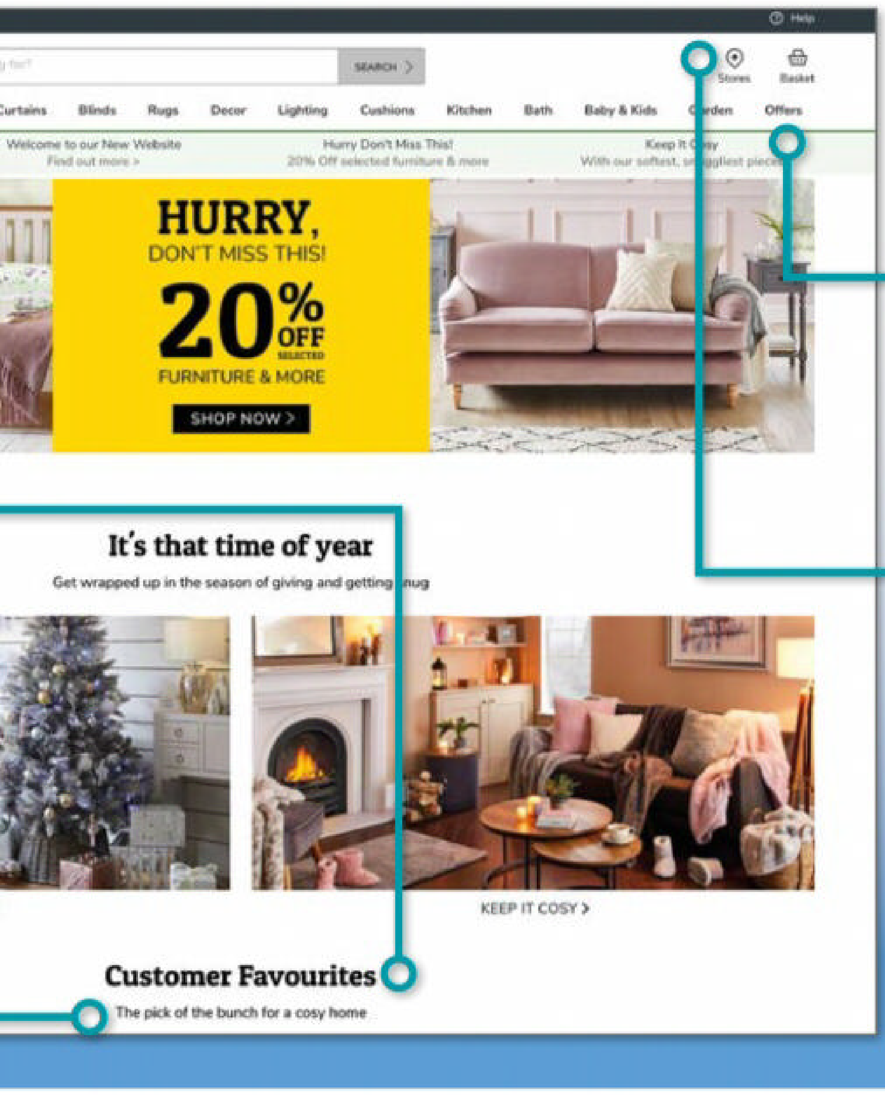
www.artfairmag.com

This new website rounds up the world's best art fairs and looks set to appeal to anyone with a love of art, including artists, dealers and collectors. Ironically, it's no masterpiece of design, but it does its job well, letting you search by date, art type and place, while also showing a calendar of forthcoming events. The drop-down menus make searching the content easy and cover a huge number of cities (not all of which have imminent fairs), while each event includes a handy overview with a panel of practical information. With website links and email contacts, it's a very well-framed offering.

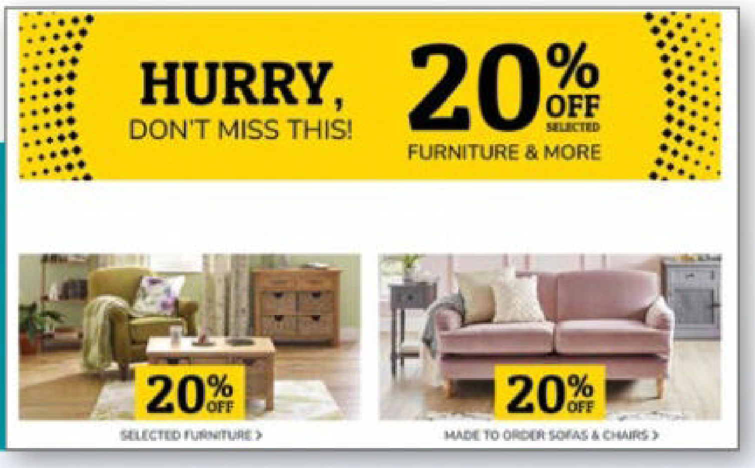
Our rating ★★★★☆

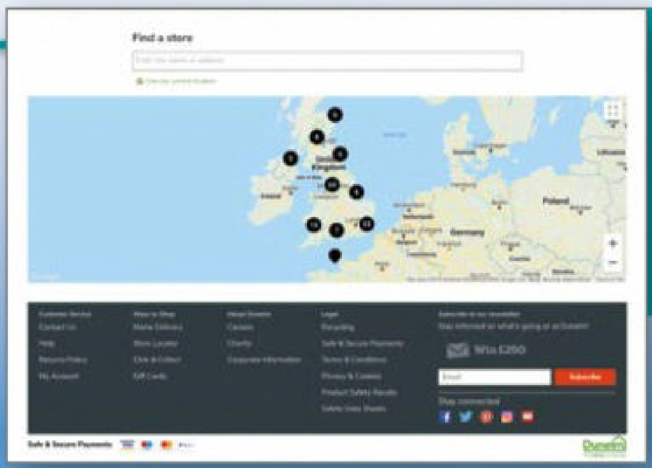
Reviews by David Crookes

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

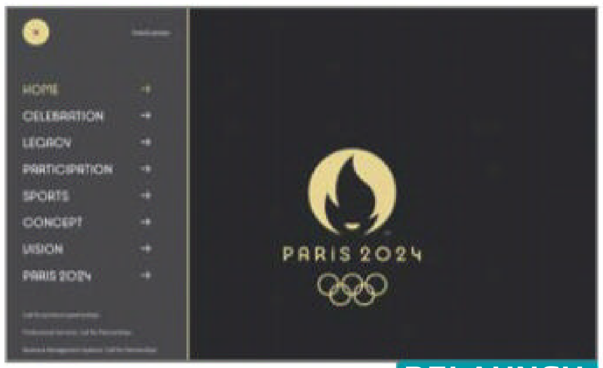

HURRY,
DON'T MISS THIS!
20% OFF SELECTED
FURNITURE & MORE
SHOP NOW >
It's that time of year
Get wrapped up in the season of giving and getting snug
KEEP IT COSY >
Customer Favourites
The pick of the bunch for a cosy home

VIEW OFFERS
You can instantly see the latest discounts being offered by Dunelm on selected products


HURRY,
DON'T MISS THIS!
20% OFF SELECTED
FURNITURE & MORE
20% OFF
SELECTED FURNITURE >
20% OFF
MADE TO ORDER SOFAS & CHAIRS >


Find a store

FIND STORES
Currently, items are only being offered for home delivery but 'click and collect' is on its way


HOME
CELEBRATION
LEGACY
PARTICIPATION
SPORTS
CONCEPT
VISION
PARIS 2024
PARIS 2024
RELAUNCH

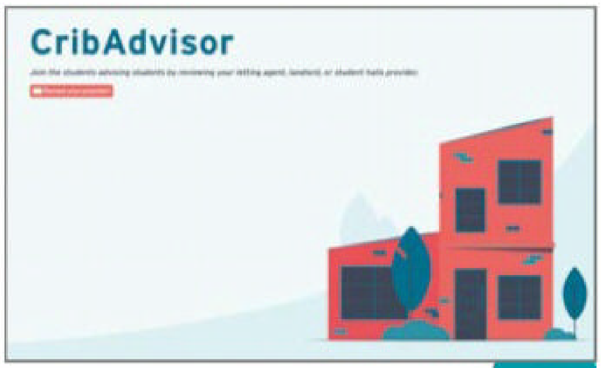
SPORT

Paris 2024

www.paris2024.org/en

When Paris 2024 unveiled its emblem for the Olympic and Paralympic Games, it was promptly ridiculed on social media and compared to the Tinder logo. You can discover the thinking and inspiration behind the design on the event's website, play around with the font and learn why it works well with digital dark modes. Currently, the emblem takes precedence over the event itself but, as it's still about five years away, that's perhaps understandable. There's general talk of celebration, legacy and participation but we expect photos of venues and details of sports to come soon.

Our rating ★★★☆☆


CribAdvisor
NEW

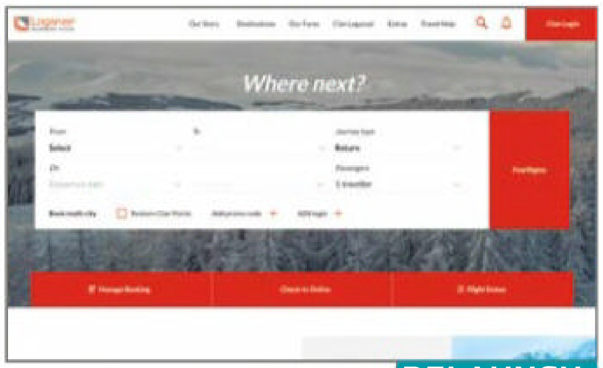
ACCOMMODATION

CribAdvisor

cribadvisor.uk

Having lived in substandard student digs during her time at university, graduate Natasha Hopewell is using this site to highlight the problems caused by poor properties. By asking students to review their letting agent, landlord or student halls provider, the aim is to give future tenants a good idea of what they're getting into before signing their agreements. Despite a bias towards Lincoln and no way to manually search for properties or instantly see where they are located, CribAdvisor has great potential but needs work. We like the helpful section on tenant rights, though.

Our rating ★★★☆☆


Where next?
RELAUNCH

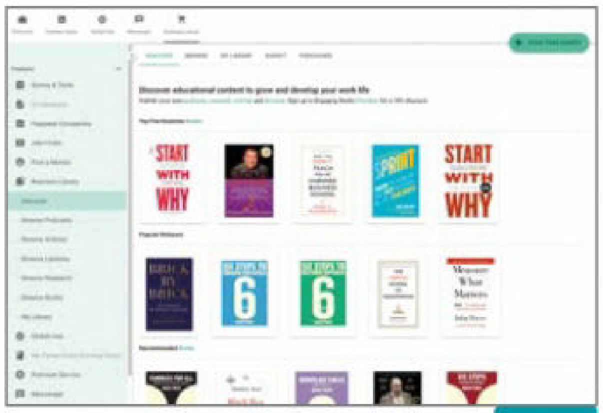
FLIGHTS

Loganair

www.loganair.co.uk

The Scottish airline Loganair has departed its cluttered old website and arrived at a destination that's friendlier to mobile devices, with a more prominent booking section on the homepage and a new flight-status button. Welcome flourishes include brief yet informative city guides and an interactive route map, and we enjoyed the potted history of the company as well as a flick through its 68-page in-flight magazine. There's a helpful emphasis on clarity, with the three-tier ticket options carefully explained and a reassuringly simple booking procedure.

Our rating ★★★★☆


START WITH WHY
START WITH WHY
BRICK BY BRICK

NEW

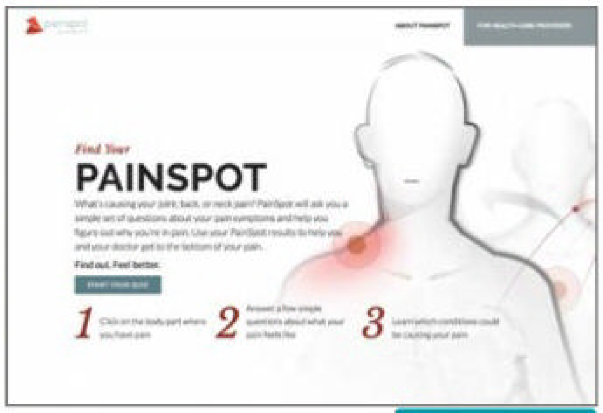
BOOKS

The Business Library

bit.ly/business488

Created by former Waitrose managing director Lord Mark Price, this site – launched in beta – is an extension of his Engaging Works platform, which aims to help companies attain workplace happiness. It already offers a large selection of business books, organised by Popular and Recommended, with an exhaustive list of categories to aid browsing. What separates it from rivals is an assortment of featured articles, podcasts and lectures, and we love how visitors can curate a library of sources and books in their own personal section. The option for customers to write book reviews would be welcome, too.

Our rating ★★★★☆


Find Your
PAINSPOT
1
2
3

RELAUNCH

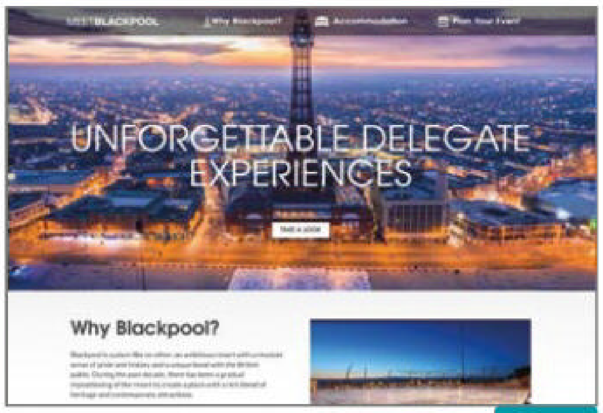
HEALTH

Painspot

www.painspot.com

Lower back, neck and shoulder pain are common complaints and this easy-to-use and intuitive assessment tool provides you with information about the potential conditions that may be causing such discomfort. It's American, but free to use – just click the body part that's experiencing pain, answer some questions and see which conditions the site's algorithms suggest. You're then able to learn more about the problem, view explanatory illustrations and discover what you should do next. You can also sign up for a newsletter and read articles posted on the sister site Creaky Joints. It could be the breakthrough you need.

Our rating ★★★★☆


UNFORGETTABLE DELEGATE EXPERIENCES
Why Blackpool?

NEW

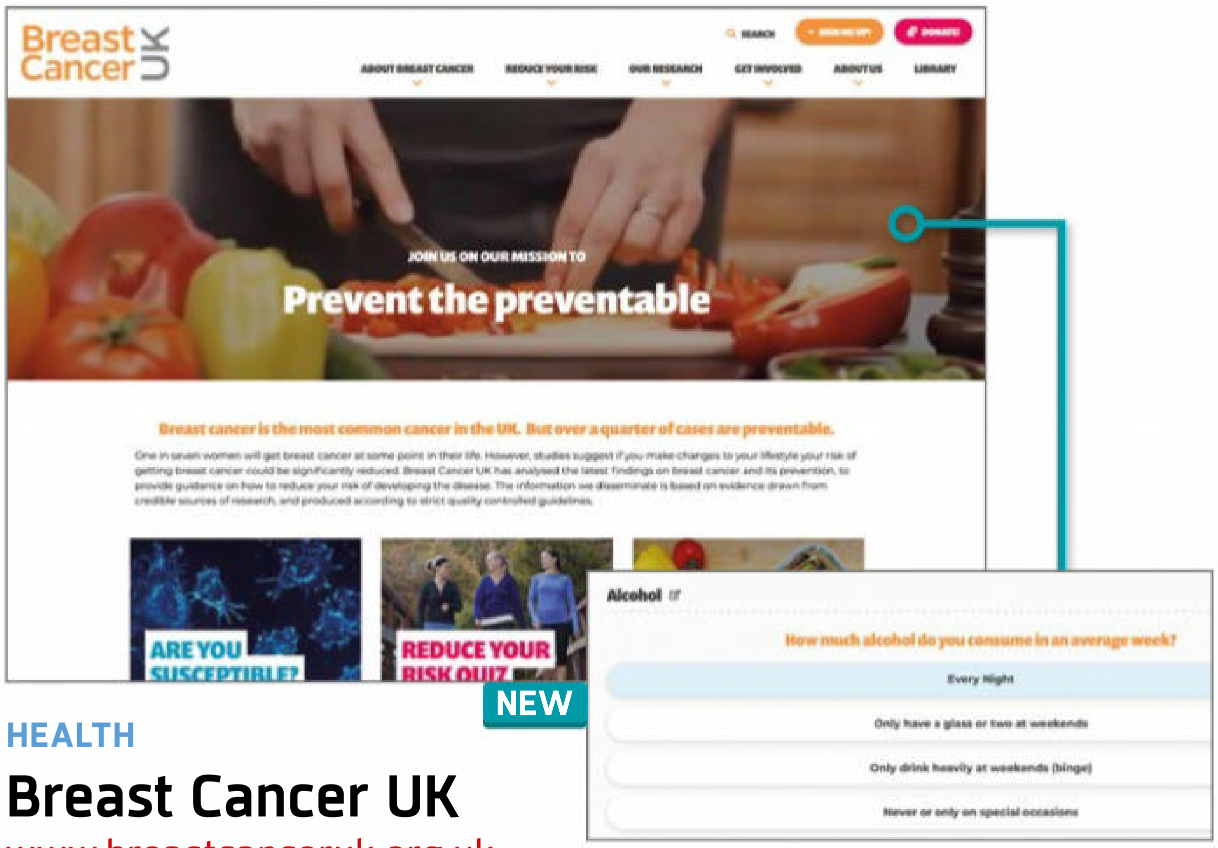
BUSINESS

Meet Blackpool

bit.ly/blackpool488

Blackpool, like many seaside towns, is struggling to fight back from years of decline and, with a new £29m conference and exhibition centre opening next year, is hoping to re-establish its credentials as a destination for business events. This subsection of the Visit Blackpool website showcases the area's facilities and accommodation and, given its aim, the pages are far from stuffy. Indeed, even if you're not about to host a conference, the regularly updated news section offers an insight into the resort's development efforts. There's a guide to decent eateries, too, if chips in gravy aren't your thing, but we'd like to see more images.

Our rating ★★★★☆


Breast Cancer UK
SEARCH
DONATE
ABOUT BREAST CANCER
REDUCE YOUR RISK
OUR RESEARCH
GET INVOLVED
ABOUT US
LIBRARY
JOIN US ON OUR MISSION TO
Prevent the preventable
Breast cancer is the most common cancer in the UK. But over a quarter of cases are preventable.
ARE YOU SUSCEPTIBLE?
REDUCE YOUR RISK QUIZ
Alcohol
How much alcohol do you consume in an average week?
Every Night
Only have a glass or two at weekends
Only drink heavily at weekends (binge)
Never or only on special occasions

NEW

HEALTH

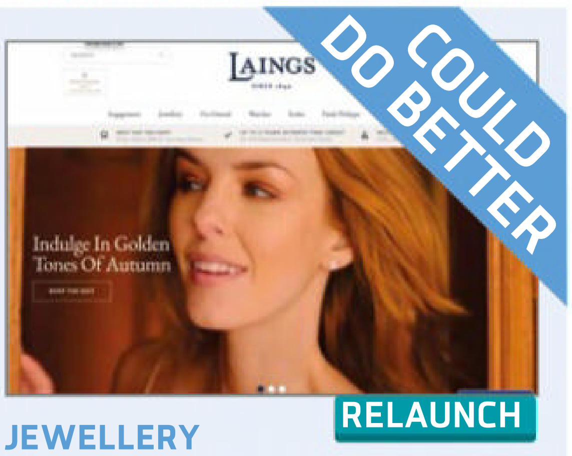
Breast Cancer UK

www.breastcanceruk.org.uk

Aside from some design tweaks and, thanks to the introduction of drop-down menus, easier navigation, this bold relaunch of Breast Cancer UK's website now feels much livelier and more engaging. There's a greater emphasis on interaction with a quiz that highlights risk reduction and a concerted effort to encourage people to get involved with the charity. Campaigns – the latest being Lunch For Life – and blog posts are more eye-catching and loads of questions about breast cancer are answered clearly in the FAQ section. By breaking each section into manageable chunks, visitors can better digest the available information, and it's now much easier to make donations.

Our rating ★★★★★

COULD DO BETTER


LAINGS
Indulge In Golden Tones Of Autumn

RELAUNCH

JEWELLERY

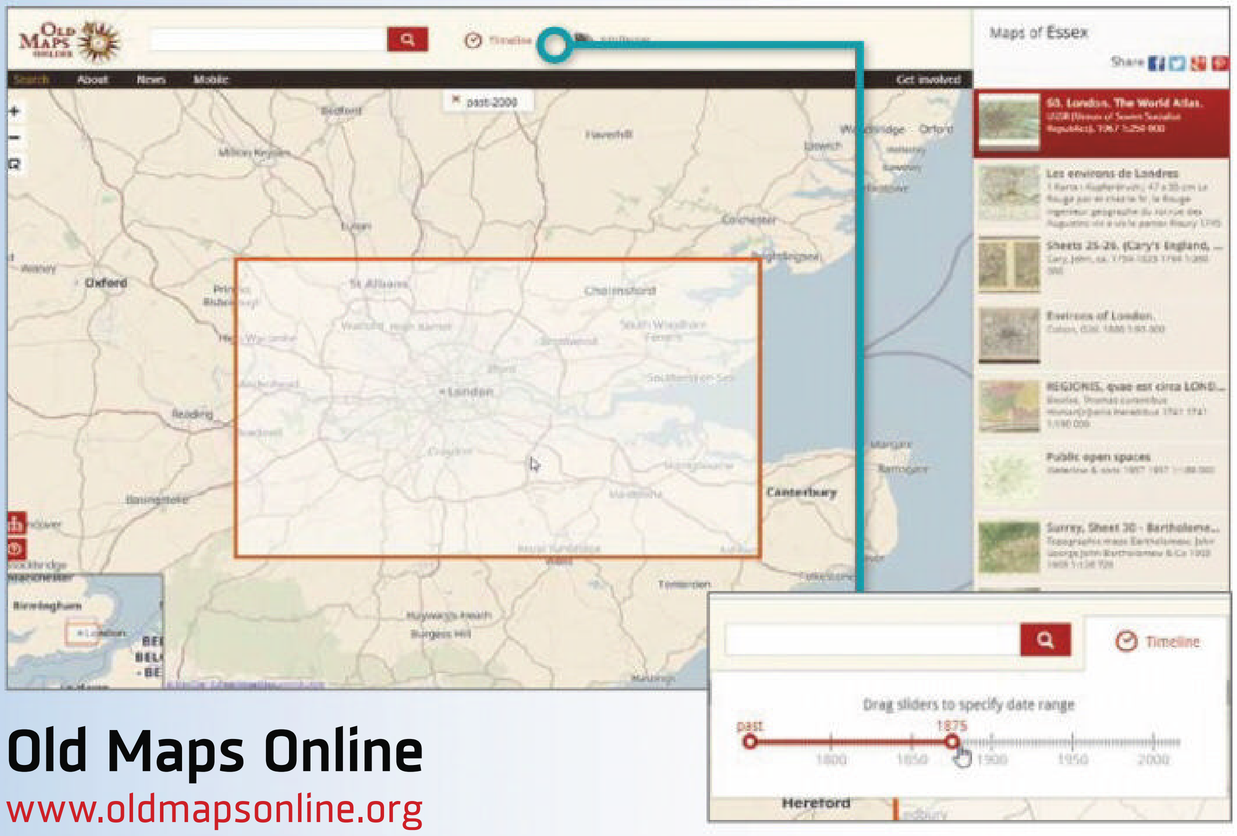
Laings

www.laingsuk.com

Luxury jeweller Laings hopes to bring its showroom style to online customers with a site featuring slick videos of beautiful people showing off their expensive watches and tasteful images of rings, necklaces, bracelets and more. Unfortunately, it's a bit style-over-substance, given the often sparse item descriptions and small number of photos that typically accompany them, and the responsive design leaves far too much white space on desktops. On the plus side, the online chat service is open seven days a week and there's a good range of blog posts.

Our rating ★★★☆☆

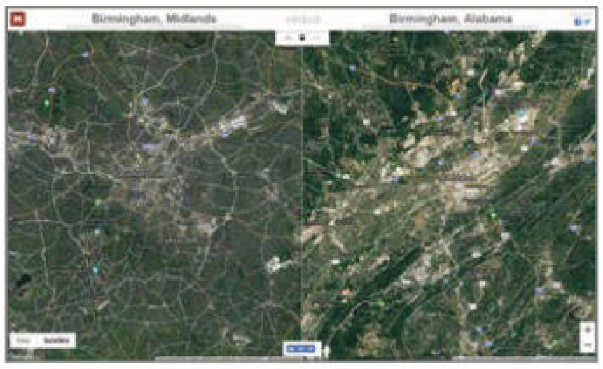
ESSENTIAL BOOKMARKS THIS ISSUE: Marvellous mapping sites



Old Maps Online

www.oldmapsonline.org

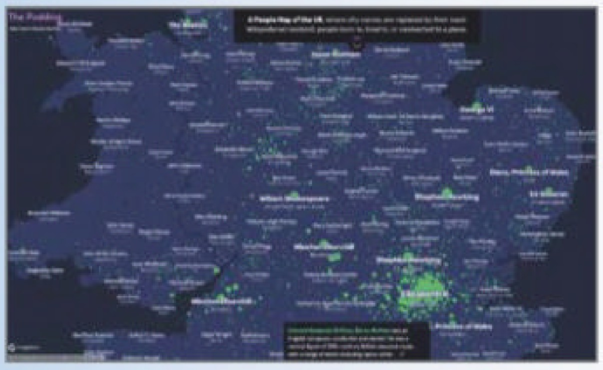
Browsing historical maps is not only educational but illuminating, too, if you have the time to skip between websites to explore different areas and time periods. Old Maps Online makes navigating the past much easier by providing a gateway to historical maps in libraries around the world. These are sourced from external sites such as the British Library and the David Rumsey Map Collection, and you can either click a map to browse it full-size or see it as an overlay on the current view. As you explore the globe, the search results in the sidebar update automatically to show you all available maps for the highlighted area. You can then click the Timeline button at the top of the page to filter the data by date range. It's fascinating stuff.



Mapmerizer

mapmerizer.mikavaa.com

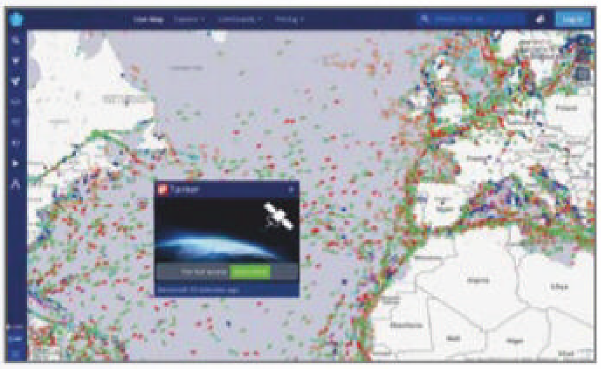
"Think of London," sang Talking Heads in 1979, "a small city". But is it really smaller than New York, Bangkok or Rio de Janeiro? And is Birmingham, Alabama bigger than Birmingham, West Midlands? Find out by visiting Mapmerizer, which lets you compare Google maps of any two cities, towns or countries in the world side by side. You can zoom into and out of both locations simultaneously, view roads, transport routes and cycling lanes, and – best of all – switch to Satellite view to get an accurate picture of how they look from above. It's a brilliant way to discover the differences and similarities between places situated many miles apart.



A People Map of the UK

bit.ly/people488

Launched back in June, this ingenious map replaces the names of towns and cities across the UK with the names of the most famous people who were born there, lived there or have a strong connection with the place. Rather than make arbitrary decisions about notability, the map is based on the popularity of the residents' Wikipedia pages – the more traffic they receive, the larger their names appear. Some of the results are predictable, such as Shakespeare for Stratford-up-on-Avon and The Beatles for Liverpool, but there are plenty of surprises, too (Carol Vorderman for Bedford). A US version of the map is available to explore at bit.ly/peopleus488.

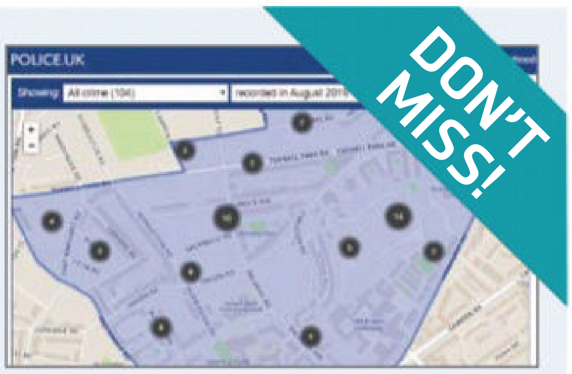


MarineTraffic

www.marinetraffic.com

There are lots of great sites and apps for tracking planes in real time, of which FlightRadar24 (www.flightradar24.com) is undoubtedly the best, but if you want to know what's happening at sea, you should head to MarineTraffic. This site provides a live map of all the ships, boats and other vessels currently sailing around the waterways and seas of the world. The oceans are a lot busier than you'd imagine and MarineTraffic helpfully colour-codes craft by type, so you can identify, for example, fishing trawlers, cruise ships, tankers and cargo vessels. You can search the map data by vessel and port, and apply filters and layers, though advanced features require you to pay £11 a month for a subscription.

DON'T MISS!



Police.uk

www.police.uk

Not all local crime gets reported in the press, but it is likely to have been logged by the police, which makes Police.uk an invaluable resource for concerned residents of England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Click the Find Your Neighbourhood button on the homepage, enter your postcode and click Search to see a map of recent incidents near your home. You can filter these by month and crime type – from anti-social behaviour and burglary through to shoplifting and violence; expand the selected area to a mile radius or draw it free-hand; and view detailed statistics about crime levels, case timelines and outcomes.

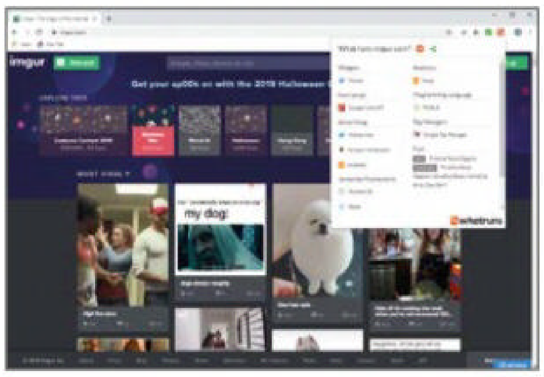
✚ Tell us about your favourite mapping sites via webuser@webuser.co.uk

Build a Better Site

Specialist tips, top tools and practical help

Top Tips of the Fortnight

Peek behind the scenes of websites



If you've ever visited a website and wondered how its developers make it work, you'll love the Whatruns Chrome extension (bit.ly/wruns488). Install this handy add on and, the next time you find a complex site you'd like to know more about, click the Whatruns icon. The pop-out window shows all the web technologies that have been used to produce a site, so you know what you might need to recreate it on your own site. Hover over anything you don't recognise to get more information. You can even follow a site to receive a notification if it changes the tools it uses.

Try the new version of Ghost

There's an updated version of WordPress rival Ghost (ghost.org) available, with a range of new options and features to try out, including the option to create subscription services, to help you earn money from regular readers, and a new site importer designed to help people looking to defect from WordPress. For more information, visit bit.ly/ghost488.

Deal of the Fortnight

Easyspace (www.easyspace.co.uk) is offering 40% off the first two years of a '.co.uk' domain, for £11.99 per year instead of £19.99.

Web-building Helpdesk

Q **I write a blog about books and have been invited to take part in a 'blog tour'? Is it a scam?**

Tom Sharples, via email

A This is a marketing event, most often used by book publishers to spread the word about their books. They usually give information and review copies to various different blogs on different days, often over the course of a week, and agree with the blog owner what they will publish about the book and when. They then promote the tour to their fans, so you'll get an extra push of visitors to your site in exchange for featuring information about their book.

THE BOOK DESIGNER
7 Top eBook Blog Tour Sites

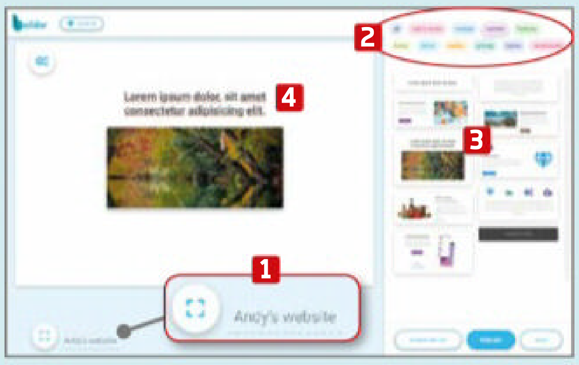
It's not a scam but it's probably more beneficial for the book publisher than it is for you, so make sure you're happy with the arrangement before agreeing to it.

Andy Shaw, Technical & Reviews Editor, Web User

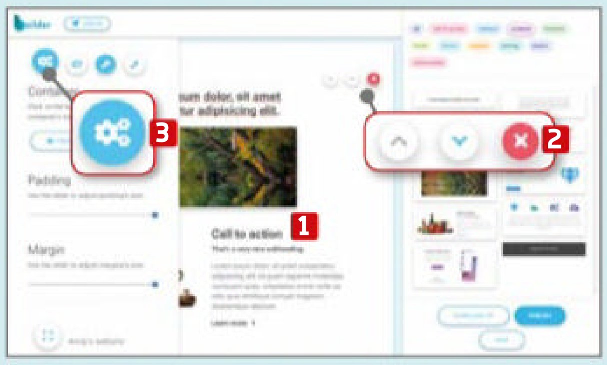
MINI WORKSHOP | Build a great-looking, dynamic website in minutes

MDBoostrap Builder: mdbootstrap.com/builder | 10 mins | Any browser

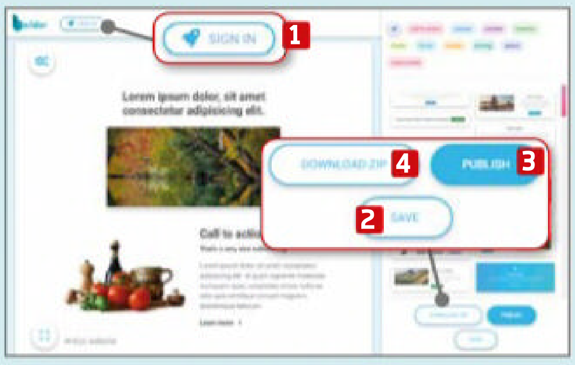
MDBootstrap Builder is a web-building tool that lets you drag and drop professionally designed elements on a blank canvas to create a beautiful website. You can host the site on the service or publish it yourself



1 On the main screen, click the large '+' button to create a new site from scratch or choose one of the example templates. Give your project a name, 1 then use the tags 2 to select the kind of content you want to place on the site. Click to select from the options that appear below. 3 The content appears on the page to the left. 4



2 Clicking another element adds it below. 1 Hover over a section to rearrange the order or remove it completely. 2 Either click on some text or an image, or click the cogs icon, 3 to open the editing panel, where you can change images, layout settings and colours.

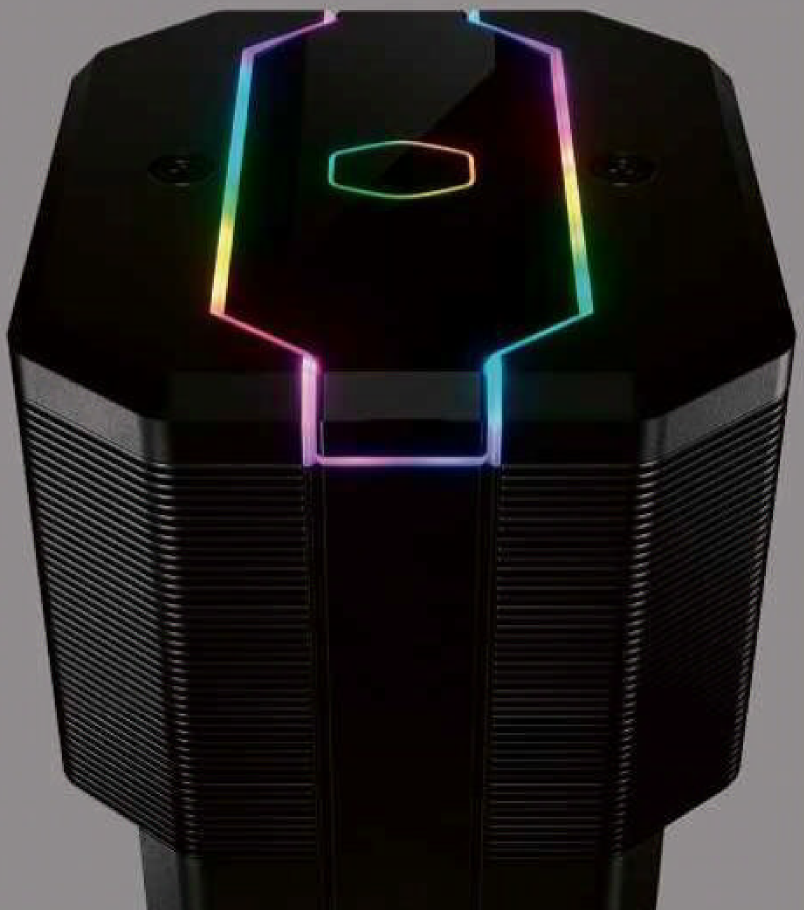


3 You need to sign up for an account 1 to save your site and be able to work on it at a later date, 2 publish it on the MDBootstrap site 3 or download all the files to publish the site on your own web hosting. 4 The last option is useful if you want to use the builder to create a template you can adapt and add more pages to.

COOLER MASTER
Make It Yours.
RTX

DUAL TOWER HEATSINK

MASTERAIR **MA620M**



The **MasterAir MA620M** comes with dual blacked out aluminum towers with a uniform 6 heat pipe layout to dissipate the heat evenly.

The MasterfanSF120R provides high air pressure with silent performance to cool away the heat from the heat pipes in silence.

Easy mounting system along with array of Addressable RGB LED lighting makes the **MA620M** the best option in the market for an air cooling solution.

What To Watch Online

Pick of the fortnight

NETFLIX

A NETFLIX ORIGINAL SERIES
THE CROWN
TIMES CHANGE. DUTY ENDURES.
17 NOV | NETFLIX
A NETFLIX ORIGINAL SERIES
THE CROWN
TIMES CHANGE. DUTY ENDURES.
17 NOV | NETFLIX

Watch Queen Olivia Colman in Season 3 of *The Crown*

From 17 November

Netflix has kept us waiting so long for a third season of its acclaimed Royal Family blockbuster that we understand how Prince Charles feels. He's still not had his turn on the throne but our wait is over: 10 new hour-long episodes of *The Crown* arrive on Sunday 17 November.

It's been two years since Olivia Colman (Oscar-winner for playing another queen, Anne, last year) and Helena Bonham Carter were cast as The Queen and Princess Margaret for Season 3 of the show.

The new episodes span 1964 to 1976, so we also meet Prime Minister Harold Wilson (Jason Watkins) and Camilla Shand, later Parker-Bowles, played by Emerald Fennell. Charles Dance and Tobias Menzies play a maturing Lord Mountbatten and Prince Phillip. Alas, we'll have to wait until Season 4 to see Gillian Anderson as Margaret Thatcher.

You can watch the latest trailers on Netflix for free at bit.ly/thecrown488, but there's plenty more elsewhere online. The official Twitter feed (@TheCrownNetflix) offers video clips and retweeted magazine articles; YouTube has behind-the-scenes cast chats (bit.ly/crownbts488); and the show's Fandom Wiki site provides videos, slideshows and background info (bit.ly/crownwiki488).

Watch the final season of *The Man in the High Castle*

From 15 November

This adaptation of the Philip K Dick dystopia, which imagines postwar US life under a victorious Germany and Japan, ramps up the sci-fi for its fourth and final season, with heroine Juliana Crain (Alexa Davalos) set to lead a rebellion into a parallel universe, via a portal built by the Nazis.

Season 4 joins Seasons 1-3 on Amazon Prime at bit.ly/castle488, and you can watch the latest action-packed trailer on YouTube at bit.ly/castletrail488.

AMAZON ORIGINAL
THE MAN IN THE HIGH CASTLE
THE FINAL SEASON NOVEMBER 15
prime video

Watch Season 7 of *Ray Donovan*

From 19 November

Liev Schreiber returns for the seventh and final time as professional "fixer" Ray, a man able to bury any problem (or person) but who can't handle his own demons.

The show has been a big hit for US network Showtime, thanks to a sharp script and great performances from an ensemble cast that includes Jon Voight, Alan Alda and British character actor Eddie Marsan, as well as Schreiber, who won an Emmy for the role.

Watch the latest trailer at bit.ly/raytrail488, and catch up with Seasons 1-6 on Now TV at bit.ly/donovan488, where new episodes arrive each Tuesday.

Watch Netflix's new original films

From 15 November

Netflix unleashes a mini avalanche of big-budget original films and shows in the run-up to Christmas, and it begins with a steady trickle this fortnight.

Klaus, Netflix's first-ever animated original film, is a fresh, witty Santa story by *Despicable Me* creator Sergio Pablos. Indie stalwart Jason Schwartzman plays a failed postman dispatched to the

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

Arctic, where he befriends toymaker Klaus (JK Simmons). Rashida Jones and Joan Cusack also lend their vocal talents. Stream *Klaus* from 15 November at bit.ly/klaus488 and enjoy the beautifully animated trailer at bit.ly/klaustrail488.

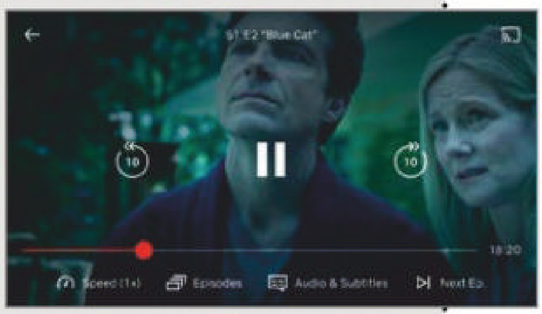
Tokyo-set crime thriller *Earthquake Bird*, starring Alicia Vikander, arrives on the same day. Based on the novel by British author Susanna Jones (bit.ly/birdbook488), the film is available on-demand at bit.ly/earthquake488. Watch the latest trailer at bit.ly/birdtrail488.

Festive fare returns a week later with time-travel romance *The Knight Before Christmas*, starring Josh Whitehouse and Vanessa Hudgens. Watch from 21 November at bit.ly/knight488.

Netflix faces backlash over speed option

Netflix has enraged filmmakers by testing an option to speed up and slow down video playback, saying that viewers have been able to vary DVD speed for decades.

The row began when some Android users spotted a variable-speed option in the Netflix app (see screenshot). Netflix confirmed the feature, but says it's still in limited test mode.



Content creators were furious. "We give you nice things. Leave them as they were intended to be seen," tweeted Hollywood super-producer Judd Apatow (bit.ly/apatow488). Many users responded that he should get off his high horse and let viewers decide. Meanwhile, on its official blog, Netflix said: "Whether we introduce these features for everyone at some point will depend on the feedback we receive" (bit.ly/netflix488).

Go soul-searching with Dolly Parton and Diego Maradona

From 13/22 November

Don't get too excited – these two petite but perfectly formed superstars whose names begin with D are *not* collaborating on a joint project. Rather, Diego and Dolly have each created their own Netflix Original miniseries, offering tantalising insights into their lives and work.

First comes *Maradona in Mexico*, in which the Argentine striker coaches Dorados, a small team in the heart of Mexico's drug cartel country. It's a voyage of self-discovery for Maradona, who's struggled to beat his addictions. Stream all episodes from 13 November at bit.ly/maradona488. There's no trailer, but this article from football magazine *FourFourTwo* sets the scene: bit.ly/442mex488.

Dolly Parton revisits eight of her songs in *Dolly Parton's Heartstrings*, a series of dramatisations such as Jolene (starring Julianne Hough) and Sugar Hill (with Timothy Busfield from *The West Wing*). Parton herself offers anecdotes and acts in roles. Stream the miniseries from 22 November at bit.ly/dolly488. Again there's no trailer, but YouTube has numerous *Heartstrings*-related interviews with Dolly, such as bit.ly/dpheart488.

Stream the ATP Finals and Euro 2020 qualifiers

From 11 November

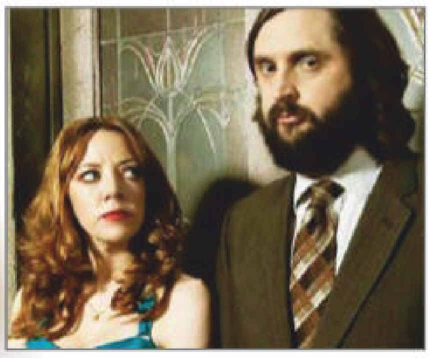
The 2019 ATP tennis tournament has landed at London's O2 Arena for its final week. Watch the action, including the grand final on 17 November, via Now TV with a Sky Sports Pass (£9.99 per day, £14.99 per week or £33.99 per month; bit.ly/nowsports488). Follow the ATP Finals live blog at bit.ly/atpblog488 and get updates via Twitter @SkySportsTennis.

NITTO ATP FINALS
NITTO ATP FINALS

Now TV also has the Brazilian Grand Prix (17 November) and the latest batch of Euro 2020 qualifiers (14-19 November). Or save your cash and watch the England games for free via ITV Hub (www.itv.com/england-football).

In case you missed it...

TV comedy regulars Joe Wilkinson and Diane Morgan (aka Philomena Cunk) play an oddball Isle of Wight couple in Gold's new show *The Cockfields* (bit.ly/cockfields488), which you can stream on-demand via Now TV.



Now TV also has new paranormal crime show *The Inbetween*, a kind of *The Sixth Sense* meets *FBI*. Watch the trailer at bit.ly/inbetween488 and stream new episodes each Monday.

Netflix has reanimated Dr Seuss's *Green Eggs and Ham* for a brand new version, voiced by stars including Eddie Izzard, Michael Douglas and Diane Keaton. Watch all 13 episodes at bit.ly/greeneggs488.

On the iPlayer, you can now catch up with all of 2019's *Autumnwatch* (www.bbc.co.uk/autumnwatch) and Gary Lineker's moving Remembrance Day film *My Granddad's War* (bit.ly/lineker488).

Product Test

We test and compare the latest products

Google Pixel 4

With an extra camera, new design and radar-sensing abilities, is Google's new flagship model now the best smartphone around?

The first thing you notice when you pull the Pixel 4 out of its box is its updated design. Google has ditched the two-tone look of its previous three generations and instead opted for a simpler single-tone colour scheme, available in black, white and orange. Whatever the colour, the phone is surrounded by a softly-curved textured black trim, with a coloured power button and volume rocker on the right edge. There's no notch on the screen, but the selfie camera and earpiece speaker are located inside a chunky top bezel.

Elsewhere, the Pixel 4 is sandwiched between protective layers of Gorilla Glass. The new rear camera module is square and distinctly iPhone-like, with the two cameras, infrared sensor and dual-LED flash arranged in a diamond.

It has dual front-facing speakers but there's still no 3.5mm headphone jack. Sadly, Google hasn't included an adapter in the box, either. There's no fingerprint sensor but you can unlock the Pixel 4 using your face or with a PIN or pattern lock.

The screen is 5.7in from corner to corner, with a new refresh rate of 90Hz. In technical testing, we measured peak screen brightness at 430cd/m^2 (candles per square metre) in automatic brightness mode, promising readability in most sunny environments in the UK. The screen's sRGB coverage in the phone's 'Natural' colour mode is at 90.5%, which is very good.

Inside the Pixel 4, you'll find a Qualcomm Snapdragon 855 processor and 6GB of memory. Both the Pixel 4 and 4 XL come with either 64GB or 128GB of internal storage, but it's worth noting, you can't expand this via microSD.

Unsurprisingly, this hardware combo delivers barnstorming benchmark results and offers a slick, responsive experience all around. In our Geekbench 4 test, the Pixel 4 performed better than its predecessor and matches the Galaxy S10's Exynos 9820 chipset in multi-core performance. It's a similar story for gaming and graphics performance, with the embedded Adreno 640 GPU delivering a higher framerate than the Galaxy S10 and iPhone 11 in the GFXBench on-screen Manhattan 3.0 test.

10:00
Tuesday, Oct 15 68°F

Unfortunately, the Pixel's battery lasted a mere 12 hours and 7 minutes in our standardised video rundown test. Looking at the numbers, that's slightly worse than the Pixel 3's result from last year, and is miles off the Galaxy S10 and iPhone 11. This is a phone that might just about make it through a day on a single charge, but you'll have to be very conservative with what you do with it. Most high-priced phones reach at least 20 hours under the same conditions.

New features

Arguably the most intriguing new feature is the Pixel 4's system of gesture-based controls. It essentially uses a motion-sensing radar, powered by a small custom chip embedded into the handset itself, which detects motion around the phone. Previous phones claiming similar functions have used the front-mounted camera to detect movement, but this new radar chip lets you interact with the phone from seemingly any angle.

This is most useful for unlocking the phone, with the screen lighting up whenever the Pixel 4 detects movement and swiftly turning off if it's left alone. You can also snooze alarms, skip songs on Spotify and cycle through your YouTube playlists with a waggle of your hand.

The Pixel 4 is running the latest version of Google's mobile operating system, Android 10, with its own Pixel launcher overlay. Android 10 is currently only available on a select few phones and includes a handful of new features and software tweaks.

A system-wide dark mode is (finally) an option, as well as a new 'focus mode', which hides notifications from apps you deem distracting. Swiping your thumb across from either side of the screen now acts as the Back button, swiping up from the bottom of the screen brings you to the home screen and swiping up while holding your finger in the middle of the screen opens a list of recent apps. It's the best version of Android yet and finally manages to give iOS 13 a proper run for its money in both responsiveness and general speed.

