

# WebUser

Issue 417

## MAKE YOUR ROUTER HACK-PROOF

The security setting hackers hope you never switch on **p64**



22 Feb - 7 Mar 2017

/ Best software / New apps / I want to break Three!

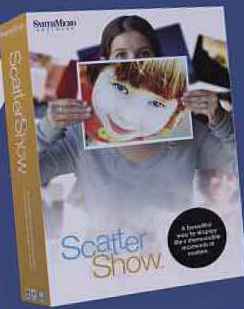
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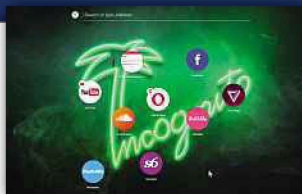
SwiftKey



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**SWITCH TO...**

**THE BROWSER OF  
THE FUTURE TODAY**



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**KODI'S BRILLIANT  
NEW VERSION**



Everything you need to know **p26**



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## Software beggars *can* be choosers

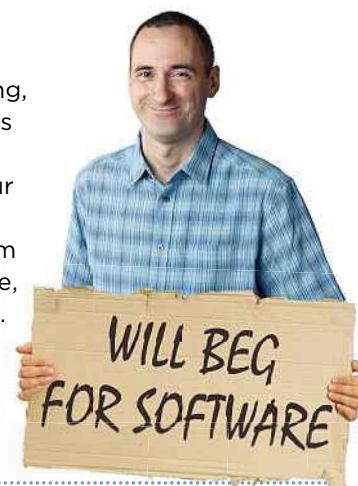
**A**re all the best things in life *really* free? The nuzzle of a kitten against your chin. The trill of a thrush on a summer morning. The smile of a happy child. I mean, what a load of rubbish, right? I agree with Coco Chanel's maxim that "the best things in life are free. The second best are very expensive", but as you can see from my picture, I'm hardly living a Chanel lifestyle.

This issue's cover feature (page 38) celebrates the fact that some very expensive things have recently become free. We've rounded up 20 brilliant programs and apps that used to cost you

but are now available for nothing. So before you beg, borrow or steal to buy software you've dreamed of downloading, check out our selection of premium tools gone *gratis*.

I'm also delighted to announce that our 2016 Back Issues Disc, containing every issue from last year, is now available from Amazon ([bit.ly/wudisc16](http://bit.ly/wudisc16)). No, it isn't free, but we think you'll find it excellent value.

**Robert Irvine**  
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[#webuser](https://www.facebook.com/webuser)



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# DOWNLOAD Paid-For Software

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WEB USER  
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# What's New Online

## Find photos you can use legally for free

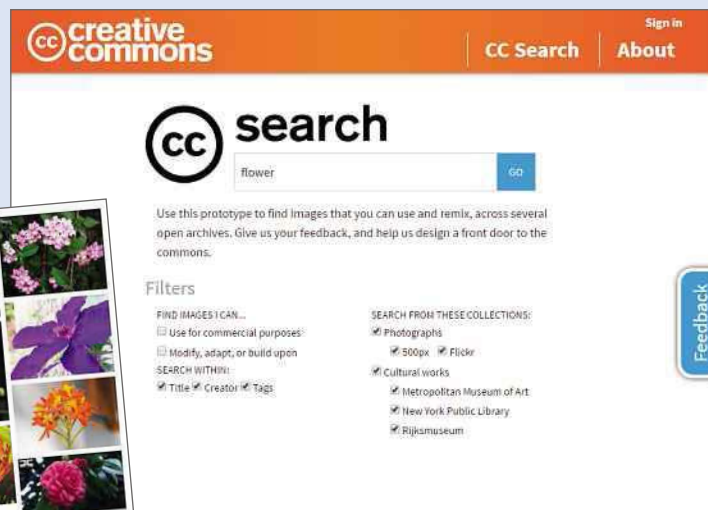
If you've ever spent hours searching online libraries for free images to use in your own work, you'll be pleased to learn there's now a far easier way. Creative Commons has launched a search engine that finds you stunning photos and lets you use them however you want without paying a penny, as long as you give credit to the creator.

The search covers more than nine million images from Flickr, the New York Public Library, the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Rijksmuseum, as well as a wealth of music and text. It's still a small proportion of the



1.1 billion works that fall under a Creative Commons licence but it beats having to flit between Google Images and individual sites to find them.

You can apply filters to show images you can use for commercial purposes, save your searches and even modify and build on some of the pictures to suit your own needs.



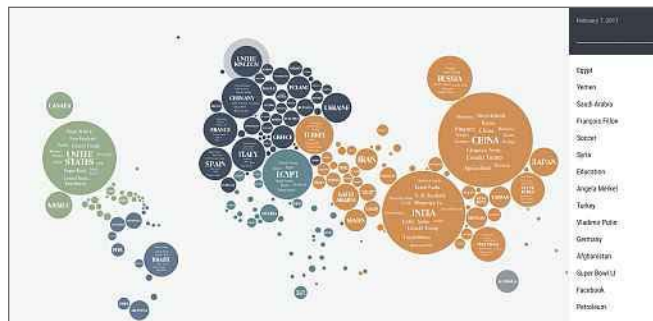
Meanwhile, the Met Museum ([www.metmuseum.org](http://www.metmuseum.org)) has made more of its digitally catalogued artworks available online. You can now access more than 375,000 images and apply the new public-domain filter to see which images you can use for free in your own projects.

[ccsearch.creativecommons.org](http://ccsearch.creativecommons.org)

## Browse top news stories from around the world

### unfiltered.news

This interesting tool lets you see the top 100 stories being reported by Google News in countries around the world. Each territory is represented by a circle of topics – the larger the words, the more mentions a topic is getting. Clicking a subject displays the relevant headlines in a sidebar, with foreign feeds automatically translated into English so you can see how differently the stories are being reported. Each topic has a timeline showing an at-a-glance view of its trending history, and the sidebar can be set to display popular topics that have had the *least* coverage in a specific country, showing just how subjective the news can be.



## Recover your online accounts with Facebook

### www.facebook.com

When you forget your login for a website, rather than answering a security question or requesting a password reset, you can now get help from Facebook.

The social network says the current methods of recovering our online accounts are "inconvenient and risky", so it's stepping in by providing another option. Starting with Github ([github.com](http://github.com)), you can now link your Facebook account with a third-party site to provide additional authentication. This works by saving an encrypted recovery token to your Facebook account, which is sent back with a time-stamped counter-signature when a login needs to be authenticated again. To activate this, simply go to Settings, Security in Github, select Store New Token and connect with Facebook by clicking the relevant button. You'll then be asked to use your name to turn on account recovery. The feature should be available for additional sites soon.

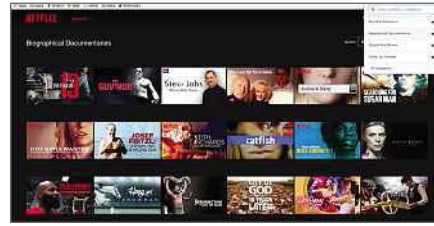


We pick the 10 best things you must do on the web this fortnight

## Unlock hidden Netflix categories

[bit.ly/netflix417](http://bit.ly/netflix417)

With so many TV shows and films on Netflix and too few suggested categories, you can easily waste an entire evening looking for something to watch. Not any more. Install the



Chrome extension Netflix Categories and you can instantly browse a list of 100 'hidden' genres, with options to bookmark your favourites and jump straight to the relevant content pages.