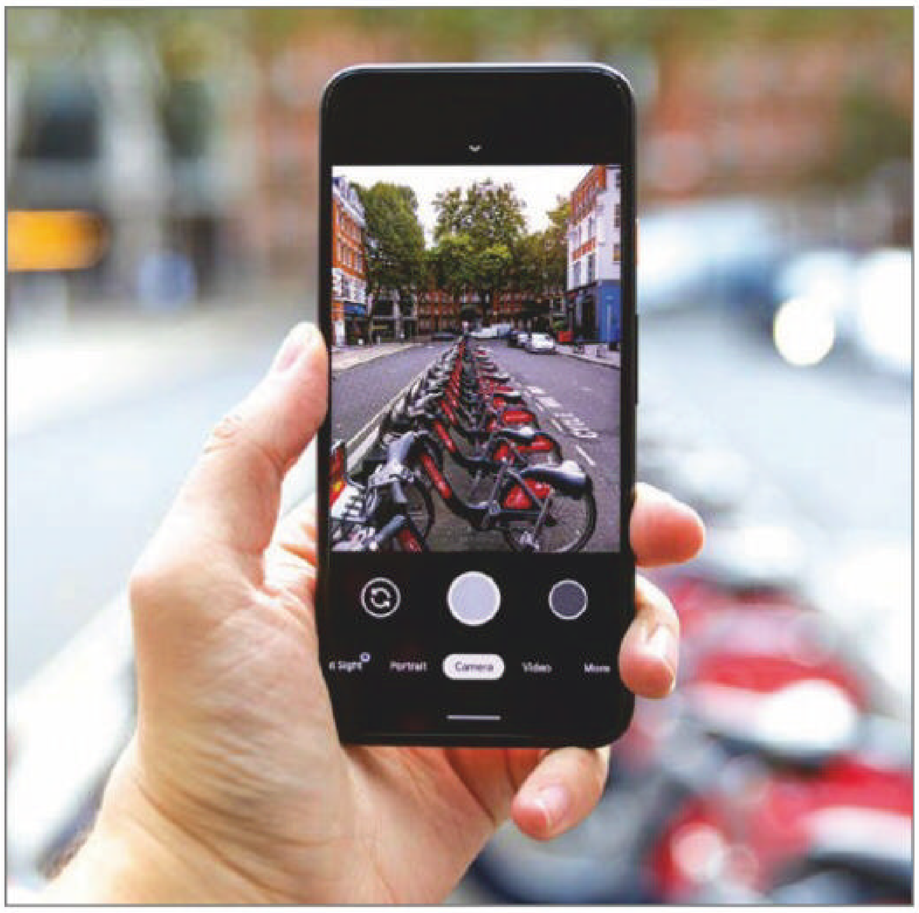
Cameras

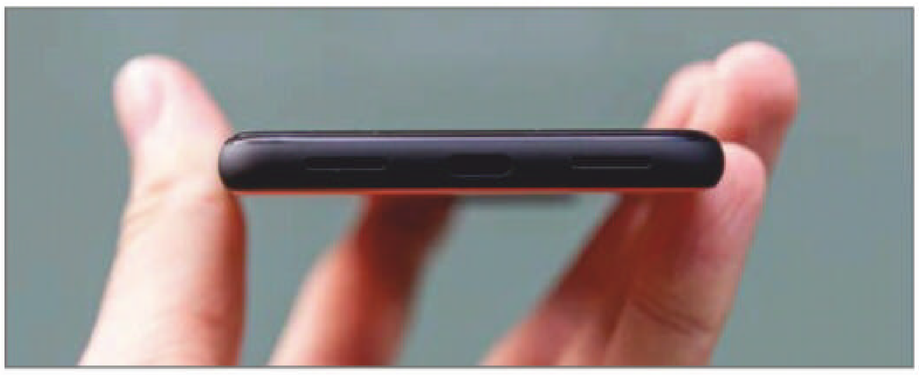
Google has included the same 12-megapixels camera unit from previous years, though it's now boosted by a new 16-megapixels 2x telephoto zoom camera. However, this isn't particularly special – it simply allows you to zoom further into the frame. Most phone makers have incorporated zoom lenses into their flagship phones for some time now.

The Pixel phones have always taken great photos, though, and that has been further improved here, particularly in the already excellent 'Night Sight' mode, with better colour balance in the dark.

Image quality is as effortlessly brilliant as ever – whatever the lighting conditions, you can rest assured that your pictures will burst with intricate details, well-judged exposures and a pleasingly-accurate colour rendition.

Mercifully, Google refuses to adopt Apple's pricing mode of charging upwards of four figures for its latest flagship handsets, so the 64GB Pixel 4 can be picked up for £669, while the 128GB variant costs £769. This makes it one of the cheapest flagship smartphones on the market. Apple's iPhone 11 Pro starts at £1,049 and the Samsung Galaxy S10 launched at £799, though you can find it discounted now.





> "Image quality is as effortlessly brilliant as ever, whatever the lighting conditions"

OUR VERDICT ★★★★☆

The Pixel 4 isn't perfect – fans will be disappointed by the lack of microSD support and fingerprint reader, while improvements to the camera come via the software rather than the hardware. Even more worryingly, battery life is disappointing for a phone of this price.

But despite all that, the Pixel 4 remains the pinnacle of what Android can muster in the fight against iOS, and does it at a significantly more affordable price.

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

PRODUCT INFO

Google Pixel 4

Price: £669
Buy from Google:
bit.ly/pixel488

SPECIFICATIONS

- 2.84GHz Octa-core Qualcomm Snapdragon 855 processor
- 6GB memory
- 64 or 128GB storage
- 5.7in display
- 16-megapixels rear camera with second 12.2-megapxiels zoom camera
- 8-megapixels front camera
- 147 x 69 x 8.2mm
- 162g

FOR

✓ Best Android software to date
✓ Pixel camera continues to impress
✓ Comprehensive range of new features

AGAINST

✗ Poor battery life
✗ No fingerprint sensor or microSD expansion

EVEN FASTER

iPhone 11 Pro, £1,049
bit.ly/iphone488

ANDROID ALTERNATIVE

Samsung Galaxy S10, £639.99
bit.ly/samsung488

Echo Dot with Clock

The new Echo Dot takes Amazon's winning formula for its smallest smart speaker and adds a clock. What's not to like?

One of the most common questions asked of the Amazon Echo is "What time is it?", but voicing this aloud is not always practical – if your device is in a shared bedroom, for example – and it's actually a lot quicker to just look at the time than have a conversation about it.

The new Echo Dot with Clock tackles this by displaying the time in bright LEDs across its side. The built-in clock can also show timers, display its volume level and indicate the temperature outdoors. That's essentially the only difference between this and last year's excellent Echo Dot.

Clock functions

These extras add a tenner to the price, bumping up the base outlay for the Echo Dot with Clock to £60 (though it's on offer at £44.99 as we write this review).

When switched off, the device looks exactly like last year's model, with the same chunky dimensions and a fabric covering that wraps around the sides. It's only when you plug it in that the new change becomes apparent.

Underneath the fabric cover is a segmented LED display capable of showing a digital clock and, when required, other information. It doesn't display advanced graphics or video like an Echo Show, but it works well and adapts its brightness to match its environment.

Amazon clearly has two rooms in mind for the Echo Dot with Clock: the kitchen and the bedroom. The former is handy for cooking, as the clock is replaced with a visual countdown when a timer is set. In the bedroom, setting an alarm places a small circle next to the time and neatly lets you silence an alarm with a tap on the top, like the snooze function on a standard alarm clock.

PRODUCT INFO

Amazon Echo Dot with Clock

Price: £59.99

Buy from Amazon:
bit.ly/dotcl488

SPECIFICATIONS

- LED display
- Dual-band 802.11a/b/g/n Wi-Fi
- Bluetooth
- 99 x 99 x 43mm
- 300g

FOR

✓ Clock is excellent addition
✓ Great speaker for the price
✓ 3.5mm output

AGAINST

✗ Alexa is weaker than Google Assistant

Sound quality and Alexa

The speaker's sound quality is as good as last year's third-generation Dot and in line with what you'd expect from a £50 speaker. It also retains the 3.5mm audio jack output, so you can connect it to a better speaker if you want to improve the audio.

Alexa, meanwhile, is identical, which is no surprise given the smart assistant lives in the cloud and any advance in intelligence would affect all Echo devices at the same time. Google Assistant is better at answering questions, in our opinion, but for the basics, Alexa is just fine, ably playing music, radio and podcasts, connecting with smart home devices and telling you about your day.

> "The LED display works well and adapts its brightness to match its environment"

OUR VERDICT ★★★★★

The Echo Dot with Clock has the same pros and cons as the clockless version. The LED display is very welcome, offering at-a-glance information without detracting from the screen-free functionality that smart speakers are designed to offer. Alexa still isn't as good as Google Assistant but this device is better than the Google Home Mini, largely thanks to that clock and its 3.5mm audio socket.

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

All you need to know about electric cars...

How much will I save? £%
What is a hybrid car?
Is the tech any good?
How far will it go?
How long will it take to charge?
How much does it cost to run?
!?
CHARGING STATION

driving electric

www.drivingelectric.com

Web User's Best Buys

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

HARDWARE, SOFTWARE & SERVICES

LAPTOP

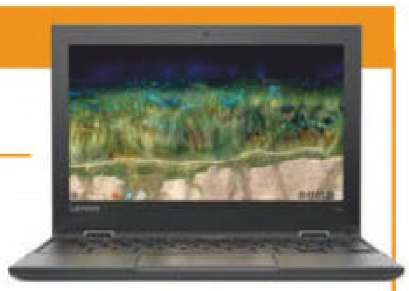
HP Pavilion x360

£679 from bit.ly/hp487
Tested: Issue 487

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

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

CHROMEBOOK



Lenovo Chromebook 500e

£349.98 from bit.ly/leno483
Tested: Issue 483

This versatile and rugged convertible Chromebook has been designed for the classroom but would be just as useful at home and on the move. It's tough enough to survive a few knocks and you can use a stylus on its touchscreen.

KEY SPECS
Intel Celeron N3450 processor ■ 32GB storage ■ 4GB memory ■ 11.6in touchscreen ■ 1,366 x 768 pixels resolution ■ Intel UHD Graphics 500 card ■ 2 x USB-C, 2 x USB 3 ports ■ 290 x 204 x 20.4mm ■ 1.31kg ■ One-year collect-and-return

SECURITY CAMERA

Google Nest Cam IQ Outdoor

£279 from bit.ly/nest481
Tested: Issue 481

This is the best-quality external security camera we've tested, capable of capturing clear, sharp video footage. It takes a bit of setting up and is expensive, but it's worth paying for if you're serious about your home security.

KEY SPECS
Outdoor camera ■ 1080p video resolution ■ 130-degree lens ■ Motion and audio detection ■ Night vision ■ 802.11ac Wi-Fi ■ 128 x 93 x 93mm ■ Three hours of free cloud storage ■ One-year return-to-base warranty

INKJET PRINTER

Canon Pixma TS6250

£114.36 from bit.ly/cango479
Tested: Issue 479

This multifunction printer looks smart and is easy to use, whether you're printing from a PC, mobile device or its own touchscreen. With great results and acceptable running costs, it's easy to recommend.

KEY SPECS
4,800 x 1,200dpi print resolution ■ 2,400 x 1,200dpi scan resolution ■ 200-sheet A4 paper capacity ■ Double-sided printing ■ 7.5in colour touchscreen ■ 802.11n Wi-Fi ■ 372 x 315 x 139mm ■ 6.2kg ■ One-year return-to-base warranty

MINI PC

ASRock DeskMini 310

£668.70 from bit.ly/asro477
Tested: Issue 477

The performance of this diminutive PC comes remarkably close to a full-size system, once you've paid for and installed its components. It's compact, quiet and runs Windows well.

KEY SPECS
Intel Core i5-8400 processor ■ 250GB SSD ■ 16GB memory ■ Intel UHD Graphics 630 card ■ 1 x USB Type-C, 2 x USB 3.1, 1 x USB 2 ports ■ 802.11ac Wi-Fi, Gigabit Ethernet ■ 158 x 155 x 80mm ■ 1.87kg ■ One-year return-to-base warranty

GRAPHICS CARD

Asus ROG Strix RX 570 OC

£189.99 from bit.ly/asusbox475
Tested: Issue 475

Asus's twin-fan graphics card gets the balance perfectly right. It comfortably plays games that are designed to push a graphics-processing unit to the limit, and for the price it kicks cards with similar specifications right out of the game.

KEY SPECS
AMD Radeon RX 570 graphics processor ■ 2,048 GPU cores ■ 1,300MHz clock speed ■ 4GB memory ■ 1 x DisplayPort, 2 x DVI, 1 x HDMI outputs ■ 200W power ■ 240mm ■ Two-year repair-and-replace warranty

All prices correct at time of review

SEASON'S READINGS

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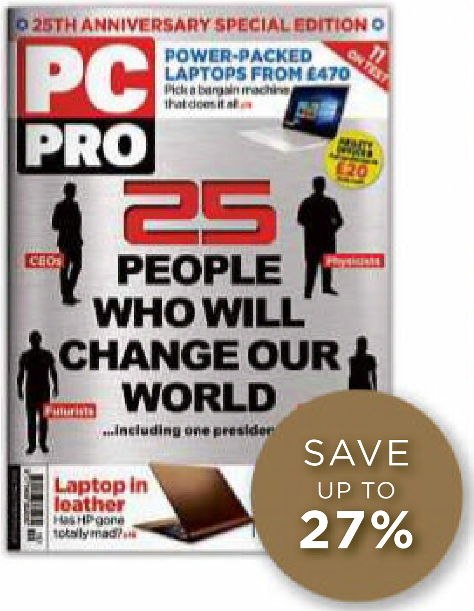

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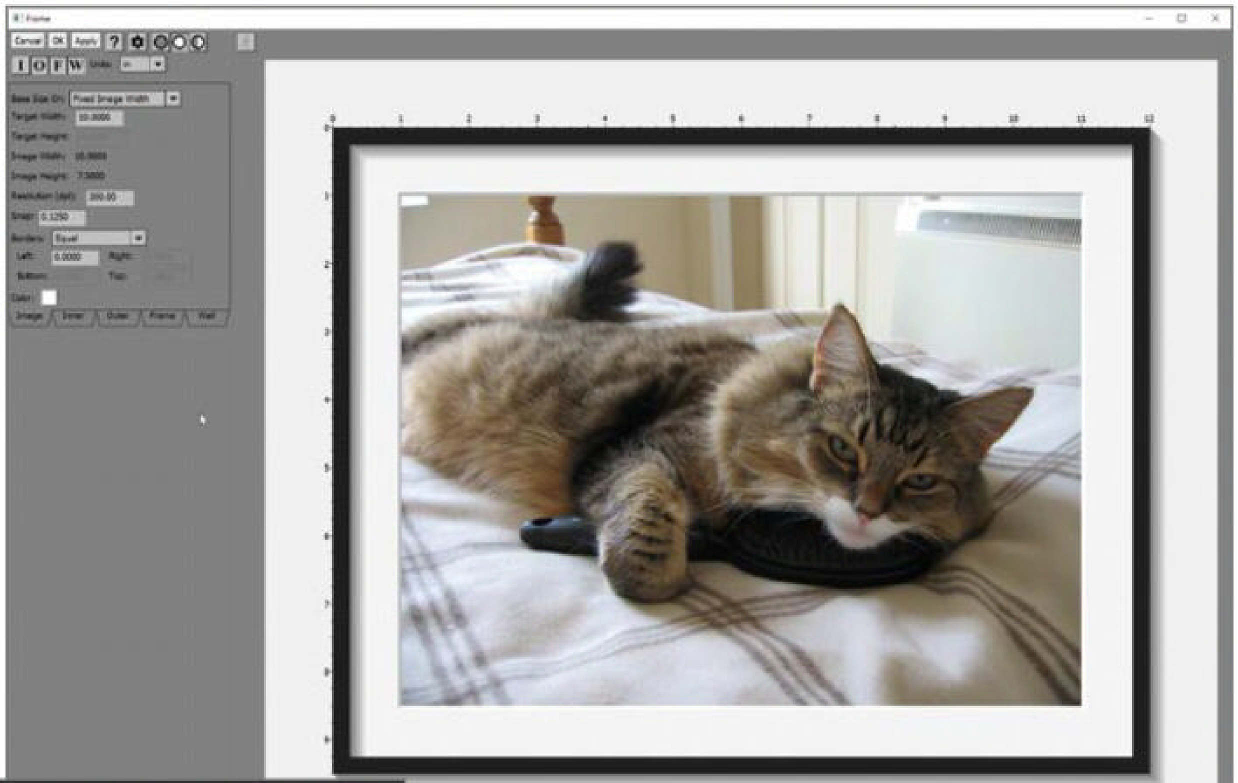
Best Free Software

IMAGE EDITOR

Picture Window Pro 8

www.dl-c.com
Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10
File size: 206MB



Picture Window Pro 8.0
Picture Window Pro 8

This powerful image browser and editor, which replaces the discontinued Picture Window Pro 7, is a complete rewrite that's now entirely free for both personal and commercial use, although you are invited to make a donation to the author if you like the program enough.

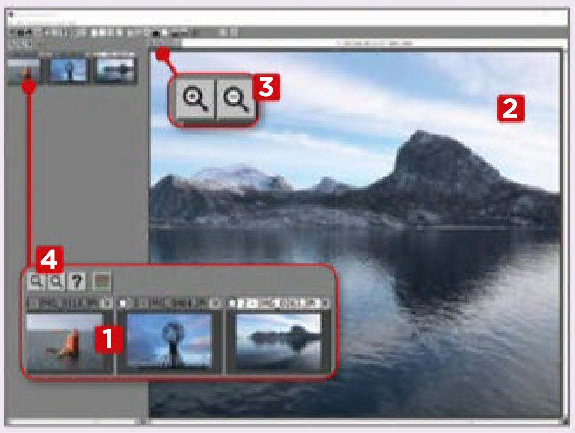
Picture Window Pro's interface is a little unusual, but you'll soon get used to it. Some tools are laid out across the top of the screen, while others are accessible from the menu bar.

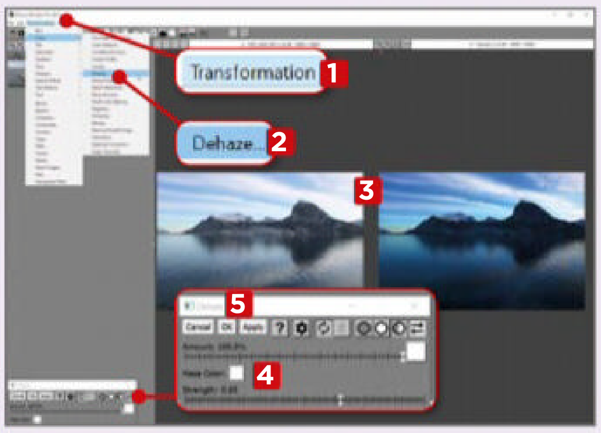
The image you're currently working on appears in the window on the right, with thumbnails of all open photos ranged down the left-hand side where you can easily switch between them. Each change you make to an image gets its own thumbnail below the main one, so it's easy to see which action you've just performed and jump back a stage or two with a click of your mouse. The software uses non-destructive editing, so you can undo any changes, even after you've saved the final image.

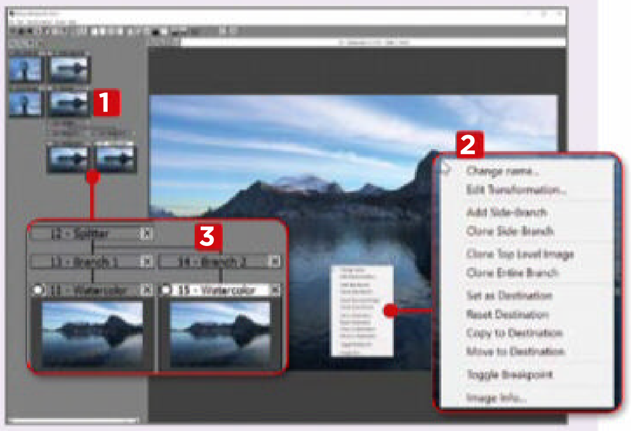
The program supports plugins from Nik, Topaz and DxO, and comes with a huge number of transformation tools sorted into categories such as Blur, Colour, Geometry, Gradient, Sharpen, Special Effects and Tools. This final category is where you'll find options such as clone and red-eye removal.

You can add frames, filters and masks, and stack images, while the Compare tool lets you see how your edited image looks next to the original. There are also scripts that let you perform more advanced changes.

MINI WORKSHOP | Edit images using Picture Window Pro 8




Transformation
1
Dehaze
2
3
4
5

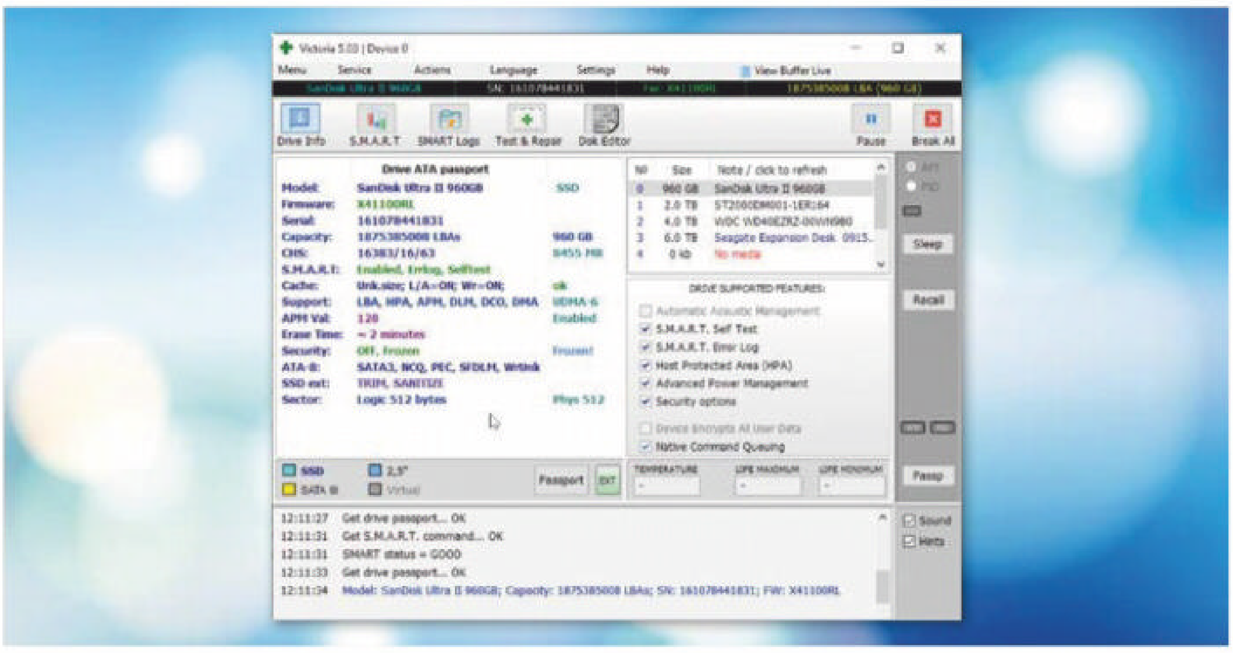

1
2
3
Change name...
Edit Transformation...
Add Side-Branch
Clone Side Branch
Clone Top Level Image
Clone Entire Branch
Set as Destination
Reset Destination
Copy to Destination
Move to Destination
Toggle Breakpoint
Image Info...

1 Launch Picture Window Pro and open some photos in the program. Thumbnails appear on the left, **1** with a preview of the currently selected image on the right. **2** The controls at the top let you zoom in or out. **3** Similar buttons let you make the thumbnails bigger or smaller. **4**

2 All the main filters and tools you can apply to your image are sorted into straightforward categories under Transformation. **1** Some tools, such as Dehaze, **2** display the tweaked image next to the original. **3** Use the controls **4** to customise the end result, then click Apply and OK. **5**

3 Each time you make a change to your image, a new thumbnail for it will appear underneath the original. **1** Right-clicking the preview displays the context menu, **2** which lets you make various changes, such as adding or cloning a side-branch **3** so you can experiment with different edits.

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


Victoria 5.03 | Device 0
Menu
Service
Actions
Language
Settings
Help
View Buffer Live
Drive Info
S.M.A.R.T
SMART Logs
Test & Repair
Disk Editor
Pause
Break All
Sleep
Recall
Passp
Passport
SSD
2,5"
SATA III
Virtual
Sound
Hints

SanDisk Ultra II 960GB | SN: 161078441831 | FW: X41100RL | 1875385008 LBA (960 GB)

Drive ATA passport
Model: SanDisk Ultra II 960GB SSD
Firmware: X41100RL
Serial: 161078441831
Capacity: 1875385008 LBAs 960 GB
CHS: 16383/16/63
S.M.A.R.T: Enabled, Errlog, Selftest
Cache: Unk.size; L/A=ON; Wr=ON; ok
Support: LBA, HPA, APM, DLM, DCO, DMA UDMA-6
APM Val: 128 Enabled
Erase Time: ~ 2 minutes
Security: Off, Frozen Frozen!
ATA-8: SATA3, NCQ, PEC, SFDLM, Wrtlnk
SSD ext: TRIM, SANITIZE
Sector: Logic 512 bytes Phys 512

№	Size	Note / click to refresh
0	960 GB	SanDisk Ultra II 960GB
1	2.0 TB	ST2000DM001-1ER164
2	4.0 TB	WDC WD40EZRZ-00WN9B0
3	6.0 TB	Seagate Expansion Desk 0915...
4	0 kb	No media

DRIVE SUPPORTED FEATURES:
☐ Automatic Acoustic Management
☑ S.M.A.R.T. Self Test
☑ S.M.A.R.T. Error Log
☑ Host Protected Area (HPA)
☑ Advanced Power Management
☑ Security options
☐ Device Encrypts All User Data
☑ Native Command Queuing

TEMPERATURE | LIFE MAXIMUM | LIFE MINIMUM

```
12:11:27   Get drive passport... OK
12:11:31   Get S.M.A.R.T. command... OK
12:11:31   SMART status = GOOD
12:11:33   Get drive passport... OK
12:11:34   Model: SanDisk Ultra II 960GB; Capacity: 1875385008 LBAs; SN: 161078441831; FW: X41100RL
```

SYSTEM TOOL

Victoria HDD 5

bit.ly/vic488

Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10 **File size:** 1.2MB

This powerful tool tests hard drives for signs of failure and bad sectors, and makes minor repairs. The software, which needs to be run in admin mode, displays drive details and S.M.A.R.T. (Self-Monitoring, Analysis, and Reporting Technology) info, and includes a disk editor for advanced users. The updated version has a new interface and a reorganised Settings menu, and makes improvements to the various tools. It also no longer tries to get S.M.A.R.T. info on flash and SCSI-drives.

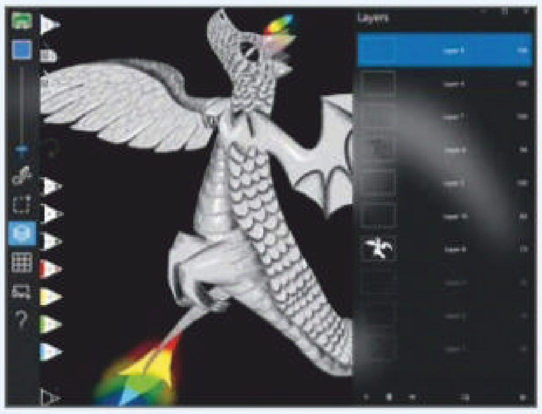
New Windows 10 App

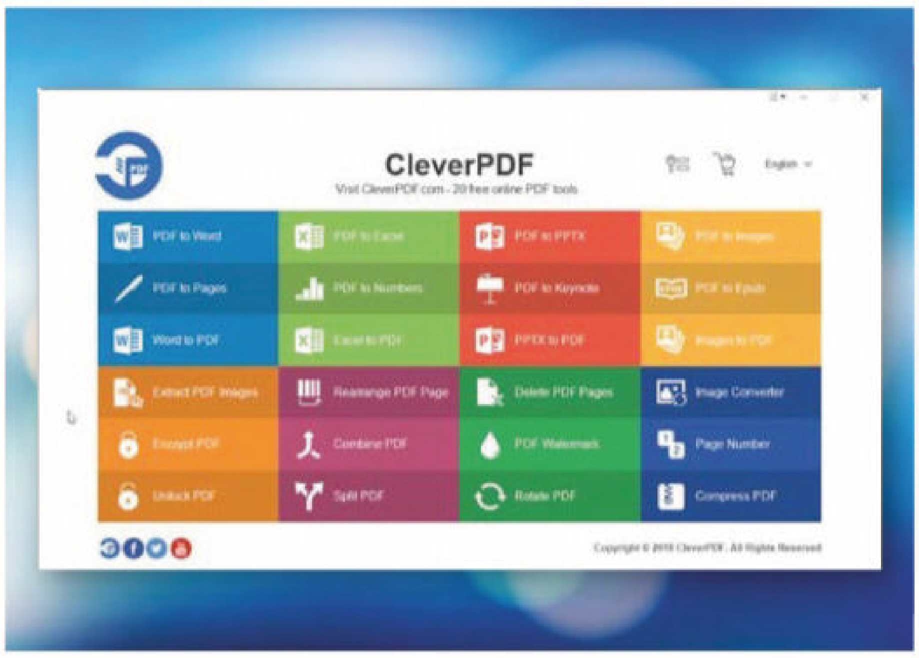
SketchPal

bit.ly/sketch488

File size: 34MB

Created by Microsoft Garage last year, SketchPal is now available in the Microsoft Store. Powered by Windows Ink, it's designed to offer advanced inking features and works with Surface Pen. Available features include layers, custom brushes, colouring assist, stroke cleanup and reference mode. Cross-device connection lets you use a second device as a remote palette.

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Rearrange PDF Page
Delete PDF Pages
Image Converter
Encrypt PDF
Combine PDF
PDF Watermark
Page Number
Unlock PDF
Split PDF
Rotate PDF
Compress PDF
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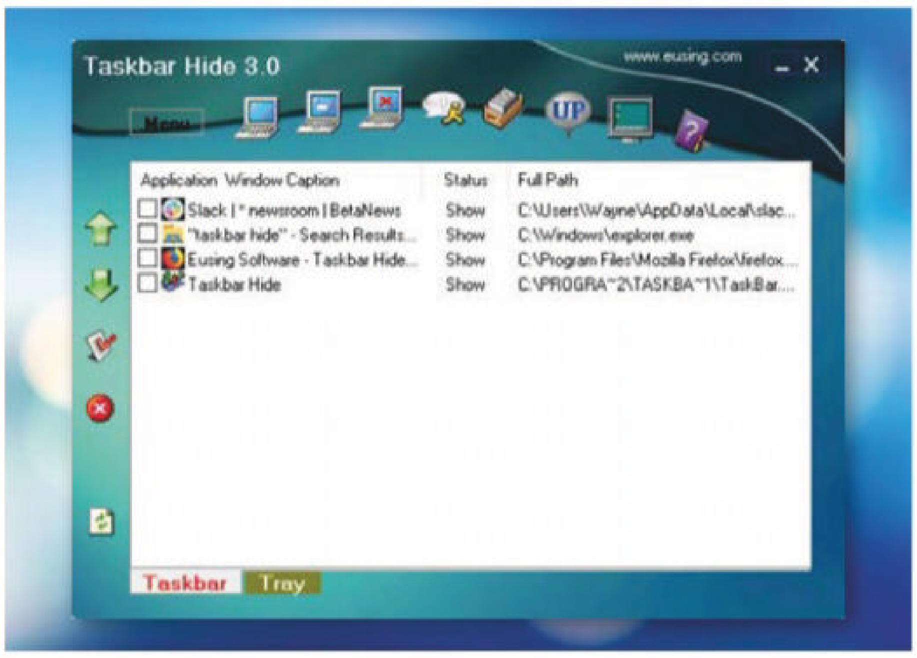
PDF TOOLKIT

CleverPDF 3

bit.ly/clever488

Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10 **File size:** 29.3MB

This desktop version of the online PDF toolkit offers 20 different tools. It can convert PDFs, create them and make changes to their contents. However, the free edition does have a few restrictions: the conversion tools are limited to three pages per file and the PDF utilities only support documents with 10 pages or fewer. If you wish to remove these restrictions, you can upgrade to the paid-for version, which costs £38.99.


Taskbar Hide 3.0
www.eusing.com
Menu
UP
Taskbar
Tray

Application Window Caption	Status	Full Path
☐ Slack | * newsroom | BetaNews	Show	C:\Users\Wayne\AppData\Local\slac...
☐ "taskbar hide" - Search Results...	Show	C:\Windows\explorer.exe
☐ Eusing Software - Taskbar Hide...	Show	C:\Program Files\Mozilla Firefox\firefox...
☐ Taskbar Hide	Show	C:\PROGRA~2\TASKBA~1\TaskBar...

SYSTEM TOOL

Taskbar Hide

bit.ly/hide488

Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10 **File size:** 883KB

Taskbar Hide lets you quickly hide any running application window, including removing its entry from the taskbar. Launch the program and it will display a list of current applications. Select one and you can use the buttons above to hide it, show it, close it, minimise it to the system tray or force it to stay on top of other windows. You can also change the order of icons on the taskbar, and hide elements, such as the Start button.

UPDATE MANAGER

WuMgr

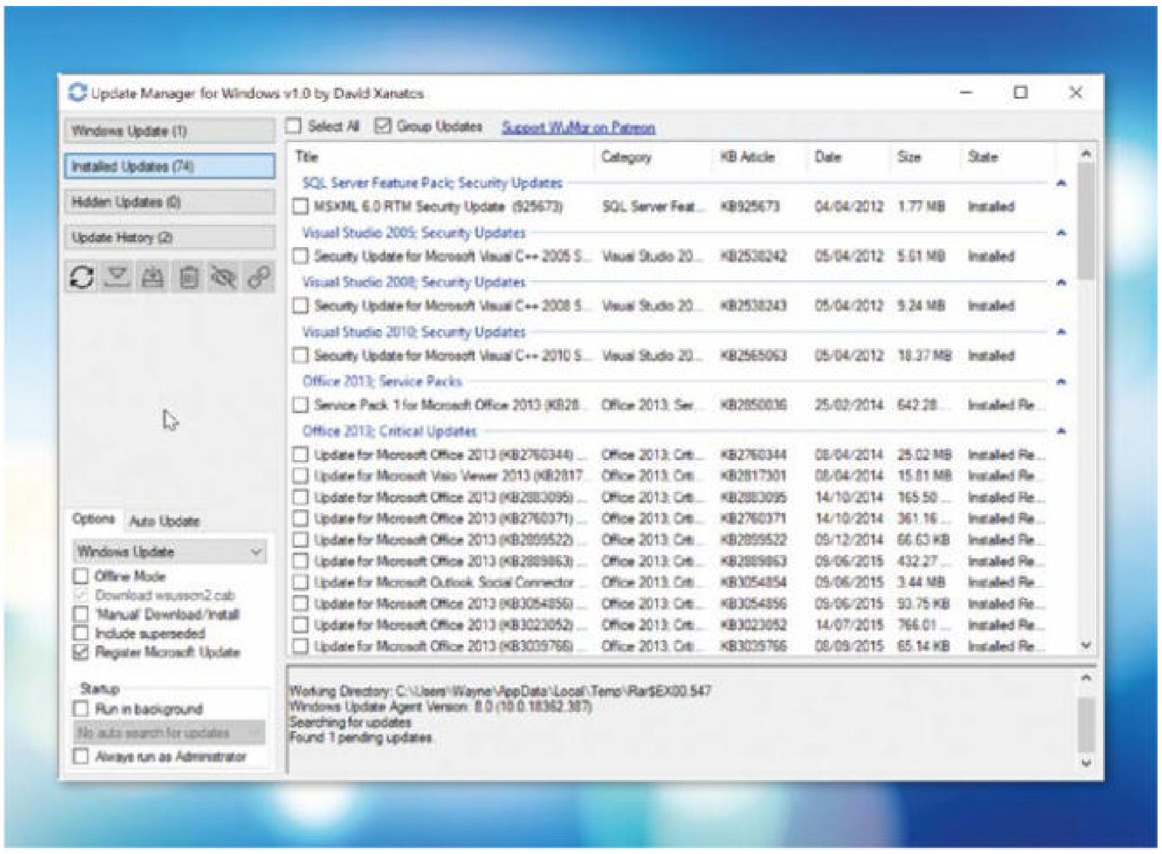
bit.ly/wumgr488

Min requirements: Windows 10

File size: 161KB

WuMgr (Update Manager for Windows) gives you complete control over all your updates in Windows 10. The program displays all pending, successful and failed updates, and lets you switch between viewing Windows Updates, Installed Updates and Hidden Updates. Click the Refresh button to populate the listings. You can download any update, install it or hide it, and also disable automatic or Microsoft store updates.

This first new version of WuMgr for 2019 sees the software hit the 1.0 milestone, and includes improvements to the automatic update check and support for additional languages.


Update Manager for Windows v1.0 by David Xanatos
Windows Update (1)
Installed Updates (74)
Hidden Updates (0)
Update History (2)
Options
Auto Update
Windows Update
Startup
No auto search for updates
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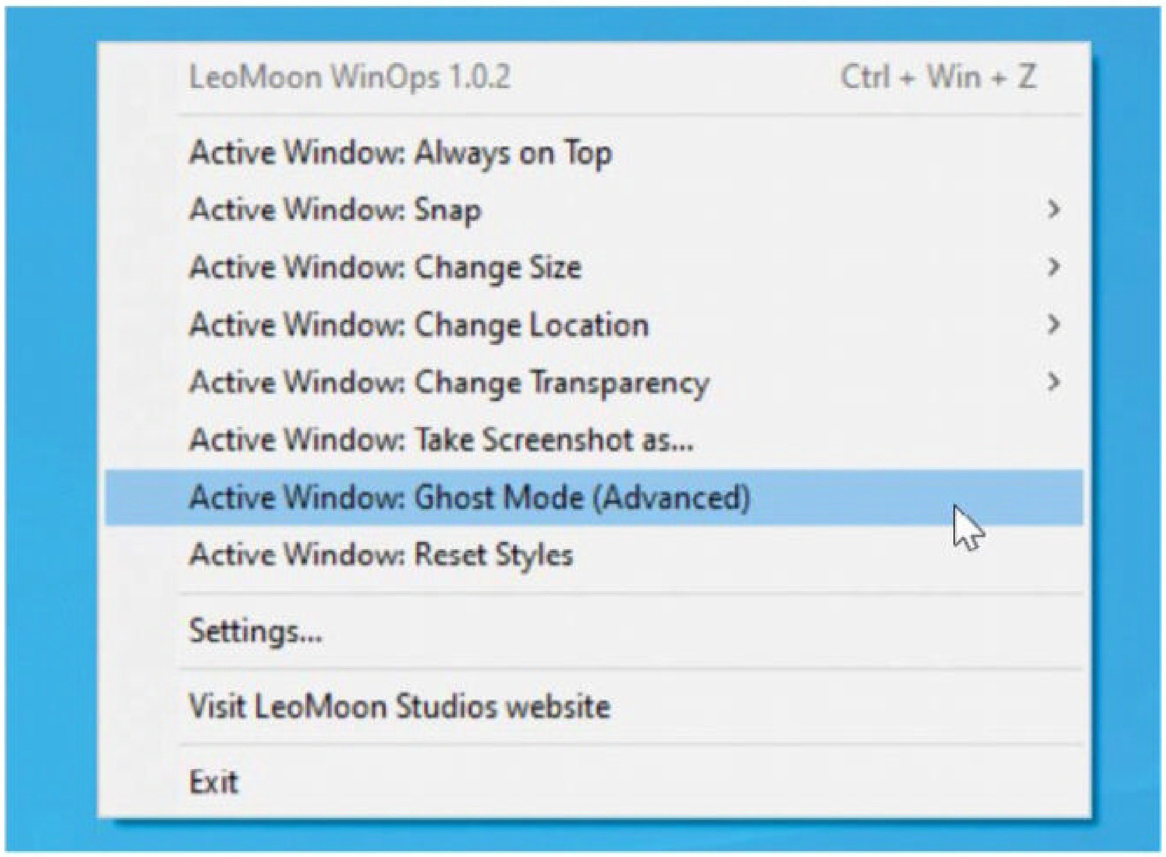
☐ Offline Mode
☑ Download wsusscn2.cab
☐ 'Manual' Download/Install
☐ Include superseded
☑ Register Microsoft Update
☐ Run in background
☐ Always run as Administrator

☐ Select All ☑ Group Updates

Title	Category	KB Article	Date	Size	State
SQL Server Feature Pack; Security Updates					
☐ MSXML 6.0 RTM Security Update (925673)	SQL Server Feat...	KB925673	04/04/2012	1.77 MB	Installed
Visual Studio 2005; Security Updates					
☐ Security Update for Microsoft Visual C++ 2005 S...	Visual Studio 20...	KB2538242	05/04/2012	5.01 MB	Installed
Visual Studio 2008; Security Updates					
☐ Security Update for Microsoft Visual C++ 2008 S...	Visual Studio 20...	KB2538243	05/04/2012	5.24 MB	Installed
Visual Studio 2010; Security Updates					
☐ Security Update for Microsoft Visual C++ 2010 S...	Visual Studio 20...	KB2565063	05/04/2012	18.27 MB	Installed
Office 2013; Service Packs					
☐ Service Pack 1 for Microsoft Office 2013 (KB28...	Office 2013; Ser...	KB2850036	25/02/2014	642.28 ...	Installed Re...
Office 2013; Critical Updates					
☐ Update for Microsoft Office 2013 (KB2760344) ...	Office 2013; Cri...	KB2760344	08/04/2014	25.02 MB	Installed Re...
☐ Update for Microsoft Visio Viewer 2013 (KB2817...	Office 2013; Cri...	KB2817301	08/04/2014	15.01 MB	Installed Re...
☐ Update for Microsoft Office 2013 (KB2883095) ...	Office 2013; Cri...	KB2883095	14/10/2014	165.50 ...	Installed Re...
☐ Update for Microsoft Office 2013 (KB2760371) ...	Office 2013; Cri...	KB2760371	14/10/2014	361.16 ...	Installed Re...
☐ Update for Microsoft Office 2013 (KB2899522) ...	Office 2013; Cri...	KB2899522	05/12/2014	66.63 KB	Installed Re...
☐ Update for Microsoft Office 2013 (KB2889863) ...	Office 2013; Cri...	KB2889863	09/06/2015	432.27 ...	Installed Re...
☐ Update for Microsoft Outlook Social Connector ...	Office 2013; Cri...	KB3054854	05/06/2015	3.44 MB	Installed Re...
☐ Update for Microsoft Office 2013 (KB3054856) ...	Office 2013; Cri...	KB3054856	09/06/2015	93.75 KB	Installed Re...
☐ Update for Microsoft Office 2013 (KB3023052) ...	Office 2013; Cri...	KB3023052	14/07/2015	766.01 ...	Installed Re...
☐ Update for Microsoft Office 2013 (KB3039766) ...	Office 2013; Cri...	KB3039766	08/09/2015	65.14 KB	Installed Re...

```
Working Directory: C:\Users\Wayne\AppData\Local\Temp\Rar$EX00.547
Windows Update Agent Version: 8.0 (10.0.18362.387)
Searching for updates
Found 1 pending updates
```


LeoMoon WinOps 1.0.2
Ctrl + Win + Z
Active Window: Always on Top
Active Window: Snap
Active Window: Change Size
Active Window: Change Location
Active Window: Change Transparency
Active Window: Take Screenshot as...
Active Window: Ghost Mode (Advanced)
Active Window: Reset Styles
Settings...
Visit LeoMoon Studios website
Exit

SYSTEM TOOL

LeoMoon WinOps

bit.ly/winops488

Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10

File size: 930KB

WinOps lets you apply a number of operations to open windows. You can set the current window to always be on top, and snap windows to the left, right, top, bottom or full screen. Snapping is built directly into Windows but it can be a little fiddly, and WinOps simplifies the process. The program lets you quickly resize a window using various presets, move the window to a different area of the screen, change its transparency, take a screenshot and activate Ghost mode (in which you can still see the window, but not interact with it). Once you've installed WinOps, press Ctrl+Win+Z to open the menu.

IMAGE EDITOR

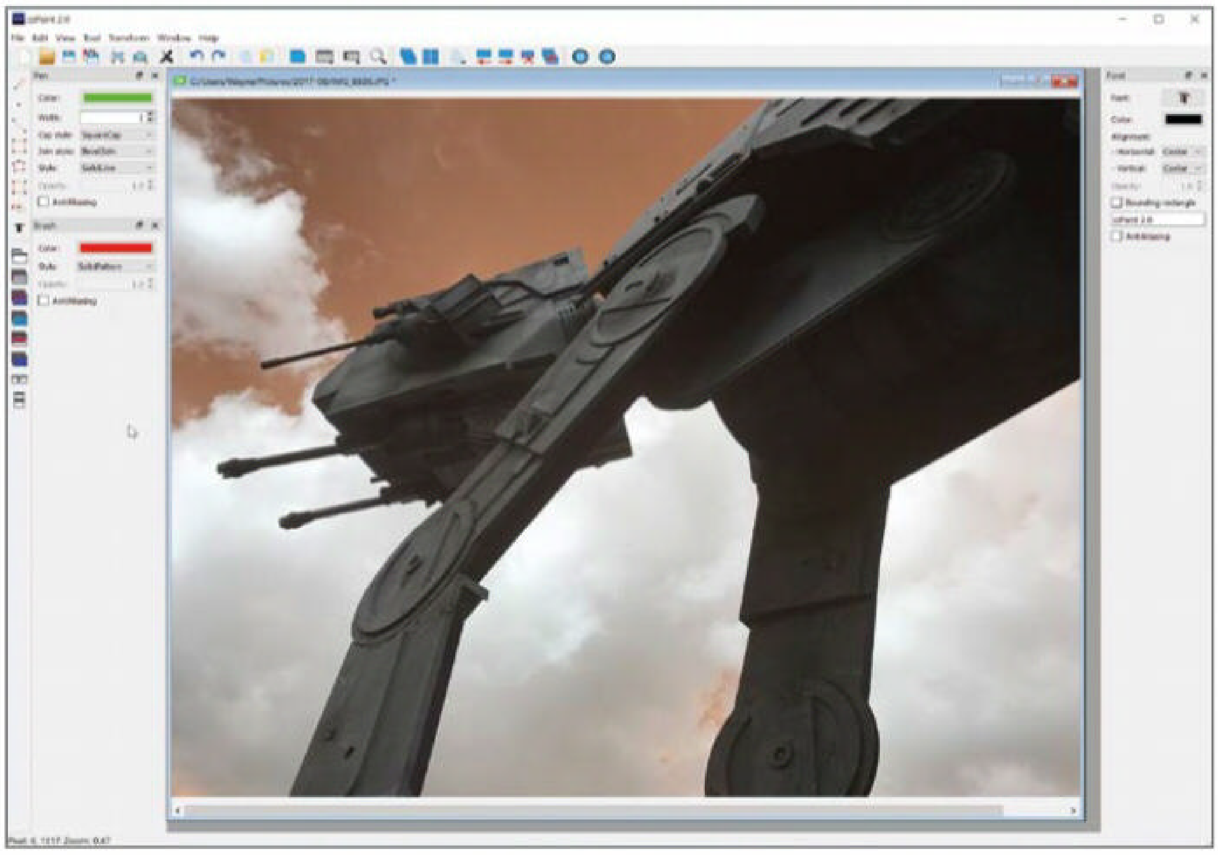
zzPaint 2

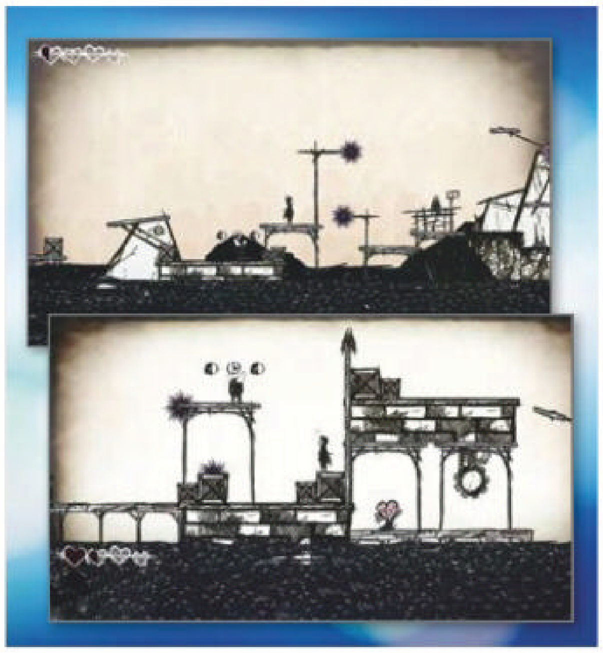
bit.ly/zz488

Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10

File size: 8.2MB

There are lots of excellent free image editors, such as GIMP and Paint.net, and Windows even comes with its own simple tool – Paint. A portable alternative to Microsoft's application, zzPaint offers a number of drawing tools including a brush (with a choice of styles), colour picker, line and shape, flood fill and text. It can also transform your images, flipping them horizontally or vertically, inverting RGB, switching from RGB to BGR, adding an alpha channel and more. Multiple images can be arranged in a cascade or tiled. The software is fairly basic, which makes it very easy to use.





GAME

Brain Marmelade

bit.ly/bmarm488

Min requirements: Windows 7/8.1/10

File size: 63MB

Brain Marmelade [sic] is a creepy 2D platform game that looks like it was created by Tim Burton with its spidery black-and-white hand-drawn graphics. You play the oddly named "Dump One" and must solve puzzles and overcome enemies. The combat system requires you to perform various attack combos with your mouse.

Install this program...

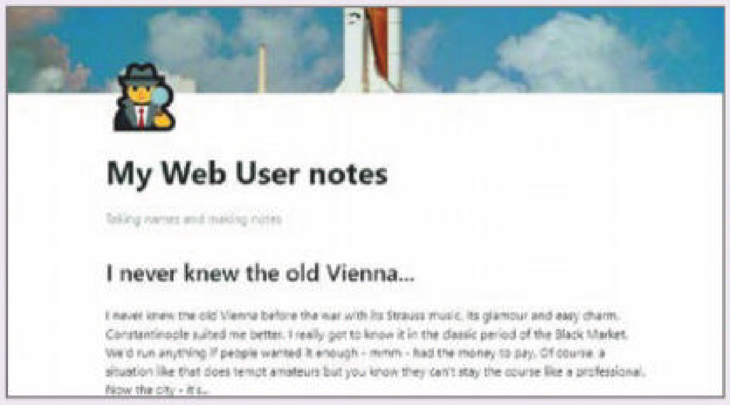
Notion

www.notion.so

Min requirements: Windows 7/8/10, macOS, Android or iOS

File size: 38.9MB

With an easy-to-use interface, lots of handy features and impressively helpful tutorials, this free note-taking tool delivers on every level. You can import data from other services, including Google Docs, Evernote and Microsoft Word, and use templates such as Personal, Student and Human Resources to build everything from to-do lists and travel plans to mood boards and meeting notes in a few clicks. Notion also lets you create your own templates, complete with cover images, and it works seamlessly across desktop and mobile devices, too.



My Web User notes

Taking names and making notes

I never knew the old Vienna...

I never knew the old Vienna before the war with its Strauss music, its glamour and easy charm. Constantinople suited me better. I really got to know it in the classic period of the Black Market. We'd run anything if people wanted it enough - mmm - had the money to pay. Of course, a situation like that does tempt amateurs but you know they can't stay the course like a professional. Now the city - it's...

...Not this one

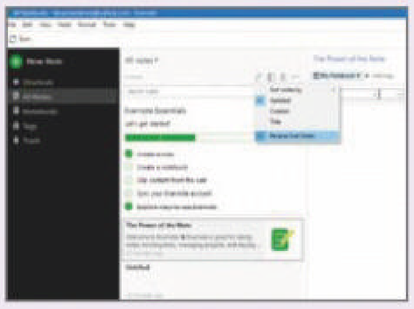
Evernote

www.evernote.com

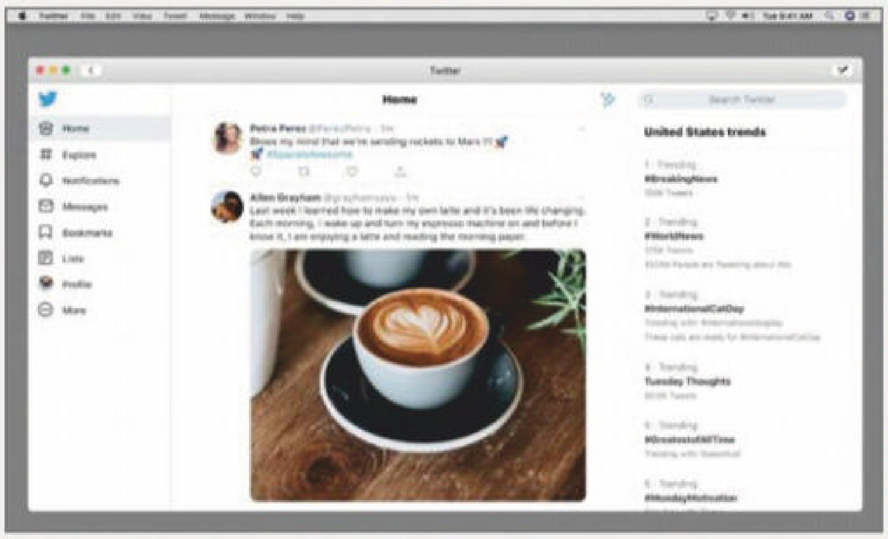
Min requirements: Windows 7/8/10, macOS, Android or iOS

File size: 371.1MB

Once the reigning king of the note-taking app, Evernote has fallen off its perch – not least because it's failed to innovate in recent years. Whatever Evernote could once do can now be done better by using other digital notepads. It also loses marks for not being compatible with Microsoft's Edge browser.