## Explore Google Earth by doodling

[lines.chromeexperiments.com](http://lines.chromeexperiments.com)

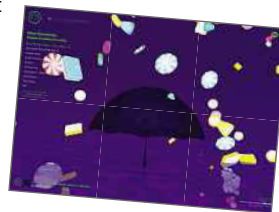
Scribble on your screen using this Chrome experiment and there's no telling where you'll end up. Land Lines asks you to draw random shapes with your mouse, then matches them with Google Earth satellite images: a simple line could follow a road in Florida while a curve may align with contours of farmland in Portugal. In each case, machine learning and line-detection algorithms detect the dominant lines of the photos. You can even go on a journey by dragging your mouse in any direction around the screen.



## Listen to music based on the weather

[weather.withspotify.com](http://weather.withspotify.com)

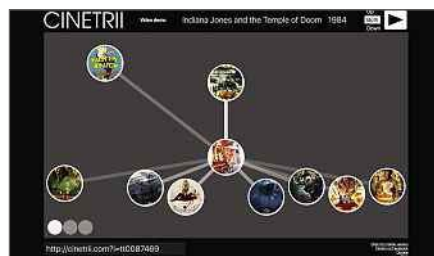
What songs do people listen to when it's raining? To find out, Spotify has partnered with AccuWeather to see how different climates affect the tunes we want to hear. The resulting Climatedune site combines 85 billion streams in more than 900 cities with details of each location's weather conditions, giving you a playlist based on the weather in your area. You can also see how weather patterns affect musical tastes elsewhere. You only hear a sample of each song but it's great fun. Who knew Tokyo dwellers like to hear Billy Joel when it snows?



## Get perfect film recommendations

[www.cinetrii.com](http://www.cinetrii.com)

Instead of relying on star ratings for its movie recommendations, Cinetrii trawls the reviews of professional critics to find connections to films you already like. When you type in the name of a movie, the site displays links to other films with explanations of why they are related – showing, for example, how *Gunga Din* (1939) influenced *Indiana Jones and the*



*Temple of Doom* (1986). It makes for an enjoyable romp through film history.

## 5 TO FOLLOW ON TWITTER

[@drawadoor](https://twitter.com/drawadoor)

Screenwriter Larry "Beetlejuice" Wilson offers script-writing tips

[@IWMDuxford](https://twitter.com/IWMDuxford)

A new account for the Imperial War Museum's historic World War Two airbase

[@beyoncefan666](https://twitter.com/beyoncefan666)

This account is getting people in a frenzy for apparently predicting the future

[@IfHillaryHad](https://twitter.com/IfHillaryHad)

What if Hillary Clinton had become POTUS? Would she be tweeting like this?

[@WinnieDancing](https://twitter.com/WinnieDancing)

Suggest songs and watch Winnie the Pooh get groovy

## + Watch boxsets on iPlayer

[www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer](http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer)

You can now bingewatch boxsets on BBC iPlayer. Starting with the recent dramas *Taboo* and *Apple Tree Yard*, all episodes of boxset shows remain on iPlayer for 30 days after the last instalment is broadcast.

## See if your name is unique

[uknames.gbgplc.com](http://uknames.gbgplc.com)

Are you the one and only? You can find out by searching for your name on OpenRegister's website to find out how popular it is in the UK. We found many of the site's estimates seem low, but you can share your result on Facebook and Twitter.

## Enjoy daily up-close views of Earth

[epic.gsfc.nasa.gov](http://epic.gsfc.nasa.gov)

NASA's Earth Polychromatic Imaging Camera (EPIC) is taking photos of our planet every two hours as it orbits the Sun a million miles away. You can view daily shots in natural and enhanced colours.

# Need to Know

## Piracy crackdown targets Kodi boxes

### What happened?

Five people have been arrested for selling set-top boxes pre-loaded with the popular media centre Kodi and programmed to play pirated sport and film channels. The set-top boxes are similar to the Google Chromecast, Amazon Fire TV Stick and other devices that let you stream online content to your otherwise unconnected TV.

As we explained in our cover feature last issue, the streaming software is perfectly legal when used to view your own photos and videos, and otherwise free-to-air content. However, some add-ons allow Kodi to access pirated content, and it can be set up to point directly to piracy services.

As a result, set-top boxes running Kodi have caught the attention of anti-piracy groups such as the Federation Against Copyright Theft (FACT). The five arrests weren't for using the software itself but for pre-loading it and setting it up to enable piracy via set-top boxes. FACT claimed the five suspects made £250,000 selling so-called Kodi boxes online. The boxes sell for about £35, which suggests the arrested men sold more than 7,000 of the devices between them.

The arrests come during a court case on the legality of selling doctored Kodi boxes, with Middlesbrough man Brian Thompson accused in court of facilitating the circumvention of copyright protection. The five arrested have been released on bail and are likely to be following Thompson's case closely.

The strengthening of anti-piracy law



**Kodi isn't illegal but some third-party add-ons provide access to content that is**



comes as the UK Intellectual Property Office is set to confirm plans for a new code that encourages Google and other search engines to tackle links to pirated content that appear in search results.

Expected to come into play at the beginning of June, the agreement would see search engines tweak their algorithms to push piracy sites down the rankings and otherwise make them more difficult to find, while promoting links to legal, paid-for content further up the results. The voluntary code would call for formal regulation.

### How will it affect you?

If you're a retailer selling Kodi boxes, you may want to think carefully about their pre-loaded software, but that's the limit to action against the set-top boxes so far. If you already own such a box, you should be aware that you may be watching pirated shows and films – the fact that a movie is still in cinemas and available to stream for free should be a dead giveaway. But there's been no action taken as yet against owners of such boxes, only against those selling them. There is, of course, plenty of legal content you can access online via a Kodi set-top box, be it free documentaries or YouTube shows, and that's one reason why it's difficult to target users.

The plans regarding search results have yet to be confirmed, but if the IPO

goes ahead with the agreement, Google and other search engines will have to tweak their results, pushing some links down the list. That should make it easier to find legal alternatives, although it's not difficult to do so already – links to content from Google Play and other stores usually sit at the top of results.

### What do we think?

Some people will always want to avoid paying for digital content, and there's certainly merit in making that harder to do, but the best way to discourage piracy is to make films, sports and other streaming material easy to find, easy to watch and relatively low in cost. Services such as Netflix and Amazon Prime have made huge strides towards achieving this, and research suggests incidents of piracy are slowing.

Of course, it's frustrating to fork out monthly subscriptions to multiple services and then be asked to pay again for a new show you've been waiting to watch. As well as hunting down traders enabling piracy, it would be helpful to focus on giving subscribers better value. The more Netflix and its rivals improve, the less people will want a Kodi-loaded, piracy-enabled set-top box.

See our Best Free Software section on page 26 to learn more about the latest (legal) version of Kodi.

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

## WhatsApp adds two-factor authentication



For added security, enable two-step verification to require a passcode when registering your phone number with WhatsApp.

### What happened?

Messaging app WhatsApp has introduced an extra layer of security for users – but you'll have to turn it on yourself.

The Facebook-owned messaging app is used by more than a billion people worldwide and its end-to-end encryption reportedly makes it popular with diplomats and activists. To keep its users even safer, WhatsApp has introduced two-factor authentication.

This simply means that WhatsApp asks for a second passcode the first time you open the app on a new device, making it harder for hackers to access your account, even if they have your login name and password.

### How will it affect me?

To turn on WhatsApp's two-factor authentication, go to Settings in the app, click Account and select Two-step Verification. Click Enable and the system will ask you to enter a six-digit passcode of your choice. Pick something memorable because you'll need to remember it to add your WhatsApp account to a new phone. You can also

give WhatsApp your email address to reset the number if you forget it – probably a wise idea so you don't find yourself locked out.

Once you're set up, you'll need to enter the code to set up WhatsApp on a new phone. That means no-one can spoof your account without the code, but you can still open a session in your web browser without it.

### What do we think?

We welcome any improvement to mobile security, and two-factor authentication is increasingly becoming a standard option for web services and apps – it's already available for Gmail and Facebook, among others. If you don't have it enabled, turn it on everywhere you can. It not only increases your security but protects your friends, too, because hackers can't use your account to spread malware and spam to your contacts. If you receive an unsolicited email to disable two-step verification, don't open the link because it could be an attempt to hack your account.

## WordPress sites defaced by hackers

### What happened?

Thousands of WordPress blog pages were defaced by hackers – even though the flaw they used to access the sites has been patched for weeks.

Earlier this year, security firms notified WordPress of a flaw in one of its versions. The popular content-management service – best known for its blogging platform – quickly rolled out a patch to web-hosting companies and then to all users. However, WordPress doesn't force users to update versions because this can cause problems with some websites.

It would appear that many sites haven't applied the fix because less than two weeks later, security researchers reported hundreds of thousands of attacks using the vulnerability, with hackers leaving 1.5 million pages defaced with "I was here" messages and political images. Such hacks are likely to evolve into search spam which hackers use to make money, researchers predicted.

Security firm WordFence said it had seen evidence that 20 hacker groups were

trying to meddle with vulnerable sites.

### How will it affect me?

If you come across one of these defaced web pages, don't panic – it doesn't mean you've been hacked. The attack uses content injection, which shoves image or text on a page, but simply visiting the page shouldn't put you at risk.

At the time of writing, the attacks aren't particularly damaging, merely the equivalent of web graffiti, but hackers tend to look for a way to make money from their efforts, so it will likely evolve into spam or malware campaigns.

If you run a WordPress-based site or blog, perform the update now or you risk your site being vandalised.

### What do we think?

Regardless of the service in question, it's wise to let software companies do their best to keep you safe. If you're not running automatic updates, keep watch on security news, because it's good practice to run security patches even if you don't install feature updates.



# Driverless cars will require dual insurance

## What happened?

Drivers who operate self-driving cars will be forced to take out dual-insurance policies to cover their vehicles in case they spin out of control.

The Department for Transport has unveiled plans for the two-in-one policy in an attempt to reduce the legal obstacles to introducing self-driving cars to the UK. Accidents involving driverless cars have raised questions as to exactly who is to blame for a crash. In June last year, a driver was killed when his Tesla Model S collided with a tractor trailer after failing to brake.

The latest plans will introduce policies that cover drivers while they are at the wheel, and then allow responsibility to be handed over to artificial intelligence (AI) while the cars are in driverless mode. Claims made against accidents involving AI will be covered by the insurance company, who will recoup losses from the responsible party, which may include the car manufacturer. The government hopes this will make it easier for victims of crashes involving driverless vehicles to get compensation.

"Automated vehicles have the potential to transform our roads in the future and make them even safer and easier to use, as well as promising new mobility for those who cannot drive," said transport secretary Chris Grayling in a statement to the *Telegraph*. "But we



must ensure the public is protected in the event of an incident."

## How will it affect you?

Even if you have no plans to buy a driverless car when they go on sale in the UK, it's useful to know that effective insurance measures will be in place should you happen to be involved in an accident with one.

Ian Crowder of The AA says that there is no way to predict how other human drivers will respond to an increase in driverless vehicles. "In the longer term, the number of insurance claims should dramatically fall," said Crowder. "However there are concerns relating to

the behaviour of drivers of human-driven cars mixing with autonomous vehicles, which could lead to an increase in collisions."

## What do we think?

We'll be interested to see how smoothly driverless cars are able to take to our roads. There are bound to be a few teething problems as human drivers get accustomed to vehicles being operated by artificial intelligence, although preliminary tests in Milton Keynes last year were deemed successful. Hopefully, accidents will be kept to a minimum, otherwise we're likely to see a lot of road rage being directed at robot cars.



## FIRST LOOK

### Samsung Galaxy A5 [www.samsung.com/UK/A5](http://www.samsung.com/UK/A5)

Smartphone fans across the globe are salivating at the prospect of getting their hands on the Samsung Galaxy S8 but, until that happens, the company has released two phones a little lower down the price scale: the Samsung Galaxy A5 and the Samsung Galaxy A3.

We got our hands on the A5, the larger of the two models, at Samsung's launch event, and were immediately impressed by its high-end design. Despite costing less than £400, the A5's glass-clad front and metal wrapping around the sides and the rear put it in the same class as the Galaxy S7.

Its 5.2in AMOLED display with a resolution of 1,920 x 1,080 provides



a pixel density of 424ppi, which isn't sharp enough to use with the Samsung Gear VR virtual-reality headset, but is plenty for everyday use. The camera looks decent, too: with a resolution of 16 megapixels, it should produce detailed shots and promises good-quality images in low light.

As with most modern smartphones, both budget and premium, the Samsung Galaxy A5 felt snappy and responsive. It's powered by an octa-core Exynos 7880 clocked at 1.9GHz, backed up by 3GB of RAM.

Elsewhere, the phone offers a 3,000mAh battery, which supports fast charging via the phone's USB Type-C socket. Priced at £369, the Samsung Galaxy A5 looks to be a hit with anyone seeking a phone with a premium design, but not the premium price tag of top-tier iPhone or Samsung handsets.

However, there are a couple of potential stumbling blocks, including the fact that the Galaxy A5 is not yet running Android 7 Nougat, and its key rival at this price – the Moto Z Play – offers a fantastic battery life that will be tough to beat.



## WHAT'S THE RUMOUR

# Is Windows 10 about to get a facelift?

When Microsoft launched Windows 10 in July 2015, it declared that this would be the last version ever of the Windows operating system and that all subsequent versions would simply be updated builds of the software. Of course, that didn't mean there wouldn't be major overhauls and now the first details of the next major Windows design update, dubbed Project Neon, have been leaked.

The leak reveals a considerable revamp of the Windows 10 interface, which would appear to be inspired by Google's Material Design. Pictures show a redesigned font throughout, which looks considerably more sophisticated. Add to that translucent and animated bars, along with other new screen components, and it appears that Microsoft is making a conscious attempt to look more modern.

The new Acrylic design feature seems to be separated into different interface components, suggesting that Microsoft is taking a modular approach to the design that allows app developers to adopt as much or as little of the aesthetic as they wish – again, something Google implemented with Material Design.

There aren't many hints of other new



features being added, other than integration with Microsoft's HoloLens augmented-reality technology. However, with the first HoloLens headset priced at £2,719, it's unlikely that most Windows 10 users will be overly excited about this addition.

### LIKELIHOOD RATING



With the Windows 10 Creators Update due within the next couple of months, it's logical that Microsoft should revamp the look of its operating system to match. The current Windows 10 design already feels a little dated, so a facelift to make it look more modern is certainly welcome. We'll have more details of new tools in the Creators Update as they're revealed.



## WEBOMETER



### WE LIKE...

#### Twitter tackles online bullying

The social network has announced that it's taking three major steps to protect its users from bullies, one of which is to make it more difficult for permanently banned users to set up new Twitter accounts.