OTHER OPERATING SYSTEMS What's new for Linux and macOS



TWITTER CLIENT

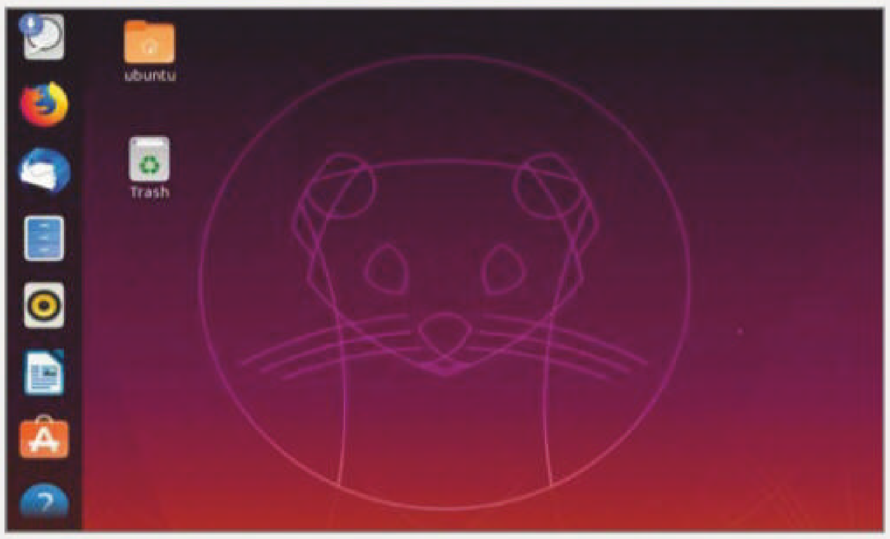
Twitter for Mac

bit.ly/twit488

Min requirements: macOS 10.15 or later, 64-bit processor

File size: 32.8MB

Twitter discontinued its Mac app last year but has released a new version for users running the latest version of macOS – Catalina. It's been built using Apple's Catalyst framework that allows developers to port over iPad apps. The new Mac app has a different interface from the one for iPadOS and offers Dark Mode support. It lets you access premium and exclusive live streams and customise your profile.



LINUX DISTRO

Ubuntu Linux 19.10 Eoan Ermine

ubuntu.com

Min requirements: 4GB RAM, 25GB free hard drive space

File size: 2.3GB

Ubuntu is one of the most popular Linux distributions and this latest release is a major improvement, boosting performance so it runs even better on older hardware. It comes with the GNOME 3.34 desktop environment, optional light and dark Yaru themes and support for Raspberry Pi 4 Model B and AMD Navi GPUs. It also has the latest versions of Firefox, Thunderbird and LibreOffice preinstalled.

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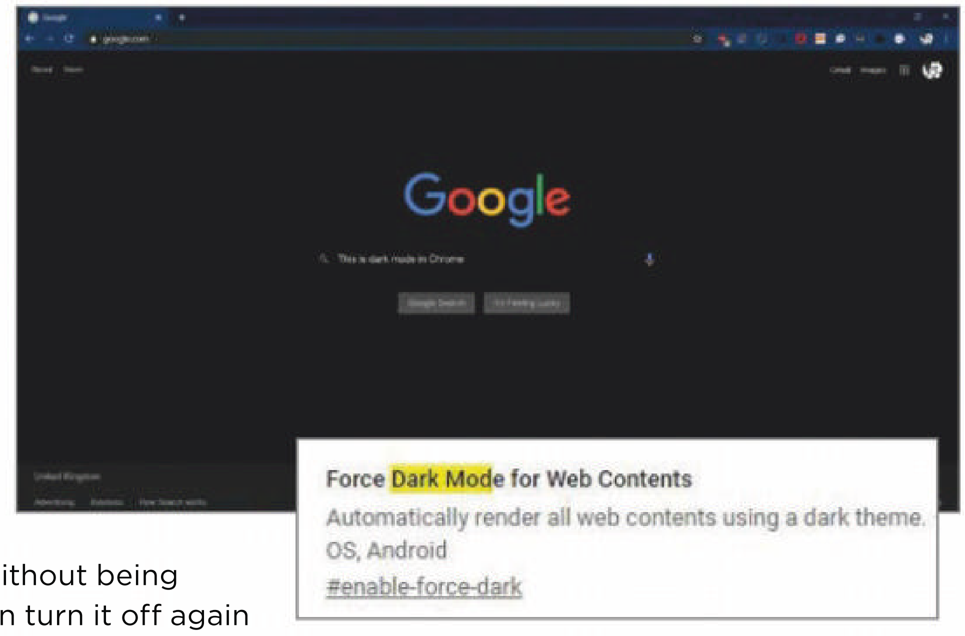
Best New Browser Tools

CHROME

Apply dark mode to every website

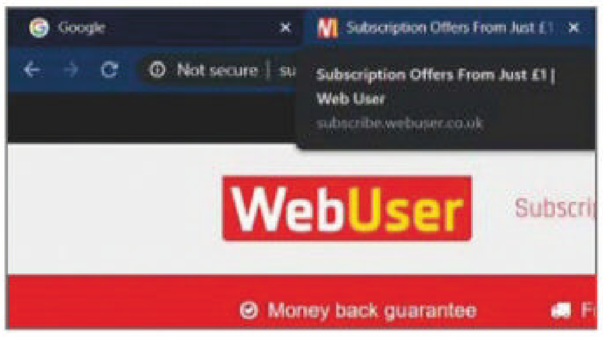

Google
This is dark mode in Chrome
Google Search
I'm Feeling Lucky

Force Dark Mode for Web Contents
Automatically render all web contents using a dark theme.
OS, Android
#enable-force-dark

It seems that dark mode is available for virtually every app, but only a handful of websites offer this easy-on-the-eyes option, which means you need to install an extension to get dark mode on your favourite sites.

To remedy this, Google has finally unveiled a new experimental 'flag' that forces dark mode across the board – no more awkward workarounds or unnecessary tools clogging up the browser. To activate the feature, visit the Chrome Experiments page at `chrome://flags` and search for 'dark mode'. Here, you'll find the setting 'Force Dark Mode for Web Contents'. Use the drop-down menu to switch from Default to Enabled, then relaunch the browser.

To check that the forced dark mode is working, head over to Google – which you'll now be able to do at night without being blinded by the glare of its once-white background. You can turn it off again by choosing Disabled next to its entry on the Chrome Experiments page.


Google
Subscription Offers From Just £1
Not secure
Subscription Offers From Just £1 | Web User
subscribe.webuser.co.uk
WebUser
Subscri
Money back guarantee

Find out what's new in Chrome 78

The latest version of Chrome has been released. Typically, these big iterations bring major refinements to the browser but, while there are a handful of changes in Chrome 78, it lacks the blockbuster features of previous editions. Security fixes form the bulk of the changes – 37 have been patched, including several marked 'High priority' – but many promised extras, such as the useful password checker, have been bumped to the forthcoming Chrome 79.

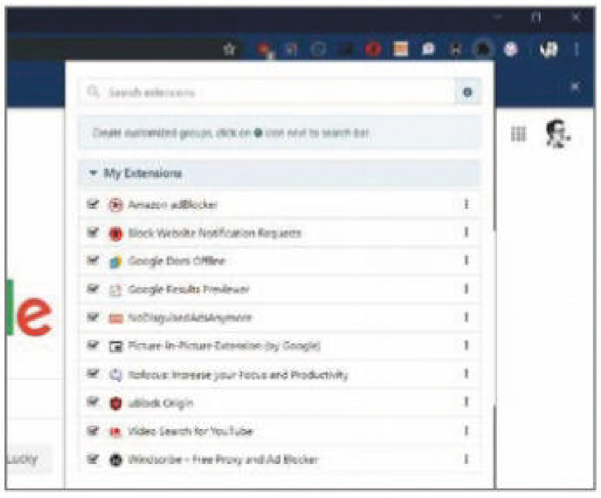
The most eye-catching new feature is the tab overlay. In older versions of Chrome, hovering your cursor over a tab displayed the title of the web page. When you perform the same action in Chrome 78, this pop-up now includes the site's URL.

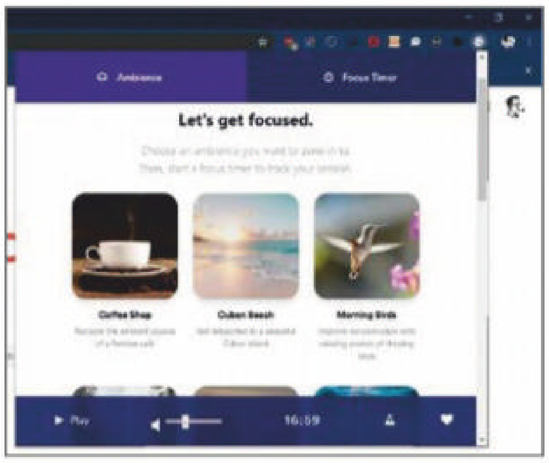
Your browser should automatically update to the new version, but you can force it to do so by clicking the three-dot menu, then pressing Help, About Chrome.

Manage Chrome extensions more easily

If there's one complaint about Chrome extensions, it's that managing them isn't exactly efficient, which is where Chrome Extension Manager (bit.ly/manager488) comes in. This easy-to-use browser tool displays all your installed extensions in a neat list and gives you a lot more control compared to the fiddly default option offered by Chrome.

Along the top of the window, there is a search bar for accessing specific extensions without scrolling. Beneath this are your browser tools, arranged alphabetically. To the left of each one is a tick box that disables and enables the tool; to the right, a three-dot icon that lets you jump to the Chrome extension-management screen. Extensions can also be grouped together by clicking the cog and selecting 'New group'.


Search extensions
My Extensions
Amazon adBlocker
Block Website Notification Requests
Google Docs Offline
Google Results Previewer
Picture-in-Picture Extension (by Google)
Rofocus: Increase your Focus and Productivity
uBlock Origin
Video Search for YouTube
Windscribe - Free Proxy and Ad Blocker
Lucky


Ambience
Focus Timer
Let's get focused.
Coffee Shop
Cuban Beach
Morning Birds
Play
16:59

Focus while you browse

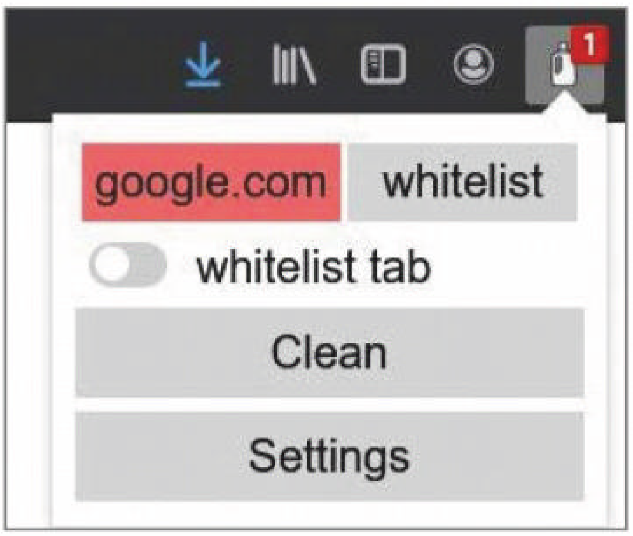
Going online opens up a minefield of distractions, but there is a way to keep your focus without using extensions that block your access to sites and force you to do your work. Rather than the stick, Rofocus (bit.ly/rofocus488) offers the carrot. Designed to "increase focus and productivity", this browser tool plays ambient background sounds to help you concentrate.

Start by choosing an ambient sound – from the Amazon forest to a Parisian café – then hop across to the Focus Timer window. By default, the countdown timer is set to 25-minute intervals, but this can be changed. The idea is that, by coupling a predetermined 'focus time' with background sounds, your brain can de-stress, becoming more creative and focused.

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

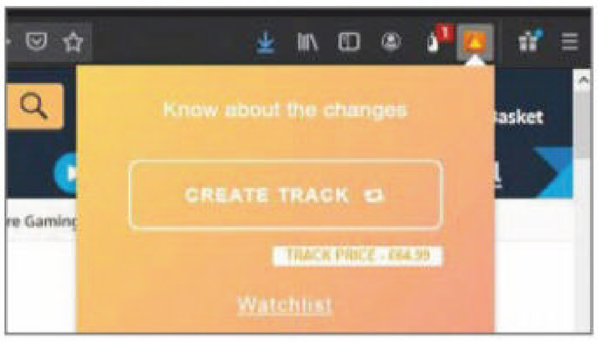
FIREFOX

Remove trackers from any website



The web can be a dirty place – most sites are infested with cookies and you can barely move for JavaScript and third-party trackers lurking in web pages. Site Bleacher (bit.ly/bleach488) simplifies the removal of cookies, locally stored data and other browsing junk that websites use to collect your data and spy on you.

Visit any site and a badge appears on the toolbar button, letting you know that something on the site can be removed. Click this and you're presented with three options. Beside the URL is the option to whitelist the site and, below that, a switch to whitelist only the current tab. This whitelist can be managed by clicking Settings. To clear your data from the site, just click Clean.



Track prices and bag a bargain

With Black Friday fast approaching and Christmas hot on its heels, it's time to keep your eyes peeled for the hottest bargains. Thankfully, the Otsledit Price Tracker (bit.ly/price488) frees you from sitting shackled to Amazon, refreshing the page and desperately waiting for price drops. The extension offers three options: Create Track, Track Price and Watchlist. Clicking Track Price is the easiest way to watch for incoming bargains. Create Track is a little more in-depth: click the button, select a specific area on the page – in this case, the item's price – and confirm that you wish to track the area. You'll now be notified if that section of the website changes.

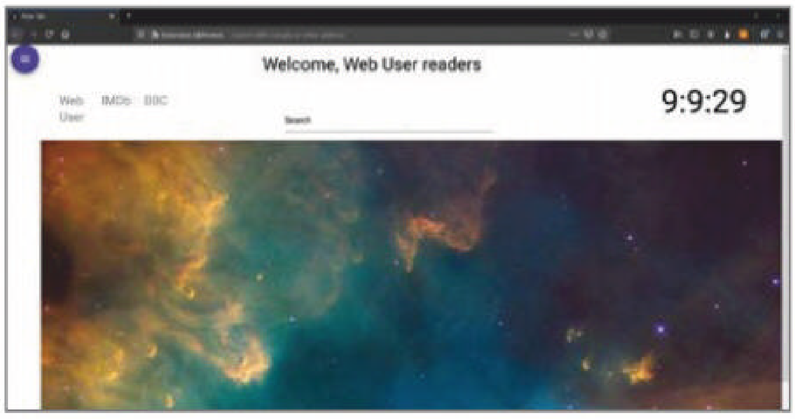
You can view all currently tracked items in your Watchlist.

Customise your new tabs

If you're looking to make your new tabs more exciting and enhance them with some practical tools, then install @Home (bit.ly/home488). This add-on starts you off with a blank slate when you first open a new tab, but click the three-line button and you'll find a host of options to add.

Start by choosing the tile icon. This is the 'store' (don't worry, it's all free), where you can add various extras such as a clock, a search bar and quick links to your favourite sites. Drag and drop the modules into place, then open the three-line menu again and click the pencil icon to resize the boxes on the new tab.

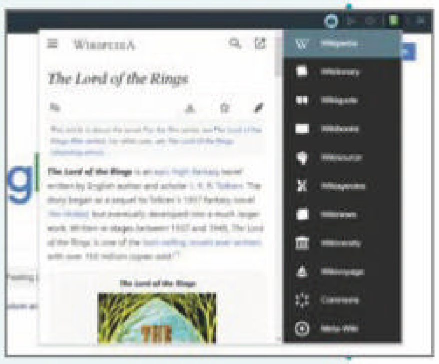
Now click the cog to enter the settings for each element – you can write a greeting message, add URLs to your quick links and create background images or colours.



OTHER BROWSERS

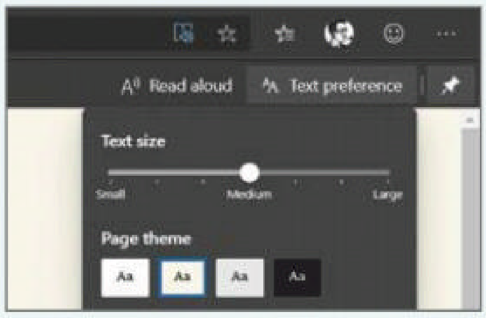
Access any Wiki in the world

There are lots of Wiki channels – from the online encyclopaedia Wikipedia to the handy online manuals of WikiHow and the entertaining Wikiquote, where notable quotations are archived. Black Menu for Wikipedia (bit.ly/wikipedia488) is an Opera add-on that lists all the different Wiki sites, including lesser known ones such as travel guide Wikivoyage. Rather than acting as a bookmark tool for the Wiki empire, websites are displayed in a fly-out window where each site is fully navigable and doesn't need to be opened in a new tab.



Hear websites read aloud

The new Edge browser includes the option to have web pages read aloud in Immersive Reader mode. Simply click the book icon in the address bar to reveal a toolbar that can be pinned by clicking the drawing-pin button. Here, you'll see two additional options: 'Read aloud' is a robotic narrator, with playback controls at the top of the screen, alongside a selection of voices; 'Text preference' is ideal for anyone struggling to read what's on the screen, and provides tools for increasing the font size and changing the background colour.



Tell us your favourite add-ons at www.facebook.com/webusermagazine

Best Free Apps

App of the Fortnight

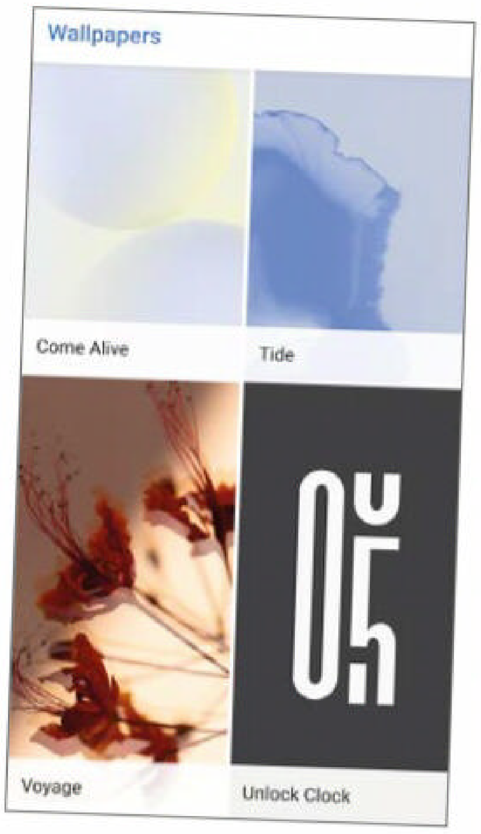
TOOLS

NEW

Digital Wellbeing Experiments

bit.ly/wellbeing488

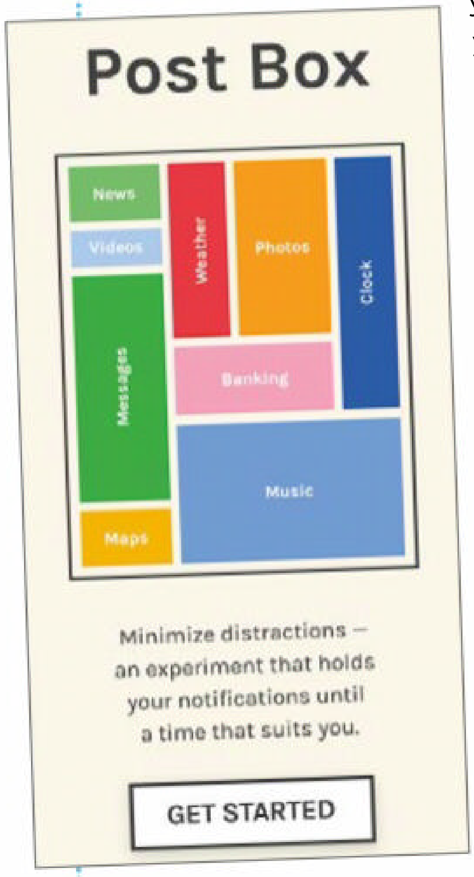
8


Wallpapers
Come Alive
Tide
Voyage
Unlock Clock

We admit that we're cheating a little with our App of the Fortnight this issue. In fact, it's actually five separate free apps – all from Google's experimental Creative Lab team – that are designed to improve your digital wellbeing in one way or another.

First up is Desert Island (bit.ly/desert488), a simple tool that helps you focus by game-ifying your phone use and challenging you to go for a full 24 hours with only a handful of your most essential apps.

Next up is Morph (bit.ly/morph488), which aims to provide you with the apps you need at the times you need them. You're tasked with thinking about how you use your time so your device can adapt to present you with the apps appropriate to a specific time or location. For example, if you only exercise in the afternoon, your fitness-tracker app will be hidden at other times of the day. It's a good way to avoid unnecessary distractions.


Post Box
News
Videos
Weather
Photos
Clock
Messages
Banking
Music
Maps
GET STARTED

Minimize distractions – an experiment that holds your notifications until a time that suits you.

Post Box (bit.ly/post488) is a very useful tool that basically stockpiles all your notifications. You schedule how often and when you'd like them delivered, and remain blissfully uninterrupted by pings, dings and on-screen messages until that time arrives.

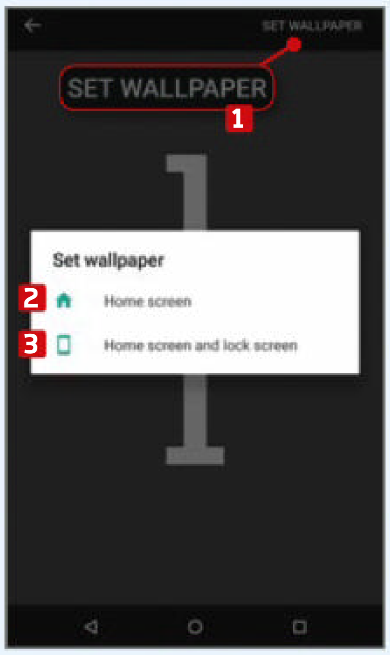
Unlock Clock (bit.ly/unlock488) helps you consider how much you use your phone by displaying a running tally every time you unlock it.

Finally, We Flip (bit.ly/weflip488) is another game-ified way to switch off from technology – this time with an added social element. You and your friends flip the off switch together and see how long you can all go without using your devices as a group.

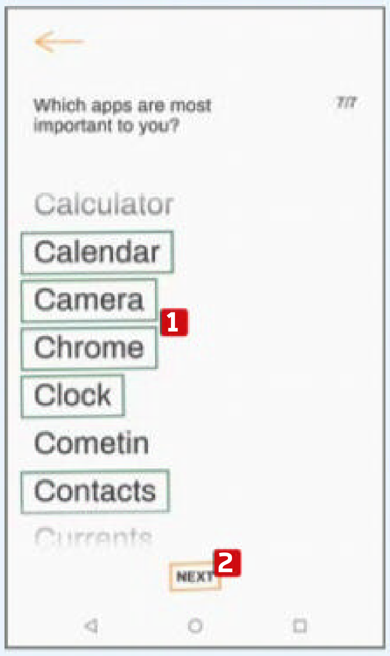
Our rating ★★★★★

MINI WORKSHOP

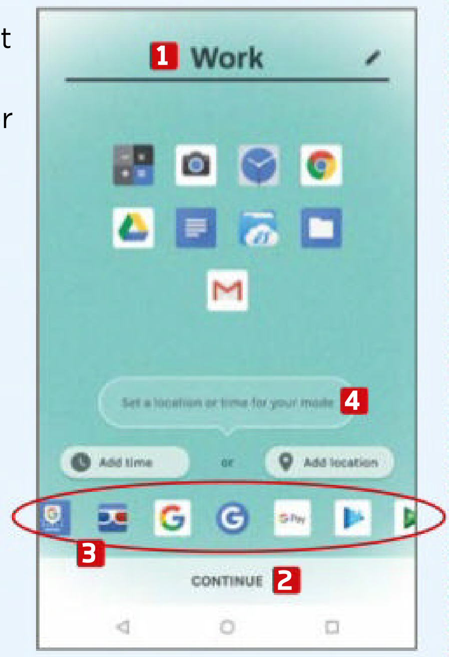
Improve your digital wellbeing with Google's new apps


SET WALLPAPER
SET WALLPAPER
1
1
Set wallpaper
2
Home screen
3
Home screen and lock screen

1 Unlock Clock works as a live wallpaper, so you won't find an icon for it in your app tray. Instead, you need to tap Settings, Display, Wallpaper, then select 'Live wallpapers' from the options. Select Unlock Clock, then tap Set Wallpaper **1** and choose whether it's applied to just 'Home screen' **2** or 'Home screen and lock screen'. **3** The counter will increase every time you unlock your device.


Which apps are most important to you?
7/7
Calculator
Calendar
Camera
1
Chrome
Clock
Cometin
Contacts
Currents
NEXT
2

2 To use Desert Island, launch it and press Get Started, then Next. Now select your seven most essential apps from the list **1** and tap Next. **2** Tap Select Default Launcher, then make sure Desert Island is selected as Home and tap Always. Tap Get Started and you'll be faced with a minimal launcher with only your essential apps available. Press the palm-tree icon to select other apps or quit.


1
Work
Set a location or time for your mode
4
Add time
or
Add location
3
CONTINUE
2

3 Launch Morph, press Get Started, then Start Experiment. Type a name for your first 'mode' – for example, Work **1** – then choose Continue. **2** Select the apps you want to be available in this mode from the strip at the bottom. **3** Press Continue, then tap 'Add time' or 'Add location' **4** to set when or where you want this mode active. Choose Continue, then tap Select Default Launcher to set Morph as your launcher.

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

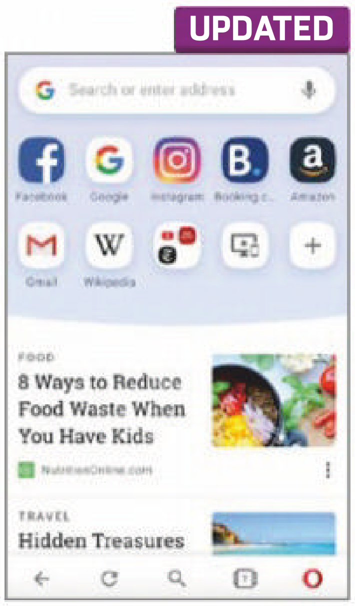
BROWSER

UPDATED

Opera for Android

bit.ly/opera488

(varies)


Search or enter address
Facebook
Google
Instagram
Booking.c...
Amazon
Gmail
Wikipedia
FOOD
NutritionOnline.com
TRAVEL

8 Ways to Reduce Food Waste When You Have Kids

Hidden Treasures

Every software developer seems to be updating its apps with a dark mode right now, but Opera has decided to take things a step further. The latest version of Opera for Android (not to be confused with Opera Mini and Opera Touch) introduces a clean new look that allows you to choose from a number of colourful themes. The new interface feels nippier, thanks to reduced animation times and quicker paths to getting things done. Version 54 also introduces built-in support for Bitcoin via its Crypto Wallet feature.

Our rating ★★★★☆

NEWS

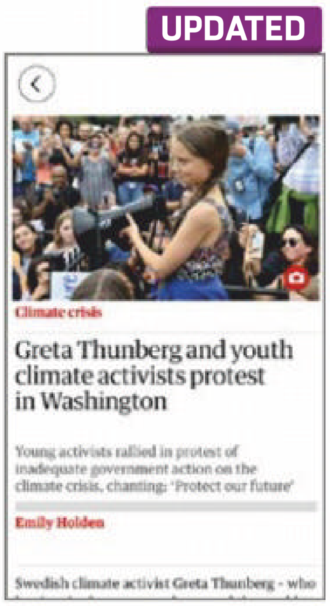
UPDATED

Guardian Daily

bit.ly/guarddroid488

bit.ly/guardios488

5 12.4



Climate crisis

Greta Thunberg and youth climate activists protest in Washington

Young activists rallied in protest of inadequate government action on the climate crisis, chanting: 'Protect our future'

Emily Holden

Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg – who

Previously, the Guardian's Daily news app was available exclusively for iPad users, so it's great that the national newspaper has broadened its support for iPhones and – for the first time – Android devices of all shapes and sizes. Into the bargain, the newly updated app benefits from a redesign that aims to deliver a clean, distraction-free reading experience. On the downside, while the app itself is free, you'll need a Guardian digital subscription (currently £12 per month) to access its full content.

Our rating ★★★☆☆

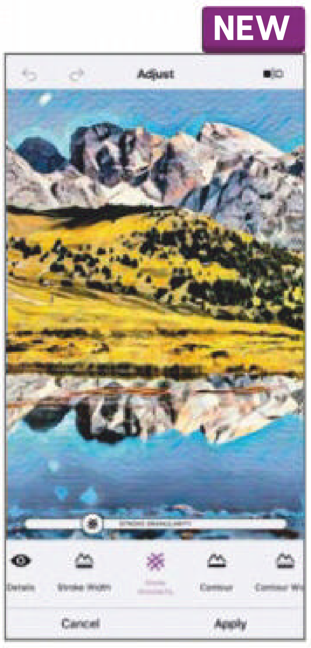
PHOTOS

NEW

Graphite

bit.ly/graphite488

12.2


Adjust
Details
Stroke Width
Contour
Cancel
Apply

There are a number of apps that turn photos into drawings but few are as effective at transforming your pictures as Graphite, which offers a wide range of styles, from ballpoint pen to technical drawing. It's easy to use, too – just select your photo and apply your style. Further customisation can be carried out by tapping Edit. The Graphite app and many of its tools and effects are free to use, but you'll need to pay £6 per year to unlock the full gamut of options and remove watermarks – which is a bit annoying.

Our rating ★★★★☆

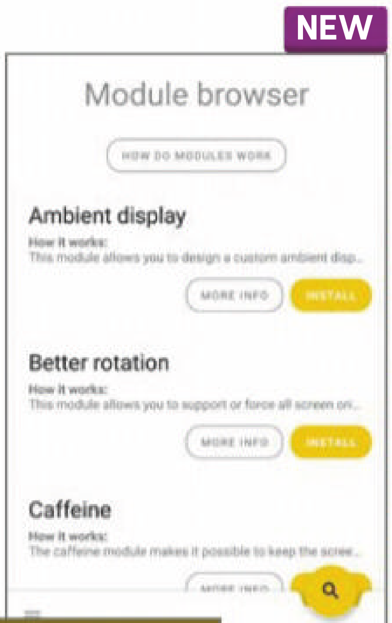
TOOLS

NEW

Cometin

bit.ly/cometin488

6


Module browser
HOW DO MODULES WORK
MORE INFO
INSTALL

Ambient display

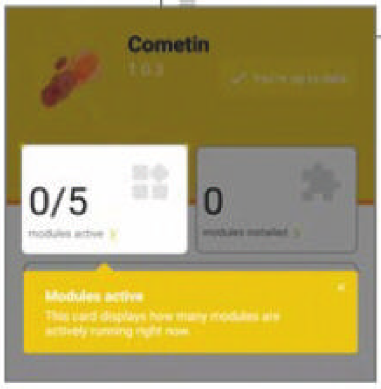
How it works:
This module allows you to design a custom ambient disp...

Better rotation

How it works:
This module allows you to support or force all screen on...

Caffeine

How it works:
The caffeine module makes it possible to keep the scree...


Cometin
1.0.3
You're up to date
0/5
modules active
0
modules installed

Modules active

This card displays how many modules are actively running right now.

Cometin is a slightly unusual app in that it provides a container for lots of little Android tools, tweaks and options, which it refers to as 'modules'. Open Cometin and tap 'Browse all modules' to see what's available. Among the modules currently on offer are tools for darkening your screen beyond Android's stock brightness tools, a timer for turning off your display after a specific period (useful if you're watching a movie) and the option to set up a parallel profile for your device (for work, for example). It's a clever idea and we look forward to seeing the selection of tools grow.

Our rating ★★★★★

PHOTOS

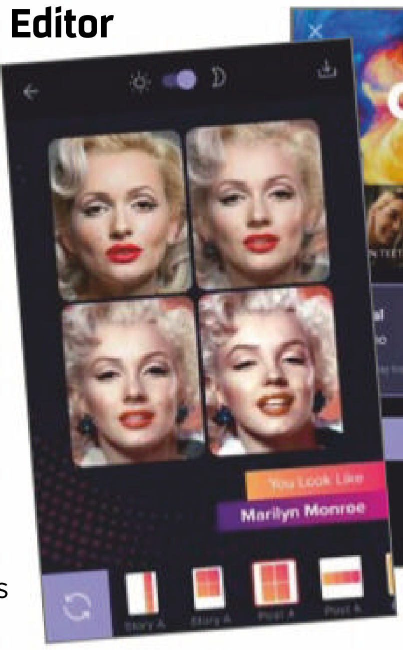
NEW

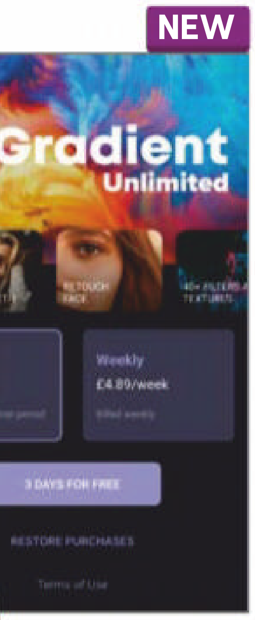
Gradient Photo Editor

bit.ly/gradedroid488

bit.ly/gradeios488

5 11

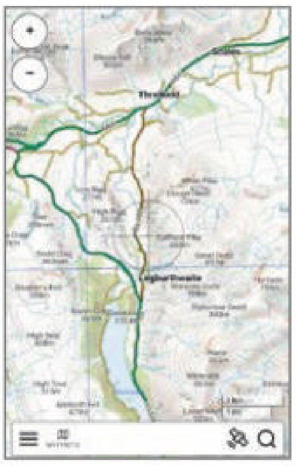

You Look Like
Marilyn Monroe
Story A
Story B
Post A
Post A


Gradient
Unlimited
Weekly
£4.89/week
3 DAYS FOR FREE
RESTORE PURCHASES
Terms of Use

Following FaceApp's virtual ageing gimmick, the latest face-based craze to sweep through the world's social-media feeds is Gradient's lookalike tool, which finds the closest celebrity match to your face type. Additionally, Gradient allows you to 'beautify' your selfies by changing skin tones, whitening teeth, retouching skin imperfections and so on. Sadly, you only get to use Gradient's full range of tools for free for the first three days after installing it. After that, you need to actively cancel your subscription or you'll end up being slapped with a £19.49-per-month fee, which we think is a major rip-off.

Our rating ★★☆☆☆

5 NEW APPS WORTH PAYING FOR



MAPS

Lake District Outdoor Map Pro

bit.ly/lakedroid488
bit.ly/lakeios488

Price: £1.79 (Android), £1.99 (iOS)

4.4 10

Planning a hike through the Lakes? Then download this app, which provides offline maps you can use where there's no mobile signal, with Ordnance Survey grid references, high zoom levels and more.

GAME

Very Little Nightmares

bit.ly/nightmares488

Price: £2.99

9

In this creepy mobile spin-off of the cult console puzzle game, you help the Girl in the Yellow Raincoat survive in a hostile house by navigating a series of dark and hazardous environments.

CLOCK

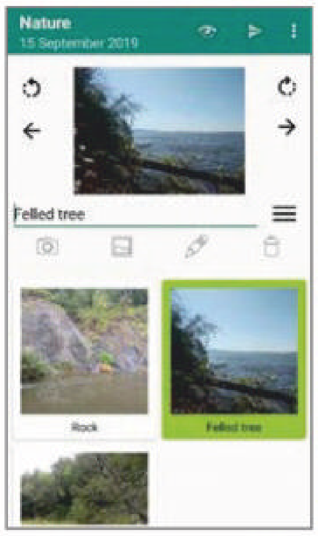
Wakey

bit.ly/wakey488

Price: £1.09

5

This cute, animated alarm clock app is packed with extras, including weather forecasts, customisable alarms and even maths puzzles to engage your brain when you wake. There's a free version to try before you have to fork out for the full version.


Nature
15 September 2019
Felled tree
Rock
Felled tree

PHOTOS

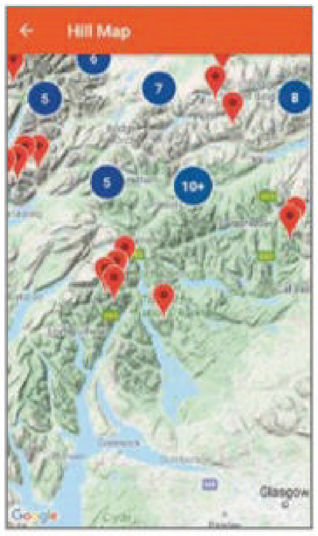
Photo Reports

bit.ly/photoreport488

Price: £1.19

5

This simple yet useful app lets you compile a selection of photos into mini-reports with text for each image, which you can export in PDF format. It's a handy tool for everything from insurance claims to school projects.


Hill Map
Glasgow
Google

OUTDOOR

Climbed-IT Pro

bit.ly/climbed488

Price: 79p

5

If you like scaling the dizzy heights of hills around Britain, this app will let you track the ones you've climbed on a map, build a wishlist of any you want to tackle and share your achievements.

Lake District Outdoor Map Pro

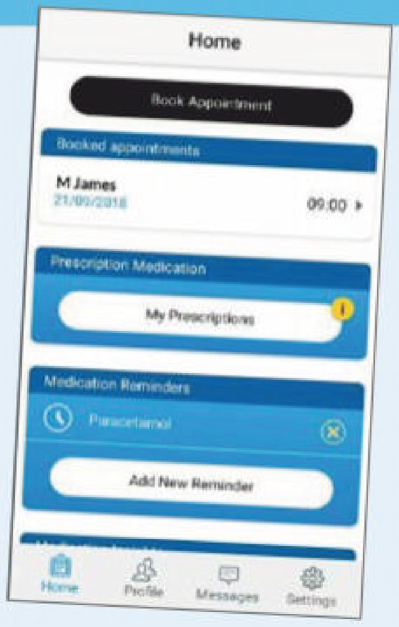
Very Little Nightmares

Wakey

Photo Reports

Climbed-IT Pro

✓ Install this app...


Home
Book Appointment
Booked appointments
M James
21/09/2018
09:00
Prescription Medication
My Prescriptions
Medication Reminders
Paracetamol
Add New Reminder
Home
Profile
Messages
Settings

myGP

bit.ly/mygpdroid488
bit.ly/mygpios488

5 10

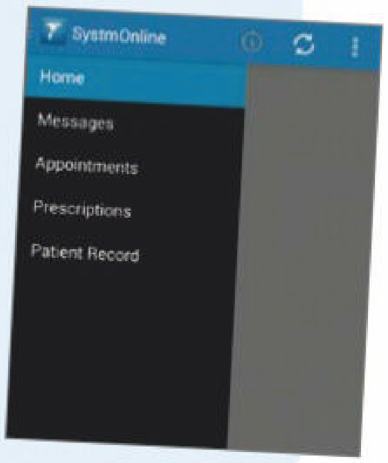
With the 'flu season well underway once again, we rely more and more on community health care. The best medical apps help to support the services supplied by local health services, not replace them. Approved by the NHS, myGP is simple to use from the moment you sign up – all you need is a UK mobile number. You can use the app to book and manage appointments at your GP's surgery, set reminders, order repeat prescriptions, view your medical records and even track your weight and blood pressure. Reassuringly, myGP promises that your data is controlled by you and hosted in a safe and secure environment.

...Not this one ✗

SystmOnline

bit.ly/systmdroid488
bit.ly/systmios488

If you're unlucky, your GP's surgery may have opted to use SystmOnline as its default online appointment-booking service. Compared to similar apps, the SystmOnline app is awkward and limited. You can update contact details, request repeat prescriptions and view your medical record, but the app's interface is unfriendly and, according to many users, it won't let you log in with a password manager or fingerprint recognition, and often crashes randomly.


SystmOnline
Home
Messages
Appointments
Prescriptions
Patient Record

Take a Screen Break

Take a rest from your browser with our fiendish fortnightly challenges. Can you solve our proverb emoji and guess the Wikipedia page?

WIN A WEB USER 2018 BACK ISSUES DISC!

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

WebUser
Issues 440 – 465
Wipe Your DIGITAL FOOTPRINT
2018 Back Issues Disc

CAN YOU GUESS THE PROVERBS FROM THE EMOJI?

1 🖋️ > 🗡️

2 ❌ 🌬️ ✊ 🎺

3 🤔 🐈 ⚰️

4 ❌ 🪄 ⚪ ⚪ 🐖

5 🃏 ⬅️ ➡️ 💷

6 💰 ❌ 📈 🌳 🌳

GUESS THE WIKIPEDIA ARTICLE

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

1 "The company operated in various industries over the past 150 years. Founded as a pulp mill and long associated with rubber and cables, it has focused on telecommunications since the 1990s"

2 "In 1998 alone, the company had sales revenue of $20bn, making $2.6bn profit. By 2000, it had a 30% share of the mobile phone market, almost twice as large as its nearest competitor."

3 "Falling sales in 2011 led to consecutive quarters of huge losses. By mid-2012, the company's stock price fell below $2 and it shed 10,000 employees by the end of the year."

5 "The company was viewed with national pride by Finns, as its mobile phone business made it by far the largest worldwide company and brand from Finland."

COMPETITIONS

WORTH £26.99 EACH

WIN 1 OF 11

Linksys Max-Stream AC600 USB Adapter

Linksys' AC600 USB adapter upgrades your Windows laptop or PC to the latest Wi-Fi standard, boosting the signal throughout your home. Next Generation Mu-Mimo delivers exceptional speed for simultaneous streaming and gaming on multiple devices. To enter, email your address to webusercomp@dennis.co.uk with 'Linksys' in the subject line. For more info, visit www.linksys.com/gb and follow @LinksysUnitedKingdom on Facebook.

WORTH £40 EACH

WIN 1 OF 6

UAG iPhone 11 Civilian cases (black)

Urban Armor Gear's new Civilian series for the iPhone 11 offers extra protection by dispersing energy from impacts and reducing the force transferred to your device. This cushions your phone should it slip from your grip. To enter, email your address to webusercomp@dennis.co.uk with 'Civilian' in the subject line. For more information, visit www.urbanarmorgear.com and follow @UrbanArmorGear on Twitter.

Our guide to Tile

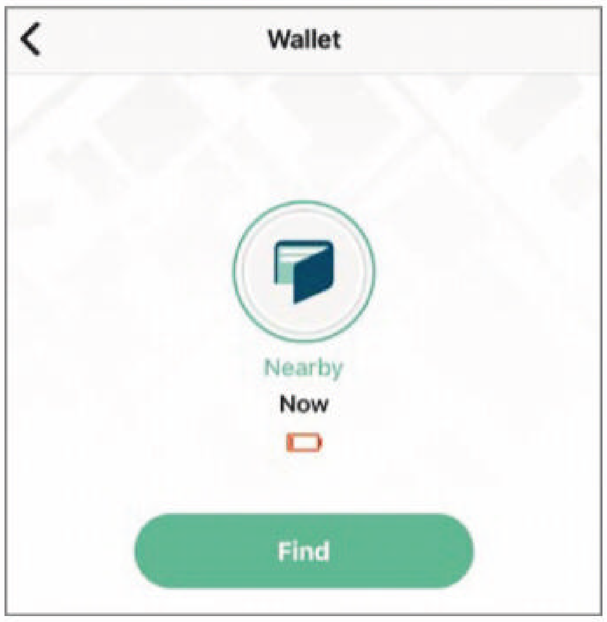
If you often mislay your keys, wallet or phone, Tile tracking tags can locate them in a jiffy. **David Crookes** explains how they work

What is Tile?

Tile (www.thetileapp.com) is a series of Bluetooth tracking devices that bring smart technology to everyday 'dumb' devices such as keys, wallets and bags. Available in various shapes and sizes, these tags allow you to pinpoint the location of lost items using a smartphone app or digital voice assistant. They can also be used to find your phone, making them a blessing for the more absent-minded among us.

How do Tiles work?

As well as harnessing the location capabilities of a smartphone, the trackers use Bluetooth low-energy, otherwise known as Bluetooth LE. When you physically place a Tile on an item and activate it, it becomes discoverable, while using the lowest possible power consumption. Should you end up losing the item it's attached to, you can open the Tile's Android or iOS app (or ask Google, Alexa or Siri) and try to establish a connection. If the Tile tracker is in range, it will make a noise, so you can follow the sound to find the item.



You can track down lost items using the Tile app on your Android or iOS device

What do Tiles look like?

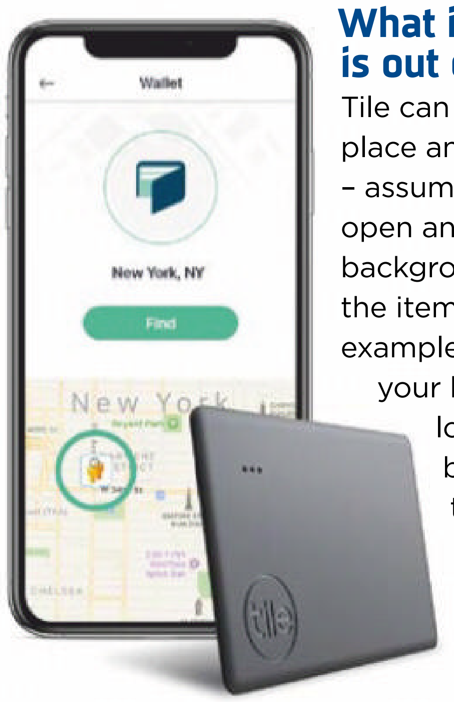
When Tile first launched on the back of a successful crowdfunding campaign six years ago, it resembled a key fob with a loop. This still exists in the form of the Tile Mate but, like the entire range, it has been updated. As of October this year, Mate now has a range of 200 feet and a one-year replacement battery. There's also a Tile Pro (see main image), which offers twice the range and a louder ring, and a revised Tile Slim, which now resembles a credit card and gives you a 200ft range as well as a three-year, non-replaceable battery life. This is particularly ideal for wallets.

Are they stickable?

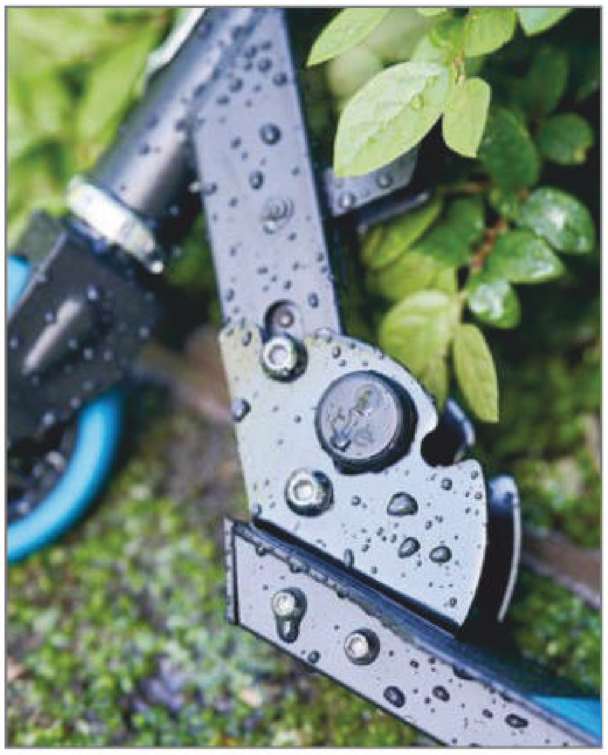
Those Tile products are not, but the company has just released a new product called the Sticker (bit.ly/sticker488) that weighs just 5g. Created in partnership with adhesive experts 3M, it can be stuck to any item or device you want, giving a range of 150 feet. Tile suggests placing Stickers on a TV remote, a bike or a camera, and reckons the adhesive will last the duration of its three-year built-in battery life.

What if my lost item is out of range?

Tile can determine the last place an item was registered – assuming the app was open and running in the background at the moment the item was lost. For example, suppose you leave your keys at the gym. This location would have been recorded so that, when you subsequently moved out of range, you'd be able to see its



The Tile Slim resembles a credit card and works over a range of up to 200 feet



You can stick Tile Stickers on any item you want, including a scooter

last noted position, go back, and – with a bit of luck – find your keys still there. It's also possible to get directions and 'ring' the Tile when you get close.

Problems can arise if the app wasn't running at the time the item was lost. However, this is where Tile arguably comes into its own, since you're then able to tap into its large, existing network of users for help with retrieving it.

How does Tile's community help find items?

Tile users form a Bluetooth-based peer-to-peer network and, if your item has truly gone astray, it's possible to call on this community by tapping Notify When Found. This issues an alert in the hope that another user's app will end up detecting your item as they wander past it. That person won't know this has happened but the location of your Tile will be relayed back to you via a notification and an email, allowing you to pop back and collect it. You can then anonymously thank the user who inadvertently helped you.

How big is the Tile network?

Recent figures suggest that Tile sold 22 million trackers across the world in 2017 and 2018, which means the network is potentially huge, depending on how many are actively in use. Tile is supplementing the standalone trackers by integrating the technology into other devices. A range of headphones by Skullcandy, for instance, have Tile technology built in, as do the Sennheiser Momentum 3 and Bose SoundSport Wireless headphones.

Tile has also attracted investment from telecommunications giant Comcast, which wants to place the technology in its set-top boxes, so they can be used to locate lost objects (there's a chance this could even come to Sky following the Comcast takeover). Other deals have been struck with Dialog Semiconductor, Cypress, Nordic Semiconductor, Silicon Labs, Toshiba and Qualcomm to integrate Tile technology with these manufacturers' chips.

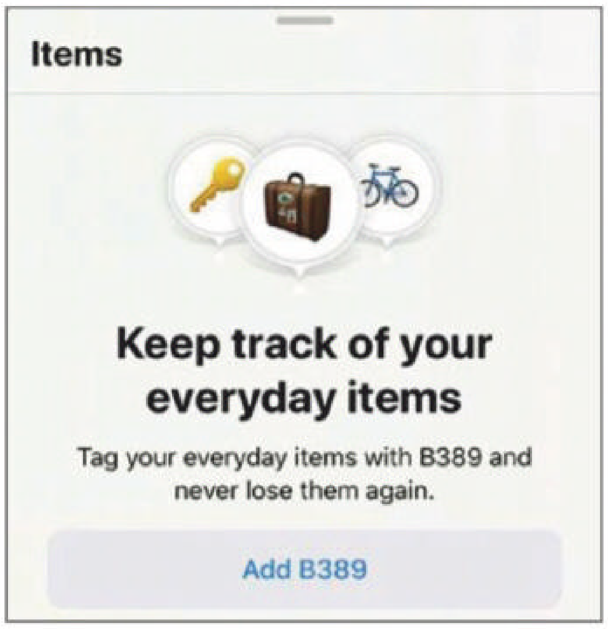
Skullcandy Venue headphones have Tile's tracking technology built in

Are there any notable rivals?

Yes. As well as those cited in the boxout below, it's worth mentioning the strong rumours that Apple is interested in launching its own tag tracker. Screenshots taken from an internal build of iOS 13 in June appeared to suggest an Items tab will be coming to Apple's Find My iPhone tool. Spotted by MacRumors, it is suggested that the tags will be fitted with the ultra-wideband U1 locator chip found in the iPhone 11 that can pinpoint items within centimetres of their location, and that the tags will pair with your iCloud account.

Are Tile trackers expensive?

A two-pack of Tile Stickers is priced at £34.99, a single Tile Pro costs £29.99 and a Mate is £19.99. The Slim costs £24.99, but there's a combo pack that includes two Mates and two Slims for £69.99. None of these require a subscription but there's also a Premium package that will notify you if you leave a location without a particular item. This also includes free replacement batteries, 30-day location history and unlimited sharing, and costs from £2.50 per month.



Items

Keep track of your everyday items

Tag your everyday items with B389 and never lose them again.

Add B389

Image: MacRumors

Apple is rumoured to be introducing Tile-style tag tracking in iOS

WHAT OTHER TRACKING DEVICES ARE THERE?

Tile is currently the main player in the tracker market but there are several other options to choose from

Chipolo

chipolo.net

Chipolo has three products: Classic and Plus are colourful circular fobs, while the super-slim Card is designed for keeping in a wallet. Like Tile, Chipolo offers community search, an app and voice control, as well as custom ringtones, differing loudness depending on the device, and a range of 200 feet.

Orbit

findorbit.com

In addition to a key finder, Orbit has has a stick-on tracker and a credit card-like device, a leather wallet with a built-in tracker and even a tiny device that is designed to be stuck to a pair of spectacles – handy if you're always losing your eyewear. The key finder's range is just 100 feet, however.

Adero

www.adero.com

Backed by Amazon and once known as TrackR, Adero made close to half its staff redundant earlier this year, but its main selling point is that its trackers work together to determine that, when carrying your bag around, everything you need is inside. The Smart Tags aim to prevent you losing stuff in the first place.

STOP LEAKING YOUR IDENTITY

COVER FEATURE

Are you inadvertently sharing sensitive information online? **Wayne Williams** reveals how you can identify data leaks and plug the holes in your privacy

It's becoming increasingly difficult to maintain your privacy online, however hard you try or whatever powerful protections you have in place. Nobody willingly surrenders their email address and password to a data breach, for example, but the frequency and scale of website hacks means it's almost impossible to avoid getting caught in one.

Fortunately, there are steps you can take to identify when, where and how your personal information has been – or is likely to be – compromised, so you can plug the leaks before it's too late. In this feature, we reveal the best tools for detecting hidden holes in your online privacy, and explain how you can fix and prevent these vulnerabilities.

We also reveal the shocking truth of just how much your personal data is actually worth to the criminals who are trying to steal it (spoiler alert – it's nowhere near as much as you'd think).

HAVE YOUR PASSWORDS BEEN STOLEN?

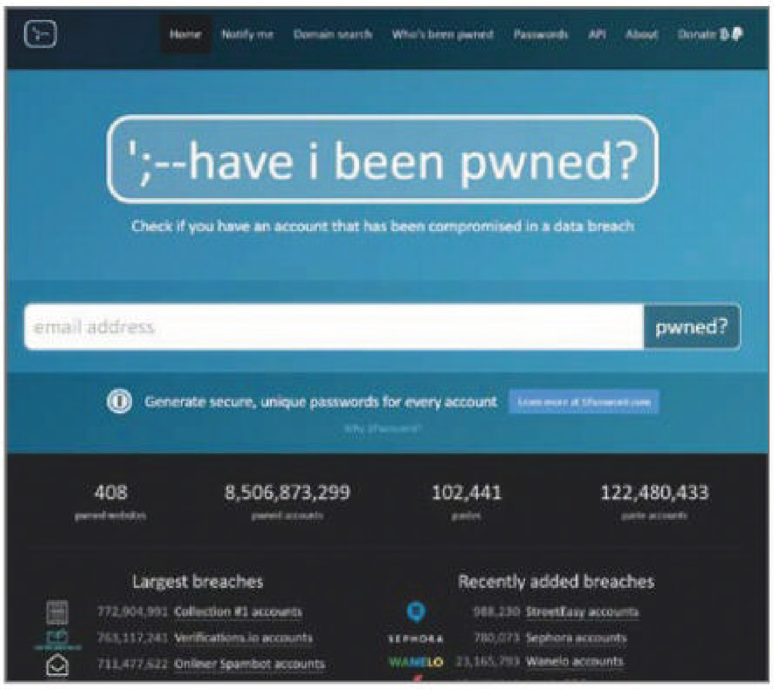
Everyone knows it's important to follow proper password etiquette and use unique and difficult-to-guess logins on every site you visit on the web. A combination of letters, numbers and symbols – rather than dictionary words or the names of family members or pets – should mean that attackers won't be able to easily crack your passwords.

The problem is that websites are hacked almost every day and passwords are leaked or stolen through no fault of the user. When that happens, the affected site should inform you and advise you to change your login details. However, sites often aren't as forthcoming as they should be, and they might not even discover the break-in for months, or even years, after it happens.

For this reason, it pays to change your password regularly – just in case – and use some of the many tools available that check whether your online accounts have been compromised, or are likely to be. Here's our pick of the best.

Check if your accounts have been breached

Have I Been Pwned (haveibeenpwned.com) is probably the best known privacy-leak checker and can tell you instantly if your email address was exposed in a breach and when that breach occurred. It also notifies you when your email account is compromised by future breaches.


Home
Notify me
Domain search
Who's been pwned
Passwords
API
About
Donate
';--have i been pwned?
email address
pwned?
408
8,506,873,299
102,441
122,480,433
Largest breaches
Recently added breaches
SEPHORA
WANELO

Check if you have an account that has been compromised in a data breach

Generate secure, unique passwords for every account

772,904,991 Collection #1 accounts
763,117,241 Verifications.io accounts
711,477,622 Onliner Spambot accounts

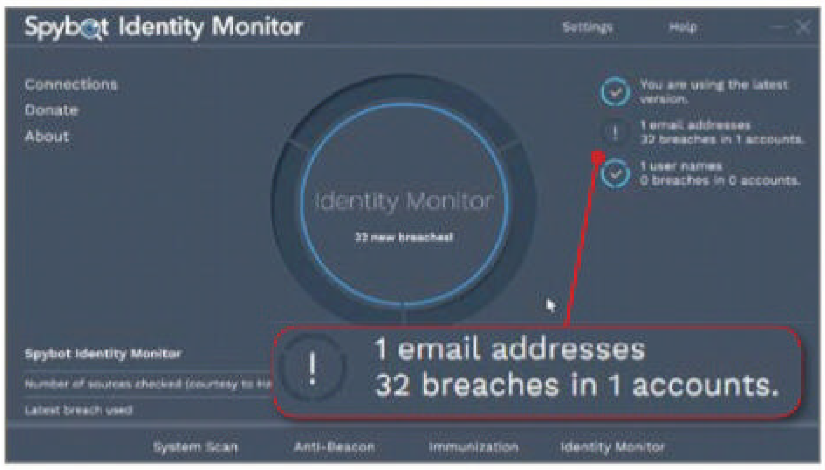
Use Have I Been Pwned to check if your email address has been compromised

The site can also check if any passwords you use appear on the web. Have some fun by entering some common (and easy to guess) passwords to see how often they've been leaked – 'password', for example, has appeared in data breaches 3.7 million times, while '123456' crops up a whopping 23.5 million times. See our Mini Workshop on page 42 to find out how to make the most of Have I Been Pwned.

Firefox Monitor (monitor.firefox.com) is a similar tool that checks to see if your email address has been compromised and gives details regarding the breaches that affect you. If you use Firefox, you'll receive a notification when you visit a site that's been breached.

Monitor multiple online accounts for leaks

Unlike many leak checkers, Spybot Identity Monitor (bit.ly/spybotid488) is a downloadable tool. Setting it up is simple – just click My Accounts, then click the buttons at the top to add as many email addresses and usernames as you like. It monitors your details against the Have I Been Pwned database but delivers its results in one simple interface, rather than you having to check each account individually by entering the details on the Have I Been Pwned website.


Spybot Identity Monitor
Settings
Help
Connections
Donate
About
Identity Monitor
32 new breaches!
Spybot Identity Monitor
Latest breach used
System Scan
Anti-Beacon
Immunization
Identity Monitor

You are using the latest version.

1 email addresses
32 breaches in 1 accounts.

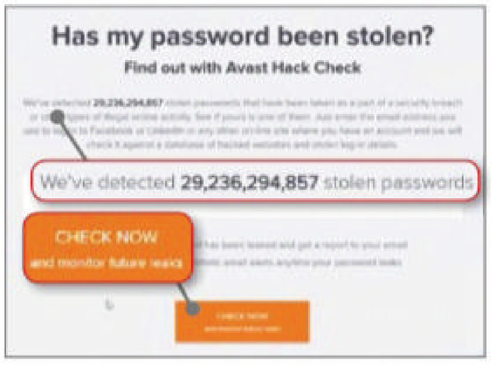
1 user names
0 breaches in 0 accounts.

1 email addresses
32 breaches in 1 accounts.

Spybot Identity Monitor lets you check the security of multiple accounts

Find out if your email address has leaked

Avast Hack Check (www.avast.com/hackcheck) is a very thorough tool that lets you discover which, if any, of your passwords have been stolen. Enter your email address, click Check Now and the site will email you a link to your personal report, which will show you all the instances where your email address was purportedly found on the dark web, alongside any accompanying passwords. Hack Check will also alert you every time your email address and passwords leak in the future.

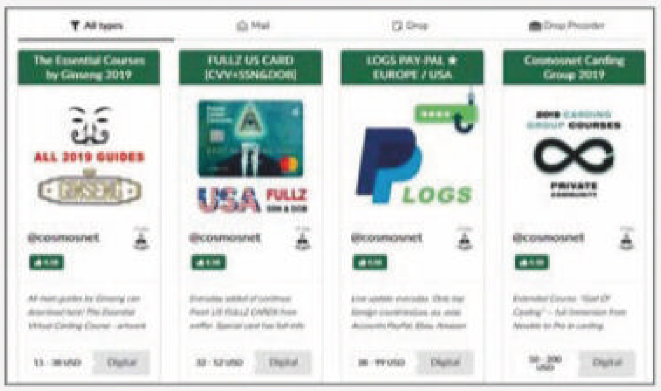

Has my password been stolen?
Find out with Avast Hack Check
CHECK NOW
and monitor future leaks

We've detected 29,236,294,857 stolen passwords

Avast Hack Check tells you if your passwords have been stolen by hackers

➔

IS YOUR DATA BEING SOLD ON THE DARK WEB?

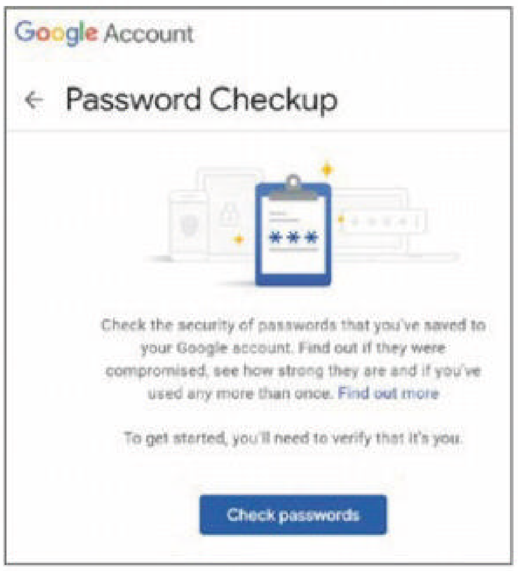

All types
Mail
Drop
Drop Provider
The Essential Courses by Ginseng 2019
ALL 2019 GUIDES
FULLZ US CARD [CVV+SSN&DOB]
USA FULLZ
LOGS PAY-PAL ★ EUROPE / USA
LOGS
Cosmosnet Carding Group 2019
PRIVATE
@cosmosnet
@cosmosnet
@cosmosnet
@cosmosnet
Digital
Digital
Digital
Digital

The dark web is a collection of websites on an encrypted network that can only be accessed using the Tor Browser (www.torproject.org/download). It's home to lots of criminal activity – you can buy drugs, guns and counterfeit currency, as well as credit card numbers, stolen subscriptions, bank logins and usernames and passwords.

Dark websites look similar to regular sites, but they're harder to find (regular search engines don't index them) and end in '.onion', rather than '.com' or '.co.uk'. However, some companies claim they can scan the dark web and alert you if your personal information is found there. The trouble is that free scans don't usually reveal much, and many companies offering 'dark web scans' require you to sign up for a paid-for service. The truth is that the dark web is – by its very nature – very hard to scan, and most if not all of these services are probably just checking to see if your details appear on regular security sites such as Have I Been Pwned (see above). If your personal data was leaked in a breach, you can pretty much guarantee it will be somewhere on the dark web and, infuriatingly, you won't be able to remove it.

Check if your passwords are compromised

Another way to check the strength and security of your passwords is to use Google's new Password Checkup tool, which you'll find in your Google account. Go to passwords.google.com and select the 'Check passwords' link toward the top of the page, then click the 'Check passwords' button on the next screen and log into your Google account again. After a few seconds, you'll be shown a total of the compromised passwords that were found, the number of reused passwords and how many of your online accounts are protected with a weak password. Clicking the down arrow under each section shows which sites are affected.


Google Account

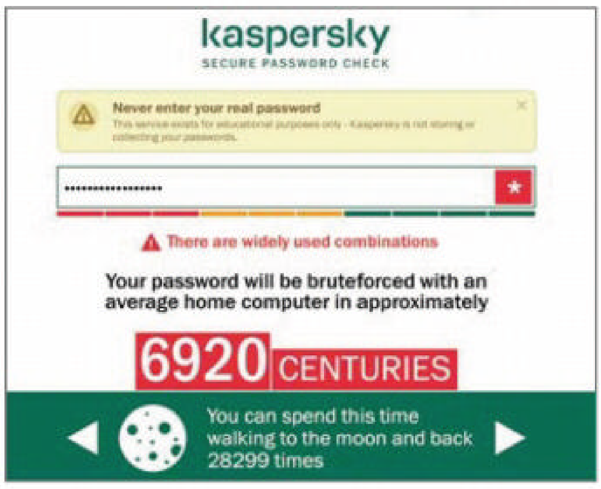
← Password Checkup

Check the security of passwords that you've saved to your Google account. Find out if they were compromised, see how strong they are and if you've used any more than once. Find out more

To get started, you'll need to verify that it's you.

Google's Password Checkup tool helps improve your password security

Click the 'Change password' button to visit the site in question or click the three-dot icon to the right of this button to view the troublesome password, and update it or delete it.


kaspersky

SECURE PASSWORD CHECK

Never enter your real password

There are widely used combinations

Your password will be bruteforced with an average home computer in approximately

6920 CENTURIES

You can spend this time walking to the moon and back 28299 times

Find out instantly how long your passwords would take hackers to crack

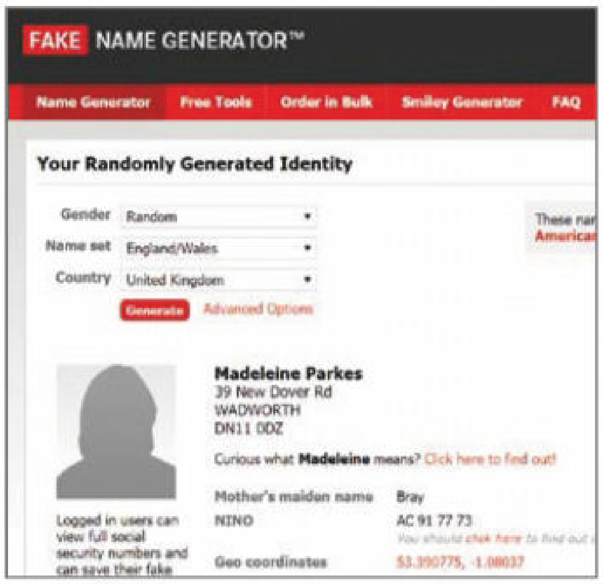
Test the strength of your passwords

If you're confident that your passwords are so tough that no hacker stands a chance of cracking them, How Secure is My Password (howsecureismypassword.net) and Kaspersky Password Check (password.kaspersky.com) will quickly disabuse you of this notion. Enter any password into either site and they will tell you how long it would take a computer to crack it. The results, however, can vary wildly – we entered '4camelshave8humps' and How Secure is My Password said it would take 227 million years to crack, while Kaspersky's tool said eight days, then later changed this to 6,920 centuries!

Fake your email address and identity

One way to ensure your email address and passwords don't get compromised is to limit the number of places they appear on the web. You can use a temporary email address from the likes of Temp Mail (temp-mail.org) on sites where you don't need to enter or share any real personal data, or that you're only likely to use once.

Another option is to create a fake identity to use when you register with websites and have to create profiles on them. Fake Name Generator (www.fakenamegenerator.com) can build you an entirely fictitious identity, complete with a fake name, address (in a country of your choosing), phone number, email address (that actually works), date of birth and employer. Other information generated could include a fake credit card number, bank account and cryptocurrency address (don't try to use these for real!), as well as favourite colour, car make and model, and height, weight and blood type!



Your Randomly Generated Identity

Gender: Random

Name set: England/Wales

Country: United Kingdom

Madeleine Parkes
39 New Dover Rd
WADWORTH
DN11 0DZ

Curious what **Madeleine** means? Click here to find out!

Mother's maiden name: Bray

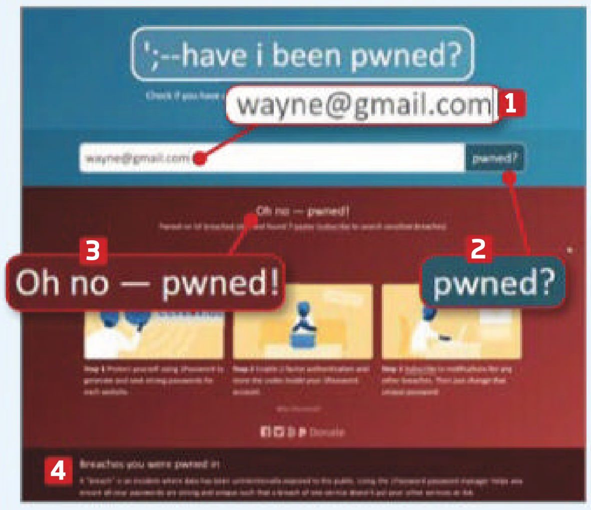
NINO: AC 91 77 73

Geo coordinates

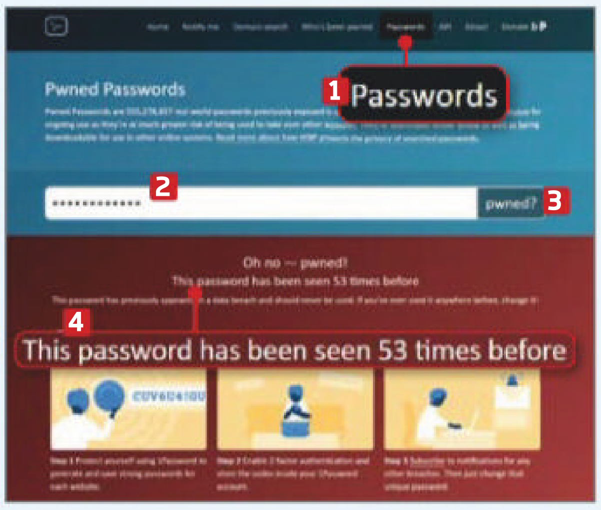
Logged in users can view full social security numbers and can save their fake

Protect your identity by creating a fake one to use when signing up with sites

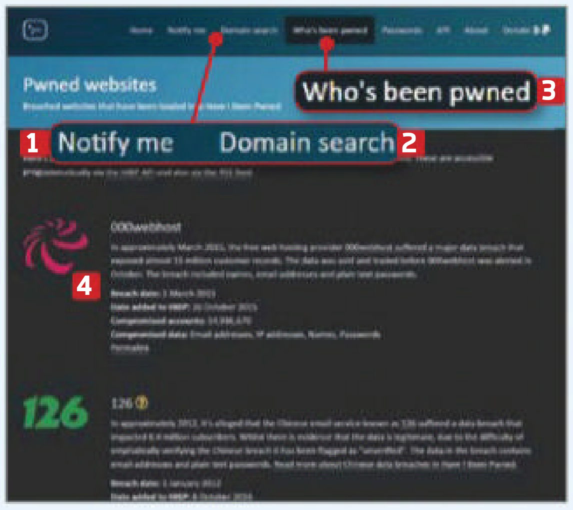
MINI WORKSHOP | Check if your passwords have been compromised



1 Start by entering your email address in the box on the Have I Been Pwned homepage (haveibeenpwned.com). **1** You can also enter anyone else's email address or make one up. Click the 'pwned?' button. **2** The site will check and report back if the address was found, and show the number of breached sites. **3** Scroll down to review the breach details. **4**



2 Click Passwords at the top of the page. **1** You can check to see if a password you use has been exposed in a data breach (therefore making it potentially less safe, even if your account wasn't compromised this time). Enter your password, **2** and click the 'pwned?' button. **3** Have I Been Pwned will show how many times that password has been seen before. **4**



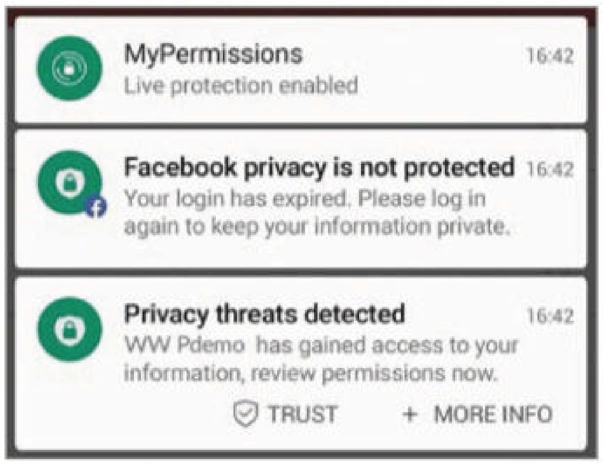
3 The Have I Been Pwned website also offers a number of other useful services. Notify Me **1** lets you enter a password and receive alerts if it's compromised in the future. Domain Search **2** lets you find all email addresses linked to a particular domain. Who's Been Pwned **3** provides an overview of all recent major breaches. **4**

ARE YOU SHARING TOO MUCH DATA?

The answer to the above question is pretty much guaranteed to be a resounding “yes!”, although there’s a good chance you won’t know exactly how much data you’re sharing. Browser add-ons, mobile apps and websites routinely request all sorts of permissions and most people blindly wave them through because denying them can create obstacles. If you say no to a permission requested by an app, for example, then it may not work as intended, or might not work at all. Sometimes, though, these permission requests are spurious and used to gather user data for advertising – or even malicious – purposes.

Find out which apps can access your data

If you haven’t done so recently – or indeed, ever – it’s worth running an audit to see what data you’re sharing and revoke access to anything you don’t like the look of. MyPermissions (mypermissions.com) is a free privacy cleaner for Android and iOS that aims to show you which apps are accessing your personal data, and what permissions they have. Recent reviews have been rather scathing about the app’s effectiveness, however, so another option worth considering is aSpotCat – Permission Checker for Android (bit.ly/aspot488).



MyPermissions 16:42
Live protection enabled

Facebook privacy is not protected 16:42
Your login has expired. Please log in again to keep your information private.

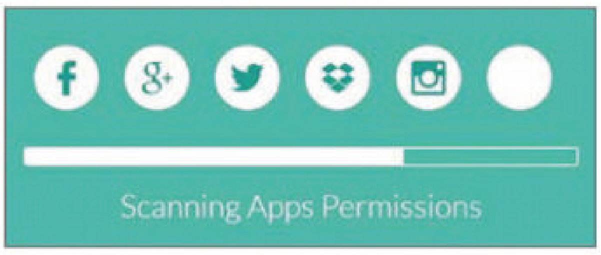
Privacy threats detected 16:42
WW Pdemo has gained access to your information, review permissions now.

Run an audit of the data you’re sharing using the MyPermissions app

Prevent unwanted access to your accounts

Privacy Cleaner for Chrome (bit.ly/priv488), also from MyPermissions, scans major services, including Facebook and Twitter, for third-party tools that have been given permission to access your private info, so you can revoke unwanted permissions. Like the mobile app, we’ve found it to be a bit hit and miss, but it managed to uncover a couple of unwanted services when we used it, so it’s worth a try.

For Firefox users, there’s Project Insight (bit.ly/insight488), which shows you the permissions granted to your installed add-ons, as well as the domains they are allowed to access. Once installed, just click the toolbar button in your browser and it will check all your add-ons and search sites (including the likes of eBay, Wikipedia and Amazon) with requested permissions. In many cases, websites will appear in the list purely because they are allowed to run in Private Browsing Mode.



Scan your accounts to see which third-party tools can access your data

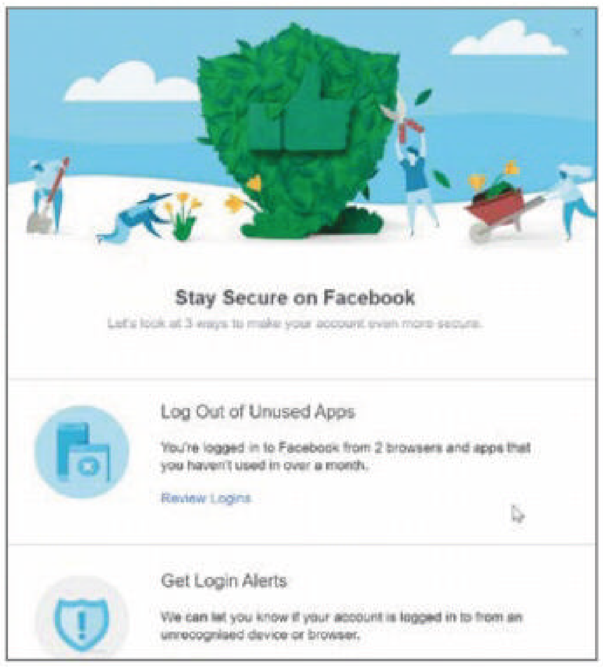
Discover which websites are tracking you

Who’s Watching You (bit.ly/watching488) doesn’t check which permissions you expressly granted, but rather looks into the privacy policies of some of the web’s biggest companies – including Facebook, Google, Amazon, Instagram, LinkedIn and Twitter – to see what details they track. Just click one of the icons to display a breakdown of the sort of things that site records. You can filter the list of sites to see which ones track your location, ignore Do Not Track requests, have access to your messages, record device information and usage, and actively engage with third-party sites (such as Facebook with its ubiquitous Like buttons).

Tighten your privacy settings on Facebook

In the wake of last year’s Cambridge Analytica scandal, Facebook earned a reputation for not caring about user privacy and has been trying to win back trust by giving users more control over their data. One thing you can now do is run Facebook Security Checkup (bit.ly/fbcheck488), which lets you see unused apps and browsers that you’ve logged into and gives you the chance to log out of them. You can enable Login Alerts, which will cause Facebook to let you know if your account gets logged into from an unrecognised device and browser, and you can also get some tips on password protection.

If you scroll down to the bottom of the window, you can open your Security Settings and, from here, see where you’re currently logged in from, change your password, enable two-factor authentication (2FA) and access privacy settings. This last option lets you control who can see your posts, see your list of friends and view your email address.



Stay Secure on Facebook
Let’s look at 3 ways to make your account even more secure.

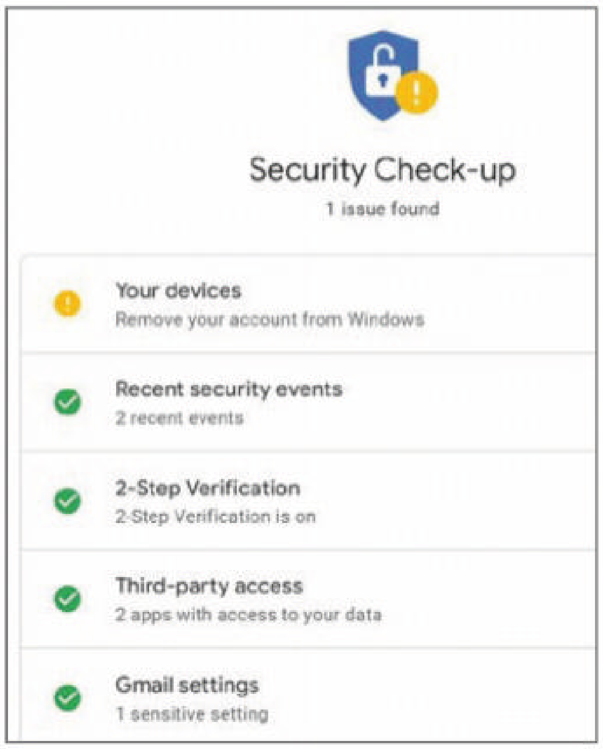
Log Out of Unused Apps
You’re logged in to Facebook from 2 browsers and apps that you haven’t used in over a month.
Review Logins

Get Login Alerts
We can let you know if your account is logged in to from an unrecognised device or browser.

Facebook’s Security Checkup helps you tighten your privacy settings

Review the security of your Google account

Google also offers a Security Checkup tool (bit.ly/gcheck488), which shows you all devices that have accessed your Google account in the past, and lets you review any recent security events, in case there is cause for concern. Google is usually very good at alerting you via email when a new or unknown device accesses your account. You can also enable 2-step verification here, see which third-party apps have access to your data and remove any you’re unhappy with, and view and manage blocked email addresses (and other ‘sensitive’ settings) in Gmail.



Security Check-up
1 issue found

Your devices
Remove your account from Windows

Recent security events
2 recent events

2-Step Verification
2-Step Verification is on

Third-party access
2 apps with access to your data

Gmail settings
1 sensitive setting

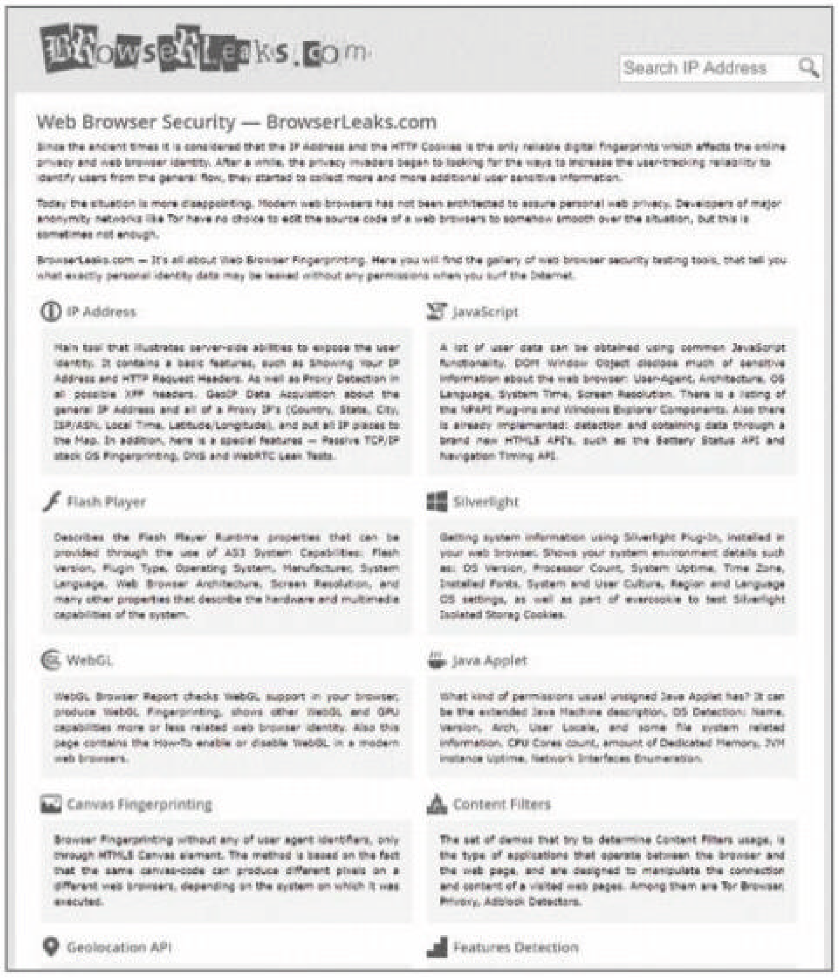
Ensure unknown apps and devices aren’t accessing your Google account

IS YOUR BROWSER LEAKING PERSONAL INFO?

Even if you take care to use strong login credentials and change them at the first sign of a security breach or after a set period of time, and even if you're very careful about what you share online and what permissions you grant, your personal information could still be at risk – without you even knowing. That's because your browser and other software could be revealing identifiable data about you. There are lots of tools you can use to check and stop this, and it's worth trying the following ones to detect and plug the leaks in your browser privacy.

Test your web browser for privacy leaks

Irrespective of which browser you use – be it Chrome, Firefox, Edge, Vivaldi or something else – BrowserLeaks (browserleaks.com) can show you what personal data is being shared online without your knowledge or permission. The tool offers a number of tests covering IP Address, JavaScript, Flash Player, WebGL, Content Filters and Geolocation API. Just select a test and BrowserLeaks will immediately show you exactly what information is being leaked through your browser. In the case of the IP Address test, for example, it will show your local and public IP addresses, ISP, country, city, connection type, latitude/longitude, DNS servers and browser type. It will also plot your current location on a map to reveal if you're unwittingly leaking details of where you are.



Web Browser Security — BrowserLeaks.com

Since the ancient times it is considered that the IP Address and the HTTP Cookies is the only reliable digital fingerprints which affects the online privacy and web browser identity. After a while, the privacy invaders began to looking for the ways to increase the user-tracking reliability to identify users from the general flow, they started to collect more and more additional user sensitive information.

Today the situation is more disappointing. Modern web browsers has not been architected to assure personal web privacy. Developers of major anonymity networks like Tor have no choice to edit the source code of a web browsers to somehow smooth over the situation, but this is sometimes not enough.

BrowserLeaks.com — It's all about Web Browser Fingerprinting. Here you will find the gallery of web browser security testing tools, that tell you what exactly personal identity data may be leaked without any permissions when you surf the Internet.

IP Address

Main tool that illustrates server-side abilities to expose the user identity. It contains a basic features, such as Showing Your IP Address and HTTP Request Headers. As well as Proxy Detection in all possible XFF headers. GeoIP Data Acquisition about the general IP Address and all of a Proxy IP's (Country, State, City, ISP/ASN, Local Time, Latitude/Longitude), and put all IP places to the Map. In addition, here is a special features — Passive TCP/IP stack OS Fingerprinting, DNS and WebRTC Leak Tests.

JavaScript

A lot of user data can be obtained using common JavaScript functionality. DOM Window Object disclose much of sensitive information about the web browser: User-Agent, Architecture, OS Language, System Time, Screen Resolution. There is a listing of the NPAPI Plug-ins and Windows Explorer Components. Also there is already implemented: detection and obtaining data through a brand new HTML5 API's, such as the Battery Status API and Navigation Timing API.

Flash Player

Describes the Flash Player Runtime properties that can be provided through the use of AS3 System Capabilities: Flash version, Plugin Type, Operating System, Manufacturer, System Language, Web Browser Architecture, Screen Resolution, and many other properties that describe the hardware and multimedia capabilities of the system.

Silverlight

Getting system information using Silverlight Plug-In, installed in your web browser. Shows your system environment details such as: OS Version, Processor Count, System Uptime, Time Zone, Installed Fonts, System and User Culture, Region and Language OS settings, as well as part of evercookie to test Silverlight Isolated Storeg Cookies.

WebGL

WebGL Browser Report checks WebGL support in your browser, produce WebGL Fingerprinting, shows other WebGL and GPU capabilities more or less related web browser identity. Also this page contains the How-To enable or disable WebGL in a modern web browsers.

Java Applet

What kind of permissions usual unsigned Java Applet has? It can be the extended Java Machine description, OS Detection: Name, Version, Arch, User Locale, and some file system related information, CPU Cores count, amount of Dedicated Memory, JVM instance Uptime, Network Interfaces Enumeration.

Canvas Fingerprinting

Browser Fingerprinting without any of user agent identifiers, only through HTML5 Canvas element. The method is based on the fact that the same canvas-code can produce different pixels on a different web browsers, depending on the system on which it was executed.

Content Filters

The set of demos that try to determine Content Filters usage, is the type of applications that operate between the browser and the web page, and are designed to manipulate the connection and content of a visited web pages. Among them are Tor Browser, Privoxy, Adblock Detectors.

Geolocation API

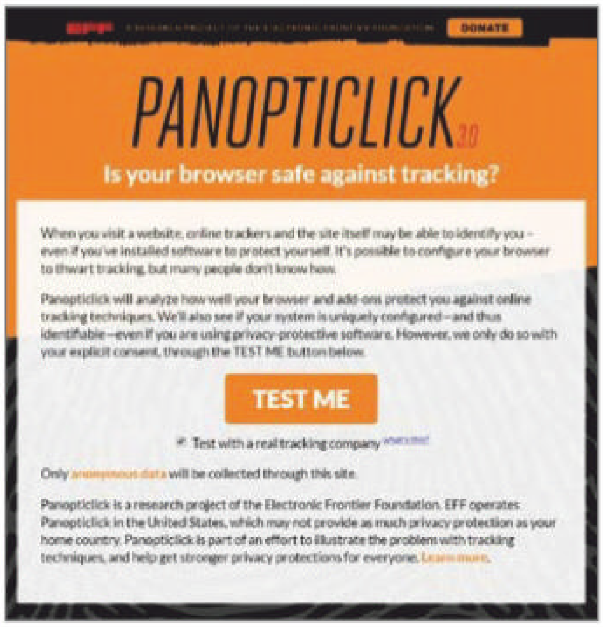
Features Detection

BrowserLeaks reveals what personal data you're leaking through your browser

Ensure your browser is blocking trackers

Most web browsers now offer a 'do not track' feature that, when enabled, will tell sites that you want to opt out of behavioural targeting (when adverts are tailored to your interests) and not be tracked. You can check to see whether this is switched on in your browser by looking in the Settings. In Chrome, click the three-dot button in the top-right corner of the browser and open Settings, then scroll down, click Advanced and, under Privacy, make sure 'Send a 'Do Not Track' request with your browsing traffic' is enabled. In Firefox, click the three-line menu button and open Content Blocking. Mozilla's browser gives you two choices: you can send a Do Not Track signal 'Always' or 'Only when Firefox is set to block known trackers' (the default setting).

While 'Do Not Track' sounds like a great way to safeguard your privacy, websites are under no obligation to respect your request, and most don't. Panopticlick (panopticlick.eff.org), from the Electronic Frontier Foundation, lets you check to see how well your browser and add-ons protect you against online tracking methods. You can run a sample test, or test your browser using a real tracking company. Just click the Test Me



Is your browser safe against tracking?

When you visit a website, online trackers and the site itself may be able to identify you – even if you've installed software to protect yourself. It's possible to configure your browser to thwart tracking, but many people don't know how.

Panopticlick will analyze how well your browser and add-ons protect you against online tracking techniques. We'll also see if your system is uniquely configured—and thus identifiable—even if you are using privacy-protective software. However, we only do so with your explicit consent, through the TEST ME button below.

☑ Test with a real tracking company

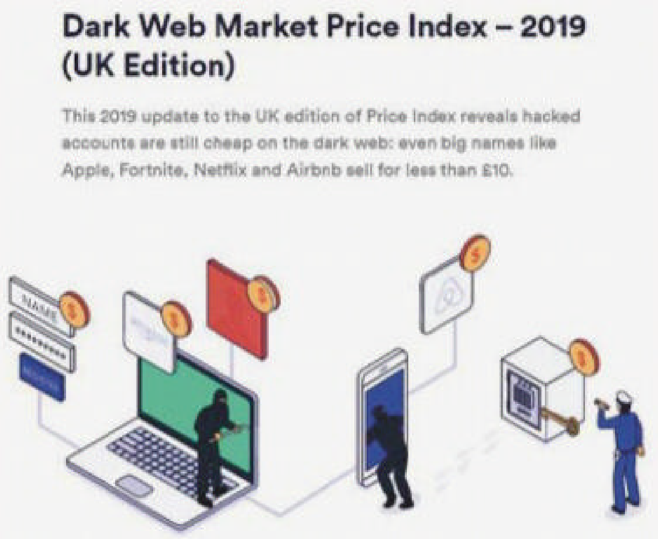
Only anonymous data will be collected through this site.

Panopticlick is a research project of the Electronic Frontier Foundation. EFF operates Panopticlick in the United States, which may not provide as much privacy protection as your home country. Panopticlick is part of an effort to illustrate the problem with tracking techniques, and help get stronger privacy protections for everyone. Learn more.

Panopticlick tells you whether your browser is really blocking web trackers

HOW MUCH IS YOUR PERSONAL DATA WORTH?

Your personal data is priceless to you, but to hackers and scammers, it's actually worth surprisingly little. Totally Money has a personal data quiz at www.totallymoney.com/personal-data/ which lets you put a price on various types of basic personal information, such as your email address and telephone number, and then reveals the actual total worth, which really isn't much at all.



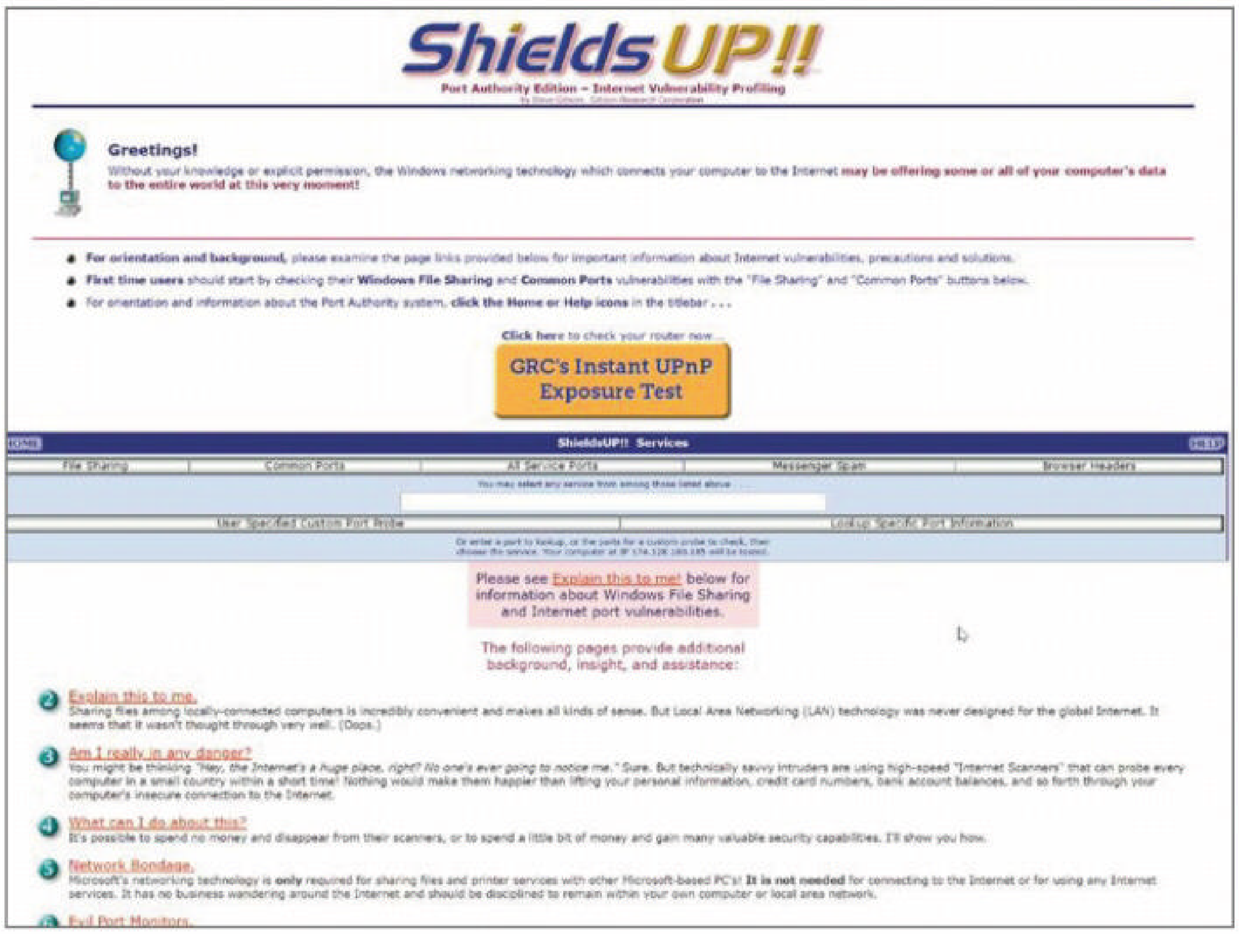
Dark Web Market Price Index – 2019 (UK Edition)

This 2019 update to the UK edition of Price Index reveals hacked accounts are still cheap on the dark web: even big names like Apple, Fortnite, Netflix and Airbnb sell for less than £10.

Top10VPN's Dark Web Market Price Index – 2019 (UK Edition) (bit.ly/darkweb488) looks at the price of some of the data you can find on the dark web, including hacked accounts for services such as Netflix and Fortnite. According to the site's research, an entire online identity is valued at just £770, while a Netflix account alone is worth £8.19, an Amazon account £14.53 and an Uber account £7.61. Facebook is valued at £6.96 and Twitter at £1.54.

Personal bank details were priced at £347.68, credit card details at £24.91, PayPal at £14.06, driving licence info at £13.28, passports at £9.93 and Gmail account logins at £4.48.

To arrive at its figures, Top10VPN reviewed tens of thousands of listings across five of the main dark web markets – Dream, Wallstreet, Empire, Berlusconi and Tochka Free. It focused on listings featuring stolen ID, personal data and hacked accounts, and excluded any massive data dumps.



ShieldsUP!!
Port Authority Edition – Internet Vulnerability Profiling

Greetings!
Without your knowledge or explicit permission, the Windows networking technology which connects your computer to the Internet **may be offering some or all of your computer's data to the entire world at this very moment!**

- **For orientation and background,** please examine the page links provided below for important information about Internet vulnerabilities, precautions and solutions.
- **First time users** should start by checking their **Windows File Sharing** and **Common Ports** vulnerabilities with the "File Sharing" and "Common Ports" buttons below.
- For orientation and information about the Port Authority system, **click the Home or Help icons** in the titlebar . . .

Click here to check your router now...

GRC's Instant UPnP Exposure Test

ShieldsUP!! Services

File Sharing	Common Ports	All Service Ports	Messenger Spam	Browser Headers

You may select any service from among those listed above . . .

User Specified Custom Port Probe	Lookup Specific Port Information

Please see Explain this to me! below for information about Windows File Sharing and Internet port vulnerabilities.

The following pages provide additional background, insight, and assistance:

2 Explain this to me.
Sharing files among locally-connected computers is incredibly convenient and makes all kinds of sense. But Local Area Networking (LAN) technology was never designed for the global Internet. It seems that it wasn't thought through very well. (Oops.)

3 Am I really in any danger?
You might be thinking "Hey, *the Internet's a huge place, right? No one's ever going to notice me.*" Sure. But technically savvy intruders are using high-speed "Internet Scanners" that can probe every computer in a small country within a short time! Nothing would make them happier than lifting your personal information, credit card numbers, bank account balances, and so forth through your computer's insecure connection to the Internet.

4 What can I do about this?
It's possible to spend no money and disappear from their scanners, or to spend a little bit of money and gain many valuable security capabilities. I'll show you how.

5 Network Bondage.
Microsoft's networking technology is **only** required for sharing files and printer services with other Microsoft-based PC's! **It is not needed** for connecting to the Internet or for using any Internet services. It has no business wandering around the Internet and should be disciplined to remain within your own computer or local area network.

Evil Port Monitors.

Check the security of your ports by running GRC ShieldsUp's tests

button and wait while the scan runs. It will show you if your browser is blocking tracking ads and invisible trackers, and whether it stops those which are in the 'acceptable ads' whitelist. It also shows you whether your browser unblocks third parties that promise to honour Do Not Track.

Scan your network's ports for vulnerabilities

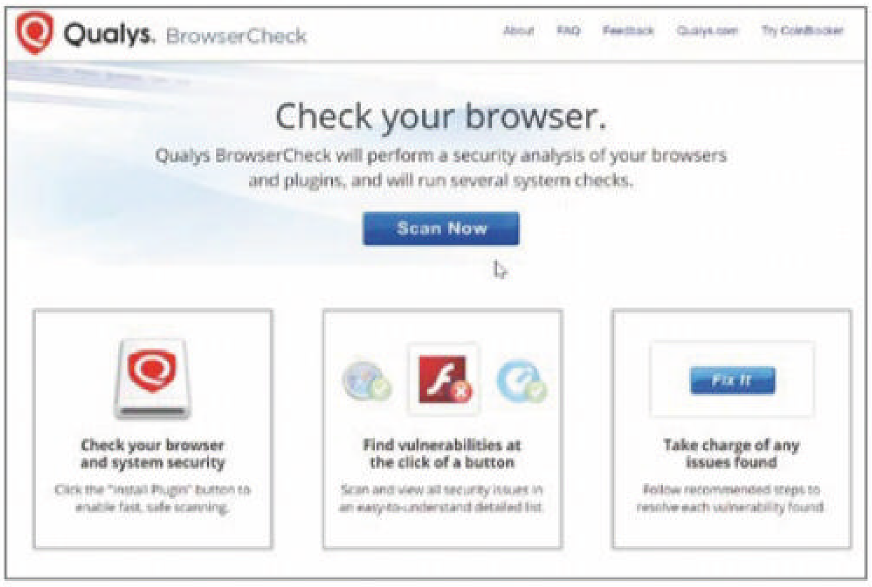
Every IP address has thousands and thousands of ports – numbers which are added to the header of data packets transmitted on a network. These are used for routing traffic to where it needs to go. Certain ports, such as port 80 (HTTP), tend to be locked down but other common ports could be open and vulnerable to hackers. An open port essentially means that it's active and the computer is listening for connection requests. It's a bit like an open door to your PC and could potentially allow attackers to exploit vulnerabilities on your system. Most routers have a 'Stealth Mode' which is designed to make open ports less obvious to outsiders by hiding their status, and you can enable this in your router settings page (see the manual or underside of the router for instructions on how to access these settings).

To check the status and security of your ports, you can use GRC ShieldsUp (www.grc.com/shieldsup). This online service runs a number of different tests, including checking for exposed Universal Plug n'Play (UPnP) protocols and the status of file sharing, common ports and all service ports, as well as browser header information.

Check your browser for security holes

Ideally, you should make sure you're running the newest version of your browser at all times because this will help protect you from the latest threats. Your browser should alert you when a new version is released, although you can manually check for a new update at any time. In Chrome, click the top-right three-dot menu and go to Help, About Google Chrome to check for any updates. In Firefox, click the three-line 'hamburger' button and go to Help, About Firefox.

To make sure your browser is properly protected, you can run Qualys Browser Check (browsercheck.qualys.com), which scans your browser and plugins looking for potential vulnerabilities and security holes. If it finds a problem, it will provide information on the issue and give you the chance to fix it by downloading an update. The add-on works with all the major browsers and you have the option of installing a plugin to perform a thorough check or running a quick scan without it. ■



Qualys. BrowserCheck

About | FAQ | Feedback | Qualys.com | Try CoinBlocker

Check your browser.