#### Facebook adds weather feature

Facebook is introducing detailed weather forecasts to its website and mobile apps. Unfortunately, the new feature will only support your current location, unless you add other locations you want to track in Settings.



### WE DON'T LIKE...

#### UK hit by dozens of cyber-attacks a month

Britain's security has been threatened by 188 high-level cyber-attacks during the last three months, according to a government security chief. Attempts made by Russian and Chinese state-sponsored hackers are among those being investigated by the National Cyber Security Centre.



#### Apple stored deleted browser history

A bug affecting the way Apple devices sync with the cloud meant that Safari browsing data, including deleted internet history, could be found on iCloud for up to a year, according to security firm Elcomsoft.



## What's new on Kickstarter

Our favourite new project on the crowdfunding site

### Memo Box Mini

[bit.ly/memo417](http://bit.ly/memo417) | From £20

Invest in a Memo Box Mini, the smallest 'smart pillbox' ever, and you'll never again forget to take your medication. This clever device connects to your phone via Bluetooth, where you can manage your meds using its free Android or iOS app – setting reminders, keeping track of what you've swallowed and ensuring you don't take a double dose. The tiny (2.6 x 1.4in) box has three compartments for morning, afternoon and night, or can be used for weekly or monthly storage. The project has already doubled its target of £8,000, so get in quick before funding closes on 7 March.



# Stay Safe Online

News about the latest threats and advice from security experts

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

### Smart TVs used to snoop on viewers

US company Vizio has settled charges that accused it of spying on its viewers, amassing their data and then selling it on. In an alarming revelation, the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) alleged that Vizio had used a staggering 11 million TVs to conduct the illicit operation. Information about users' demographics, geographical locations and viewing preferences was apparently sold without consent to third parties.

Under the terms of the agreement, Vizio neither confirmed nor denied malpractice. Kevin Moriarty, a lawyer for the FTC's Division of Privacy and Identity Protection, said in a blog post: "Before a company pulls up a chair next to you and starts taking careful notes on everything that you



watch (and then shares it with its partners), it should ask if that's okay with you." He went on to add, stridently, that "Vizio wasn't doing that, and the FTC stepped in".

Vizio is not a household name over here but it is the most popular TV manufacturer in the US, dominating a hefty 20% of the market. In the past few years, Samsung and LG have also been accused of spying on viewers through their smart TVs, although both companies subsequently claimed to have fixed the 'problem'. [bit.ly/tv417](http://bit.ly/tv417)

### 2.5m Xbox and PlayStation logins stolen

Criminals have stolen the usernames and passwords of up to 2.5 million Xbox and PlayStation users, according to hack-monitoring website Have I Been Pwned ([haveibeenpwned.com](http://haveibeenpwned.com)). The information was reportedly



lifted from the unofficial gaming forums Xbox360 ISO and PSP ISO, where gamers can share links to download free and pirated versions of popular games for the two consoles.

The breach happened in 2015, when hackers broke into the forums and stole 1.3 million account details from the PSP ISO forum and 1.2 million from the Xbox forum, according to the *Daily Mail*, but the details are only now being revealed after the hackers shared the data online.

Troy Hunt, the security researcher behind Have I Been Pwned, said the usernames, passwords and IP addresses for the affected accounts are probably available to buy on the dark web. The news comes soon after Polish game-development studio CD Projekt RED, which makes the popular *Witcher* video game series, had more than 1.8 million user credentials stolen from its online forum. [bit.ly/xbox417](http://bit.ly/xbox417)

## Security Helpdesk | Your questions answered by security specialists

**THIS ISSUE'S EXPERT:**  
**Mike Ahmadi, Global Director – Critical Systems Security at Synopsys ([www.synopsys.com](http://www.synopsys.com))**



**Q** Following the news about vulnerabilities discovered in Netgear routers, why do so many routers have security flaws?

Seb Khan, via email

**A** At Synopsys, we have tested many routers and

firewalls over the past decade, and have found vulnerabilities that number in the thousands. Manufacturers typically build such devices simply to perform the stated functionality, which is to route traffic and block unwanted traffic. What many fail to do, however, is adequately assess the inherent security of the devices they sell, thereby flooding the market with vulnerable devices.

Some companies have taken it upon themselves to address these vulnerabilities, but users are often left guessing which devices are adequately tested. This is because there is currently

**“** There is currently no legal requirement to test routers to a given level of rigour **”**

no regulatory requirement for manufacturers to test their routers to a given level of rigour, and any attempt to force such regulations is met with extreme resistance.

The only way a user can determine the level of risk associated with a device is to run their own tests to determine what vulnerabilities are present. They can then either use this information to force a manufacturer to fix the detected

problems or switch to a device from another company that does a better job of addressing such issues.



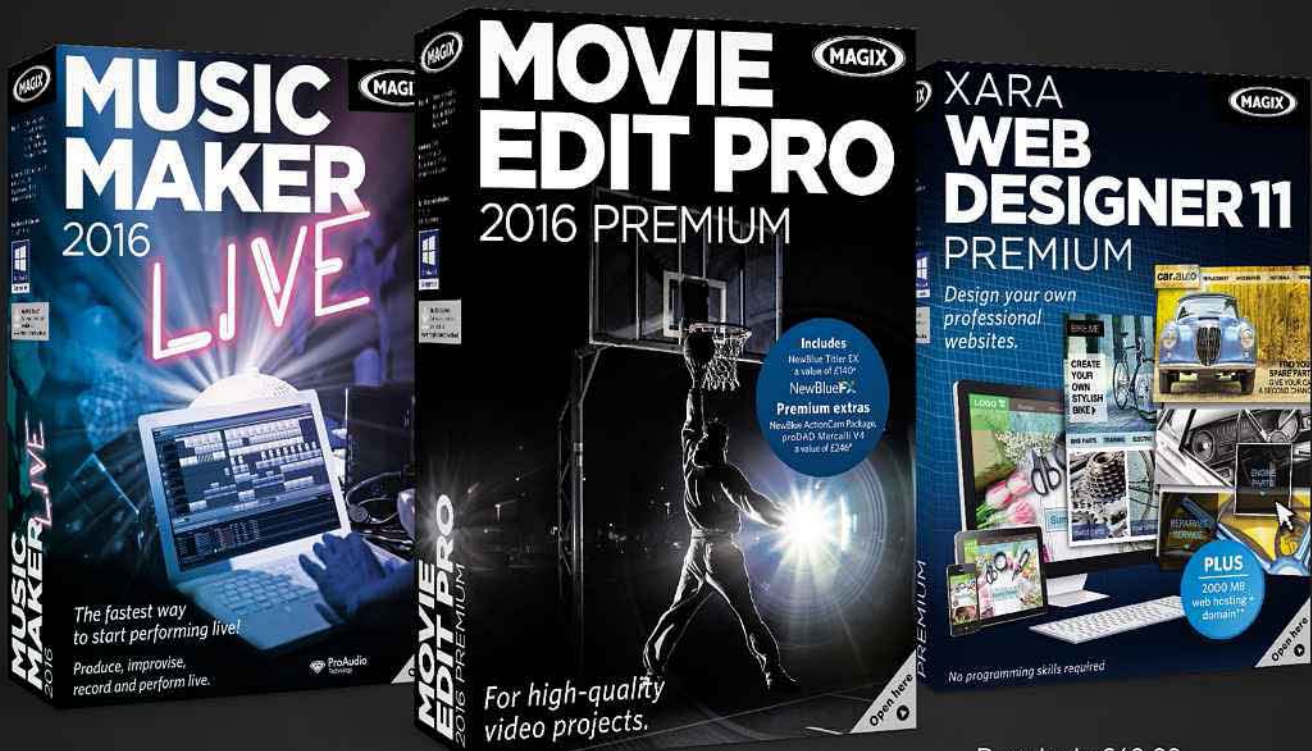
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# ★ Best New Websites