Qualys BrowserCheck will perform a security analysis of your browsers and plugins, and will run several system checks.

Scan Now

Check your browser and system security
Click the "Install Plugin" button to enable fast, safe scanning.

Find vulnerabilities at the click of a button
Scan and view all security issues in an easy-to-understand detailed list.

Fix It

Take charge of any issues found
Follow recommended steps to resolve each vulnerability found.

Use Qualys Browser Check to ensure your browser and plugins are up-to-date and not vulnerable to leaks

NEXT ISSUE on sale Wednesday 27 November 2019

SECURE ANYTHING WITH A USB STICK
The ultimate way to protect your PC, files and online accounts

PLUS...
EDIT VIDEO USING VLC
Discover the popular media player's best hidden tools
DITCH CHROME FOR EDGE
Try the new features in Microsoft's reinvented browser
STOP USING CCLEANER
Clean and speed up your PC using a superior alternative

SUBSCRIBE TO WEB USER AT SUBSCRIBE.WEBUSER.CO.UK

RENAME any device

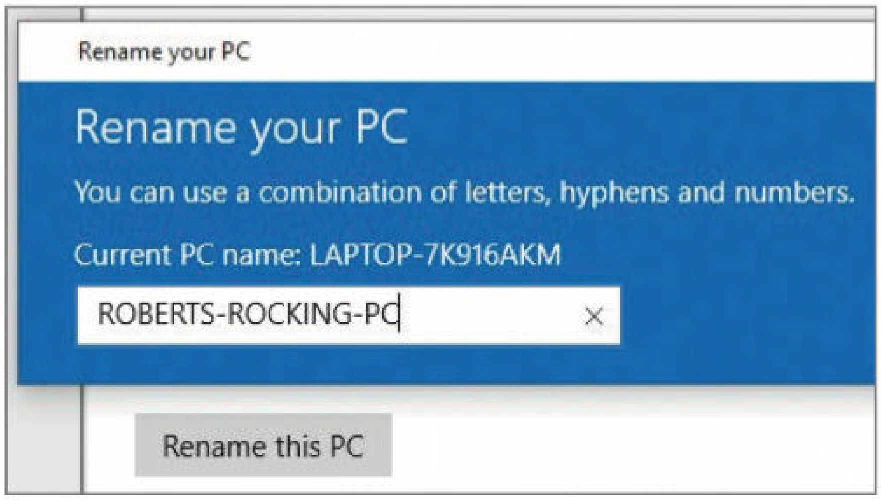
ROB'S PC
ROB'S TABLET
ROB'S PHONE
ROB'S LAPTOP

You don't need to stick with the dull default names for devices. **Robert Irvine** explains the easiest ways to personalise your hardware and call it whatever you want

WINDOWS PC

If you bought your PC or laptop with Windows 10 preinstalled, the chances are that its default name is something boring and impersonal such as LAPTOP-7K916AKM. Equally, if your computer had a previous owner, its name may be something like SUSANS-PC, which can prove annoying if your name isn't Susan. Fortunately, it's very easy to rename your system to something more suitable. Open the Windows 10 Start menu and choose Settings, then click System, About. In the 'Device specifications' section, click the 'Rename this PC' button and enter your desired PC name – this can include letters, numbers and hyphens, but no spaces or special characters. Click Next then restart your PC to confirm the change.

In Windows 7 or 8.1, you can rename your computer by opening the Control Panel and choosing 'System and Security', System, 'Advanced system settings'. Click the Computer Name tab at the top of the System Properties box, then click the Change button, type your new PC name and click OK.



Rename your PC

Rename your PC

You can use a combination of letters, hyphens and numbers.

Current PC name: LAPTOP-7K916AKM

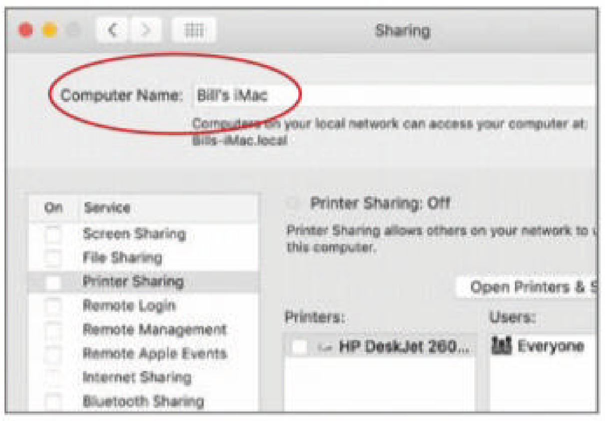
ROBERTS-ROCKING-PC

Rename this PC

Change your PC's name to something more interesting and personal

APPLE MAC

On a macOS desktop computer or MacBook, click the Apple menu in the top-left corner of your screen and select System Preferences. Select the Sharing button in the Internet & Network section and type a new name for your Mac in the Computer Name box at the top of the window. This will appear on your home network and be displayed internally on your computer.



Sharing

Computer Name: Bill's iMac

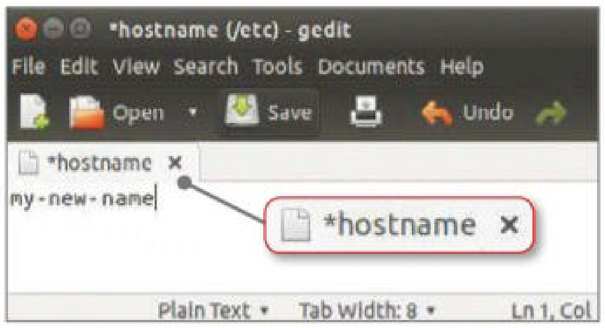
Computers on your local network can access your computer at: Bills-iMac.local

On
Service
Screen Sharing
File Sharing
Printer Sharing
Remote Login
Remote Management
Remote Apple Events
Internet Sharing
Bluetooth Sharing
Printer Sharing: Off
Printer Sharing allows others on your network to use printers connected to this computer.
Open Printers & S
Printers:
HP DeskJet 260...
Users:
Everyone

Rename your Mac by going to the Sharing tab of your System Preferences

LINUX PC

The exact procedure for renaming a Linux computer differs between distributions, but if you're running Linux Mint or another Ubuntu-based Linux distro, you can usually do so by editing the 'hostname' file. Press Ctrl+Alt+T to open a terminal window, then type `sudo gedit /etc/hostname` and press Enter to open the file in the graphical Gedit text editor. Delete the existing hostname from the file, replace it with your new desired PC name and click Save.



*hostname (/etc) - gedit

```
my-new-name
```

File Edit View Search Tools Documents Help
Open
Save
Undo
*hostname ×
*hostname ×
Plain Text ▾
Tab Width: 8 ▾
Ln 1, Col

Edit the hostname and hosts files in Linux to change your PC's name

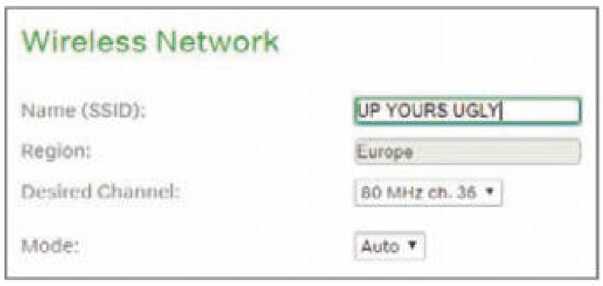
Next, you'll need to edit the 'hosts' file, which also contains your PC's default name. Type `sudo gedit /etc/hosts` in a terminal window, press Enter and look for the hostname in the file that opens (this should be in a line that begins 127.0.1.1 or similar). Again, replace this with your preferred name and save the text file.

Reboot your PC to apply the changes and confirm its new name. For other Linux distros, search the web for "change hostname on [name of Linux distribution]" to get instructions.

WIRELESS ROUTER

If you leave your router's name – known as the Service Set Identifier (SSID) – set to the default of something like 'BTHomeHub-1234', other people can identify its make. This potentially gives hackers the info they need to target your network, particularly if your router has a known flaw. It also makes your SSID easy to mistake for neighbours' networks that have similarly generic names.

To rename your SSID, open your web browser and log into your router settings. The IP address is usually something like 192.168.0.1 – check the



Name (SSID): UP YOURS UGLY
Region: Europe
Desired Channel: 80 MHz ch. 36
Mode: Auto

Rename your Wi-Fi network's SSID for security reasons - and for fun!

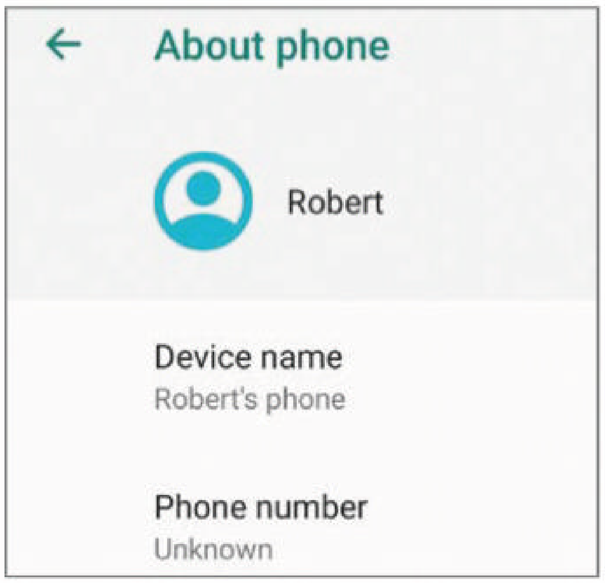
label on your router for details or search for your device on the Router IP Address database (www.routeripaddress.com). Find the entry Wireless Network Name (SSID) or similar and enter the new name. For security reasons, it's best not to include your own name, address or other identifying details in the SSID, although you can have fun and call it something quirky like 'Tell My Wi-Fi Love Her', 'Get your own damn router' or 'Please stop your dog barking'. Apply the change, reboot your router and reconnect any disconnected devices to the renamed SSID.

ANDROID DEVICE

The default name of your Android phone or tablet is usually set by the manufacturer – for example, 'moto g7 plus' – which is both boring and unoriginal. It's just as well, then, that renaming your device is very simple and means you can properly stamp your identity on it.

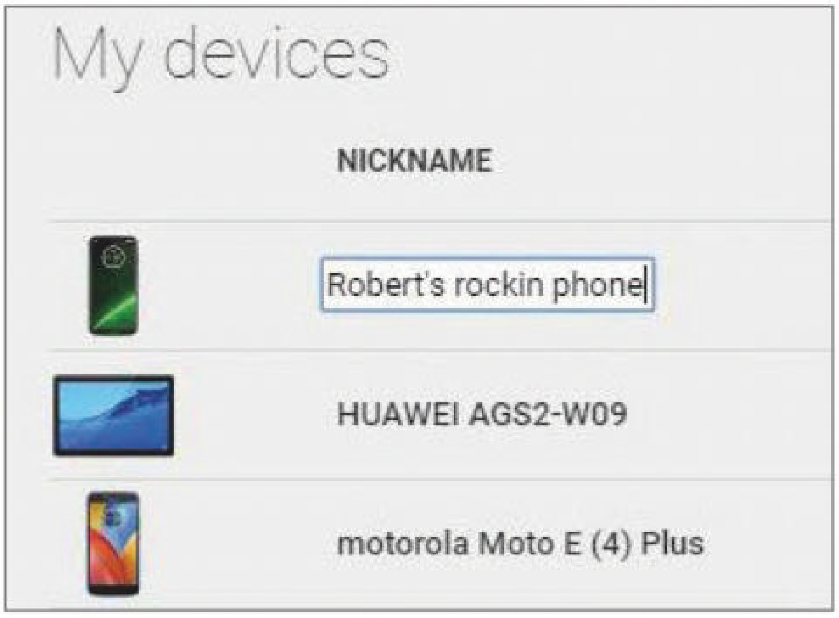
Go to Settings, System and tap 'About phone', 'About tablet' or 'About device'. Select 'Device name', enter your chosen moniker for your phone or tablet, and press OK. You may see a warning that this name may be visible to other people when you connect to Bluetooth devices. To find out, go to Settings, Bluetooth (or 'Connected devices') and tap 'Pair new device'. This will turn on Bluetooth and let you view and edit the device name that other people can see.

You can also change the device name(s) used by the Google Play store when you install Android apps and download other content. Go to play.google.com/settings to view your list of recognised devices, then click the Edit button next to one to give it a new nickname. Choose Update to confirm and this nickname will now appear in the list of options when you click to install an app. Repeat for your other Android devices as necessary.



Robert
Device name: Robert's phone
Phone number: Unknown

Give your phone or tablet a more original name than the manufacturer did

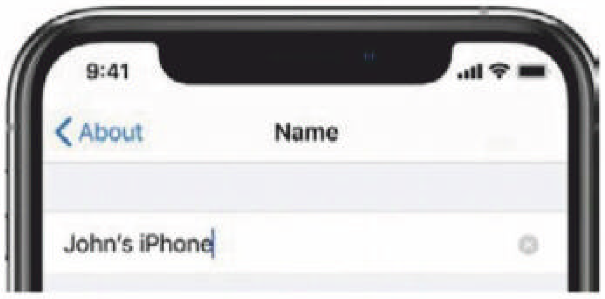


NICKNAME
Robert's rockin phone
HUAWEI AGS2-W09
motorola Moto E (4) Plus

Change the names used for your Android devices by the Google Play store

iPHONE & iPAD

It really couldn't be simpler to change the name of your iPhone or iPad, no matter which version of iOS you're using. Just go to Settings, General, About and press the Name field. Type what you want to call your device and tap Done. The new name will be recognised by iCloud, iTunes and AirDrop, and appear when you use Apple's Find My iPhone/iPad tool to track down a lost or stolen device.

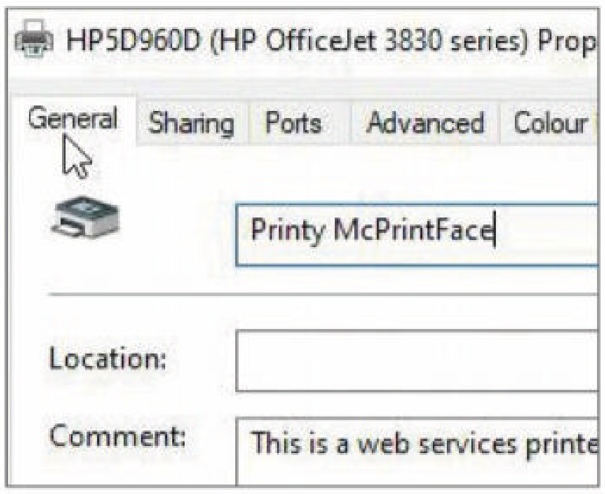


John's iPhone

Apple makes renaming your iPhone or iPad incredibly easy

PRINTER

When you set up a printer, Windows typically names it after the manufacturer or model. You can rename it by going into the Control Panel and choosing 'Devices and Printers' (or 'View devices and printers'). Double-click your default printer, then double-click Customize Your Printer to open the Properties box. On the General tab, delete the printer's current name, enter a new one and click OK. The Model name is displayed on the same tab if you want to restore it later. ■



Printy McPrintFace
Location:
Comment: This is a web services printe

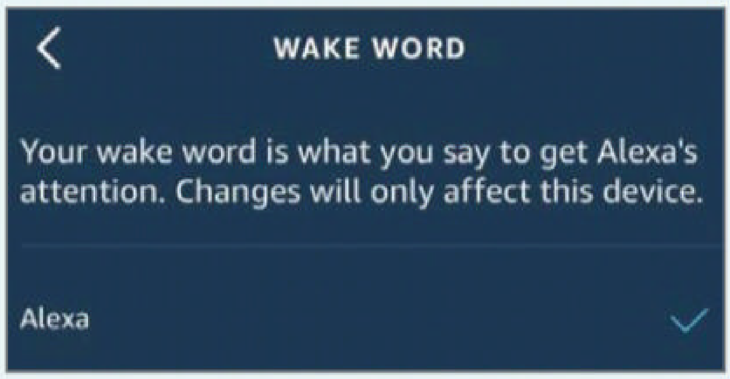
Customise the name of your printer so it stands out on your network

YOU CAN'T CALL ME AL(EXA)

Tired of starting every command to your Echo speaker with "Hey Alexa…"? If you have a relative or pet called Alexa (or even Alex), they're undoubtedly sick of it too, so you can either persuade them to change their name or set the device's 'wake word' to something else.

Open the Alexa app on your phone or tablet, open the menu in the top-left corner and choose Settings, Device Settings. In the All Devices list, select the Echo or other Alexa-enabled device whose name you want to change, then choose Wake Word. Here you can switch from saying 'Alexa' to addressing your device as Amazon, Computer or Echo instead – not particularly exciting options, but a change is as good as a rest!

Sadly, Google won't let you address its smart speakers as anything other than "OK/Hey Google", though the option to change this was reportedly tested last year.



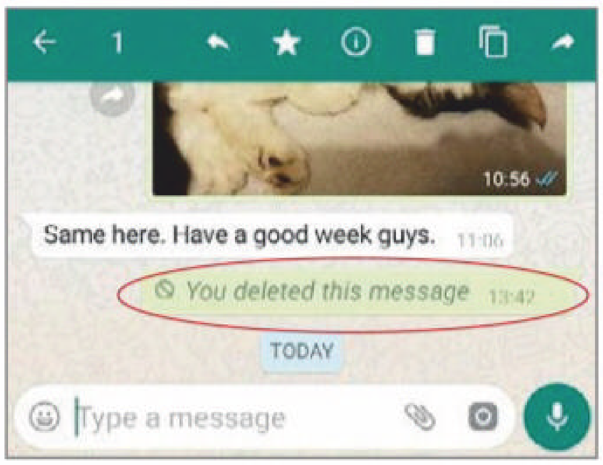
Your wake word is what you say to get Alexa's attention. Changes will only affect this device.
Alexa ✓

SECRET TIPS for WhatsApp

It's the best and most popular messaging app but are you getting the most out of it? **Jane Hoskyn** reveals the latest expert tricks for mastering WhatsApp

Unsend embarrassing messages

Don't panic! WhatsApp now lets you 'unsend' accidentally dispatched messages. Long-press the message, tap the bin icon and select Delete For Everyone. This erases the offending text from your recipient's screen as well as your own, whether or not it's been read. The catch is that you can only unsend a message for up to an hour and your recipient will see 'This message was deleted', which may leave them feeling even more determined to find out what they missed.



Same here. Have a good week guys. 11:06

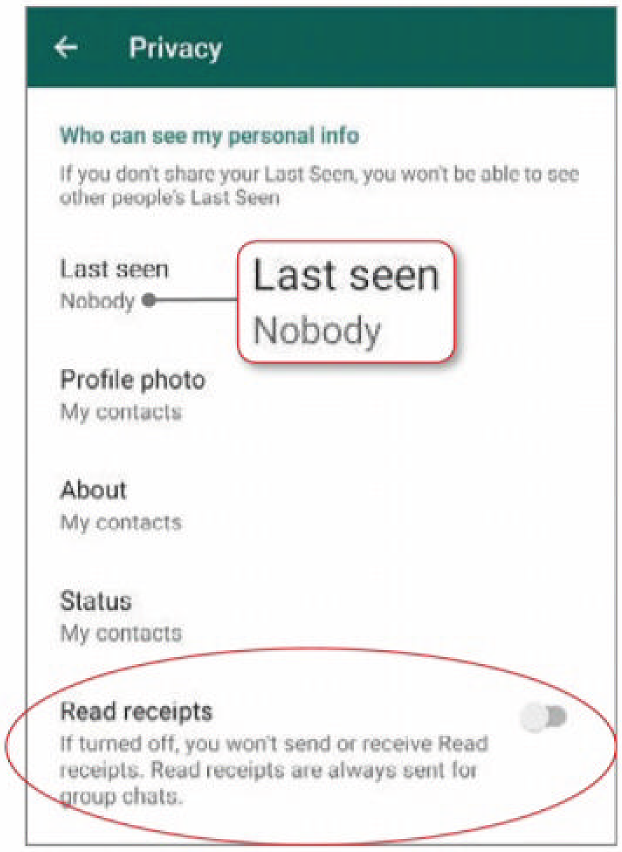
You deleted this message 13:42

WhatsApp lets you delete sent messages, if you're quick – but everyone will know

Hide yourself and your blue ticks

WhatsApp encrypts your messages in transit, but it's hardly a fortress of privacy. By default, it reveals when you're online, what time you were last active and when you've read messages. To switch off these intrusions, open Settings via WhatsApp's main menu then go to Account, Privacy. Tap 'Last seen', then Nobody (to hide the 'online' tag) and disable 'Read receipts' to stop the blue ticks.

Disabling blue ticks also prevents you from seeing when recipients read *your* messages, so you could keep them switched on and use this alternative trick instead: set your device to display full messages in notifications. On iOS, you could also get Siri to read them out and, in Chrome, you can use free extension WAToolkit to display notifications (see boxout, opposite). That way, you can read incoming messages without opening WhatsApp and triggering a read receipt.



Who can see my personal info

If you don't share your Last Seen, you won't be able to see other people's Last Seen

Last seen
Nobody

Last seen
Nobody

Profile photo
My contacts

About
My contacts

Status
My contacts

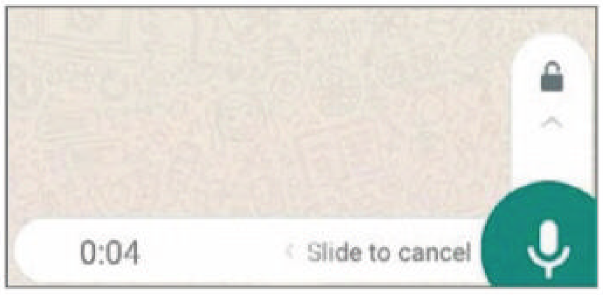
Read receipts
If turned off, you won't send or receive Read receipts. Read receipts are always sent for group chats.

Go incognito and ditch the blue ticks to stop WhatsApp revealing your every move

Save private audio notes

The microphone icon in the bottom-right corner of WhatsApp's message window works like a walkie-talkie button. Press and hold it, record a voice message, then let go to instantly send it. You can cancel before sending by swiping left, or enable hands-free mode by sliding your finger up to the lock icon while recording.

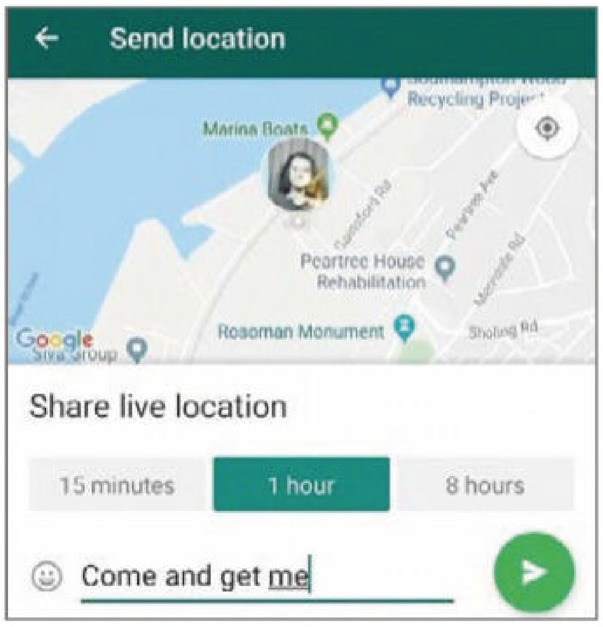
With a bit of trickery, this feature also works as a private dictaphone for recording ideas. First add your own number as a contact (tap the green message button then 'New contact', 'Create contact'), then start a thread ('chat') with yourself and get talking. On Android, the audio files are saved in WhatsApp\Media\Audio files as well as in the app; on iOS they're saved in the app only.



Turn WhatsApp's audio message feature into a private dictaphone

Share your live location

WhatsApp now lets you share your device's location in real time, so your recipient can track exactly where you are, which is handy when meeting in an unfamiliar place. Open a chat with that person, then tap the 'attach' icon (paperclip on Android; '+' on iOS) and choose Location from the attachment options (which also include audio files,

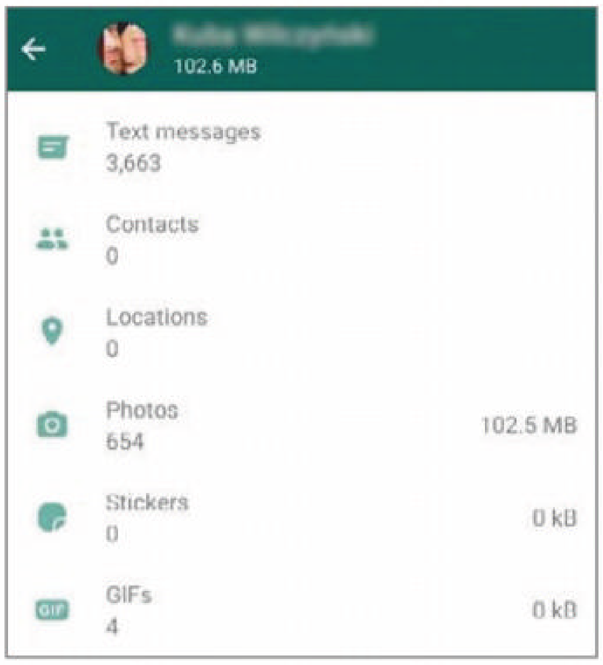


Come and get me

Give a friend temporary tracking privileges to help with a rendezvous documents, photos and contacts). Allow location access, then select 'Share live location' and choose how long they can track you for. You can tap 'Stop sharing' in the chat to shut down the tracking once you've succeeded in meeting up.

See who you chat to most

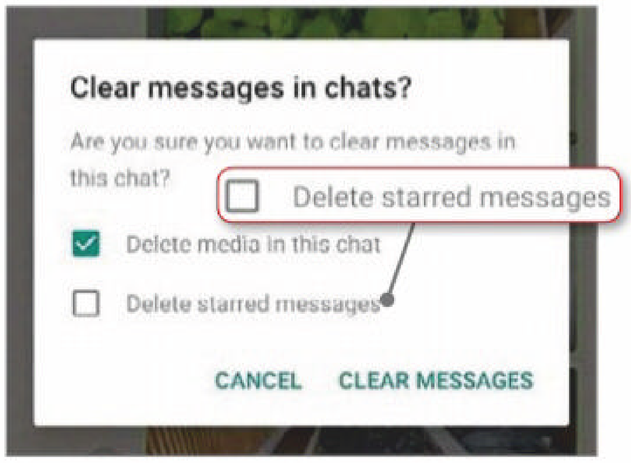
WhatsApp's 'Storage usage' screen is designed to reveal how much space you're using, but it's also a handy way to monitor your chat habits. Tap 'Data and storage usage' in Settings, then 'Storage usage' to see all your chats and how much space each one is taking up, with the largest at the top. Tap a person for a megabyte-by-megabyte breakdown of the types of media they use to communicate with you.



Find out whose chats take up most space - and what data types are responsible

Delete space-hogging chats (except the best bits)

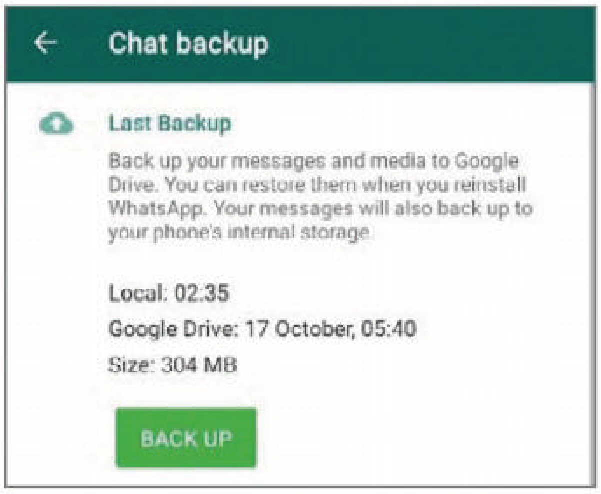
You don't have to delete entire chats to free up storage space. Tap a chat under 'Storage usage', then Free Up Space and tick the stuff you want to clear. For example, just GIFs and videos or everything except text. Alternatively, delete everything except 'starred' messages (add a star by long-pressing a favourite message). Open a chat's menu and tap More, 'Clear chat'. Make sure that 'Delete starred messages' is unticked and then tap Clear Messages.


Clear messages in chats?

Are you sure you want to clear messages in this chat?

☐ Delete starred messages
☑ Delete media in this chat
☐ Delete starred messages
CANCEL
CLEAR MESSAGES

Keep this box empty to clear out all messages except your favourites



Back up your messages and media to Google Drive. You can restore them when you reinstall WhatsApp. Your messages will also back up to your phone's internal storage.

Local: 02:35
Google Drive: 17 October, 05:40
Size: 304 MB

Automatically back up your chats to carry on where you left off on a new device

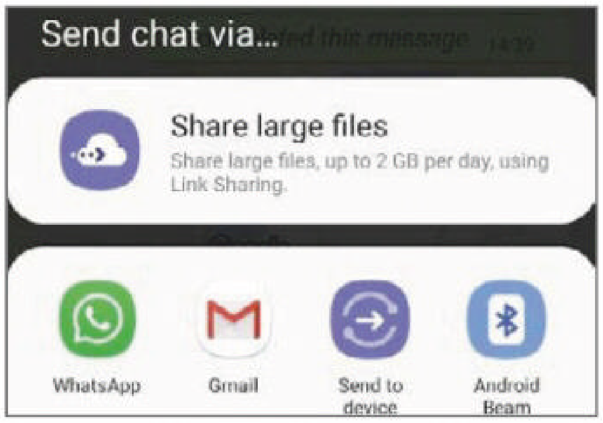
Back up and restore your WhatsApp chats

WhatsApp chats aren't stored in your account so, if you're switching to a new device, you'll need to import a backup from Google Drive or iCloud. To save a regular automatic backup, go to Chats, 'Chat backup' in Settings, then decide the backup frequency and whether to include videos and use mobile data. Be aware that chats are only encrypted in WhatsApp, not after they're backed up in the cloud.

To import a backup, install WhatsApp on a new device and follow the prompts. Sadly, you can't do this across platforms so chats backed up from Android can only be restored on Android and the same restriction applies to iOS.

Download a whole chat as a text file

WhatsApp lets you export entire message threads as plain text files, complete with timestamps. Open the chat's menu and tap More, 'Export chat', then choose email and enter a recipient (such as yourself), then Send. You'll see plenty of other export options, depending on your devices and apps. Ours included Bluetooth, messaging service Telegram and even nearby devices including our neighbour's Fire Stick, which we discreetly ignored!



Share large files, up to 2 GB per day, using Link Sharing.

WhatsApp lets you export chats via email – or even to other chat apps

Message multiple people without using groups

WhatsApp group-notification nightmare season (more commonly known as Christmas) is almost upon us. Happily, there is a way to message multiple contacts in one go without triggering a notification pile-on: add them to a 'broadcast' – WhatsApp's version of email's BCC (blind copy).

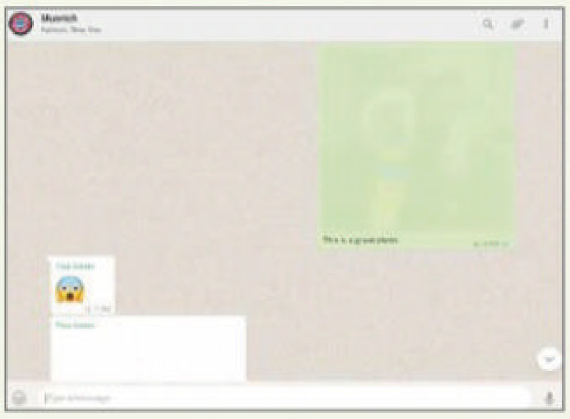
Open the main menu from the Chats tab, tap 'New broadcast', select your contacts and tap the tick to create your message. The recipients won't see each other and they'll only get your message if you're in their contacts.

Annoyingly, you can't stop people adding you to WhatsApp groups – this feature is currently only available in India. While we wait for the new opt-out, we suggest muting a group chat until it's less active, by selecting 'Mute notifications' in the chat's menu. ■

IMPROVE WHATSAPP WITH EXTENSIONS

WhatsApp supports third-party extensions but there's no built-in way to add them, so we've trawled app stores and developers' sites to round up the best – and they're all free.

- **Transcriber (Android: bit.ly/transc488); Audio to Text (iOS: bit.ly/audiotext488): Automatically convert WhatsApp voice messages to text.**
- **WhatsApp Business (Android, iOS: whatsapp.com/business): Use two numbers on one phone, add chat labels and create auto-responses.**
- **WikiBot (Android, iOS: bit.ly/wikibot488): Send it any word and it'll reply with a Wikipedia definition.**
- **WAToolkit (Chrome: bit.ly/wat488): Configure text size in WhatsApp Web (web.whatsapp.com) and get notifications, even when you close the page.**
- **Hide Media (Chrome: bit.ly/hidem488): Hide photos and videos in WhatsApp Web – useful for slow connections and privacy from passers-by (see screenshot, above).**



NEXT ISSUE: Discover secret tips for Facebook Messenger

Best free office suites

There's no need to pay for Microsoft Office with so many free alternatives now available. **Andy Shaw** ranks his favourite tools for word processing, spreadsheets and more

Google Docs | docs.google.com | ★★★★★

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

WebUser GOLD AWARD

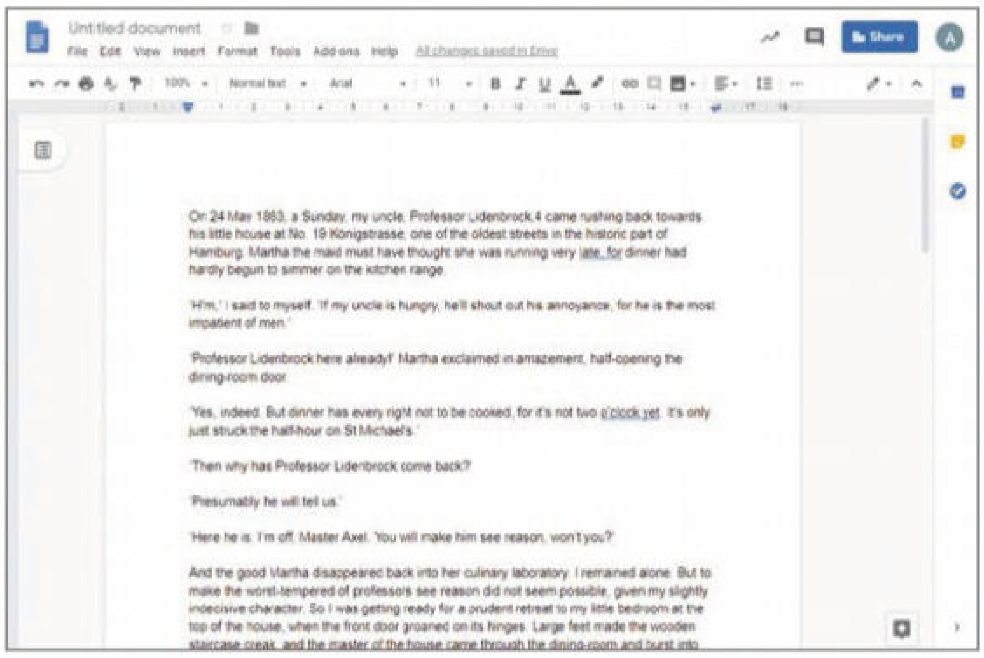
What we liked:

Web User used to separate cloud-based office tools from the versions you can install in Windows, because they fitted a different purpose. But now that offline suites let you save your files online, and browser-based software can be saved to your hard drive and operated without an internet connection, the dividing line between the two has more or less vanished.

In our opinion, Google's suite of online, cloud-based tools (Docs, Sheets, Slides and Forms) is the king of the free office suite, whether you're online or off. Its tools aren't as comprehensive as LibreOffice's, and office-software experts might scoff at its limitations, but we think they're missing the point. Google's tools have just enough scope to keep most small offices running and they are more than capable of fulfilling the needs of the average home user.

Google has the essential core trio of tools covered: Docs is a capable word processor that can churn out anything from a simple letter to a lengthy book, while Sheets and Slides offer all the necessary tools for creating spreadsheets and presentations. You'd have to be relying on some very obscure features to find yourself hitting a brick wall with any one of these tools.

The online nature of Google Docs makes collaboration simple, which is ideal when sharing and organising documents with family and friends. Also, any files you save won't count against Google's free storage limits, so you can keep as many documents and spreadsheets within the system as you like.


Untitled document
File Edit View Insert Format Tools Add-ons Help All changes saved in Drive
Share
100%
Normal text
Arial
11

On 24 May 1863, a Sunday, my uncle, Professor Lidenbrock,4 came rushing back towards his little house at No. 19 Königstrasse, one of the oldest streets in the historic part of Hamburg. Martha the maid must have thought she was running very late, for dinner had hardly begun to simmer on the kitchen range.

'H'm,' I said to myself. 'If my uncle is hungry, he'll shout out his annoyance, for he is the most impatient of men.'

'Professor Lidenbrock here already!' Martha exclaimed in amazement, half-opening the dining-room door.

'Yes, indeed. But dinner has every right not to be cooked, for it's not two o'clock yet. It's only just struck the half-hour on St Michael's.'

'Then why has Professor Lidenbrock come back?'

'Presumably he will tell us.'

'Here he is. I'm off, Master Axel. You will make him see reason, won't you?'

And the good Martha disappeared back into her culinary laboratory. I remained alone. But to make the worst-tempered of professors see reason did not seem possible, given my slightly indecisive character. So I was getting ready for a prudent retreat to my little bedroom at the top of the house, when the front door groaned on its hinges. Large feet made the wooden staircase creak, and the master of the house came through the dining-room and burst into

How it can be improved:

Although Google Docs covers all the basics well, there are some useful tools that this office suite lacks. A permanent on-screen word count has been on the wish list of writers for some time, and there's no option to add visible versions of invisible elements, such as spaces, to make editing easier. The other tools have similar minor shortfalls.

OUR VERDICT

There are noticeable gaps in Google's toolbox compared to the more comprehensive LibreOffice, but Docs and Sheets have more to offer than just raw tools, including comprehensive collaboration, access from any device you can lay your hands on and unlimited file storage. Unless you need a specific tool or Microsoft Office-only file compatibility, this suite of core tools is enough to satisfy all your home office requirements.

LibreOffice | www.libreoffice.org | ★★★★☆

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

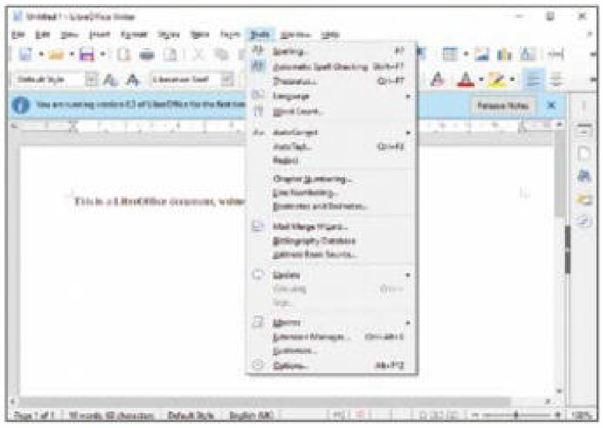
WebUser SILVER AWARD

What we liked:

Compared to most office software, LibreOffice now feels quaintly old fashioned. Eschewing many of the leaps to modernisation that other office products have attempted, such as Microsoft's ribbon bar, LibreOffice sticks with the old design of standard toolbars and menus we've used for years.

It operates as a traditional suite of tools with a variety of individual programs, including a word processor, spreadsheet, database, presentation tool and drawing program. This is a more comprehensive collection than that offered by Google, so it's the better option if you want the extras.

By default, files you create in LibreOffice are saved in the Open Document Format, which is fine if you're creating files for yourself but likely to confuse other people if you share them. However, with a few extra clicks, LibreOffice will save files as Microsoft documents and can also do fancy things such as saving PDFs.



How it can be improved:

There's nothing innovative about LibreOffice – if anything, the OpenOffice software it sprang from has done more to change and improve its tools. Sure, if it ain't broke don't fix it, but LibreOffice can feel a bit bleak and utilitarian.

OUR VERDICT

LibreOffice's old-school menus and buttons, and its traditional blueprint of individual Windows-based office tools accessed from a launcher may seem dowdy compared to Google's online offering, but it has more sophisticated office features.

Microsoft OneDrive | onedrive.com | ★★★★☆

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

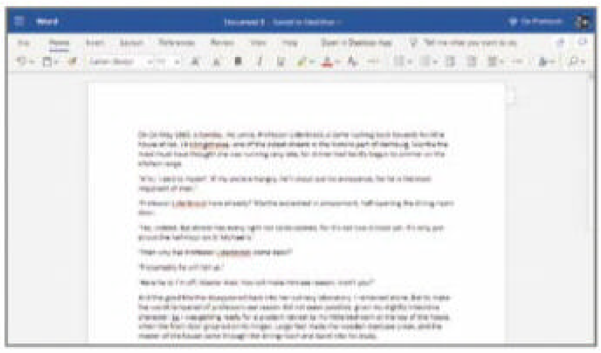
WebUser BRONZE AWARD

What we liked:

If you're solidly on board with the way Windows 10 integrates with OneDrive, you might prefer to use Microsoft's online office suite, which has strong links with the company's paid-for Office software but is free to use and surprisingly capable.

The suite provides Word, Excel, Powerpoint and OneNote, which should cover most of the tools required by the home user. Like Google's offering, it also neatly bridges the divide between your desktop and the cloud, working online when you need it but neatly syncing your files offline if you have Windows 10 set to operate in conjunction with OneDrive.

A further benefit is that, being Microsoft, its files are Office-compatible by default, so if you work and share files with other people and organisations that use Microsoft's tools (which is almost everyone), then you'll have perfectly compatible files without even having to think about it.



How it can be improved:

The Excel Spreadsheet component has a modern ribbon bar, which brings it in line with Microsoft's paid-for software. However, the Word and PowerPoint tools are lagging behind, with simplistic menus and buttons, and need updating.

OUR VERDICT

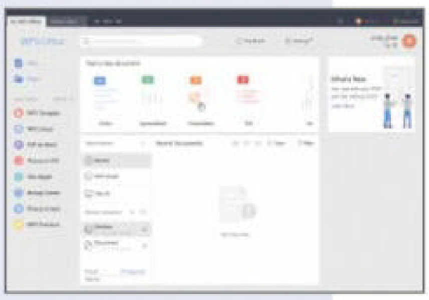
Microsoft Office continues to rule paid-for office software, which lends its free online suite some gravitas. It's the sensible option if you need Microsoft Office compatibility but it's less coherent than our other award winners, with some tools lacking updates.

BEST OF THE REST

WPS Office

www.wps.com

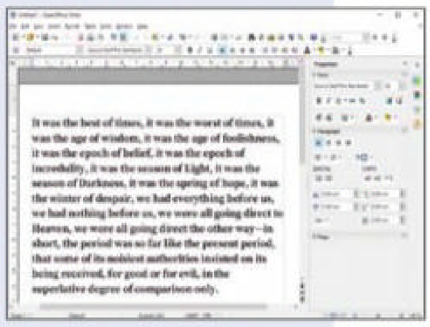
WPS Office has four main components to its office suite: a word processor, a spreadsheet, a presentation tool and a PDF editor. You have to sign up for an account to use the free service, but it comes with a generous 1GB of online space for storing and syncing your files. It feels more modern than LibreOffice but holds back some of its best features for paying customers.



OpenOffice

www.openoffice.org

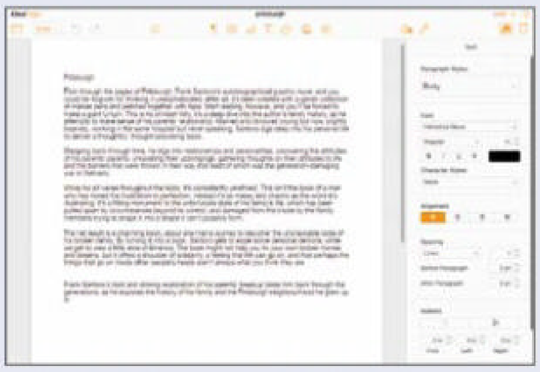
OpenOffice is LibreOffice's big brother and also needs installing on your PC. With both being developed from the same base software, there's a lot of similarity between the two, though OpenOffice isn't updated as often. It also doesn't come with the Charts tool, which you may not need but it's good to have the option.



Apple iCloud

www.icloud.com

Apple has its own suite of software that it gives away to Mac users for free, though it's not available on Windows. However, you can use its online tools for free if you sign up for an Apple account. These are a poor relation to Google and Microsoft's tools, though, unless you've bought into Apple's hardware. Even then, you're probably still better off looking at our award-winners instead.



Practical WebUser

16 pages of workshops, tips, projects and problem solving

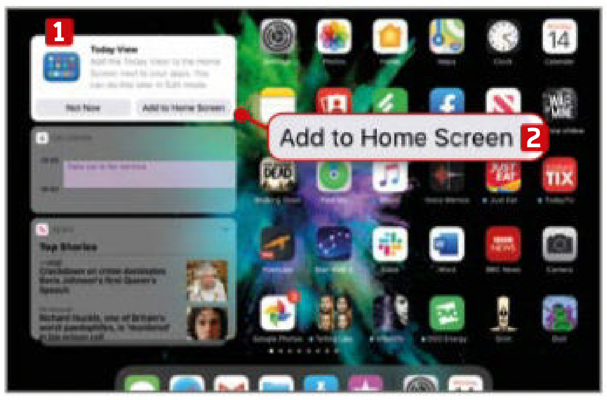
Get the most from iPadOS

Apple has created a version of iOS specifically for iPads, with new features that aren't available on the iPhone. Here's what you need to know

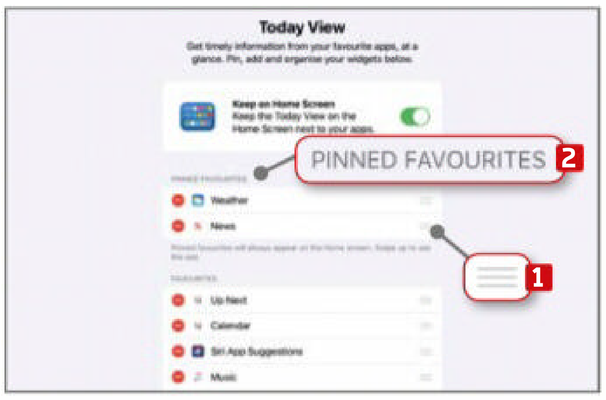
iPadOS: bit.ly/ipados488 | 20 mins | iPad only

The iPad debuted in 2010, and Apple has rolled out new models and revisions every year since. Until recently, the tablet ran the same iOS operating system as the iPhone, but now Apple has designed a special iPad-only version called iPadOS that makes better use of the larger device's size and capabilities. Among the additions are a new home screen, better multitasking features, the ability to download fonts from the App Store and changes to Safari. Mac users who update to macOS Catalina can even use their iPad as a wireless second display.

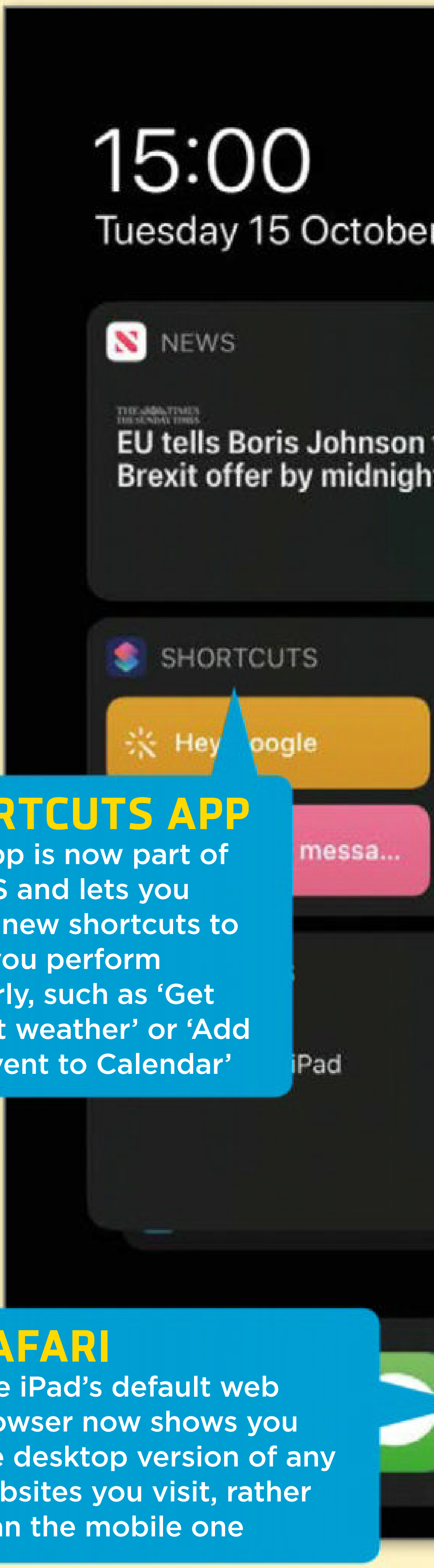
The new iPadOS is quite different from iOS but in this Workshop we'll walk you through the highlights.


1
Add to Home Screen 2

1 The new home screen in iPadOS lets you display widgets alongside your apps. Swipe in from the left to see the new Today View, 1 which includes calendar events, news stories, Siri app suggestions, weather and more. You can add this permanently to the home screen. 2

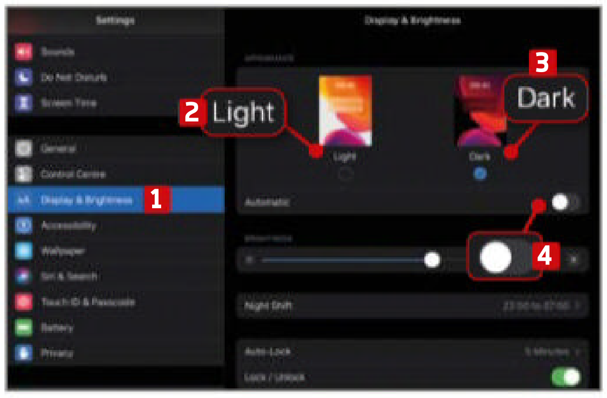

Today View
Get timely information from your favourite apps, at a glance. Pin, add and organise your widgets below.
Keep on Home Screen
PINNED FAVOURITES 2
Weather
News
1
Up Next
Calendar
Siri App Suggestions
Music

2 To customise the Today View, scroll down to the bottom of the sidebar and tap the Edit button. You can reorder the widgets by tapping and dragging the three lines next to an item. 1 Move your favourites to the pinned area. 2 Scroll down to see many more widgets you can add to the view.

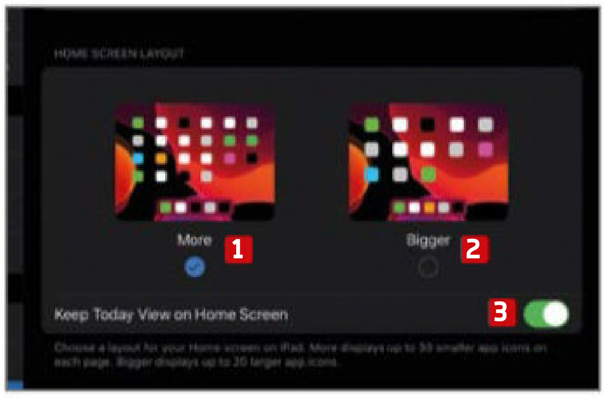

15:00
Tuesday 15 October
NEWS
EU tells Boris Johnson
Brexit offer by midnigh
SHORTCUTS
Hey Google
messa...
iPad

SHORTCUTS APP
This app is now part of iPadOS and lets you create new shortcuts to tasks you perform regularly, such as 'Get current weather' or 'Add new event to Calendar'

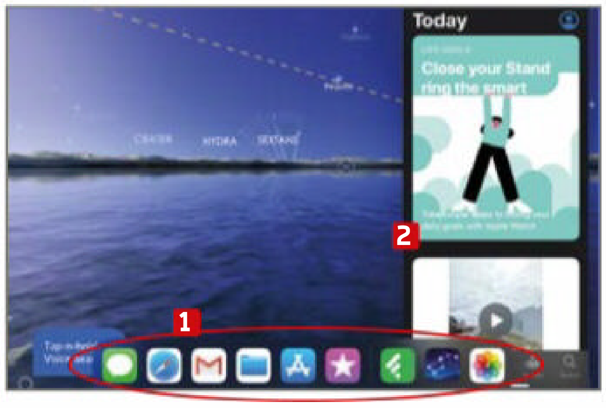
SAFARI
The iPad's default web browser now shows you the desktop version of any websites you visit, rather than the mobile one


Settings
Display & Brightness
3
Dark
2 Light
1
4

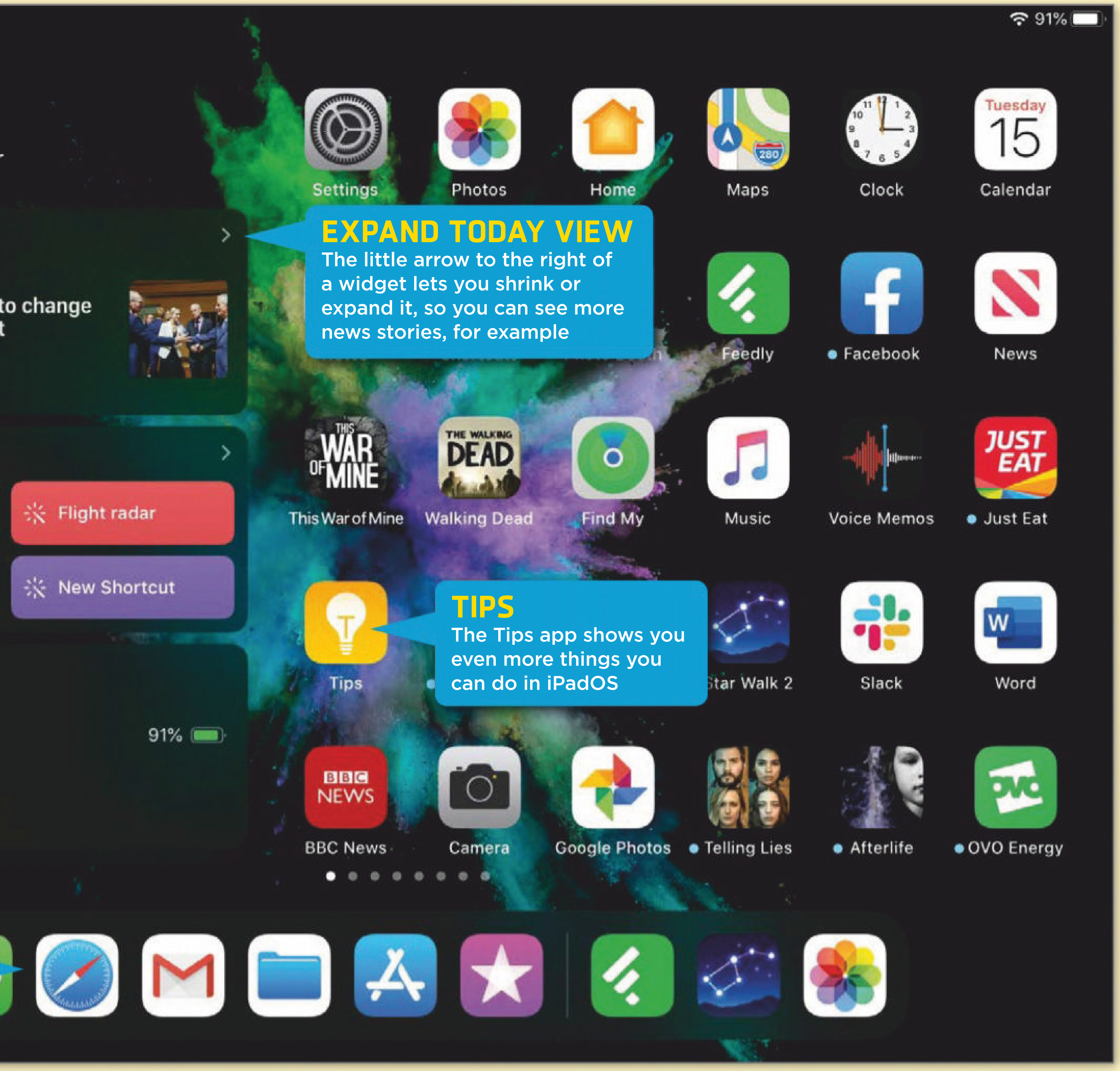
3 As with iOS 13, the new iPadOS offers a dark mode. Enable or disable it by going to Settings, 'Display & Brightness'. 1 Select Light 2 or Dark mode, 3 and it changes immediately. Switch on Automatic 4 and the mode changes depending on the time of day (Dark at night).


HOME SCREEN LAYOUT
More 1
Bigger 2
Keep Today View on Home Screen
3

4 With iPadOS, Apple has made better use of the screen space, cramming up to 30 app icons on each page. If you prefer the old look, go to the bottom of the Display & Brightness screen, where you can switch between the More 1 and Bigger 2 options. You can add or remove the Today View here, too. 3

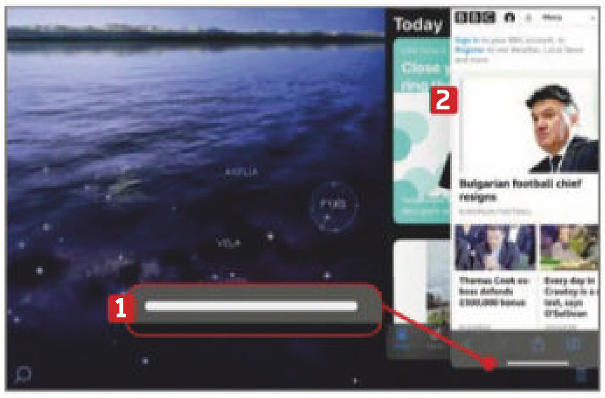


5 The Slide Over feature lets you place one app on top of another. While using an app, swipe up from the bottom edge to reveal the dock. 1 Tap the app you want to slide over, then drag it to the side of the screen. It will appear as a floating sidebar. 2 You can interact with the second app as usual there.

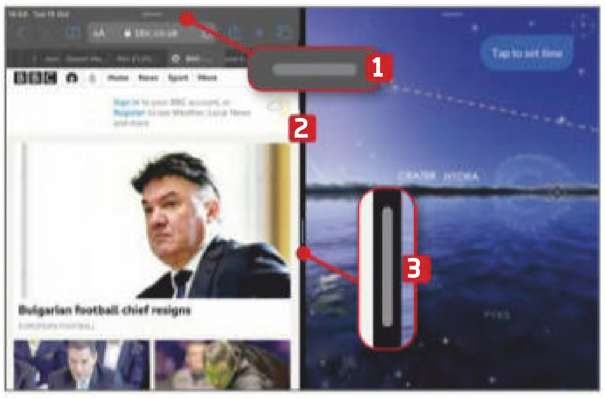

91%
Settings
Photos
Home
Maps
Clock
Tuesday 15
Calendar
to change
Feedly
Facebook
News
THIS WAR OF MINE
This War of Mine
THE WALKING DEAD
Walking Dead
Find My
Music
Voice Memos
JUST EAT
Just Eat
Flight radar
New Shortcut
Tips
Star Walk 2
Slack
Word
91%
BBC NEWS
BBC News
Camera
Google Photos
Telling Lies
Afterlife
OVO Energy

EXPAND TODAY VIEW
The little arrow to the right of a widget lets you shrink or expand it, so you can see more news stories, for example

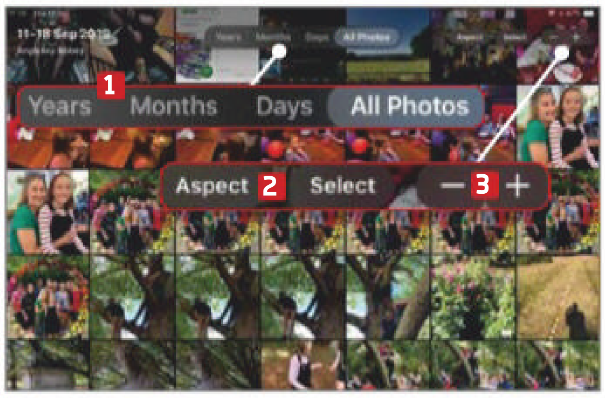
TIPS
The Tips app shows you even more things you can do in iPadOS



6 Once you have an app open in Slide Over, you can swipe it out of sight or move it to the other side of the screen. You can have several apps open in a Slide Over window. Swipe the line on the bottom of the bar **1** to switch between apps. **2** Swiping the line upwards reveals all your open apps.


1
2
3
Bulgarian football chief resigns

7 Drag the line at the top of the Slide Over window **1** to the centre of the iPad's display to make that app full screen. There's also a Split View, which is similar but displays two apps side by side. **2** Repeat the process for Slide Over but drag the app to the far edge. Drag the divider **3** to resize the windows.


Years
Months
Days
All Photos
1
Aspect
2
Select
3

8 Apple has redesigned its Photos app on both iOS and iPadOS. Now you can view all photos or reorder them by years, months or days. **1** You can also change the look of the thumbnails from Square to Aspect (making it easier to identify horizontal and vertical shots) **2** and zoom in or out. **3**

Workshop 2

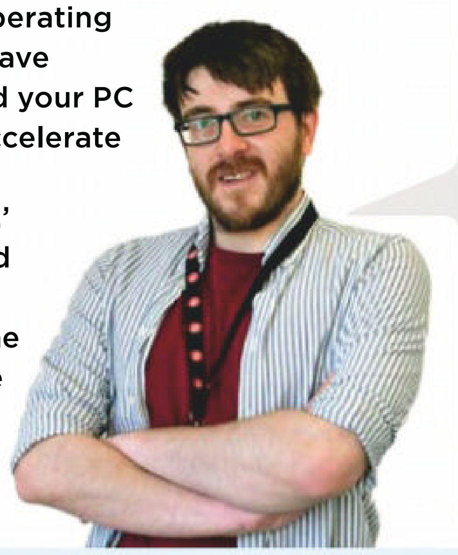
Explore the Windows 10 November 2019 Update

NOVEMBER
Windows 10 update

Windows 10: bit.ly/windows488 | 20 mins | Windows 10

The Windows 10 November 2019 Update is the latest feature update for Microsoft's ever-evolving operating system. Due to go live mid-November, it may have launched by the time you read this. If it's not reached your PC yet, you can either wait for the update to arrive or accelerate the process by following our Expert Tip, right.

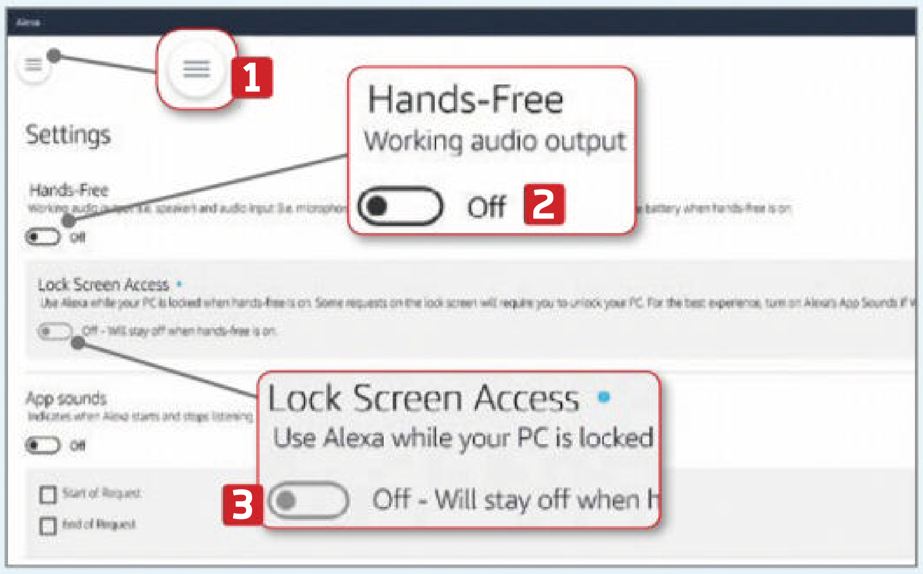
Many of the update's changes are 'under the hood,' including the vague tease of "general battery life and power efficiency improvements for PCs with certain processors", so don't expect a massive overhaul on the scale of version 1903 (the May update). It seems we're at the 'tweaking and refining' stage of Windows 10's life cycle, though there's still plenty to get stuck into, especially around notifications and voice control.



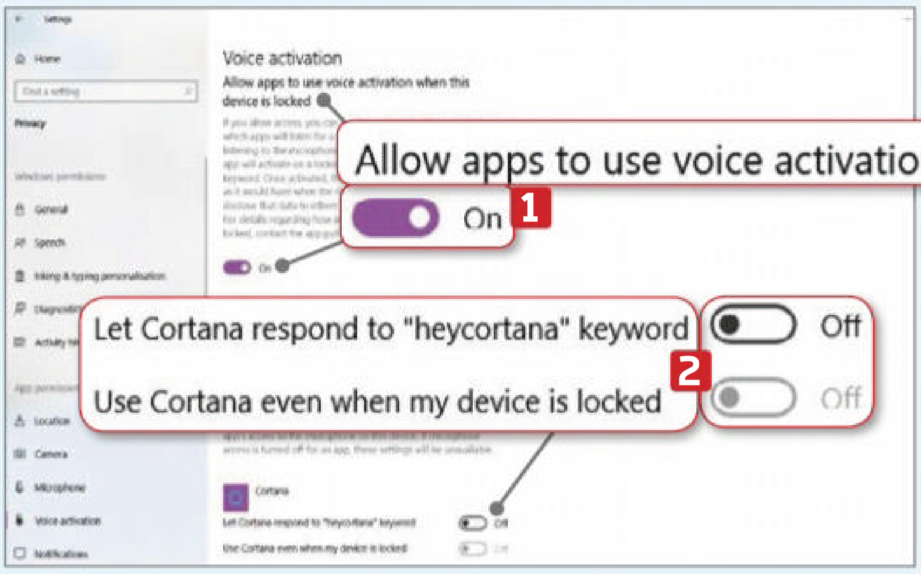
EXPERT TIP

Steve Clark says

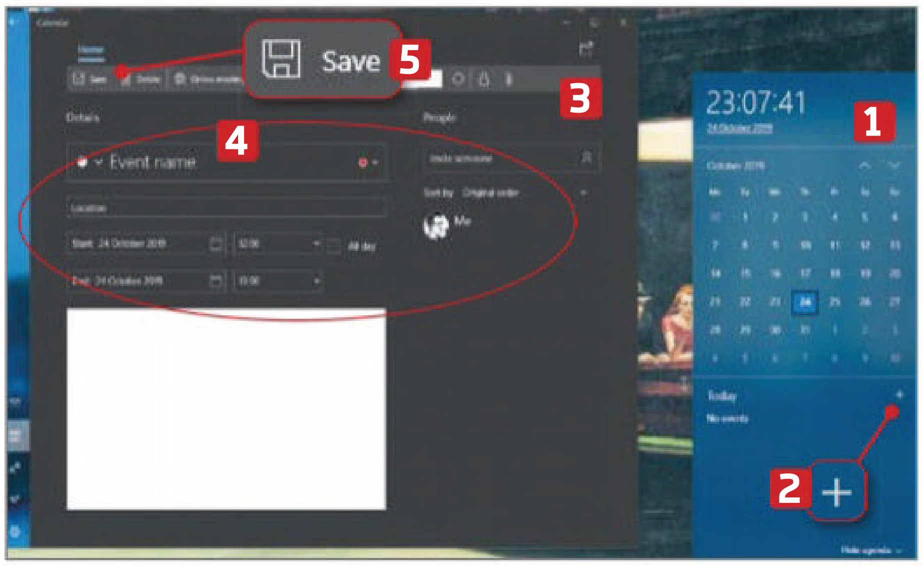
To try the latest version of Windows 10 before it's rolled out to your PC, sign up to the Windows Insider Programme – search for `windows insider` in the Start bar to join the club. Sign in and select one of four options, ranging from the more stable Slow ring to the hyper-beta Skip ring. Once you're set up, keep checking for new updates. Be aware that some of the bigger 'feature' updates can take a while to install.


1
Settings
Hands-Free
Working audio output
Off
2
Lock Screen Access
Use Alexa while your PC is locked
3
Off - Will stay off when h
App sounds

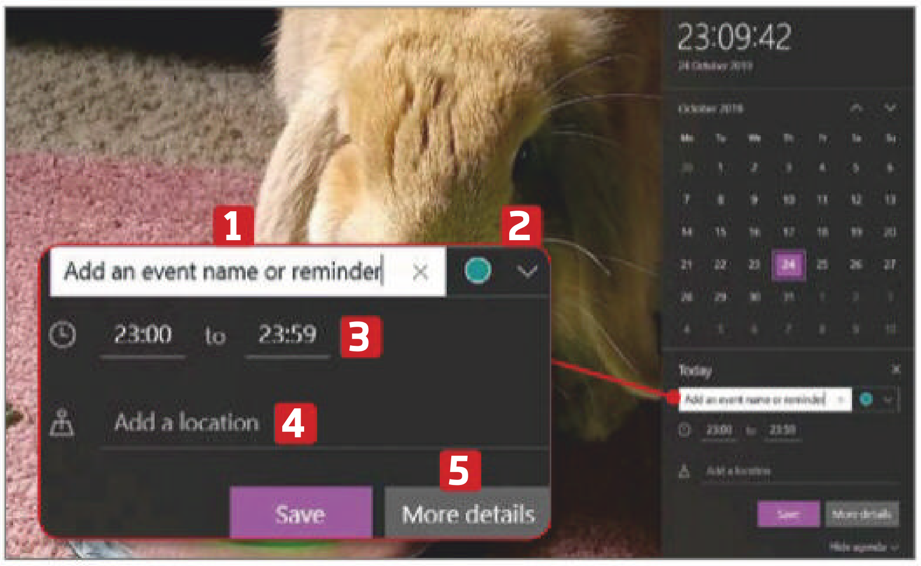
1 The first big change in the November update allows you to add other voice assistants to the lock screen. Start by downloading your chosen assistant – we're using Alexa. Open the app and click the menu 1 to visit the Settings. Toggle on both Hands-Free 2 and Lock Screen Access, 3 so you can summon your assistant even when the computer's locked.


Voice activation
Allow apps to use voice activation
On
1
Let Cortana respond to "heycortana" keyword
Off
2
Use Cortana even when my device is locked
Off

2 If you're happy to use Cortana, search the Start bar for `voice activation`. Turn on 'Allow apps to use voice activation' and 'Allow apps to use voice activation when this device is locked'. 1 Under Cortana, toggle on both 'Let Cortana respond to keyword' and 'Use Cortana even when my device is locked'. 2


Save
5
3
4
Event name
23:07:41
1
2
+

3 Calendar events have become less clunky. The old method was to select a date in the calendar, 1 click the '+' icon 2 to open the Outlook calendar 3 and add a raft of details – event name, location, times, invitees 4 – before finally clicking Save. 5 This was pointlessly cumbersome for on-the-fly entries such as 'Pick up milk'.


23:09:42
1
2
Add an event name or reminder
23:00 to 23:59
3
Add a location
4
5
Save
More details

4 Compare that to the November update: select your date and you can immediately begin typing in the text field. 1 This displays options to change the colour, 2 add start and finish times 3 and include locations. 4 Click Save or click 'More details' 5 to open Outlook calendar, if you wish to add something more complex than a basic event.

18+

WHAT IS
AVAXHOME?

AVAXHOME -

the biggest Internet portal, providing you various content: brand new books, trending movies, fresh magazines, hot games, recent software, latest music releases.

Unlimited satisfaction one low price
Cheap constant access to piping hot media
Protect your downloadings from Big brother
Safer, than torrent-trackers

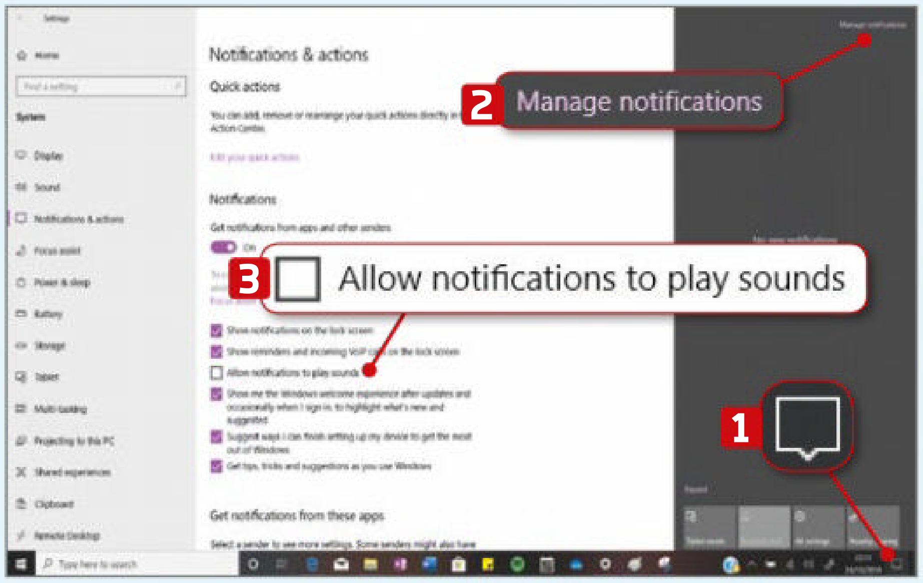
18 years of seamless operation and our users' satisfaction

All languages
Brand new content
One site

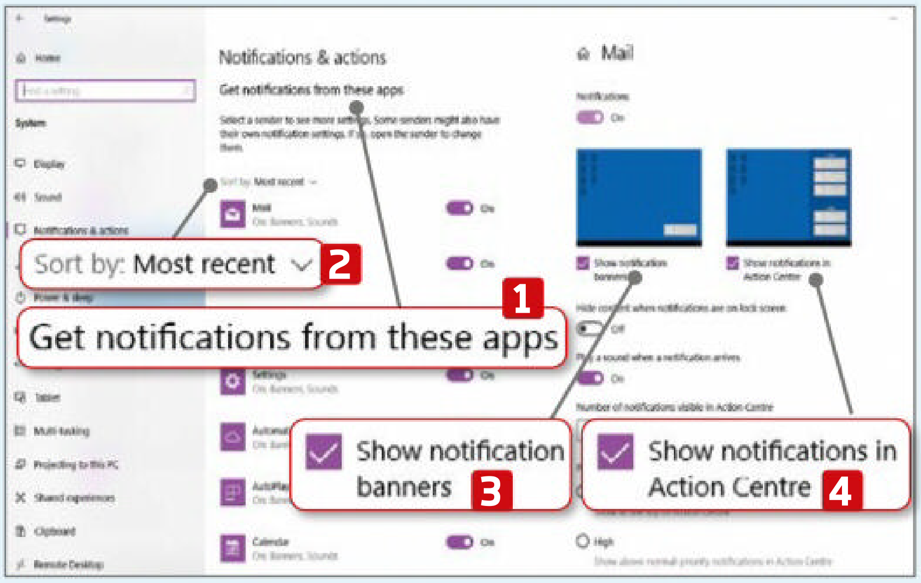
AVXLIVE.ICU

AvaxHome - Your End Place

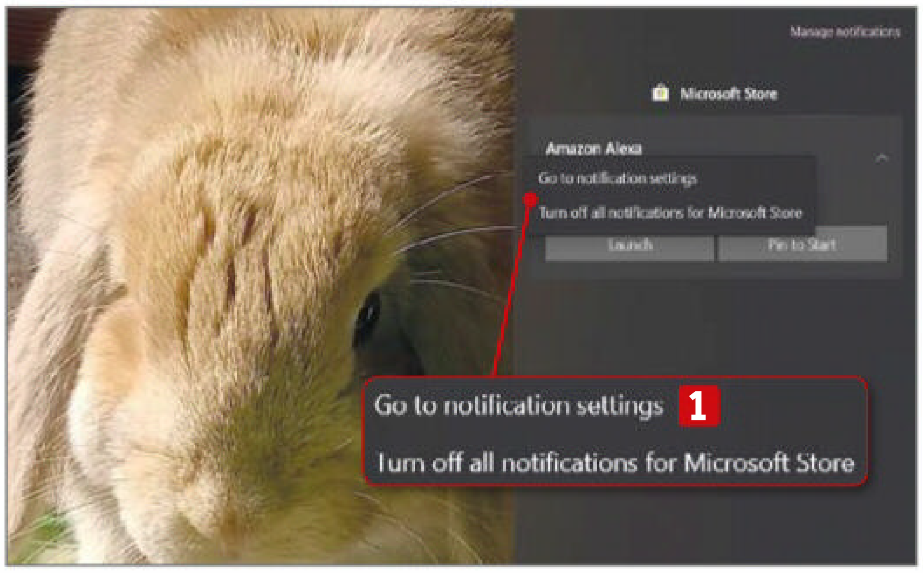
We have everything for all of your needs. Just open https://avxlive.icu


Manage notifications
2
3
Allow notifications to play sounds
1

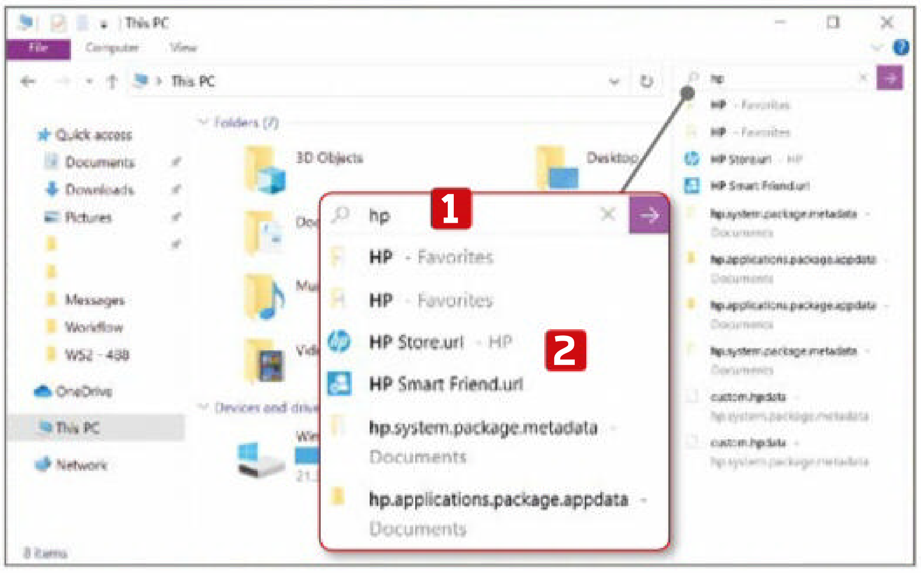
5 Notifications are now displayed at the top of the Action Centre, which makes them easier to keep an eye on. Click the Action Centre, **1** then 'Manage notifications'. **2** The Notifications section has a new tickbox 'Allow notifications to play sounds', **3** which is applied universally rather than on an individual per-app basis.


Sort by: Most recent
2
1
Get notifications from these apps
Show notification banners
3
Show notifications in Action Centre
4

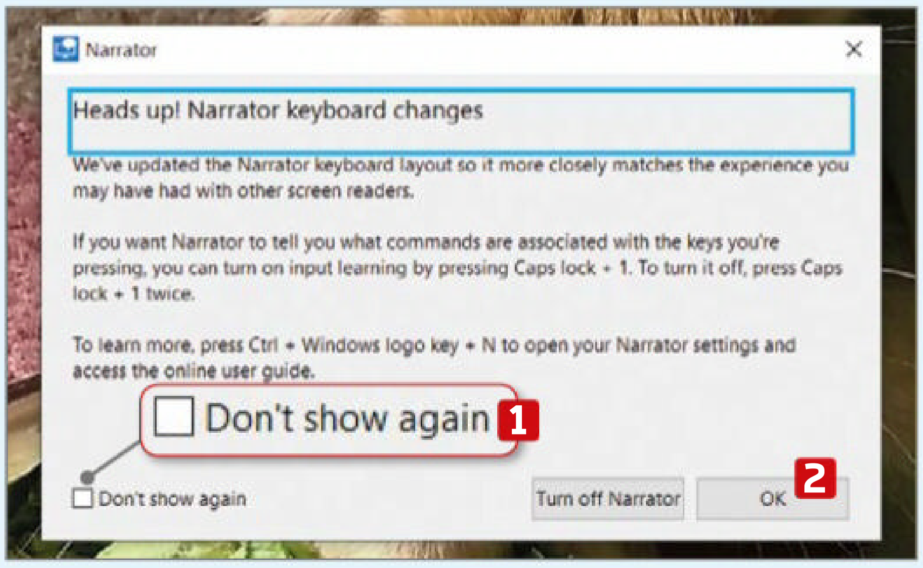
6 Staying in the 'Notifications & actions' window, scroll down to 'Get notifications from these apps'. **1** You can sort the app list by 'Most recent' **2** and Name. Click any app to see how updates will appear. You can choose between banners **3** and Action Centre notifications, **4** or untick both to stop seeing them at all.


Go to notification settings
1
Turn off all notifications for Microsoft Store

7 The final update to notifications comes in the form of dismissals. When you get a notification, either as a banner or in the Action Centre, right-click it. Previously, you were given the option to turn off specific notifications; now, it lets you 'Go to notification settings' or 'Turn off all notifications for' that particular app. **1**


hp
1
HP - Favorites
HP - Favorites
HP Store.url - HP
2
HP Smart Friend.url
hp.system.package.metadata - Documents
hp.applications.package.appdata - Documents

8 File Explorer has also received an upgrade. Now that it's powered by Windows Search, which marries OneDrive to traditional indexed search, it's a lot quicker and more intuitive. When you start typing in the search box, **1** a list of matches appears below **2** so you no longer have to wait for individual results to come through.


Narrator

Heads up! Narrator keyboard changes

We've updated the Narrator keyboard layout so it more closely matches the experience you may have had with other screen readers.

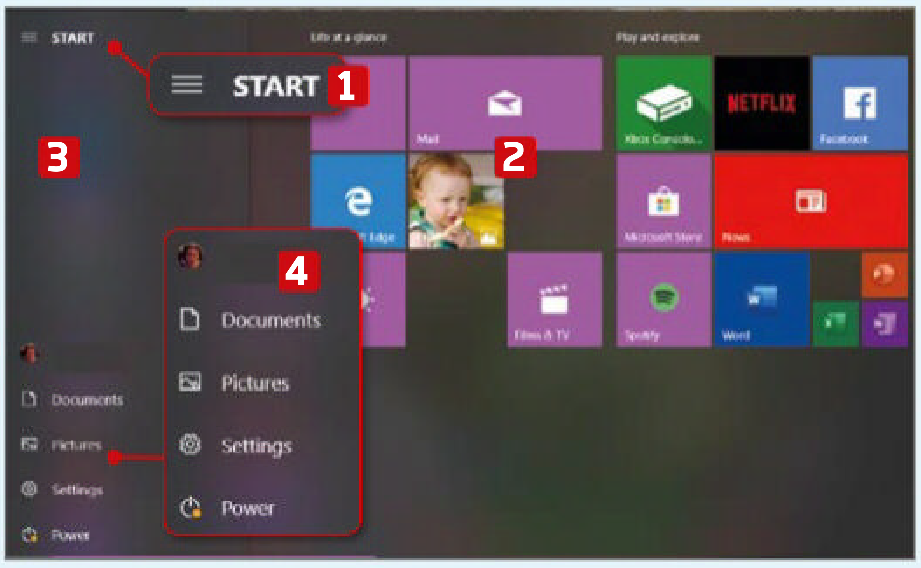
If you want Narrator to tell you what commands are associated with the keys you're pressing, you can turn on input learning by pressing Caps lock + 1. To turn it off, press Caps lock + 1 twice.

To learn more, press Ctrl + Windows logo key + N to open your Narrator settings and access the online user guide.

☐ Don't show again

☐ Don't show again
1
Turn off Narrator
OK
2

9 The Narrator app can 'read' your keyboard's function keys and knows whether the Function Key Lock is activated. To check it's working, search for `narrator`. When the app loads, the new changes are explained. You don't have to make any other adjustments, just make sure you tick 'Don't show again' **1** and click OK **2** or it'll pop up every time.

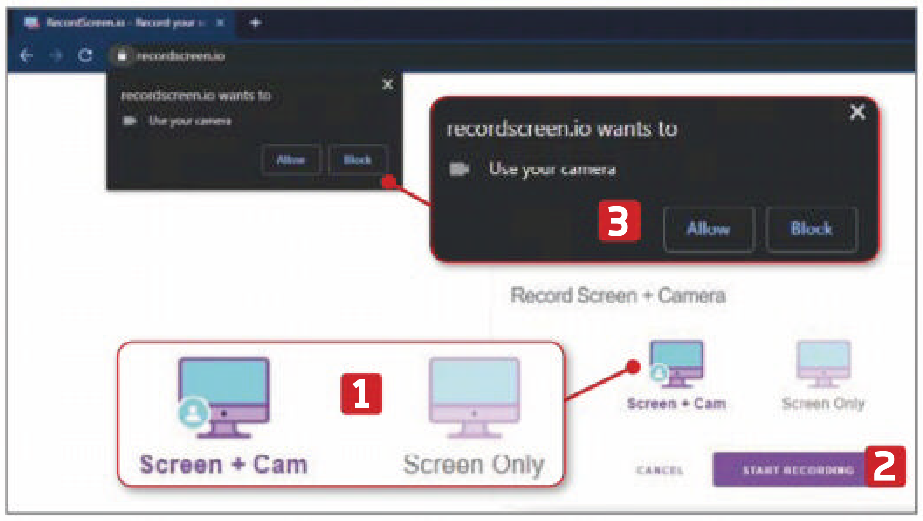

START
1
3
2
4
Documents
Pictures
Settings
Power

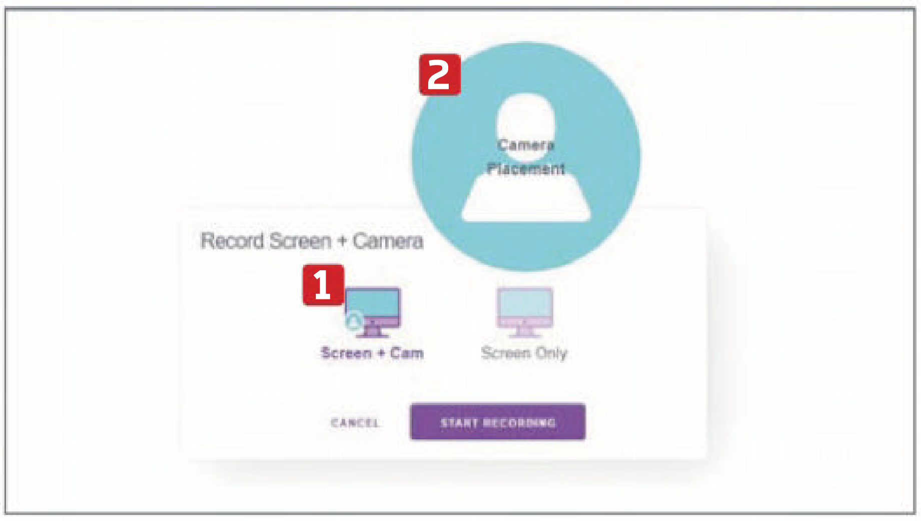
10 Open the Start menu **1** to see the familiar app list and live tiles. **2** The navigation panel on the left **3** contains five icons – Account, Document, Pictures, Settings and Power. **4** Previously, you had to hover over these to get an individual tool tip; now, you get a section describing every icon.

Record your screen from your browser

A screen recorder is a useful tool to have to hand, whether you want to show someone how to fix a particular problem or share your skills by demonstrating how to use your favourite software. RecordScreen is a browser-based tool that lets you capture footage and audio from your computer, and it's completely free. There's no need to buy or even download any software – just bookmark this site.

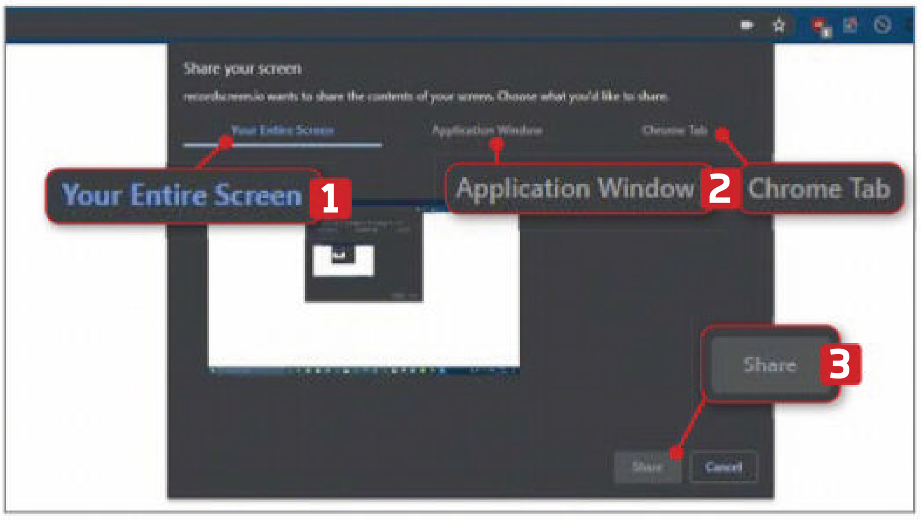
RecordScreen: recordscreen.io | 10 mins | All browsers

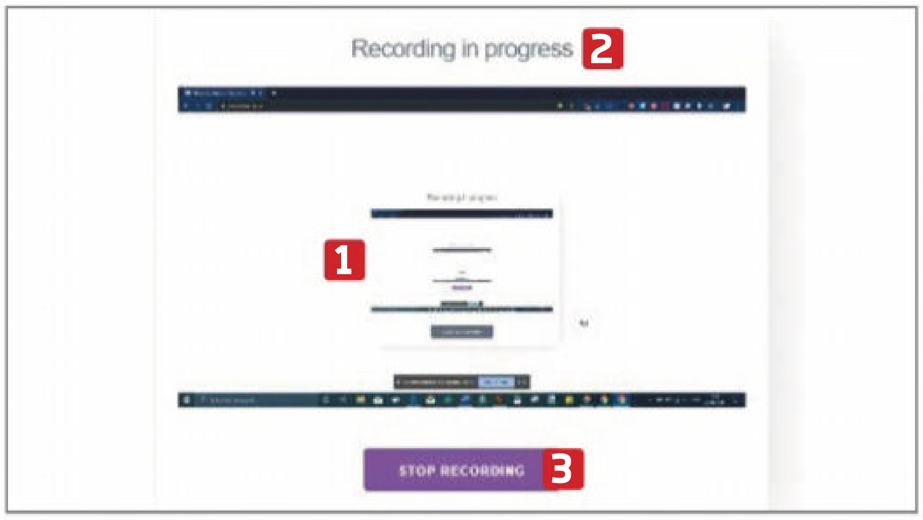

recordscreen.io wants to
Use your camera
Allow
Block
Record Screen + Camera
Screen + Cam
Screen Only
CANCEL
START RECORDING
1
2
3


Camera Placement
Record Screen + Camera
Screen + Cam
Screen Only
CANCEL
START RECORDING
1
2

1 Visit recordscreen.io and press the Record button. Rather than beginning a recording, the site sends you to the setup page. Select either 'Screen + Cam' or Screen Only. **1** When you're ready, click Start Recording, **2** then grant permissions to use the mic, the camera and to share the screen. **3**

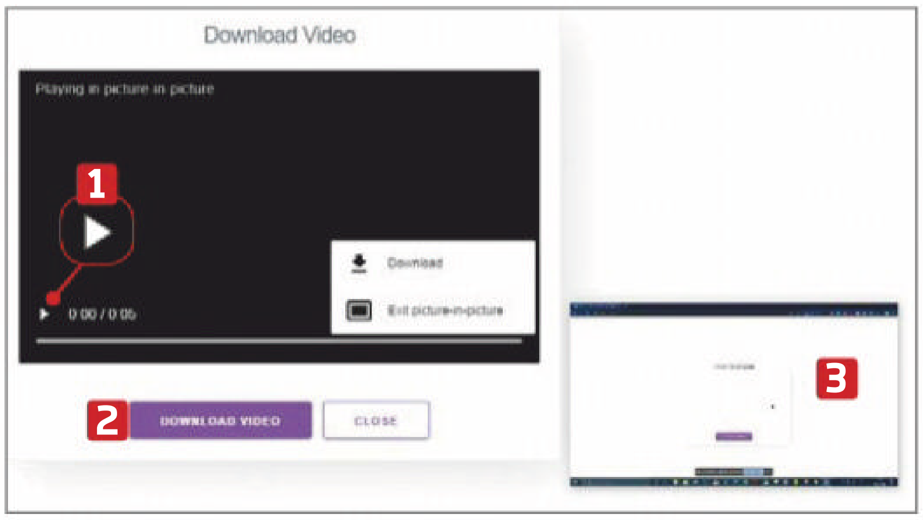
2 If you choose to record 'Screen + Cam', **1** you can set up the position of your camera's placement. **2** By default, it's located in the bottom-left corner but if you'd like to move it to a different spot, click and drag when you see the cross-hair cursor to move it into position.

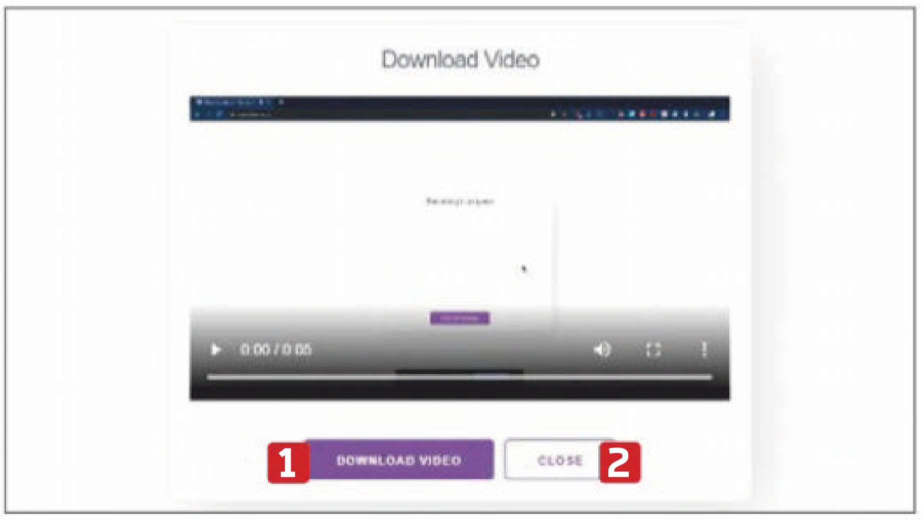

Share your screen
Your Entire Screen
Application Window
Chrome Tab
Share
Cancel
1
2
3


Recording in progress
STOP RECORDING
1
2
3

3 Next, a pop-up lets you choose which part of your screen to record, either via the tabs across the top or, in some browsers, a drop-down menu. Select between your current screen or display, **1** or a specific program or browser window. **2** Click Share **3** or OK to start your recording.

4 A display in the centre of the screen shows what's being recorded. **1** A notice at the top informs you that there's a 'Recording in progress'. **2** You can now switch between tabs and programs – everything that happens on screen is captured. When you're done, click Stop Recording. **3**

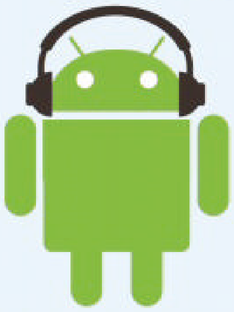

Download Video
Playing in picture in picture
0:00 / 0:05
Download
Exit picture-in-picture
DOWNLOAD VIDEO
CLOSE
1
2
3


Download Video
0:00 / 0:05
DOWNLOAD VIDEO
CLOSE
1
2

5 Once the recording has finished, the display becomes a playback video with a timeline and Play button. **1** You can adjust volume and expand the window full-screen. Click the three-dot menu for options to download the video **2** or watch your recording in Picture-in-Picture mode. **3**

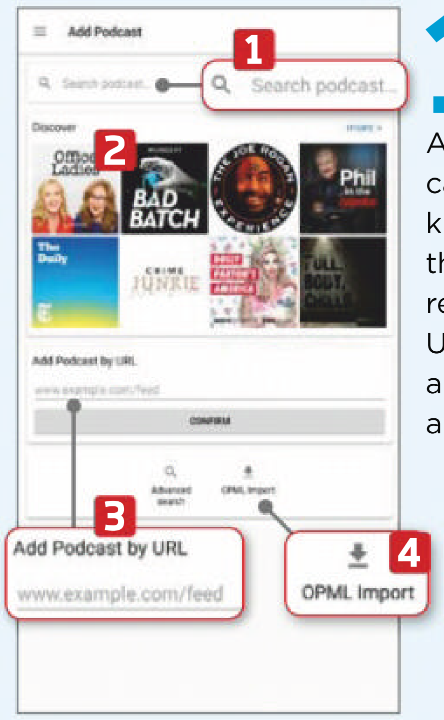
6 Once you're satisfied with your recording, click Download Video. **1** The clip appears in the default downloads folder. To scrap the video, click Close. **2** Be warned – this means you can't retrieve your video later, and there's no confirmation box should you decide to change your mind.

Manage your podcasts on Android

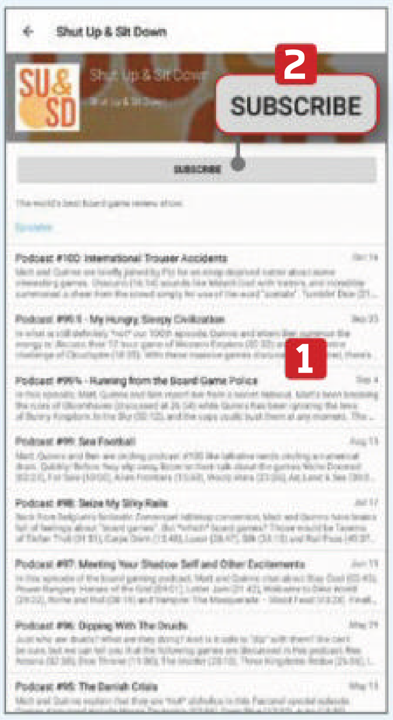


The proliferation and popularity of podcasts continues apace – from captivating documentaries to laugh-out-loud comedy and discussion on every niche interest under the sun. AntennaPod is a brilliant, open-source podcast app that manages your podcasts on Android with a minimum of fuss. You can set it to download new episodes automatically and keep your files perfectly organised.

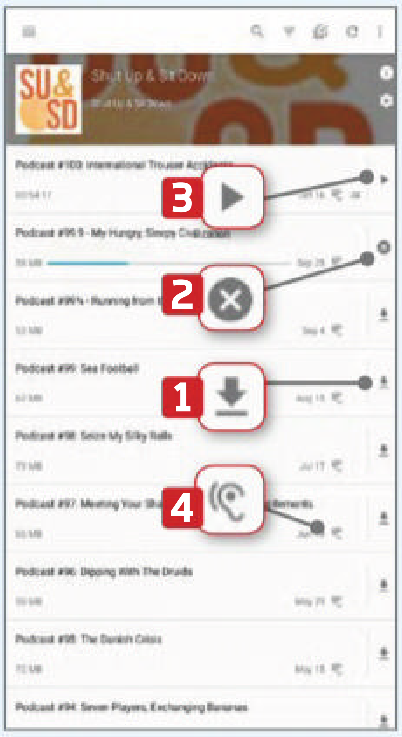
AntennaPod: bit.ly/antp488 | 🕒 **10 mins** | **Android 4.0**


Add Podcast
1
Search podcast...
Discover
2
Add Podcast by URL
www.example.com/feed
CONFIRM
Advanced search
OPML Import
3
Add Podcast by URL
www.example.com/feed
4
OPML Import

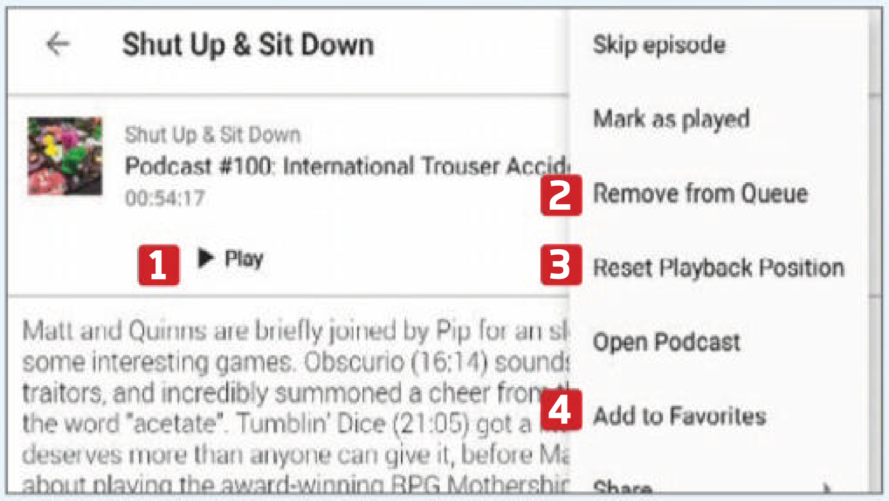
1 When you first launch AntennaPod, it opens the menu. Start by tapping the Add Podcast option. Here, you can search for a podcast you know the name of, 1 browse through AntennaPod's recommendations, 2 type in the URL if you know it 3 or import an OPML list of podcasts from another app. 4


Shut Up & Sit Down
2
SUBSCRIBE
1

2 Once you've found the podcast you want, tap it and you're taken to a list of episodes, 1 which may be long if the podcast has been around for a while. This is just a preview page, to show you what's available. If you like what you see, tap the Subscribe button 2 to add the podcast to AntennaPod, then tap the Open Podcast button.