## Site of the Fortnight

TRAVEL

### Ticketclever

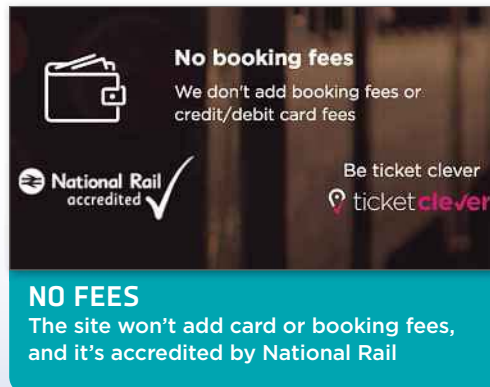
[www.ticketclever.com](http://www.ticketclever.com)

Splitting a rail journey can save you money, but it's easy to get sidetracked by all the possible times and options. Ticketclever aims to remove a lot of the hassle and promises to slash the cost of tickets by up to 60% by using clever algorithms. As with other train-ticket sites, you specify your journey's start and end points, the number of people and the time of travel, and Ticketclever splits the results by price, speed and flexibility. You can then see the various routes and split tickets, and the all-important savings. We found that Ticketclever significantly undercut standard fares, so it's definitely worth a try.

Our rating

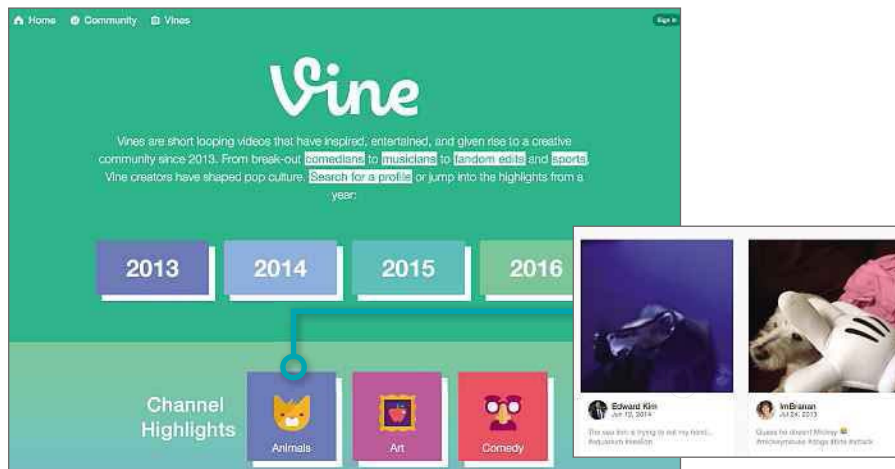
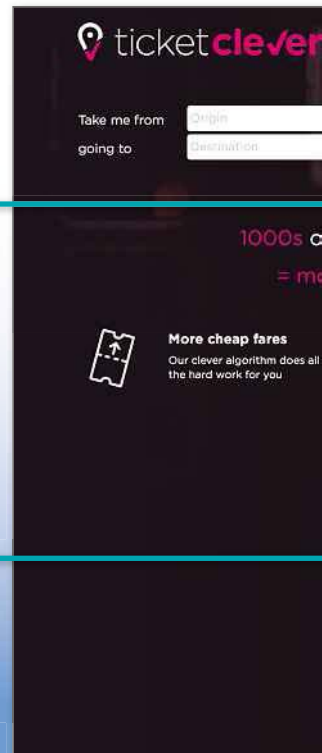


NEW



VIDEO

Watch Ticketclever's video to find out how its algorithms save you money



VIDEO

### Vine

[vine.co](http://vine.co)

Vine was Twitter's pointless but fun tool for creating and sharing six-second looping video clips, which was shut down at the end of last year. Happily, you can now revisit many of Vine's most ingenious creations from its four-year lifespan via this official curated archive of uploaded footage. Clips are categorised by year, highlights, editors' picks and playlists, which makes it easy to find your favourite type of vines, whether they feature animals, art, comedy, music, sports or just plain weird stuff. We love the fun, accessible look of the site and had pangs of nostalgia looking through the most-looped and most-liked vines in the Community section.

Our rating



RELAUNCH



SHOPPING

### UK Digital

[www.ukdigital.co.uk](http://www.ukdigital.co.uk)

This camera and camcorder store has revamped its website to make it more mobile-friendly, with a much improved homepage that makes it easier to view its featured products, browse the most popular categories, see what's new and read the latest blog posts. You can also get a better feel for items via more detailed descriptions and prominent product shots. Existing customers may feel peeved at having to create a new account, but this gives you the ability to create a wish list and ask questions about items. It's also now simpler to sell your own gear through the site.

Our rating



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

**SPLIT RESULTS**  
Compare the walk-up fare to the quickest journeys and lowest-priced tickets

**TICKET OPTIONS**  
You can use your railcard to apply a further discount to your split tickets

**It's easy**  
Pick up your tickets within a minute of booking

**No booking fees**  
We don't add booking fees or credit/debit card fees

**Be ticket clever**  
ticketclever

**Outward Journey**  
Leaving On TUESDAY 7 Feb 2017  
Departing after 07:48  
Be clever Be frugal Be quick Be flexible All More

**Outward Details**  
STP 07:48 MAN 11:49 Std £89.70  
EUS 08:20 MAN 12:07 Std £82.70  
EUS 08:46 MAN 12:07 Std £82.80  
EUS 09:00 MAN 11:07 Advance Std £82.00  
EUS 09:20 MAN 11:28 Advance Std £82.00

**Adult**  
Child 5-15  
Child discount of 50% on most tickets. Up to 2 under 5s can travel free with a fare-paying passenger.  
Select railcard  
Only one Railcard will be applied



## GENEALOGY

### National Archives of Ireland

[bit.ly/ireland417](http://bit.ly/ireland417)

If you've got Irish ancestors, this site could help you research your family tree. It provides a step-by-step online course that points you toward free online resources and gives you tips on keeping records and searching effectively. The site uses videos and simple language to explain how to get to grips with the Census, military archives and church registers, and offers details on surnames, place names and property. There are case studies and research profiles to provide inspiration, and you can print a PDF of the course to digest offline.

Our rating



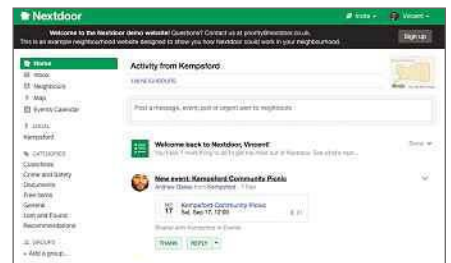
## TRAVEL

### Big Bus Tours

[www.bigbustours.com](http://www.bigbustours.com)

An open-top bus tour is a great way to travel around the world's major cities and take in the sights, and Big Bus Tours makes this easy by offering rides in Europe, America, the Middle East and Asia-Pacific. As well as letting you study the routes, this-easy-to-navigate site has informative lists of the top things to do and the landmarks to see. Handy features include service-status updates, a map showing stop-off points and a tool for finding bus stops near your current location. Ticket prices are clearly displayed and you can quickly purchase them in sterling, Euros or dollars.