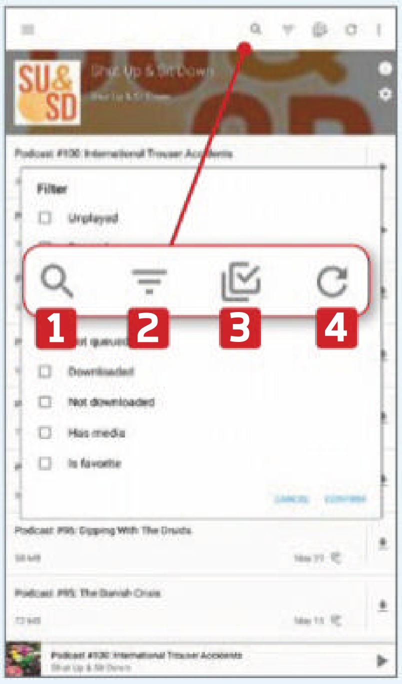

Shut Up & Sit Down
3
2
1
4

3 You can now start downloading the episodes you want to listen to. Tap the down arrow 1 next to a podcast to start downloading. If you change your mind, tap the cross. 2 Once an episode has downloaded, you can play it by tapping the Play button. 3 Tap the Ear icon. 4

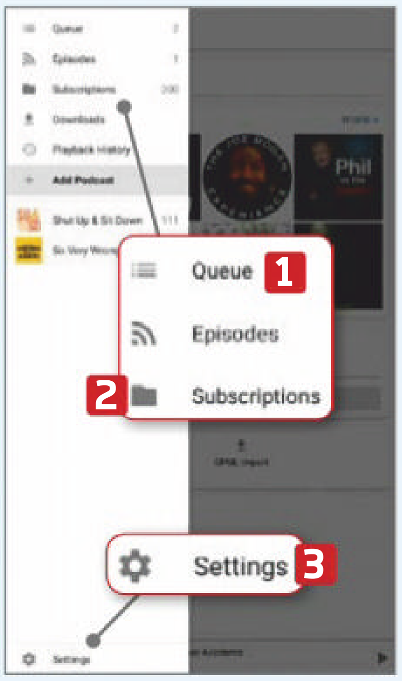

Shut Up & Sit Down
Shut Up & Sit Down
Podcast #100: International Trouser Accid
00:54:17
1
Play
Skip episode
Mark as played
2
Remove from Queue
3
Reset Playback Position
Open Podcast
4
Add to Favorites
Share

Matt and Quinns are briefly joined by Pip for an
some interesting games. Obscurio (16:14)
traitors, and incredibly summoned a cheer
the word "acetate". Tumblin' Dice (21:05) got a
deserves more than anyone can give it, before
about playing the award-winning RPG

4 This opens the page for that particular episode, where you can Play 1 or Delete it. Click the menu for more options, including managing the episode in your playback queue, 2 resetting how far you've got through it 3 and adding it to your Favorites. 4


Shut Up & Sit Down
Filter
Unplayed
1
2
3
4
Downloaded
Not downloaded
Has media
Is favorite
CANCEL
CONFIRM

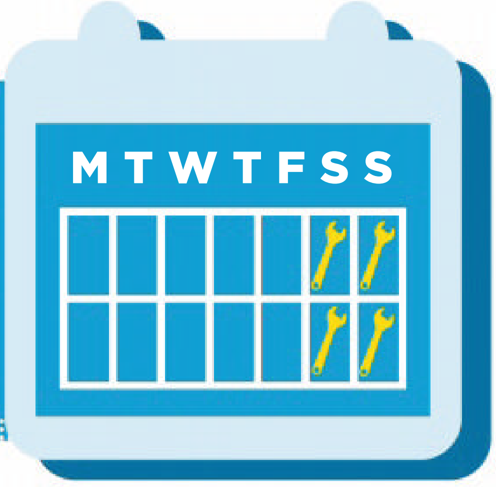
5 Back on the subscription page, you can filter the list of episodes. Tap Search to find a particular show to listen to, 1 filter out episodes based on certain criteria, 2 select more than one episode at a time (useful for mass deletion) 3 and refresh the list. 4


Queue
Episodes
Subscriptions
Downloads
Playback history
Add Podcast
Queue
1
Episodes
2
Subscriptions
Settings
3
Settings

6 From the homepage, you can access all your subscriptions by tapping the menu button. Here, you can jump to the various different options for accessing your podcasts, such as episodes you haven't heard yet, 1 or skip straight back to your subscriptions. 2 Tap Settings 3 for more options for organising, downloading and listening to your podcasts.

Weekend Project

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



How to...

Play old games on your Windows 10 PC

Wayne Williams delves into his gaming archives to find classic titles that he can still play on his modern PC

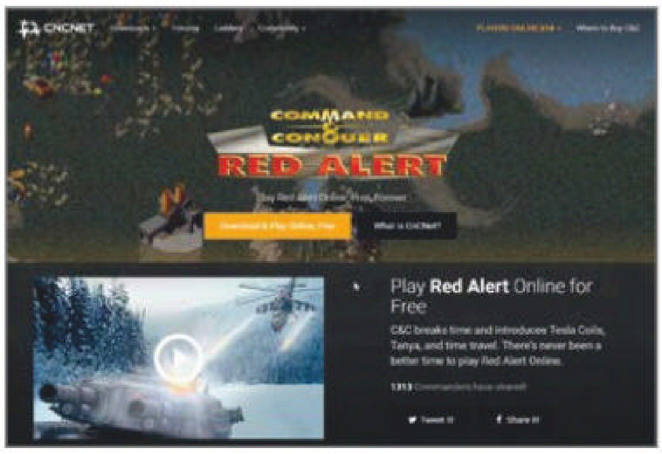
It's fun to revisit your youth from time to time, listening to old songs you've not heard in years or sitting back to watch a film you vividly recall going to see at the cinema. Playing old games that you used to enjoy but haven't thought about in a long time can be equally rewarding, giving you a chance to complete a title you always meant to go back to or unlocking long dormant skills, such as remembering how to rocket-jump in the original Quake. Sadly, firing up an old PC game isn't always as straightforward as you might expect, and there's no guarantee it will run on modern hardware or in Windows 10. But where there's a will to play old games, there's a way, as we'll show you in this issue's Weekend Project.

Where to get old games

You may have a pile of old games gathering dust in the loft or the garage that you can use but, failing that, you can pick up old titles from charity shops, car boot sales or eBay.

Some publishers have released old titles as freeware so, if you missed them at the time, you can catch up for free. Wikipedia has a comprehensive list of once commercial games that are now free at bit.ly/freew488.

There are some true classics on this list, including Command & Conquer: Red Alert (bit.ly/redal488), StarCraft (bit.ly/starcr488), Elder Scrolls II: Daggerfall (bit.ly/dagg488), OpenTTD (an open source version of Transport Tycoon Deluxe at www.openttd.org)



Play **Red Alert** Online for Free

C&C breaks time and introduces Tesla Coils, Tanya, and time travel. There's never been a better time to play Red Alert Online.

Command & Conquer: Red Alert is a great game you can play online for free and Beneath a Steel Sky (bit.ly/beneath488).

Run games in Admin mode

If you manage to install an old Windows game but can't get it to start, try running it in Administrator mode. Some titles require permissions, which the less security-minded XP was happy to grant, but Windows 10 isn't as relaxed and its standard mode has more restrictions in place. To get around this, try right-clicking the program's executable and selecting 'Run as administrator'.

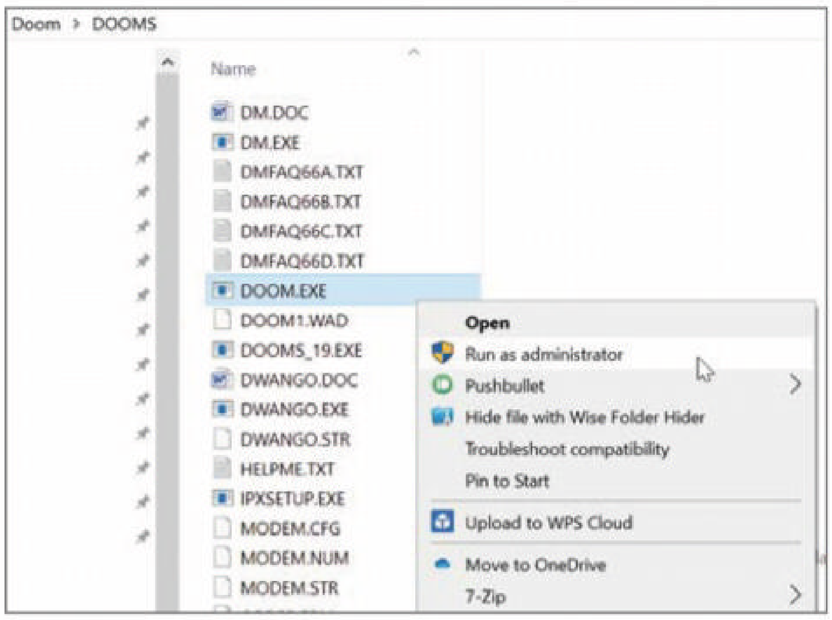
If that doesn't work, try compatibility mode (follow our Mini Workshop, below). You can also play DOS games in a special emulator called DOSBox – we show you how to set this up on page 61.

If you want some games to play in it, try the huge collection available for free from Major Geeks at bit.ly/dosgam488.

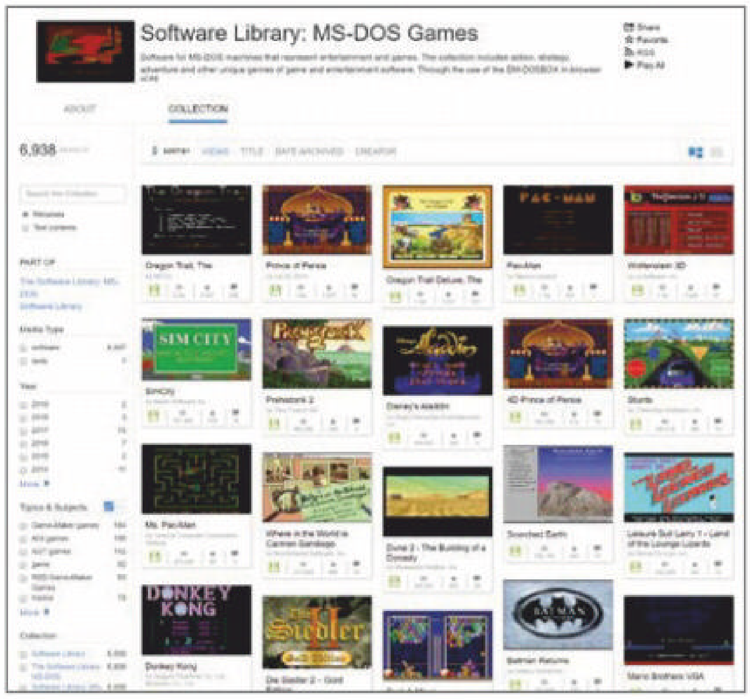
Community patches

If you manage to get an old game running in Windows 10, you may be shocked by how poor the graphics and gameplay seem in comparison to modern titles. Don't worry, other people have spotted this too and, if a game was or still is popular enough, someone may have produced a patch for it that unlocks modern graphics capabilities, increasing the resolution and more. You can check to see if your game has been improved by searching Google for `gamename unofficial patch` (replacing `gamename` with the actual name of the game) or `gamename community patch`. GOG (www.gog.com) and Steam (steamcommunity.com) both have active community forums that are worth exploring.

Fans of games such as Doom, Doom2, Heretic, Hexen and Strife can upgrade an old version to the latest release at DoomWorld (bit.ly/doom488).


Doom > DOOMS
Name
DM.DOC
DM.EXE
DMFAQ66A.TXT
DMFAQ66B.TXT
DMFAQ66C.TXT
DMFAQ66D.TXT
DOOM.EXE
DOOM1.WAD
DOOMS_19.EXE
DWANGO.DOC
DWANGO.EXE
DWANGO.STR
HELPME.TXT
IPXSETUP.EXE
MODEM.CFG
MODEM.NUM
MODEM.STR
Open
Run as administrator
Pushbullet
Hide file with Wise Folder Hider
Troubleshoot compatibility
Pin to Start
Upload to WPS Cloud
Move to OneDrive
7-Zip

Running a game in administrator mode might fix some problems you're having with it


Software Library: MS-DOS Games
ABOUT
COLLECTION
6,938

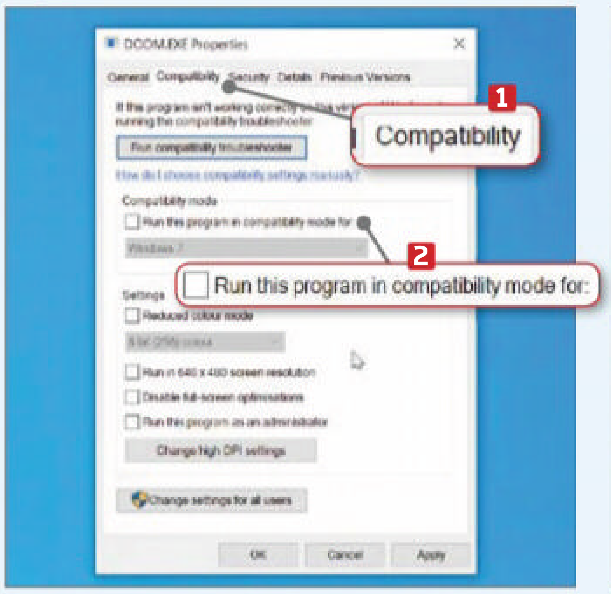
You can play loads of old PC games in your browser at the Internet Archive

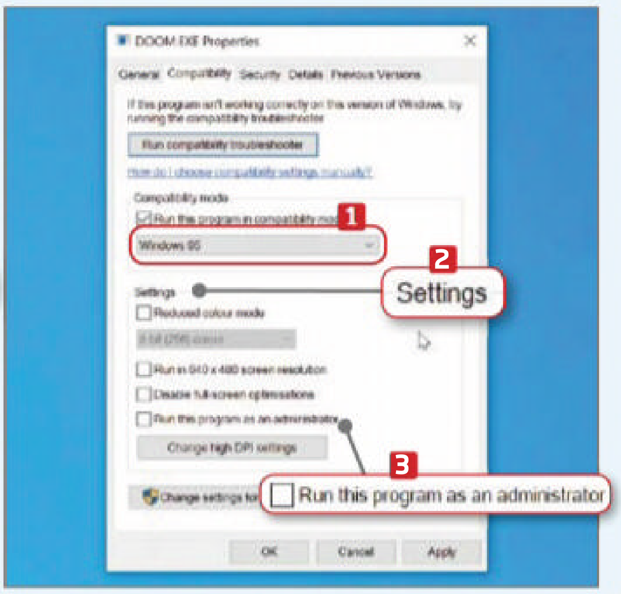
Play DOS games on the web

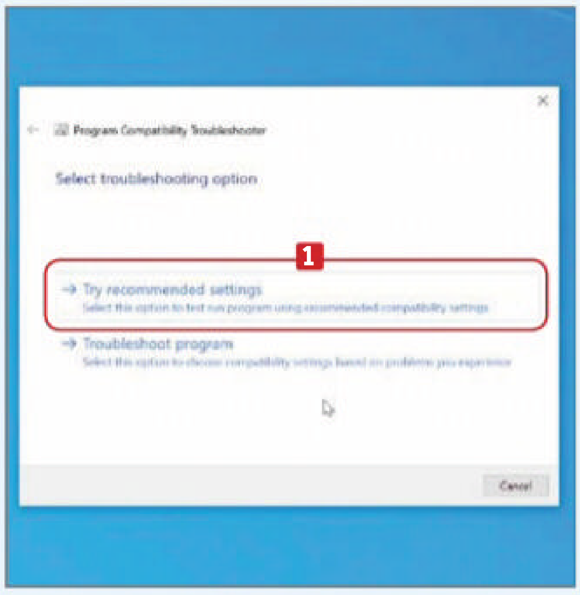
Back in 2015, the Internet Archive added 2,400 playable DOS games to its site at bit.ly/iados488. A few more titles followed and then, as we reported in last issue's What's New Online, the site has now introduced another 2,500 games to its library, bringing the total to just shy of 7,000. All of them can be played for free in your web browser.

The list of titles on offer is impressive and includes 90s classics such as Duke Nukem 3D, Prince of Persia, Sim City, Championship Manager, Eye of the Beholder, The Incredible Machine, Wolfenstein 3D, The Curse of Monkey Island and Microsoft Flight Simulator. Most of the games play without any

MINI WORKSHOP | Run old games in compatibility mode


DOOM.EXE Properties
General
Compatibility
Security
Details
Previous Versions
1
Compatibility
Run compatibility troubleshooter
2
Run this program in compatibility mode for:
Settings
Reduced colour mode
Run in 640 x 480 screen resolution
Disable full-screen optimisations
Run this program as an administrator
Change high DPI settings
Change settings for all users
OK
Cancel
Apply


DOOM.EXE Properties
1
Windows 95
2
Settings
3
Run this program as an administrator
Change high DPI settings
OK
Cancel
Apply


Program Compatibility Troubleshooter
Select troubleshooting option
1
Try recommended settings
Troubleshoot program
Cancel

1 If a game won't run in Windows 10 and Admin mode doesn't fix this, try fooling the software into thinking it's running on an older operating system. Right-click the program's EXE file and select Properties. In the next window, click the Compatibility tab. 1 Tick the box next to 'Run this program in compatibility mode for'. 2

2 Click the drop-down menu underneath and you're presented with a list of past Windows versions, from Windows 95 to Windows 8. 1 You can try any version but it's best to choose the operating system that your game would have originally run on. There are other settings available, too, 2 including Admin mode. 3

3 Apply and OK the change, then run your game again. If it still doesn't work, try another operating system or use the compatibility troubleshooter. Right-click the game's EXE file and select 'Troubleshoot compatibility'. You can try the recommended settings 1 or troubleshoot the game by answering various questions.

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	Provider	Package name	Monthly price	Contract length	Broadband speed	Allowance	First-year cost*
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2	Shell Energy	Shell Energy: Fast Broadband	£19.99	18 months	11Mbps avg. speed	∞ unlimited	£239.88
3	sky	Sky: Broadband Essential	£20.00 (£25 after 18 months)	18 months	11Mbps avg. speed	∞ unlimited *	£240.00
4	Virgin media	Virgin Media: Big Bundle + Fibre Broadband + Weekend Calls	£33.00 (£54 after 12 months)	12 months	54Mbps avg. speed	∞ unlimited	£396.00

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Data supplied by www.broadbandgenie.co.uk. Correct as of 28 October 2019.

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Broadband Genie's helpline is powered by Simplify Digital, the Ofcom-accredited switching service

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

SNEAK PREVIEW!

Computer act!ve

- **DITCH YOUR ROUTER!** Why it's probably unsafe – and what to use instead
- **BEAT THE WARRANTY BOMBSHELL** Spot problems before your time runs out
- **WHO'S USING YOUR USB STICKS?** Clever hush-hush way to find out

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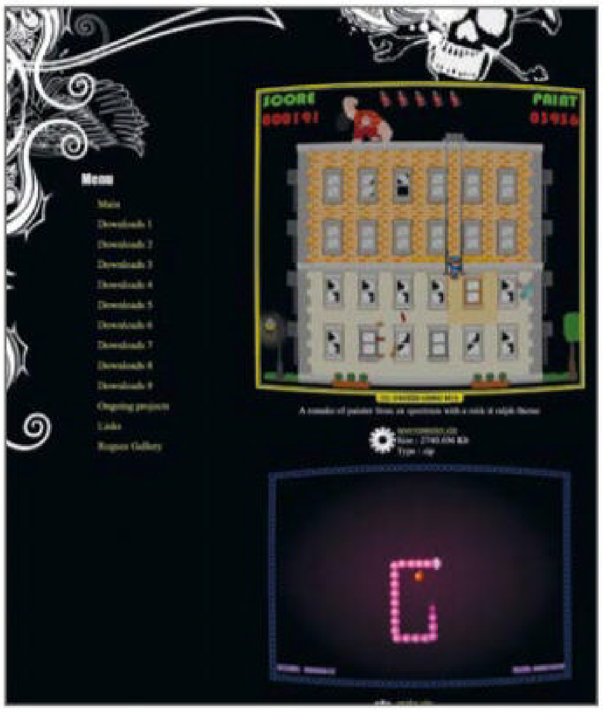
On sale Weds 20 Nov

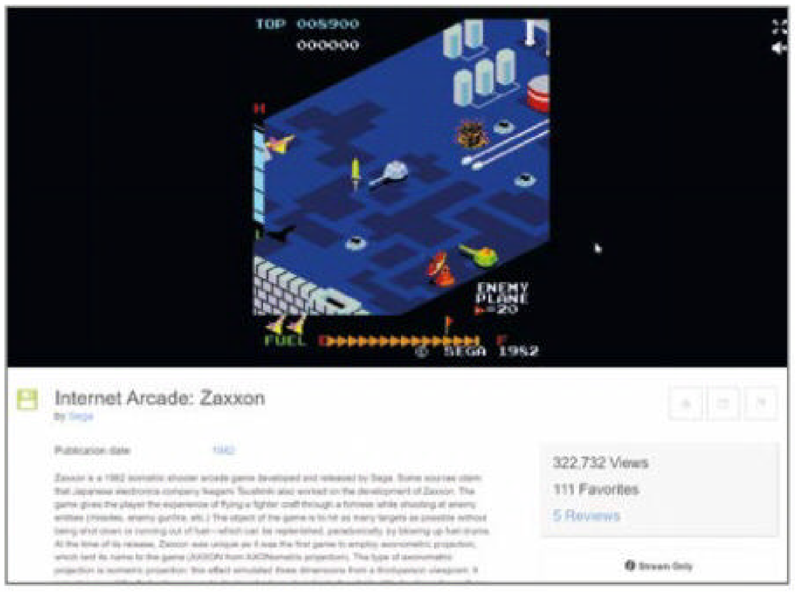
issues but some have a few glitches and may run a little slow. Not all the games come with a manual so you may need to do some research on the web to find out how to play them.

Emulators and remakes

There are several ways to enjoy non-PC games – one is to use an emulator to play the originals, or you can opt for a remake instead. There are emulators for all past systems, from the ZX Spectrum and Commodore 64 to the PlayStation, and the games that run on them come in the form of ROMs, which you can find with the help of Google, though downloading and playing a game you never bought in the first place is understandably frowned upon by the games publishers.


SCORE
000191
PAINT
01956
Menu
Main
Downloads 1
Downloads 2
Downloads 3
Downloads 4
Downloads 5
Downloads 6
Downloads 7
Downloads 8
Downloads 9
Ongoing projects
Links
Rogues Gallery

Crozza Remakes offers a large selection of classic games you can play on Windows 10


TOP 005900
000000
ENEMY
PLANE
20
FUEL
© SEGA 1982
Internet Arcade: Zaxxon
by Sega
Publication date
1982
322,732 Views
111 Favorites
5 Reviews
Stream Only

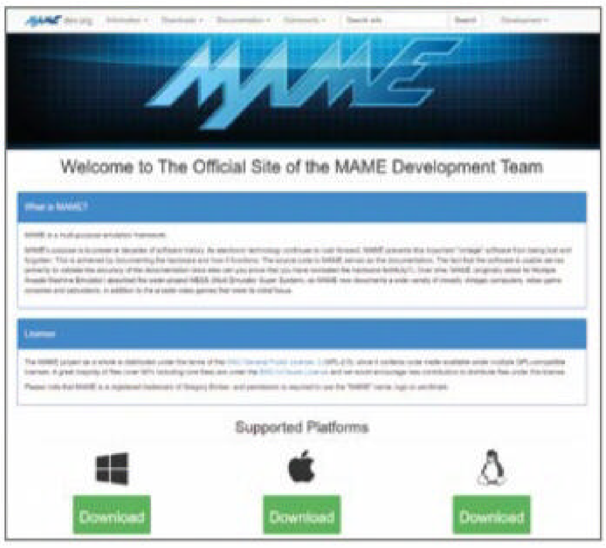
Internet Archive's Internet Arcade lets you play games such as Zaxxon in your browser

While remakes offer a simpler way to enjoy past games – you just download and install them – they aren't always faithful copies. A lot of remakes will "improve" on the graphics and sound, and add different elements to the game play. We're a big fan of Crozza Remakes (bit.ly/croz488) which has a lot of excellent modern versions of classic games, such as Asteroids, Manic Miner, Donkey Kong, Pacman and Mario Bros.

Play old arcade games

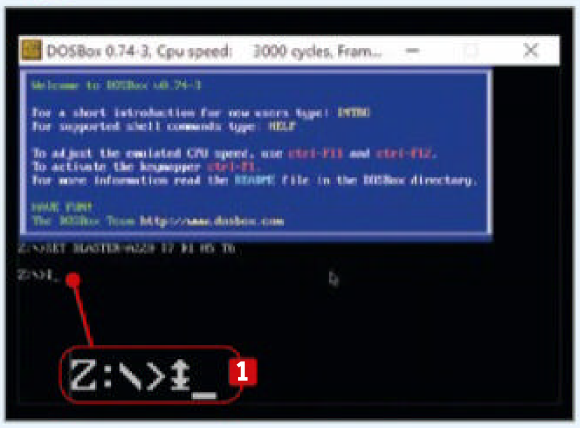
You can transform your PC into an arcade machine that plays all the old classics using Multiple Arcade Machine Emulator, or MAME for short (www.mamedev.org). It's very easy to use – just unzip the program to a folder on your hard drive and add the games you want to play to MAME's Roms directory. The MAME site has a collection of free legal ROMs at mamedev.org/roms but you're unlikely to be familiar with any of them. If you want to play the classic titles, you'll need to search elsewhere. When you run the emulator, it lists all the installed games available to play and you can choose the one you want.

If you don't want to go to the hassle of installing an emulator and finding ROMs for it, you can also try the Internet Archive's Internet Arcade (bit.ly/intarc488), which contains over 1,700 arcade games you can play in your browser, including Defender, Paperboy, Q*Bert, Tron, Marble Madness and Tetris. You can play them in a window or in full-screen mode. ■

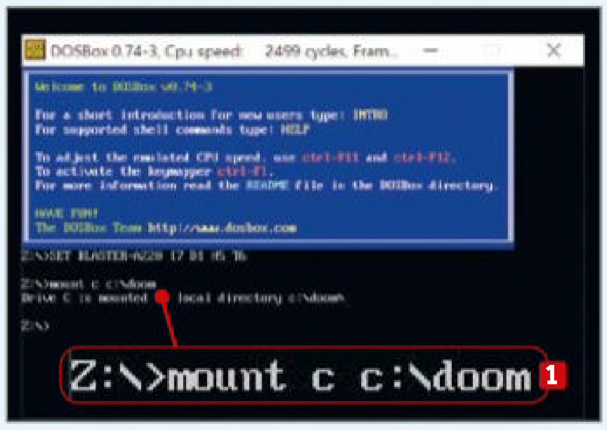

MAME
Welcome to The Official Site of the MAME Development Team
What is MAME?
License
Supported Platforms
Download
Download
Download

MAME is the best known emulator for running old arcade games

MINI WORKSHOP | Get old PC games running using DOSBox

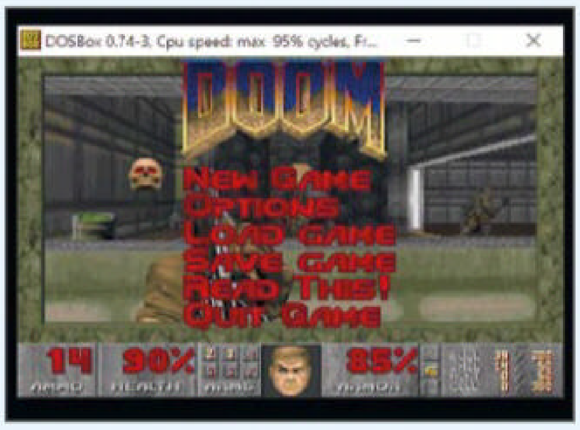

DOSBox 0.74-3, Cpu speed: 3000 cycles, Fram...
Z:\>‡_
1

1 Trying to get old games that were written for MS-DOS to run on a modern PC can be frustrating. DOSBox (www.dosbox.com) software aims to emulate DOS and opens in a familiar looking black window, similar to a Command prompt, **1** with instructions on how to run the software.


DOSBox 0.74-3, Cpu speed: 2499 cycles, Fram...
1

```
Z:\>mount c c:\doom
```

2 Either copy the original game to your hard drive, insert the CD or download a file from www.dosgamesarchive.com. Mount the folder the game is in by typing `mount` in the DOS box, followed by the drive letter and directory. For example, `mount c c:\game` makes the Game directory your new C: drive. **1**


DOSBox 0.74-3, Cpu speed: max 95% cycles, Fr...
DOOM
NEW GAME
OPTIONS
LOAD GAME
SAVE GAME
READ THIS!
QUIT GAME
14
90%
85%
AMMO
HEALTH
ARMS
ARMOR

3 Type `c:` to switch to that drive or game, then `dir` to see the files. You should now be able to install or run your game. Switch to full screen by pressing Alt+Enter. Edit the configuration file to change settings and speed up or slow down a game by using Ctrl+F11 or Ctrl+F12.

NEXT ISSUE **How To...** Make any mobile device more accessible

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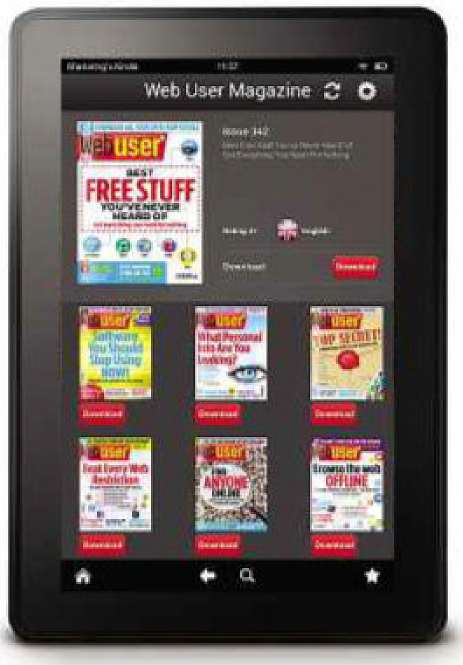
STEP 2 Choose your subscription term and tap twice on the 'price' box

STEP 3 Choose whether to create an optional PixelMags account

STEP 4 Enter your Apple ID password to confirm

Download on the App Store

...on a Kindle Fire



Kindle Fire subscriptions come with a FREE one month trial.

STEP 1 Tap 'Free Trial Subscription' in the ***Web user*** library

STEP 2 Chose your subscription term from the drop down menu on the popup that appears

STEP 3 Tap 'Subscribe'

available on kindle fire

...via the Zinio app

STEP 1 Search for ***Web user*** via the search box in the Shop tab

STEP 2 Tap the 'Subscribe' button

STEP 3 Choose whether to create an optional Zinio account

STEP 4 Enter your Apple ID password to confirm

Subscribe to *Web user* today and save on the single issue price

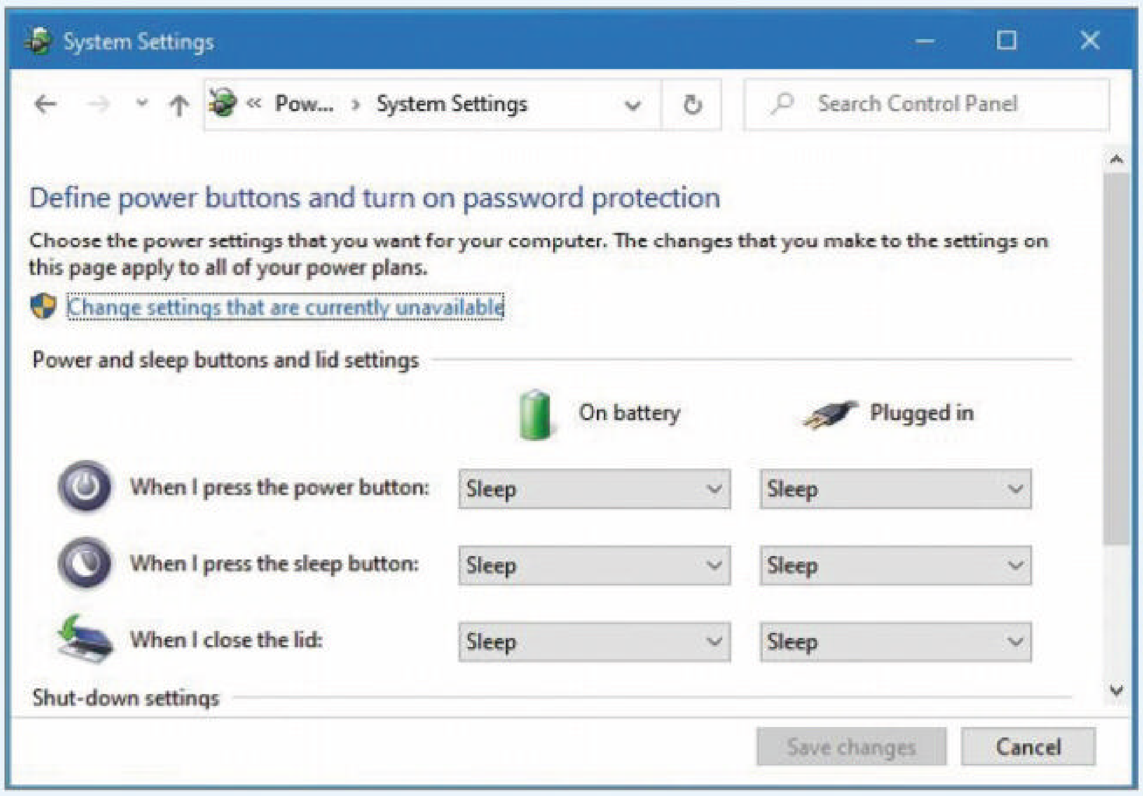
Web User Masterclass

Speed up Windows startup to get your PC working faster

Use Windows' Sleep mode to wake your PC faster

The most obvious way to reduce the time spent waiting for your PC to start up is to avoid shutting it down in the first place. Instead, put it into Sleep mode. Windows resumes from sleep in a fraction of the time it takes to start from cold. To enter Sleep mode, click Start, Power, Sleep.

That's all very simple but it could be even simpler. Open the Control Panel and click Power Options followed by 'Choose what the power buttons do'. The options may vary depending on whether you have a desktop or laptop PC, because desktops don't have a lid you can close to shut them down. Set all options to Sleep. Now you can press the power button to send your PC to sleep. It's like putting your TV into standby and uses very little power. Tap a key, the mouse or the trackpad and the PC starts up in seconds instead of minutes.



Define power buttons and turn on password protection

Choose the power settings that you want for your computer. The changes that you make to the settings on this page apply to all of your power plans.

Change settings that are currently unavailable

Power and sleep buttons and lid settings

	On battery	Plugged in
When I press the power button:	Sleep	Sleep
When I press the sleep button:	Sleep	Sleep
When I close the lid:	Sleep	Sleep

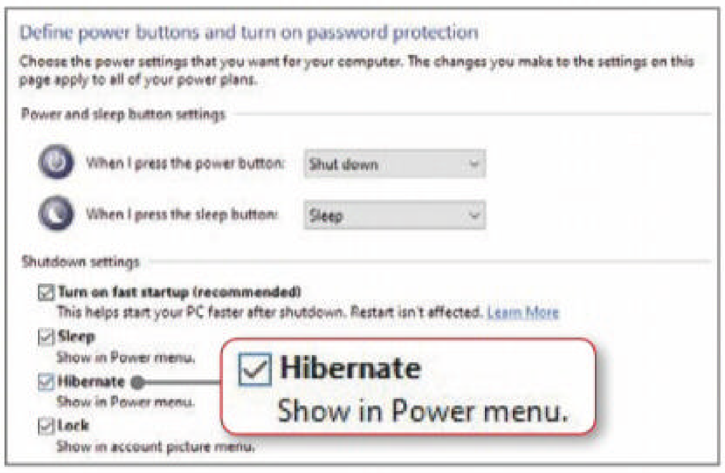
Shut-down settings

Start your PC quickly by choosing Sleep mode instead of shutting down

Hibernate for fast startup

Computers use a small amount of power while in Sleep mode, which means a laptop's battery will eventually run out if left in that state for a long time. It may take a week or more, and the battery will lose only a few per cent of power overnight, but you may not want even this tiny amount of drain. If that's the case, use Hibernate instead of Sleep.

Many computers support Hibernate, which is very similar to Sleep mode but without the power drain. In Hibernate mode, Windows saves a snapshot of the current state of the computer to the hard drive before powering off. When you power the PC back on, it loads the snapshot and you can continue working on whatever you had open when you finished last time. Resuming from Hibernate is still faster than a cold start.



Define power buttons and turn on password protection

Choose the power settings that you want for your computer. The changes you make to the settings on this page apply to all of your power plans.

Power and sleep button settings

When I press the power button: Shut down

When I press the sleep button: Sleep

Shutdown settings

☑ Turn on fast startup (recommended)
This helps start your PC faster after shutdown. Restart isn't affected. Learn More

☑ Sleep
Show in Power menu.

☑ Hibernate
Show in Power menu.

☑ Lock
Show in account picture menu.

Set Windows to enter hibernate mode if you worry that sleep mode might drain your battery

Open the Control Panel and click Power Options, then 'Choose what the power buttons do'. Click the link labelled 'Change settings that are currently unavailable'. Enable the Hibernate option, then restart Windows. Now when you click Start, Power, you'll see a new Hibernate option on the menu. Use this instead of shutting down your PC or using Sleep mode.

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.

Stop background apps

If you have a lot of programs running in the background, they may start when Windows starts, which can use up valuable resources and cause bottlenecks on your PC. Open Settings, Privacy, 'Background apps' and use the switches to disable any you don't need. Also check the settings or preferences for all the software on your computer and make sure none of it is set to start automatically with Windows.

Install an SSD

One of the most effective ways to make Windows start up faster is to use a solid-state drive (SSD) instead of a mechanical hard drive. If you're planning to treat yourself to a new computer, make sure it comes with an SSD installed, because it makes a huge difference. An SSD enables a PC to start up in around a tenth of the time it takes with a hard drive.

Use portable applications

Windows startup times get longer as your PC gets older. One of the main reasons is that PCs tend to become stuffed with software, which drains resources and slows Windows down.

The solution is to install as little software as possible and to use portable or web-based apps instead. For example, use LibreOffice portable (bit.ly/libop488) rather than installing it. Also use Microsoft Office web apps such as Word and Excel at onedrive.live.com instead of installing Office, and GIMP portable (bit.ly/gimp488) and Audacity portable (bit.ly/aud488) to edit photos and audio files.

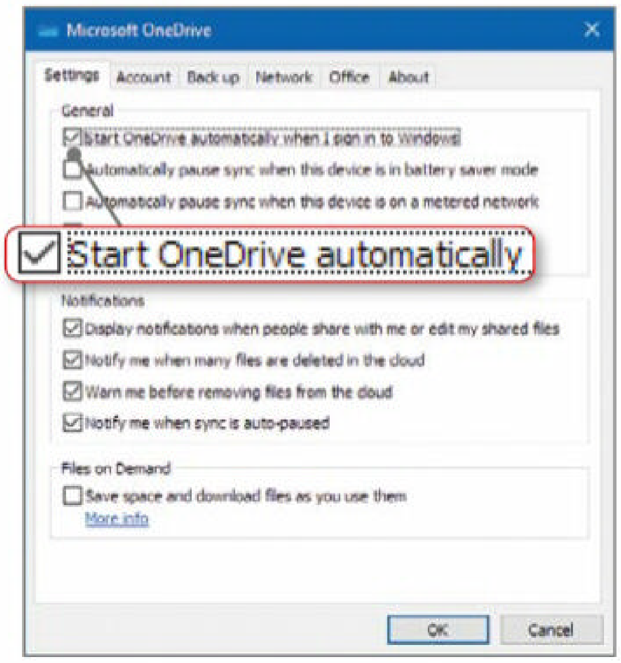
Not all software developers make portable versions of their apps, and some can be hard to find, but there are hundreds of apps to explore at portableapps.com/apps.

Delay online storage tools

Cloud-storage services such as OneDrive, Google Drive and Dropbox are very useful but they start automatically with Windows and take a few minutes to sync. The first thing they do is scan your hard drive for files and compare them with the online versions. This taxes the processor, hard drive and memory, slowing Windows startup.

For a faster startup, stop your cloud services running automatically and run them manually when you need them. With OneDrive, for example, right-click the cloud icon in the notification area and select Settings. Click the Startup tab and remove the tick next to 'Start OneDrive automatically when I sign into Windows'. When you need it, click Start, type `OneDrive` and click to run it.

Google Drive and Dropbox are similar. Right-click the taskbar icon and go to settings or preferences, where you can choose to let them start with Windows or not. Disable this for maximum speed.



General

☑ Start OneDrive automatically when I sign in to Windows

☐ Automatically pause sync when this device is in battery saver mode

☐ Automatically pause sync when this device is on a metered network

☑ Start OneDrive automatically

Notifications

☑ Display notifications when people share with me or edit my shared files

☑ Notify me when many files are deleted in the cloud

☑ Warn me before removing files from the cloud

☑ Notify me when sync is auto-paused

Files on Demand

☐ Save space and download files as you use them

More info

Don't let online storage start with Windows if you want a speedier startup

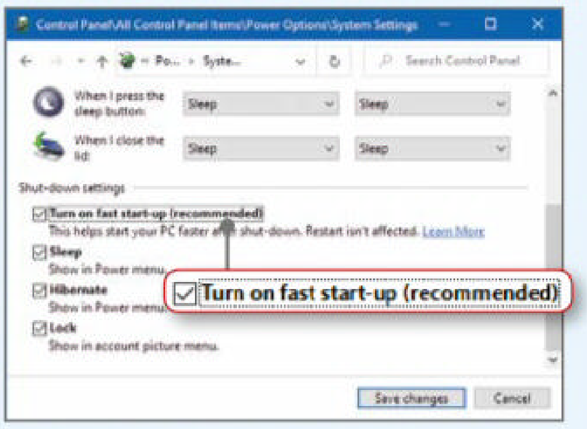
TAKE IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL

More advanced tips for when you're feeling brave

Enable fast startup

You can enable fast startup in Windows 10 but this has its pros and cons. To activate it, open Control Panel, Power Options, 'Choose what the power buttons do', then click 'Change settings that are currently unavailable'. Tick the box 'Turn on fast startup (recommended)'. If you don't have this option, you can't change it.

When fast startup is enabled, the PC starts quickly, as you'd expect. This is because when it shuts down, it partially logs you out of your account and then hibernates. It starts up faster next time because many of the items Windows needs are loaded already.


Control Panel\All Control Panel Items\Power Options\System Settings
Po...
Syste...
Search Control Panel
Save changes
Cancel

When I press the sleep button: Sleep | Sleep

When I close the lid: Sleep | Sleep

Shut-down settings

☑ Turn on fast start-up (recommended)
This helps start your PC faster after shut-down. Restart isn't affected. Learn More

☑ Sleep
Show in Power menu.

☑ Hibernate
Show in Power menu.

☑ Lock
Show in account picture menu.

☑ Turn on fast start-up (recommended)

Fast startup makes booting quicker, but boot features are trickier to access

If you like to tweak BIOS settings, boot from other devices or use other boot features, note that those options are difficult or impossible to access with fast startup enabled. What's more, you can no longer shut down your PC and switch it on again to fix any problems you're having. Click Start, Power, Restart instead.

Clear the Start-up folder

If you use Windows 7 or earlier, you'll see a Start-up folder in the Start, All Programs menu. Windows 10 hides this, but if you enable 'Hidden items' on Explorer's View menu, it's in: C:\ProgramData\Microsoft\Windows\Start Menu\Programs\StartUp. Open it and check it for programs, because anything that appears there runs automatically when Windows starts. Nothing in it is essential, so you can click and drag any programs to the desktop and then run them manually if you ever need them.

Adding a shortcut to a program in this folder is an easy way to ensure that it starts with Windows. Find a program and copy it to the Start-up folder to run it automatically. Alternatively, right-click a program and select 'Send to', then 'Desktop (create shortcut)' and drag the shortcut to the Startup folder.

Disable Startup apps

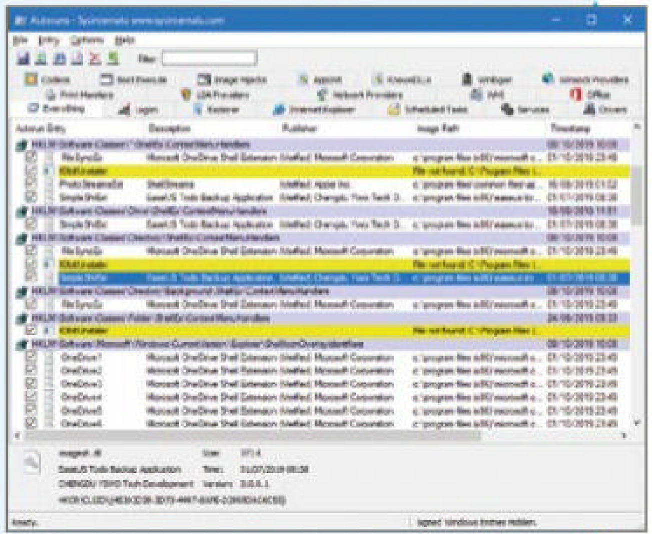
Windows 10 stores startup programs in the Settings app. Open it and choose Apps, Start-up. In Windows 7, press Windows+R, enter `msconfig` and select the Startup tab.

Here you'll see a list of apps that start with Windows, as well as the impact they have on your PC's startup time. Nothing here is essential to Windows, so you can disable anything you don't need.

Another way to access the same list is to right-click the taskbar, select Task Manager and Click the Start-up tab. You can see each item's CPU usage and disk activity here, too. If you can't see these columns, right-click a column header and add them. The figures show which startup apps use most resources, and therefore which will deliver the biggest startup speed boost when disabled.

The best tool for tweaking Windows startup is Autoruns (bit.ly/autor488). Unzip it, right-click autoruns.exe and run it as an administrator. Right-click any 'file not found' items (in yellow) and delete them so that Windows doesn't waste time looking for them during startup. Red items are unknown but may be essential, so don't just delete them.

Check each entry for obvious signs that the item is unnecessary, perhaps because it belongs to software you've uninstalled or never use. If you're not sure what something is, leave it alone because you can break Windows if you delete the wrong things.



Autoruns shows all items that load with Windows – don't delete anything vital

Ask the Expert

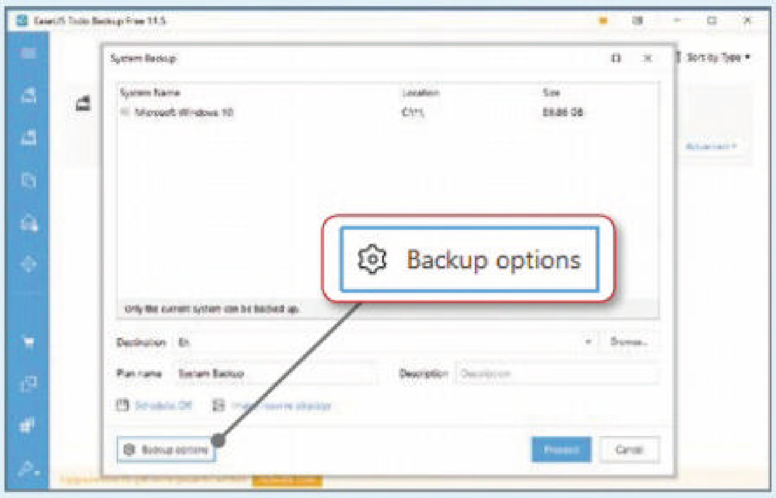
Roland Waddilove, computer programmer and PC journalist since 1981, answers all your technical questions. Email us for help at webuser@webuser.co.uk

SOFTWARE

Reduce the size of your backups

Q EaseUS Todo Backup tells me that my system backup will be 304GB. How can this be true when my C: drive is 304GB in total and has 190GB free? The Windows folder takes up just 22GB. Surely a system backup shouldn't copy the entire C: drive including empty space. What's going on here?

John Perkins, via email



If a backup seems too large, check Options to see which type your using

A There are different types of backup. File backups copy only your files, while clone-type backups make an exact copy of the hard drive and intelligent backups copy only the parts of the hard drive that are in use.

Todo Backup is telling you that the backup will be the same size as the disk, which implies that it's configured to clone the drive, creating an exact copy. This is useful if you need to replace a hard drive, but a waste of space if all you need is a data backup.

To check which type of backup you're running, choose System Backup, then click Backup Options, Advanced and make sure 'Sector by sector backup' isn't ticked. In the Space section of the backup options, make sure normal or medium compression is selected.

NETWORKING

Get your network back

Q My household has a desktop PC, two iPads, two iPhones and, until recently, an HP laptop. However, a message now appears on the laptop telling me that the Ethernet connection doesn't have a valid IP configuration.

Everything has been working perfectly well for years, and both PCs are running genuine Windows 10 software. They have both succumbed to numerous updates since Windows 10 first appeared. Now, despite every effort, I can't connect the laptop to the internet.

I'm reluctant to reinstall Windows on the laptop because I'm not sure how up to date the backup is.

Sandy Cameron, via email

A A couple of things spring to mind, the first of which is to ask why you are using Ethernet instead of Wi-Fi. Although routers tend to come with one or more Ethernet ports, which means it's possible to connect a laptop using an Ethernet cable, most home networks use Wi-Fi. Perhaps Wi-Fi is disabled and Windows is trying to use Ethernet as an alternative, which is not set up.

Some laptops have a Wi-Fi on/off key, such as F12. If yours has one, turn it on, then open Windows 10 Settings, click Network & Internet and select Wi-Fi on the left. It should be turned on and you should see a link to show available networks. Click it to make sure the computer is connected to your home Wi-Fi network.

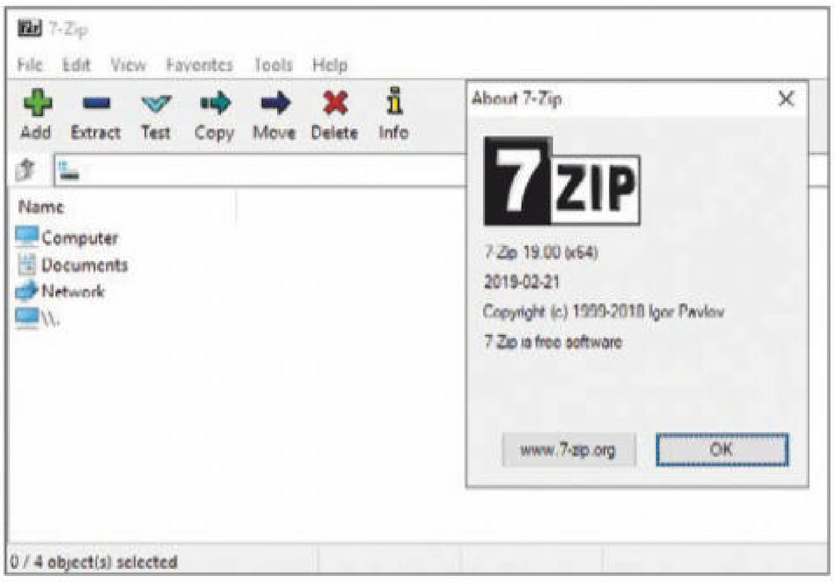
The other possibility is that it's an IP address problem. Every PC, phone and tablet on your network must have a unique IP address, such as 192.168.2.10. If a device doesn't have one, or two devices try to use the same address, problems can occur. This can happen if you set IP addresses manually, so it's better to use automatic settings.

GENERAL PC

Set up Explorer associations

Q When I try to access my Windows 7 Downloads file, I receive the following message: "Explorer.EXE. This file does not have a program associated with it for performing this action. Please install a program or, if one is already installed, create an association in the Default Programs control panel". How do I perform these actions?