Our rating



## SOCIAL

### Nextdoor

[nextdoor.co.uk](http://nextdoor.co.uk)

Nextdoor, the social network that connects you with people in your area, has acquired the similar UK site Streetlife and is encouraging the latter's 1.5 million members to move in and make themselves at home. Nextdoor gets you to draw a boundary for your community of between 100 and 2,000 houses so you can post messages and documents, lost and found notices, and classified ads. With the ability to add local special-interest groups and promote community events, it's a brilliant interactive noticeboard and a great way to get to know your neighbours.

Our rating



**NOW  
ON SALE!**

# WebUser



**Issues 388 - 413**

All 26 issues of 2016

## 2016 BACK ISSUES DISC

Our **2016 Back Issues Disc** containing all 26 issues from last year is now on sale from Amazon

For more information, visit [bit.ly/wudisc16](http://bit.ly/wudisc16) or search for 'webuser disc' on Amazon

**You can still buy our 2015 Back Issues Disc from [bit.ly/wudisc15](http://bit.ly/wudisc15)**





[www.newgovernmentjobs.co.uk](http://www.newgovernmentjobs.co.uk)

## Our rating



futurevolc.vedur.is

## Our rating



[filmthreat.com](http://filmthreat.com)

### Our rating



[www.globalexplorer.org](http://www.globalexplorer.org)

## Our rating



trainingground.guru

## Our rating



# Build a Better Site

Specialist tips, top tools and practical help

## Top Tips of the Fortnight

### Upgrade PHP or pay

Active support for version 5.6 of PHP expired at the end of January and many web hosts have sent emails to customers warning that they will no longer provide free support for older versions of the scripting language, and that sticking with them may incur extra charges. However, it's easy enough to avoid these costs by accessing your web host's Control Panel and upgrading to the latest version (7.1). Most applications, including WordPress, work perfectly well with it and the performance of some sites may even be improved.

### Desktop browser offers mobile previews

Developing a site for both small and large screens has become integral to having a successful online presence but it can be tricky to get your head around



what your site will look like in both sizes. Blisk ([blisk.io](http://blisk.io)) is a browser that can solve the problem easily. Aimed specifically at web designers, the browser can display your site on both a large screen and a simulated phone screen at the same time. Just pick your desired phone from the list on the left to see the preview.

### Deal of the Fortnight

iPage ([www.ipage.com](http://www.ipage.com)) is offering 12, 24 or 36 months of web hosting for £1.80 per month (a saving of 83%) if you pay for the entire term upfront.

## Web-building Helpdesk

THIS ISSUE'S EXPERT:

Stefano Maruzzi,  
EMEA Vice President,  
GoDaddy ([uk.godaddy.com](http://uk.godaddy.com))



**Q** Do you know of any websites where I can list and possibly sell domain names?

John Wait, via email

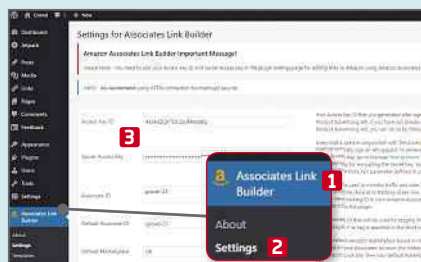
**A** Many domain-name registrars offer a service to sell domain names. GoDaddy's service, called GoDaddy Auctions ([uk.auctions.godaddy.com](http://uk.auctions.godaddy.com)), works a bit like eBay to create an online marketplace for buying and selling domain names. A seller sets a minimum starting bid, interested parties then bid for the name and the highest bid at the end of the auction wins. The seller can also choose optional features designed to increase the exposure of a listed domain. An added benefit is that there is now a free mobile app called GoDaddy Investor (for iOS and Android), which lets you monitor auctions in real time.



## MINI WORKSHOP | Make money more easily with Amazon Associates' WordPress plugin

Amazon Associates: [bit.ly/amaf417](http://bit.ly/amaf417) | 10 mins | Requires WordPress website

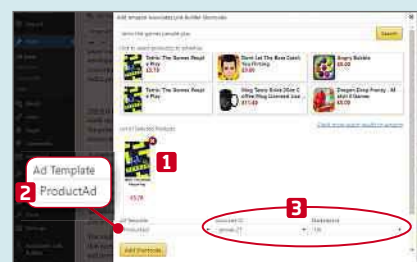
Adding money-making Amazon links to a WordPress site is simple. You need to sign up for an affiliate account ([affiliate.amazon.co.uk](http://affiliate.amazon.co.uk)), and get an Access Key ID and Secret Key from the Product Advertising API tab.



**1** Log into your Dashboard, click Plugins and Add New, then search for and install the Amazon Associates Link Builder plugin. Click the Associates Link Builder menu **1** and select Settings. **2** Type in all the details (for the Access Key ID, Secret Access Key and more) that you gathered while setting up your account. **3**



**2** When you create a post, you'll see a new search box above the composition window. **1** Position your cursor in the place where you want the link to a product to appear on your finished page. Type a search in the box for a product, then press the Search button. **2**



**3** Click the box of the product you'd like to link to. It will appear in a separate section below. **1** Select a template. **2** If you have registered for more than one Amazon Associate account, you can select the one you want and the country in which it works. **3**



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- 250GB M.2 2280 SATA SSD
- 2TB SATA 6.0Gb/s 64MB HDD
- 8GB NVIDIA® GeForce® GTX 1070
- 500W FSP Power Supply



FROM **£1,199.99**

## STORMFORCE™ TORNADO

Product code: 7260-5272

- Windows 10 Home
- Intel® Core™ i5-6400 Processor
- ASUS H170 Pro Motherboard
- 16GB DDR4 HyperX Fury Memory
- 1TB SATA 6.0Gb/s 64MB HDD
- 8GB NVIDIA® GeForce® GTX 1070
- 24X DVD/RW
- 500W FSP Power Supply



FROM **£1,049.99**

## STORMFORCE™ CYCLONE

Product code: 7260-5199

- Windows 10 Home
- Intel® Core™ i7-6700
- ASUS H170 Pro Motherboard
- 16GB DDR4 HyperX Fury Memory
- 250GB M.2 2280 SATA SSD
- 3TB SATA 6.0Gb/s 64MB HDD
- 8GB NVIDIA® GeForce® GTX 1080
- 500W FSP Power Supply
- Blue LED Light Strip



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# Product Test

We test and compare the latest products

## Devolo GigaGate

**Andy Shaw** tests Devolo's latest answer to the problem of getting your Wi-Fi network into every corner of your home

There are lots of ways to get Wi-Fi all around your home, even in rooms far away from your router. The cheapest solution is to get a basic Wi-Fi extender, which should be enough to cover any deadspots, but you may find the signal is only strong enough to allow basic tasks such as checking your email. If you need more of your internet connection's bandwidth to reach the far corners of your house, you'll need something more sophisticated.

In Issue 415, we reviewed the Netgear Orbi ([bit.ly/issue415](http://bit.ly/issue415)). This consists of two router-like devices that create their own, private Wi-Fi network between them. One (the base station) connects to your existing router using its Ethernet port; the other (the satellite) is positioned to extend the Wi-Fi signal to your home's deadspots. The idea is that you connect to the satellite when you're too far from your existing router to get a signal, and the fast connection between the two units delivers Wi-Fi to your devices where you can't otherwise get it.