Derek Wellings, via email



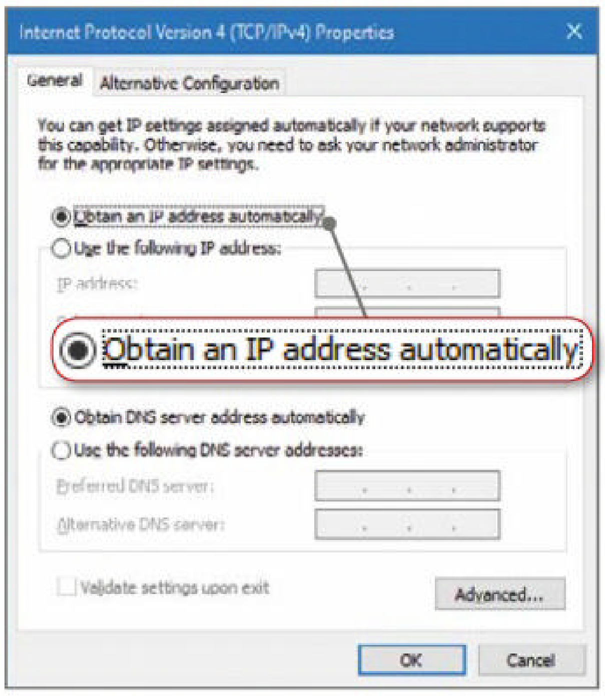
7-Zip 19.00 (x64)
2019-02-21
Copyright (c) 1999-2018 Igor Pavlov
7-Zip is free software

0 / 4 object(s) selected

Windows won't recognise certain types of file unless it has a compatible program installed – such as 7-Zip for '.7z' files

A We're not sure what's going on here. Do you mean you can't access the Downloads folder, or a particular file in the folder? It sounds as if you've downloaded a file that has an extension Windows doesn't recognise.

For example, if you downloaded a '.7z' file and double-clicked it in Explorer, an error message would appear saying that no program is associated with it. The fix is to install a program that can open .7z files, such as 7-Zip (www.7-zip.org). The program will tell Windows to associate that type of file with it when it installs.



Internet Protocol Version 4 (TCP/IPv4) Properties

General | Alternative Configuration

You can get IP settings assigned automatically if your network supports this capability. Otherwise, you need to ask your network administrator for the appropriate IP settings.

● Obtain an IP address automatically
○ Use the following IP address:
IP address:

● Obtain DNS server address automatically
○ Use the following DNS server addresses:
Preferred DNS server:
Alternative DNS server:

☐ Validate settings upon exit

It's usually best to let your networking hardware work out its own IP address

Open the Control Panel, then 'Network and Sharing Centre'. Here, you should see an active network with a Connections link on the right. Click it, then click the Properties button in the window that appears. In the next window, make sure Internet Protocol Version 4 is enabled. Double-click it and check that 'Obtain an IP address automatically' and 'Obtain DNS server address automatically' are both selected.

SECURITY

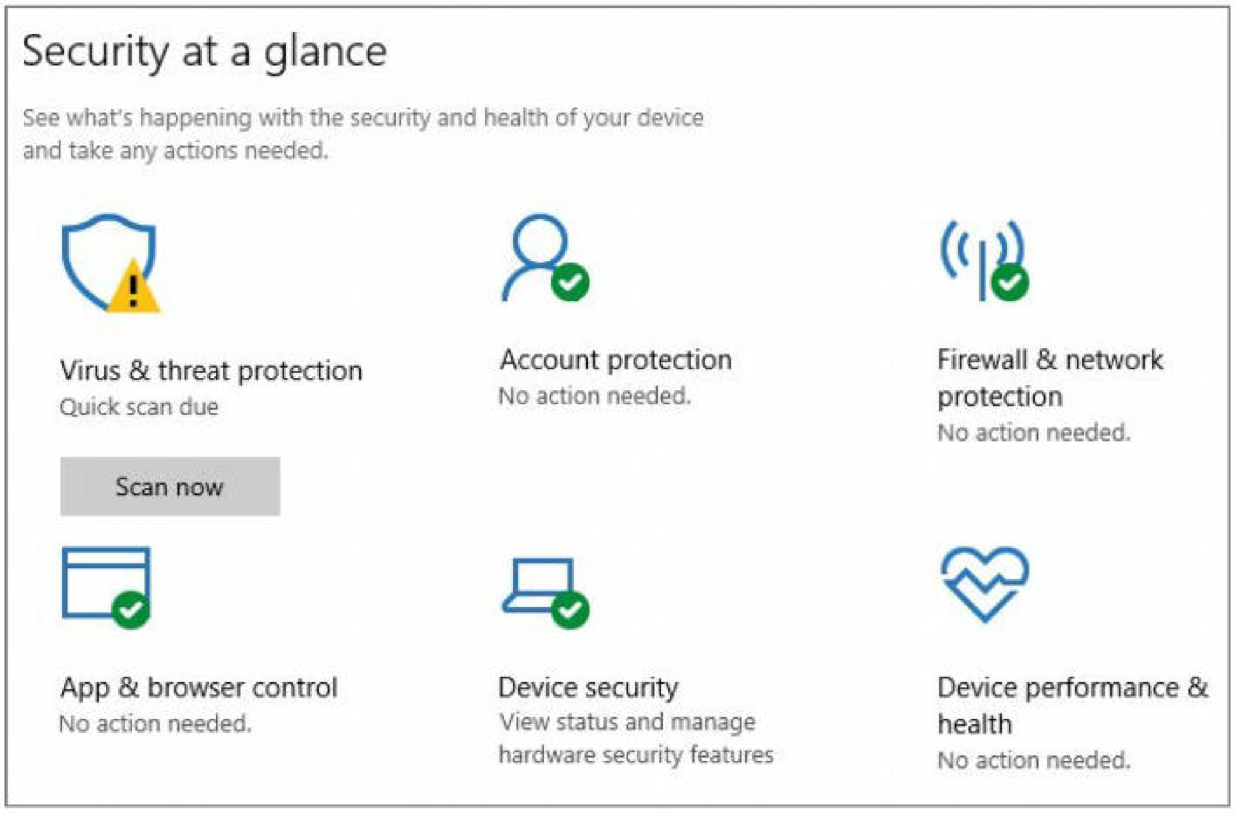
Choose appropriate security

Q I have always purchased security software and updated it regularly. Now some people claim that Windows Defender is all you need, while others say it's rubbish and that you should get a security suite – usually followed by the name of their favourite tool. Am I wasting my money with security software subscriptions?

S Harris, via email

A There isn't a simple yes or no answer to this. Some people find that Windows Defender is all they need, while others rely on free or purchased security software. Windows Defender was indeed a very poor option when Microsoft first introduced it, but it has steadily improved over the years and is now at a point where you can safely use it as your sole security option. It's very good at blocking malware.

That's not to say it's perfect, however, and third-party security suites offer much more than Windows Defender. For example, some security suites can keep an eye on what you or your family members type into web pages and block or warn you when any sensitive information is entered. It may also be possible to lock or erase the computer remotely if it's stolen. Other common tools include app locks, credit card storage, secure shopping and search features, a VPN, password management, assorted utilities, security apps for your phone and so on.



Security at a glance

See what's happening with the security and health of your device and take any actions needed.

Virus & threat protection
Quick scan due

Account protection
No action needed.

Firewall & network protection
No action needed.

App & browser control
No action needed.

Device security
View status and manage hardware security features

Device performance & health
No action needed.

Windows Security is fine for some, but paid-for software offers more features

The question you need to ask yourself is how much do you need these extras? Windows Defender simply protects your PC from viruses and spyware. It does that well, but threats can come from other directions, too. You may find that a paid-for security suite offers greater peace of mind if you'd rather just install the software and forget about it.

MACOS

Don't automatically update to Catalina

Q A couple of years ago, I decided to invest in a beautiful 27in iMac. It looks great, but now every time Apple updates the operating system, something disappointing happens. The recent Catalina 64-bit fiasco has been the worst yet.

My genealogy software stopped working because it's 32-bit, and there's currently no 64-bit version. I bought some alternative software that gives me

HARDWARE

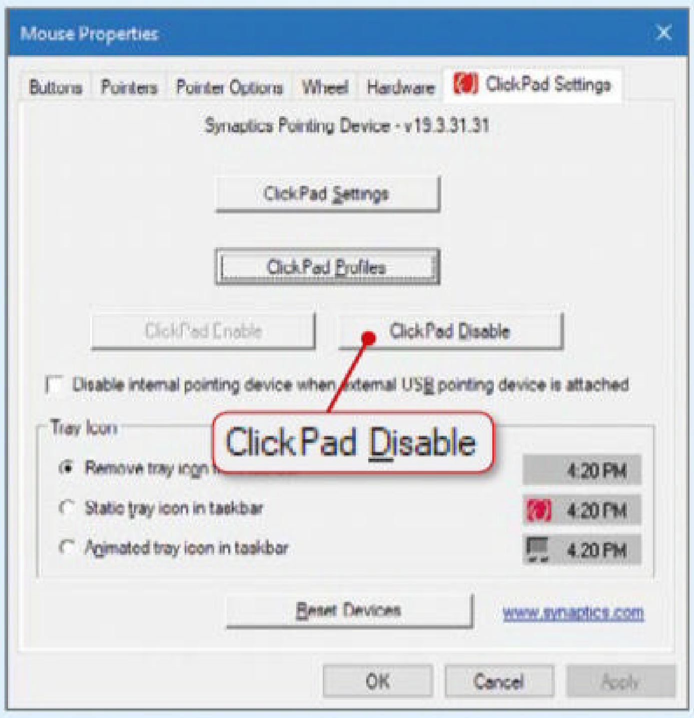
Disable laptop touchpad

Q My laptop has a touchpad, but because I tend to work at a desk, I prefer to use a wireless mouse. However, I sometimes brush my hand against the touchpad while typing, which moves the mouse pointer so I end up typing or clicking in the wrong place. How do I disable the touchpad?

Mark Thompson, via email

A Is there any software installed on your laptop that lets you configure the touchpad or change its settings? If not, open Control Panel and click Mouse. The Mouse Properties window may include a touchpad tab, where you can configure its settings. Check this for a Disable option.

If you can't see any such option in the Control Panel, open the Windows 10 Settings app and click Devices. Select Touchpad and set the sensitivity to the lowest setting. It should now ignore accidental touches.



Mouse Properties

Buttons | Pointers | Pointer Options | Wheel | Hardware | ClickPad Settings

Synaptics Pointing Device - v19.3.31.31

☐ Disable internal pointing device when external USB pointing device is attached

Tray Icon
● Remove tray icon
○ Static tray icon in taskbar
○ Animated tray icon in taskbar

Enable, disable or customise the touchpad using Mouse Properties in the Control Panel access to my 30 years of research, but I'll need to check the 7,500-plus individuals manually after the transition. There's no 64-bit software for my scanner, either, and it's not even that old.

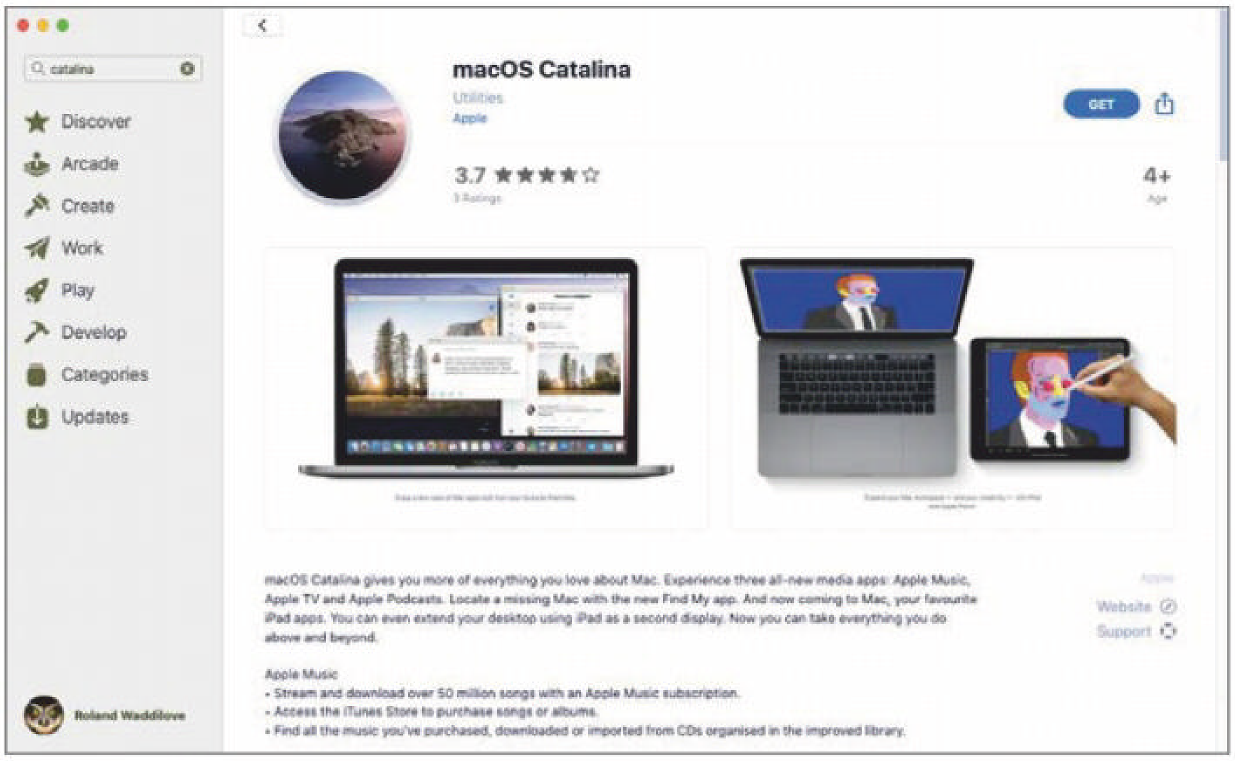
The biggest disappointment, however, is that Picasa doesn't work at all any more. I know that Google no longer supports it, but I've never found any software I like as much to replace it.

I have more than 50,000 photos, many of which I have scanned over the years, so they don't include any metadata. Some of them are from the 19th Century. I have saved these using filenames that include a date and the image number (for example, 20191013 – 001.jpg, which is the year, month, day and count number). They are all stored in a date-named folder structure on my hard drive.

Now I need to recover the face and geo tagging and the comments, and to sort the images by folder. Do you have any suggestions?

Dean Armstrong, via email

A Unlike previous versions of macOS, Catalina will not run 32-bit applications. There's no way of getting around this, so you have no choice but to use 64-bit software. It's too late now, but remember for next time that operating system upgrades are not compulsory, and you can keep using your current OS for as long as you like. Mojave was clearly your best option.



macOS Catalina gives you more of everything you love about Mac. Experience three all-new media apps: Apple Music, Apple TV and Apple Podcasts. Locate a missing Mac with the new Find My app. And now coming to Mac, your favourite iPad apps. You can even extend your desktop using iPad as a second display. Now you can take everything you do above and beyond.

Apple Music
- Stream and download over 50 million songs with an Apple Music subscription.
- Access the iTunes Store to purchase songs or albums.
- Find all the music you've purchased, downloaded or imported from CDs organised in the improved library.

Don't upgrade to macOS Catalina if you use 32-bit programs, because they won't work

Upgrading is always risky, so making a backup first is essential. SuperDuper (www.shirt-pocket.com) clones the Mac's internal drive to a USB drive that you can then use to boot it up (hold down Option after switching on). This lets you run your Mac as it was before you installed Catalina, so you can use apps that don't work with the update or restore your Mac and undo the upgrade.

Assuming you don't have a backup and can't restore Mojave, try Family Tree Maker (www.mackiev.com/ftm), Mac Family Tree 9 (from the Mac App Store) or Heredis 2019 World (also in the Mac App Store). All three are 64-bit programs that work in Catalina.

Have you imported your photos into Apple Photos? This supports face detection and geotagging, and you can even search the contents of photos. Type 'dog' into the search box, for example, and it shows all photos containing dogs. Google Photos is even better, and recognises people, places and objects in photos. Storage is free and unlimited for photos of up to 16 megapixels. Install Google Backup and Sync (bit.ly/gbs488) on your Mac to upload your photos automatically.

NETWORKING

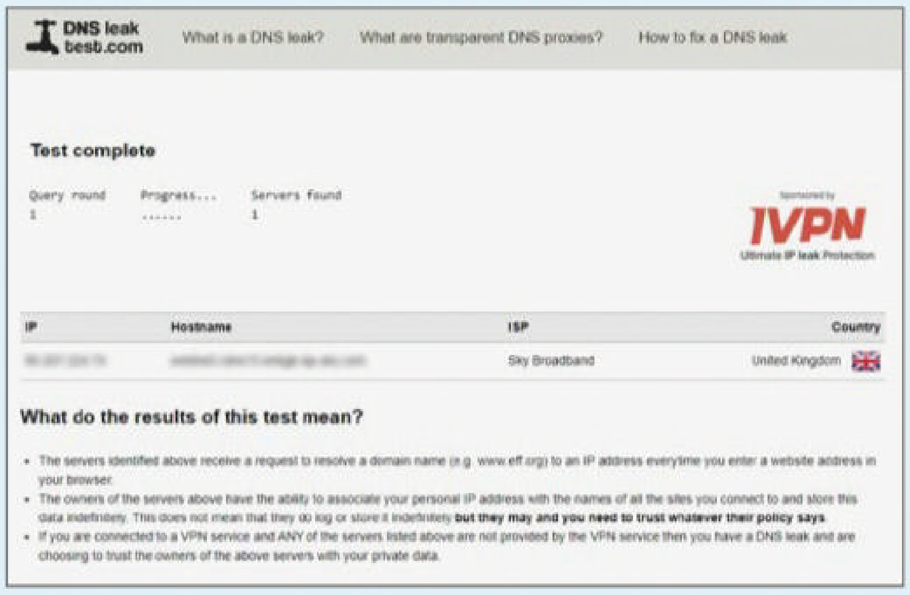
Stop DNS settings changing

Q I use Windows 10 and Linux Mint on separate laptops, and have set up Cloudflare (1.1.1.1 and 1.0.0.1) as the DNS server on both. My Firefox and internet connection settings are identical on both computers.

When I occasionally run DNS Leak Test (dnsleaktest.com) on the Kaspersky-protected Windows laptop, nothing untoward crops up. However, after a few minutes online with the Linux Mint device, the DNS server changes from Cloudflare to Google.

I've checked the location of the Google IP address, and the server (74.125.47.12, six in total) appears to be operated by Google Translate, which is located in Brussels. I have never used this service, but that aside I can't understand how Google can presume it has the right to override my DNS settings.

Brian Lucas, via email



Test complete

```
Query round   Progress...   Servers found
1             ......        1
```

IP	Hostname	ISP	Country
[redacted]	[redacted]	Sky Broadband	United Kingdom

What do the results of this test mean?

- The servers identified above receive a request to resolve a domain name (e.g. www.eff.org) to an IP address everytime you enter a website address in your browser.
- The owners of the servers above have the ability to associate your personal IP address with the names of all the sites you connect to and store this data indefinitely. This does not mean that they do log or store it indefinitely **but they may and you need to trust whatever their policy says.**
- If you are connected to a VPN service and ANY of the servers listed above are not provided by the VPN service then you have a DNS leak and are choosing to trust the owners of the above servers with your private data.

Find out who's receiving your DNS requests with DNS Leak Test

A It's very unlikely that Google is overriding your network settings, unless you have installed a program that specifically does that. The IP address you mention does indeed belong to Google. Some reports we found said it wasn't a regular computer and one said it was Google Translate. It's very odd if dnsleaktest.com is reporting that you're using Google Translate as your DNS server.

We found some other Linux users who were experiencing unusual DNS behaviour, and they fixed the problem by opening /etc/NetworkManager/NetworkManager.conf and changing the line `dns=dnsmasq` to `#dns=dnsmasq`. This fix may work for you, too.

This fortnight Roland has been getting online insurance quotes because all his policies seem to expire at the same time

Readers' Helpdesk

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

SOFTWARE

Get up-to-date scanner software

Q I wonder if you and your team can offer advice on free or low-cost scanner software. I own an Epson Perfection 2480 Photo, but the manufacturer isn't providing a driver for Windows 10 64-bit, rendering the scanner useless. I have tried a couple of alternative drivers without success, including one that leaves a watermark that only disappears if you pay. My scanner only gets occasional use, so I can't justify buying a new one and the carbon footprint that involves.

Keith, via email

Bring your scanner back online

A Sorry you're having trouble with Epson's lack of support. For free scanner software, we'd recommend trying NAPS2 (www.naps2.com), which is free and open-source, so you shouldn't have to deal with any sneaky watermarks. There are some other things you could try to make sure your scanner is running properly – it's always worth checking drivers for older operating systems, such as the Windows 7 drivers, and some people have had success using drivers for similar scanner models. However, there's no guarantee that this will work.

You could also try scanning in Linux, since Epson still has a driver for your scanner for that operating system.

Steve Clark, Features Writer, Web User

READERS RESPOND

Back Issues disc winner
WebUser

HARDWARE

Are powerline adapters fast?

Q In answer to Angela Liddle's question regarding powerline adapters (bit.ly/webuser483), I use the Devolo dLAN 500. They're faster than Wi-Fi, and nearly as fast as Ethernet cables, so if you've been struggling with internet speeds, I would absolutely recommend trying them. You can pick them up quite cheap – I got mine on Amazon for less than £30 (bit.ly/devolo488), and it's been worth every penny. Hope that helps.

John, via email

Powerline adapters can boost your web speeds

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.

GENERAL PC

Q Is there a way to resize taskbar icons? I'm not sure how it happened but my icons are now elongated and include the name of the app or program.

Scott, via email

MAPS

Q Is there a better map app than Google Maps? I can't believe that at this point it's the best one to use – surely there's an alternative that's just as good, with as many features.

J Cartwright, via email

BROWSER TOOLS

Re-download discontinued extensions

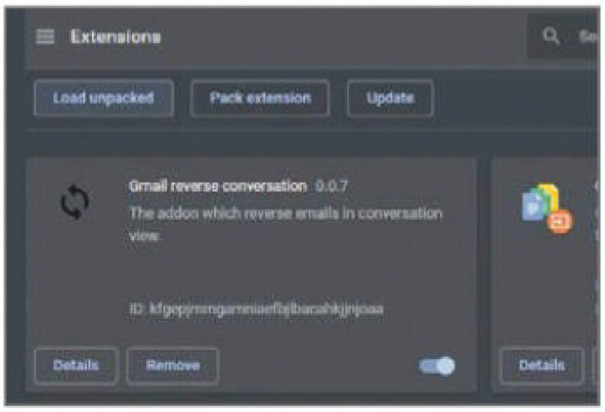
Q Several times now, I've downloaded Chrome extensions only to find they've been removed from the Web Store – typically, because they circumvent adverts and other things Google probably doesn't like. While I still have these installed on my desktop PC, I'd also like to have them on my laptop. Is there any way of doing this or, once they're deleted from the Web Store, are they essentially lost forever?

Arthur Falk, via email

A We can relate to this one, Arthur: we've also found some of our favourite browser tools have vanished. However, there are a couple of ways you can add removed extensions to a different computer. The easiest way is to see if they're available at Crx4Chrome (www.crx4chrome.com).

The trickier method is to type `chrome://version` into your address bar. Here, you'll find the profile path, which, once you navigate to it in Explorer, has a folder called Extensions. This contains all your installed extensions, identified by ID code. To find out which extension is which, go to `chrome://extensions`, select a browser tool, then note the ID code in the address bar. Now, you can copy the latest version of the extension over to your new computer. Next, go to `chrome://extensions`, turn on 'Developer mode', and choose 'Load unpacked' to get the extension running.

Steve Clark, Features Writer, Web User



Gmail reverse conversation 0.0.7
The addon which reverse emails in conversation view.

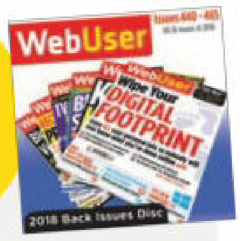
Use your browser to get extensions that are no longer in the Web Store

Your Top Tips

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

TOP TIP

Back Issues disc winner



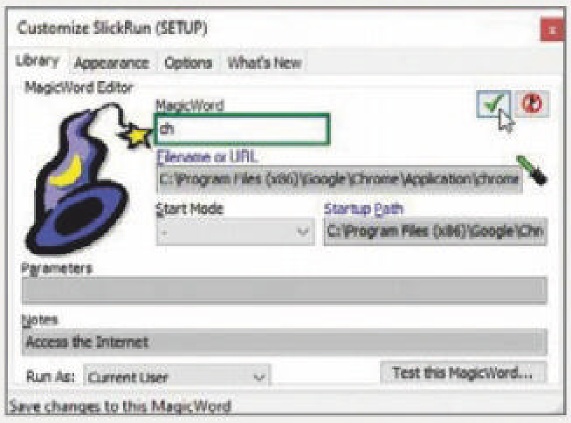
GENERAL PC

Launch programs faster

I'm always looking for ways to save time at work – even a few seconds shaved off everyday tasks can add up to a big difference. Recently, I've started using a tool called SlickRun (bit.ly/slick488) to open my programs and navigate to websites more quickly, and I've been seriously impressed with how speedy it is.

Install SlickRun, right-click its taskbar icon and select 'setup'. This takes you to a menu where you configure the 'magic words', which correspond to any programs or web addresses that you want to open. Select 'new magic word' and create commands to open anything that you use regularly ('mail' for your Gmail account, for example).

When you're ready to to launch your program, simply type the magic word in the SlickRun search box. You can also set up shortcuts for particular words to get even quicker access.



MagicWord: ch
Filename or URL: C:\Program Files (x86)\Google\Chrome\Application\chrome
Start Mode: -
Startup Path: C:\Program Files (x86)\Google\Chr
Parameters:
Notes: Access the Internet
Run As: Current User
Save changes to this MagicWord

Use SlickRun to help you launch programs more quickly

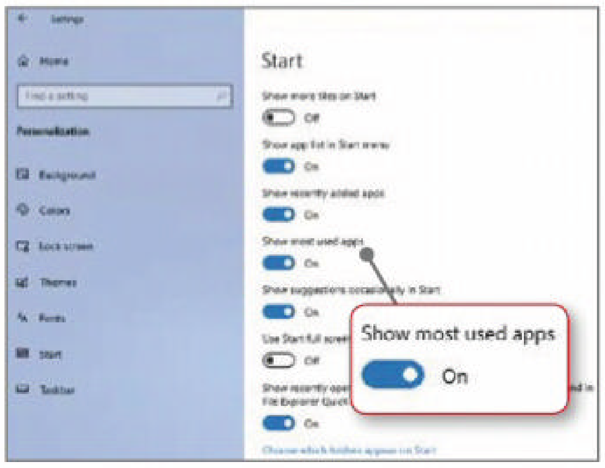
Alex Gambon, via email

WINDOWS

Show or hide your most used apps

At the top of the Start menu, you should see a list of your most used apps displayed. However, it doesn't always appear, depending on whether it's switched on in the Settings. Open the Windows 10 Settings app and choose Personalisation. In the Start section, there is a switch to 'Show the most used apps'. Turn it on if you find the list is helpful or turn it off if it gets in the way.

Ian Cole, via email



Show most used apps: On

Choose the options that appear on your Start menu from the Settings app

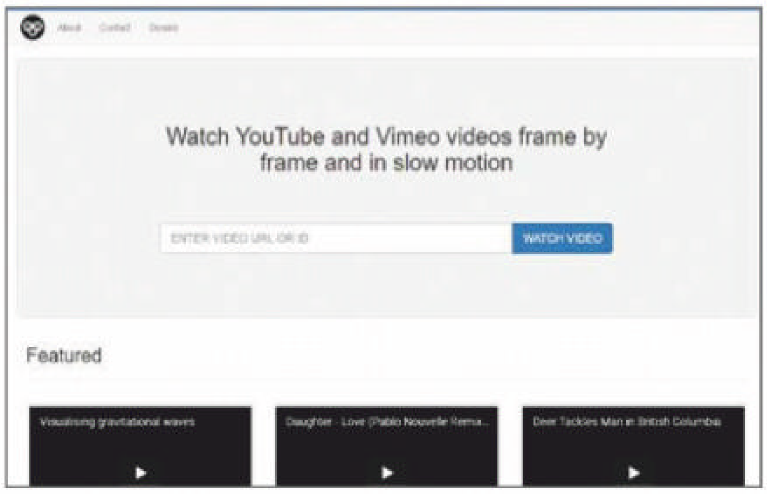
VIDEO

View YouTube videos frame by frame

I find YouTube videos handy for general DIY tips around the home but it's sometimes difficult to see exactly what's happening at certain points in the footage. If you've ever tried to pause a YouTube video at a precise moment, you'll know how fiddly this can be.

Well, it turns out that you can actually watch videos frame by frame. Simply pause the video at any point, then use the '<' (Shift+comma) and '>' (Shift+full stop) keys to navigate through the frames. You can also use the website www.watchframebyframe.com to watch any video frame by frame or in slow motion.

Geoff Winters, via email


Watch YouTube and Vimeo videos frame by frame and in slow motion
ENTER VIDEO URL OR ID
WATCH VIDEO
Featured

See everything you ever missed on YouTube

SECURITY

Configure Windows Defender settings

I've been playing around with ConfigureDefender (bit.ly/defend488) recently, and found it to be a powerful tool for setting up Windows Defender to run just how you want it to. It's an open-source tool that effectively gives you a long list of all the different Windows Defender settings. There's no search tool, though, so you'll have to scroll through the whole list to find what you're looking for. However, I personally found it well worth the time since you can tweak pretty much any little feature to work how you want.

Customise Windows Defender and stay protected

Oli Parker, via email

WINDOWS

Get more taskbar space

If, like me, you run Windows 10 on a small laptop, there isn't a lot of room on the taskbar for icons. There are a couple of options available to get some extra space and one is to use smaller icons. Right-click the taskbar and go to 'Taskbar settings', then turn on the switch 'Use small taskbar buttons'.

The other option is to free up space by removing things you don't need from the taskbar. Right-click it again to show a menu and you'll see a section with five or six 'Show...' items. Get rid of any you don't use, such as Cortana.

A large amount of taskbar space is taken up by the search box, but you can gain extra space by reducing it to a button. Right-click the taskbar and select Search, 'Show search icon'. This replaces the big box with a small magnifying glass icon. Just click it when you want to search for something.

John Sullivan, via email

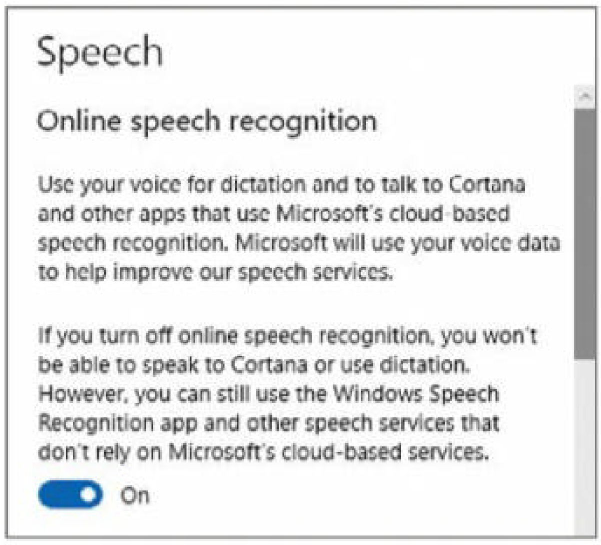
WINDOWS

Dictate instead of typing

Are you still bashing keys to enter text into your computer? Why? A lot of people don't seem to realise that you can simply speak to it. Open the Settings app and click Privacy. In the Speech section, turn on the 'Online speech recognition' switch.

Now, wherever you would normally type in text, press Windows+H. A small bar appears at the top of the screen – it says Initialising for a short time, and then says Listening. Speak and whatever you say is entered for you. I don't like using it when there are other people around, though.

Jan Spencer, via email



Speech

Online speech recognition

Use your voice for dictation and to talk to Cortana and other apps that use Microsoft's cloud-based speech recognition. Microsoft will use your voice data to help improve our speech services.

If you turn off online speech recognition, you won't be able to speak to Cortana or use dictation. However, you can still use the Windows Speech Recognition app and other speech services that don't rely on Microsoft's cloud-based services.

● On

If you can't type very fast, try turning on speech recognition and dictating instead

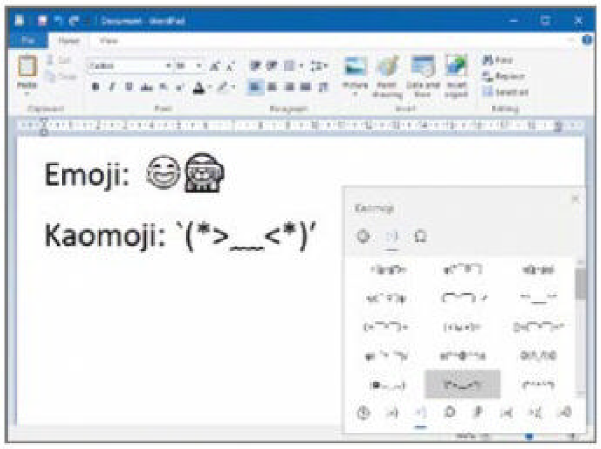
EMOJI

Use emoji and kaomoji

You probably know how to enter emoji into messages on your phone, but can you do it on your Windows PC? I've just discovered that when you type text, pressing Windows+full stop shows a set of emoji in a small pop-up panel.

If you see the emoji you want, just click on it. If you can't see it, start typing a definition of the emoji and Windows will find the one you want. For example, if you start to type `burger`, the burger emoji will be displayed. You can then click it to insert it into the text. You can also view a different set of emojis by clicking on the icons below.

There are other things in the pop-up window, too. Click the kaomoji symbol `;-)` at the top and all sorts of strange mini pictures appear made of characters such as < / ; - and so on. There is a row at the bottom to show different types of kaomoji. Some of them seem obvious, but others I can't make head nor tail of.



Emoji:

Kaomoji: `(*>__<*)′

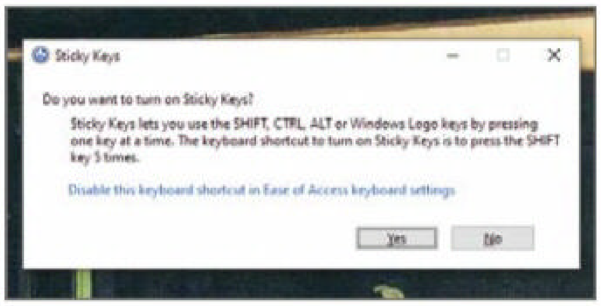
Use emoji and kaomoji in Windows by pressing the Windows key + full stop

Alex Dunn, via email

WINDOWS

Disable sticky keyboard shortcuts

I'm sure some people must find Sticky Keys handy, but I've personally never had a use for it and find it annoying when it pops up accidently. I finally realised that it can be disabled pretty easily. Press the Shift key five times to bring up the sticky keys menu, then click the link 'Disable this keyboard shortcut in Ease of Access keyboard settings'. There's a box that says 'Turn on Sticky Keys when SHIFT is pressed five times' – if you untick it, the sticky keys menu will stop appearing.



Sticky Keys

Do you want to turn on Sticky Keys?

Sticky Keys lets you use the SHIFT, CTRL, ALT or Windows Logo keys by pressing one key at a time. The keyboard shortcut to turn on Sticky Keys is to press the SHIFT key 5 times.

Disable this keyboard shortcut in Ease of Access keyboard settings

Sick of being bugged about Sticky Keys? Fix it here

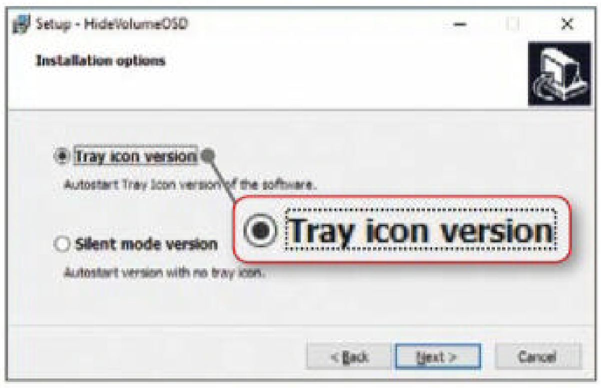
Dipak, via email

WINDOWS

Minimise the volume OSD

You know that irritating black box that appears any time you change the Windows 10 volume? There's actually a very simple way to get rid of it. You can download a tool called Hide Volume OSD (bit.ly/osd488). When you install it, you can choose between two options: tray icon and silent mode. The tray icon version gives you a small button in your notification area, letting you turn the OSD (on-screen display) on and off. Silent mode simply turns the OSD off altogether.

Maurice Fletcher, via email



Setup - HideVolumeOSD

Installation options

● Tray icon version

Autostart Tray Icon version of the software.

○ Silent mode version

Autostart version with no tray icon.

Windows displays when you change your volume settings

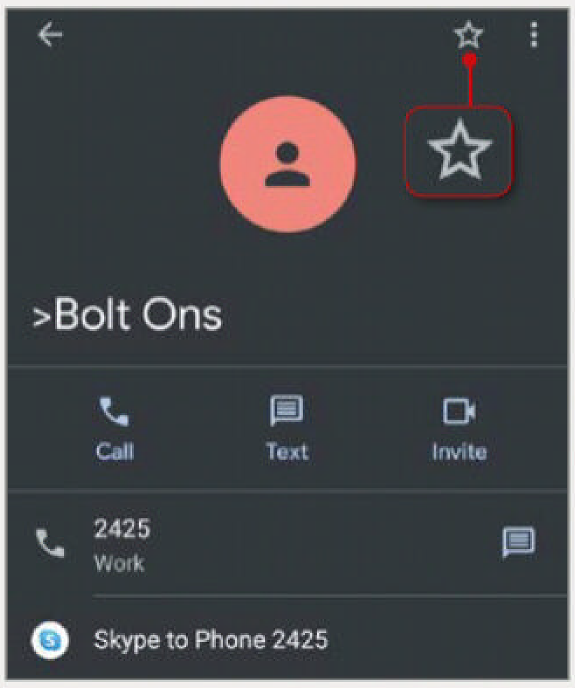
BLUNDER OF THE FORTNIGHT

MOBILE

Never miss important calls

I was in the embarrassing situation of missing several important calls from my kid's school last week after putting my phone in 'do not disturb' mode while in the office. Although it's good for blocking spam calls and WhatsApp messages, I hadn't thought about what would happen if someone tried to get through in an emergency. I've now gone through my contacts list and added a star to my most important contacts, setting them as my favourites. Under the 'do not disturb' settings, you can choose to allow calls from starred contacts only. Hopefully, this will help readers with Android phones avoid getting into the sticky situation I found myself in!

Janine McGregor, via email



Starring your contacts should ensure that important calls get through

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

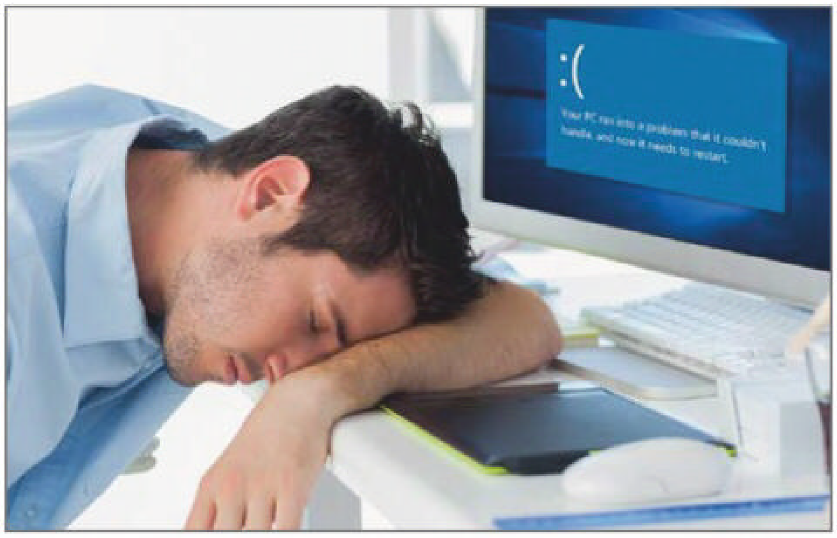
Inbox

You can let us know your views via:
editor@webuser.co.uk, www.facebook.com/webusermagazine
and www.twitter.com/webusermagazine

Star Email

Back Issues disc winner

Windows 10 solved its own update problem


:(
Your PC ran into a problem that it couldn't handle, and now it needs to restart.

In Roland Waddilove's 'Ask the Expert' section in Issue 486, he addressed the problem of how to 'Solve Windows 10 update errors'.

For well over a year, I have struggled to find a solution to why a 2016 HP desktop PC that I look after for an elderly relative would repeatedly fail to install Windows 10 version 1803 (the April 2018 Update). I had tried everything that was suggested by Roland with no success.

Since the PC was working fine and my relative would have been lost without it, I decided to leave well alone and concluded that I could always reinstall Windows 10 at some time in the future if necessary.

Then, in September this year, my relative contacted me for urgent help. When I looked at the PC, I found to my total surprise that version 1803 had, for some reason, successfully installed and that the reported problem was caused by the insistent privacy questions required for this update to finally complete. One month later, I have discovered that Windows version 1903 (May 2019 Update) has now installed as well, so everything is finally up to date.

This all goes to show that Windows 10 is able to correct its own update errors. However, I am still perplexed by the situation and have not encountered more than a fleeting problem with any other setup.

Colin Palmer, via email

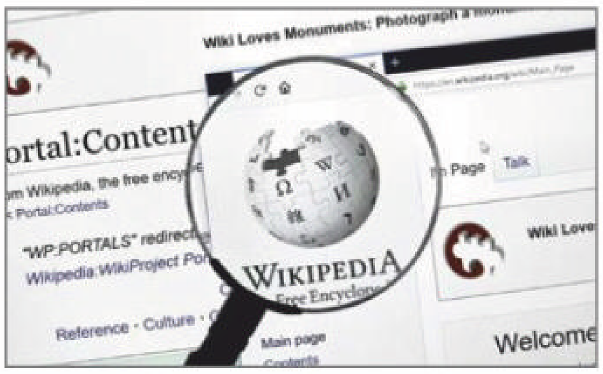
Don't call Wikipedia editors "ignoramuses"

I'm 13 years old and am astounded by the rubbish some people say. In recent issues, you've published two letters in your magazine criticising Wikipedia, but there were numerous errors in them and so I'd like to make some things clear.

In the first letter, the writer called the moderators on Wikipedia "ignoramuses" and got angry at them for deleting one of his articles. He claimed that they had deleted it for no apparent reason but that isn't how Wikipedia works. Before the deletion took place, there would have been an administrator who contacted the main author of the article to inform them. I doubt that the article was deleted for no reason – it was probably deleted because it had no citations, was badly written or simply just wasn't up to the standard expected by Wikipedia.

In the second letter, the writer said administrators are "hired" but this is not true. You become an administrator by actively contributing to Wikipedia and are chosen by other administrators, who are unpaid and volunteer their time and work to help the site. If you think that Wikipedia would be better with a fixed team of paid editors, take a look at the Encyclopædia Britannica website – how did that turn out? Don't call the editors 'ignoramuses', just because your work wasn't up to the standard required.

Kaveh Kordestani, via email



Apple needs to lower iPhone prices

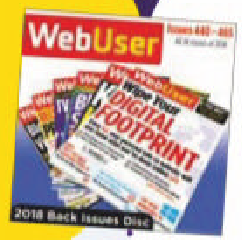
After reading your review on the iPhone 11 in Issue 486, I see that Apple is launching an even cheaper iPhone early in 2020.

It's funny that, ever since the first iPhone went on sale, Apple has been telling us that it would be impossible to make a cheaper iPhone that would not be complete rubbish. Now that we have the likes of OnePlus making superior phones for half the price and are seeing

Quiz Answers: Issue 487

1	The Wicker Man	🧺 👱
2	Eraserhead	↗✏️ 👤
3	House of Wax	🏠 ⬅️ 🕯️
4	Night of the Demon	🌃 ⬅️ 😈
5	The Brides of Dracula	👰 👰 ⬅️ 🧛
6	The Masque of the Red Death	😷 ⬅️ 🟥 💀

WINNER!
Well done to **Simon Forrest** who wins a Web User Back Issues Disc



WIKIPEDIA ARTICLE

Apple iPod

falling sales of the overpriced iPhone, all of a sudden Apple is able to produce a cheaper device.

Apple has finally realised that it can no longer do whatever it wants and that if it doesn't get its act together, then people will go elsewhere. So I say thanks to the likes of OnePlus and Huawei for bringing prices down.

Stan Elliott, Bangor, Co Down

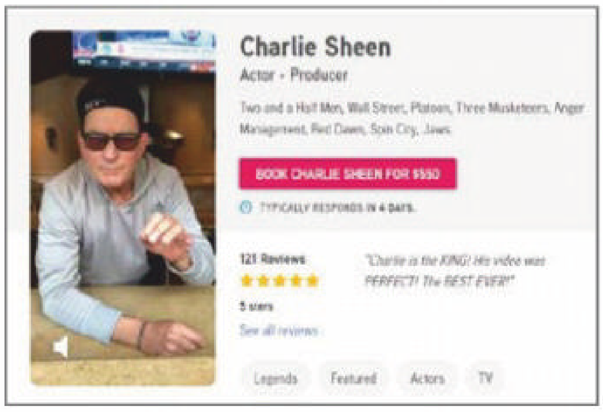
Cameo is an excellent idea for celebrities

I'm not sure if you've understood the point of Cameo (www.cameo.com), as reviewed in Essential Bookmarks, Issue 487, or have otherwise deliberately misrepresented the service. It is not intended to be a way for washed-up celebrities to earn a living but to help them better manage the 'shoutout' requests they receive from people online, maintain control over their public image and ensure that they're not being ripped off, and that their fans aren't either.

Any well-known person who has a social-media presence will frequently be asked to "say hello" to their followers' friends and family members ("because it would really make their day"), endorse charitable causes and events, or share written or video messages of some other kind. By directing all such requests to their Cameo profile, they can more easily process them, and – yes – monetise these shoutouts for a small fee in return for their time and effort. It also serves to deter trolls and timewasters.

I think this is an excellent idea, not one that should be mocked, and I wish there was a UK-specific equivalent of Cameo, because – as you mention – it is currently dominated by American celebrities and all rates are in dollars.

Name withheld, via email



What you say...

HAVE YOU EVER BEEN TARGETED BY A 'MICROSOFT' TECH-SUPPORT SCAM (bit.ly/scam487)?

Quite a few times. I usually tell them to get lost, but one time I asked if the computer the scammer was referring to was switched on. He said yes, and I told him that the only computer on was my work laptop (true) and that it was connected to the Ministry of Defence network (not true, but the company I worked for at the time did do work for the MoD). I told him this was a major security breach that I'd need to report and could he hold. I heard an expletive and he hung up.

Lee Dodgson

A few times, but after a bit of thinking you just instantly know it's a scam. I mean, how could they know something that hasn't happened?

Jack Gold

Yes, some time ago. I went along with his game for about 10 minutes and then said: "Do you think I'm stupid?". He replied, "What do you mean?" and I told him I was an IT expert, even though I'm not. He then asked why I was wasting his time if I knew it was a scam?

You couldn't make it up.

Sue Rasala

Yes, I've received a few and I enjoy wasting their time. Love to end with "Actually, I have a Mac".

Phil Ówen

I read years ago that Microsoft will never instigate a call to you, so I've never fallen for it in the times I've had these calls.

Pete A Cox

Seems strange that this still happens.

Christopher Chesters

YAHOO HAS CLOSED ITS ONCE POPULAR GROUPS SERVICE (bit.ly/yahoo488). DID YOU EVER USE IT?

When I first went online in 1997, there was no Facebook and, actually, not much else, either. Yahoo Groups was about the only place where you could have discussions with other people who were interested in similar things. I joined back then and it was good, but over the last 10 years it gradually declined and the massive data breach that recently occurred put a lot of people off. So I am not really surprised it is going, but it's sad all the same.

John Hewett

I remember when Yahoo was the cutting edge of the internet. Yahoo Auctions used to be the place to buy stuff and Yahoo had such a great directory (much more useful than modern search engines). Geocities was where I built my first ever websites and, of course, I used Yahoo Groups. I am genuinely surprised that the service were still going – I had assumed Yahoo had shut down years ago.

Nat Grove

Yes, in the Noughties, but they became overwhelmed with spam and other rubbish.

Phil McCarty

I didn't realise Yahoo Groups was still going. Haven't used it since it used to be e-Groups.

Martin Phillp

I still use Yahoo because I'm old! Never used Groups though.

Tina Ferry

I used the Yahoo search engine for a while, and Yahoo Mail.

Brian Brown

A long time ago, back in 1998. Then it got creepy.

Gavin Green

No.

Glenn Faulkner

Page 404

Barry Collins is fed up of dealing with businesses that prefer postbox to inbox

Let's stamp out snail mail in 2020

Illustration: Andrew Torrens

Here we are on the cusp of 2020 – a date that still sounds ridiculously futuristic to me – and yet we're still clinging to a mode of communication that was invented when the Pharaohs were knocking around Egypt.

Email should have killed off the postal service years ago. It's certainly given it a good kicking, to be fair, but I'm still dealing with businesses that insist on communicating via 'snail mail' for no good reason whatsoever.

I've spent the past week getting quotes for a new boiler. The first company was referred to me by the very forward-thinking energy supplier Octopus (octopus.energy), which literally changes my energy prices every half an hour in line with demand, takes all my readings via smart meters and hasn't sent me a single piece of paper in the year I've been with them. The company it recommended wants to install a "smart boiler" and took a survey of my house using a Skype-like app, where the surveyor was on the other end of a video link. Yet, when it came to delivering the quotes for the job, the company said it would send them in the post – quotes I'm still waiting for almost a week later.

> "We're still clinging to a mode of communication that was invented when the Pharaohs were knocking around Egypt"

The same was true of the second, more local firm, which came to price up the job. This chap spent 10 minutes talking to me about the benefits of installing a Hive smart meter, relayed stories of how one customer kept turning the heating down at home while he was sitting on a beach in Barbados, fearful that his stay-at-home kids would be running up his bill while left unsupervised, and yet he too insisted on sending the quotes in the post "because I'm a bit old-school".

I love my accountants. Avuncular old Pete and his efficient assistant Rachel are brilliant at patiently dealing with my lifelong aversion to making money (I do words, not numbers, as I told them at our first meeting). They finally convinced me to stop running my business on patchy Excel spreadsheets and move to the online accounting system Xero instead, which has cut the amount of time I spend on tedious admin such as invoicing and filling in VAT returns enormously. Rachel can log into Xero and correct my inevitable errors ("no, Barry, you can't claim a six-pack of Wagon Wheels as a business expense") and everything is submitted electronically.

And yet, every time they write to me or send me an invoice, it comes through my letterbox on bits of paper that the dog will inevitably chew, or that I won't see under the mountains of pizza menus and appeals to save donkeys in Derbyshire.

Why is this? How can these businesses – which are selling and working with cutting-edge technologies – rely on a postal system that is woefully inefficient, more costly and less convenient for the person on the receiving end? What has trackable, searchable, instantaneous email ever done to them?

So, here's my early resolution for the new year (which I'm still convinced is only 2006, by the way): any company that insists on using the aptly named snail mail won't be getting my business. I'll write to them to let them know, obviously.

WebUser

SUBSCRIPTION OFFER
FOR MORE INFO SEE PAGE 62

ENJOYED THIS ISSUE?

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

What's inside the next issue:

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PLUS:

- Try the new Edge browser's best features
- Edit your videos using VLC's hidden tools
- Ditch CCleaner for a superior alternative

AND...

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