The main problem with the Orbi is that it is very expensive (£367.98 when we checked on Amazon at [bit.ly/orbi417](http://bit.ly/orbi417)). That said, the starter kit effectively consists of two fully-featured routers,



so it's still good value for money if you can afford it. However, if you're looking for something less expensive, Devolo's GigaGate is a similar concept at a significantly lower price.

### Orbi vs GigaGate

£220 is still far from cheap for a Wi-Fi extender, so we would still expect good results, but you only have to compare the specifications of the GigaGate to the Orbi's to

see why it's more than £140 cheaper. The Orbi has almost everything you'd expect to see from a modern, top-end router, with only a few omissions. It has four Gigabit Ethernet ports on each device and provides both 5GHz and 2.4GHz Wi-Fi on its satellite station, giving you two networks to spread your devices across.

The GigaGate is sparse by comparison. It has just one Gigabit Ethernet port on

“ the strong, dedicated network between the two GigaGate devices spanned the divide with apparent ease ”

each device, with four Fast Ethernet ports on the satellite to connect other devices to, and only provides a 2.4GHz network for your devices, which is a bit disappointing.

The question you have to ask is how much extra are you prepared to pay for the luxury of a 5GHz network?

### Simple setup

One of the best things about the GigaGate is that it's very easy to set up. All you need is a spare Ethernet port in your existing router and a wall socket to plug the base station into. Connect the base station to your router, plug the satellite in between the base station and the area you're trying to extend your Wi-Fi to, and you can connect to the satellite's Wi-Fi network using the password printed on its base.

If you want a seamless network, you can assign your existing Wi-Fi credentials to the satellite using the standard WPS (Wi-Fi Protected Setup) system, by holding down the buttons on both devices.

If your Wi-Fi is non-existent in certain areas of your house, then this is certainly going to deliver on its promise of increasing the signal's reach. We placed the two units in opposite corners of our test house, on different floors, and managed to connect without the devices reporting any problems with the signal strength. This meant we could set up the satellite unit in an existing deadspot and the strong, dedicated network between the two devices spanned the divide with apparent ease.

### Performance

We compared the speed of the GigaGate's Wi-Fi to our existing Wi-Fi extension system, which is set up to send the Wi-Fi into a deadspot that the ISP router on its own cannot reach. It uses a Linksys router with boosted aerials (reviewed in Issue 391, [bit.ly/issue391](http://bit.ly/issue391)), extended out of the corner of



the house where our ISP router sits with a long Ethernet cable.

This system is cheaper to put together than the Orbi but, with the optional upgraded aerials, is a more expensive option than the GigaGate, although it does provide the option of a 5GHz network in the furthest reaches of our house.

We were pleasantly surprised by the Devolo GigaGate's performance. We compared the time it took to transfer our usual collection of photos and videos over the network from a USB SSD to a laptop in our house's furthest reaches. The Linksys router was marginally faster when sending photos over its 2.4GHz network, taking two minutes and eight seconds, while the GigaGate took three seconds more. The Linksys's 5GHz network took 20 seconds longer, so the GigaGate's lack of a 5GHz network wasn't a concern.

Large video files transferred more quickly on the Linksys' 5GHz network, taking 2 minutes 53 seconds. However, the GigaGate's

2.4GHz network was only just behind, clocking 3 minutes and 7 seconds. This was a significant improvement on the Linksys router's 2.4GHz transfer time of 3 minutes and 40 seconds.

Our results show that if you have a place in your house that suffers weak or intermittent Wi-Fi, the Devolo GigaGate is an excellent way to bridge the gap. In our tests, it reached a known deadspot just as well as our existing Wi-Fi extension, but was less expensive and avoided the mess of trailing cables.

### PRODUCT INFO

#### Devolo GigaGate

Price: £219.99

Buy from Amazon:  
[bit.ly/dev417](http://bit.ly/dev417)

### SPECIFICATIONS

- 2Gbps Wi-Fi bridge
- 2 x Gigabit Ethernet port (one each on base and satellite)
- 4 x Fast Ethernet ports (satellite only)
- Wi-Fi access point
- AES encryption
- 4 x 4 quantenna technology

### FOR

- ✓ Get a strong Wi-Fi signal into the places Wi-Fi usually fails to reach
- ✓ Simple to set up
- ✓ A lot less expensive than the Orbi

### AGAINST

- ✗ Still expensive

### BETTER HARDWARE

Netgear Orbi, £367.98  
[bit.ly/orbi417](http://bit.ly/orbi417)



### MORE SATELLITES

BT Whole Home Wi-Fi, £299.98  
[bit.ly/bt417](http://bit.ly/bt417)



### OUR VERDICT



There are cheaper ways to extend your Wi-Fi signal to the deadspots in your home but if you want a solution that's stable, powerful, tidy and easy to set up, the new wave of wireless bridges from Devolo, Netgear and BT do an excellent job.

The Devolo GigaGate isn't as powerful as

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

Netgear's Orbi, and it lacks some of the Orbi's top-end features, but this means it comes at a more reasonable (though still expensive) price.

# Nvidia Shield TV

Vaughn Highfield tests a device that streams all sorts to your TV, from 4K Amazon and Netflix shows to the latest Android and PC games

**N**vidia is best known for its graphics cards but in the past couple of years, the company has branched out into other devices, including an Android tablet and this Android-powered set-top box.

The original version of the Shield TV suffered from a lack of content and was primarily a games machine, right down to its Xbox-style remote control. Internally, this new version is almost identical, though it's now housed in a smaller case and has dropped the microSD slot.

## PRODUCT INFO

### Nvidia Shield TV

**Price: £189.91**

**Buy from Amazon:**  
[bit.ly/nvd417](http://bit.ly/nvd417)

## SPECIFICATIONS

- Nvidia Tegra X1 processor
- 3GB RAM
- Up to 4K HDR playback at 60 frames per second
- USB 3
- 802.11ac 2.4GHz and 5GHz Wi-Fi
- Bluetooth 4.1
- Gigabit Ethernet
- Android 7.0 (Nougat)
- 159 x 98 x 26mm

## FOR

- ✓ Slick and powerful TV streamer
- ✓ Get Netflix and Amazon Prime in 4K
- ✓ Doubles-up as Android (and PC) games console

## AGAINST

- ✗ More expensive than basic TV streamers
- ✗ Games features wasted on non-gamers

It continues to offer the same gaming features along with a USB 3 port, so you can add storage, and there's a pricier Pro version (£279.94) that still has the microSD slot along with 500GB of internal storage. However, there is now much more content available and a significantly enhanced range of TV-streaming services.

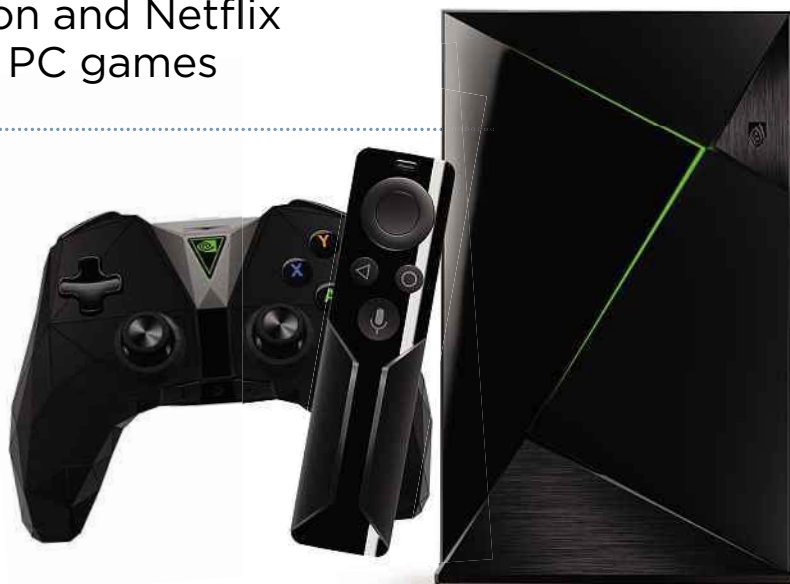
## Streaming services

The unit comes with a redesigned version of the games controller and a Shield TV remote. This is similar to the kind of remote you would expect to get with a traditional TV streamer, and used to be sold separately at a cost of £35.

Support has been added for Amazon Prime Video, Netflix (both streaming up to 4K resolution, making this the only set-top device to offer Amazon's 4K service at the moment) and BBC iPlayer, though there's still no catch-up player for ITV, Channel 4 or Channel 5. You can also stream straight from your mobile device with its Google Cast support, and install plugins to run popular streaming-server software such as Kodi and Plex.

## Games and voice commands

You can install Android games directly on the device, just as you would on an Android phone or tablet. In the two years since the launch of the first Shield TV, many more developers have created games that work well on larger screens, and



the Shield TV's hardware runs them very well.

You can also stream games from a PC – either your own, if you have a powerful enough model with the right Nvidia graphics card; or for £7.99 per month, you can access GeForce Now, a streaming library of PC games hosted and run from Nvidia's own servers. With a good broadband connection, this service promises to stream 4K-resolution games to your living room TV at 60fps

(frames per second).

The device integrates with Google Assistant, which uses the always-on microphones found on both the device itself and its remote controllers. This means you can operate the device via voice commands to launch a specific game or app without using the remote.

An imminent update should tie this to other smart devices you may have around your home, such as smart lighting and other gadgets.

## OUR VERDICT



Nvidia has relaunched and repackaged its niche gaming device with much better support for TV streaming. This makes

it one of the best streaming devices around, particularly if you have a 4K TV and want to watch Netflix and Amazon Prime.

It lacks ITV, Channel 4 and Channel 5 catch-up services but if you like playing games as well as watching TV, then you probably won't care,

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

because the Shield TV is a brilliant games console, whether you want to play Android or PC games.

If you're not bothered about the gaming features, you can get a much cheaper TV streamer that's almost as good from the likes of Roku.



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# Web User's Best Buys

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

## HARDWARE

### GRAPHICS CARD

#### Asus AMD Radeon R7 250

£78.59 from [bit.ly/250amd416](http://bit.ly/250amd416)

Tested: Issue 416



This graphics card has enough power to make less challenging games run smoothly in 1080p resolution, with high-detail settings enabled. It's very cheap and benefits from plenty of speedy stream processors.

#### KEY SPECS

2,048 stream processors ■ 128 texture-mapping units ■ 32 render-output units ■ 926MHz GPU frequency ■ 4GB RAM ■ Supports up to six displays ■ 4,096 x 2,160 pixels resolution ■ DisplayPort, DVI-D and HDMI video connectors

### WI-FI REPEATER

#### TP-Link RE450

£44.99 from [bit.ly/tpl414](http://bit.ly/tpl414)

Tested: Issue 414



The TP-Link RE450 provides a strong signal at a price that's hard to resist. It's better at extending the 5GHz network than the 2.4GHz, but it also acts as a bridge to transfer older devices to the newer network.

#### KEY SPECS

2 x 60mm, 1 x 42mm antennae ■ 3.8W power consumption ■ 2.4GHz (450Mbps) and 5GHz (1,300Mbps) ■ 802.11ac Wi-Fi ■ WPS button ■ Repeater and access point modes ■ 163 x 76 x 37mm ■ Three-year return-to-base warranty

### MONITOR

#### AOC Q2781PQ

£299.99 from [bit.ly/aoc412](http://bit.ly/aoc412)

Tested: Issue 412



This good-value monitor offers impressive image quality, a lovely design and 178-degree horizontal and vertical viewing angles. You won't need to calibrate it, either. If you're after a monitor with a resolution of 2,560 x 1,440 pixels, buy this.

#### KEY SPECS

27in flat screen ■ 2,560 x 1,440 pixels resolution ■ 1,000:1 contrast ratio ■ 350cd/m<sup>2</sup> brightness ■ 60Hz refresh rate ■ DisplayPort, HDMI, VGA inputs ■ 330 x 180mm base ■ Three-year collect-and-return warranty

### BUDGET TABLET

#### Amazon Fire HD 8

£89.99 from [bit.ly/8hd410](http://bit.ly/8hd410)

Tested: Issue 410



For its low price, Amazon's Fire HD 8 is a pleasant surprise: it's great for media streaming and web browsing, its battery life is exceptional and it's easy to use. Once it's integrated with Amazon's Alexa voice assistant, it will be even better.

#### KEY SPECS

Quad-core 1.3GHz processor ■ 8in 1,280 x 800 pixels resolution screen ■ 2-megapixels rear camera ■ 16GB storage (12.09GB free) ■ MicroSD memory card slot ■ Fire OS operating system ■ 214 x 128 x 9.2mm ■ 341g

### CHROMEBOOK

#### Acer Chromebook R11

£229.99 from [www.amazon.co.uk](http://www.amazon.co.uk)

Tested: Issue 409



The Acer Chromebook R11 laptop has a keyboard that flips behind its touchscreen, so it can also be used as a tablet. It's not hugely powerful but it runs all the web apps you might need and its battery lasted over eight hours in our tests.

#### KEY SPECS

Dual-core 1.6GHz Intel Celeron N3050 processor ■ 2GB of memory ■ 11.6in touchscreen ■ 1,366 x 768 pixels resolution ■ 16GB eMMC drive ■ 1 x USB 2, 1 x USB 3 ports ■ 802.11ac Wi-Fi ■ SD card reader ■ 295 x 203 x 20mm ■ 1.2kg

### WINDOWS 10 LAPTOP

#### Acer Aspire One Cloudbook 14

£199.98 from [www.pcworld.co.uk](http://www.pcworld.co.uk)

Tested: Issue 407



The Cloudbook 14 is as good a laptop as you'll get for less than £200. It's not particularly fast and doesn't have a brilliant display, but it's fantastic value, especially because it includes a year's subscription to Office 365 Personal.

#### KEY SPECS

Dual-core 1.6GHz Intel Celeron N3050 processor ■ 2GB of memory ■ 32GB SSD ■ 14.1in non-touchscreen ■ 1,366 x 768 pixels resolution ■ 1 x USB 3, 1 x USB 2 port ■ 802.11n Wi-Fi ■ 339 x 235 x 17.9mm ■ 1.6kg ■ One-year return-to-base warranty

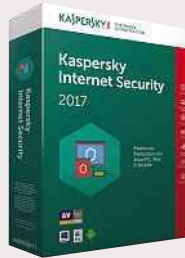
## SOFTWARE & SERVICES

### INTERNET SECURITY

#### Kaspersky Internet Security 2017

**£19.95** from [bit.ly/kaspersky2017](http://bit.ly/kaspersky2017)  
**Tested:** *Computeractive* Issue 493

Kaspersky is rock solid at protecting your PC from the worst of the web, and has come top in nine of our most recent tests, blocking all malware with its robust defences. Use the URL above to save £15.04 on the software (normal price £34.99).



#### KEY FEATURES

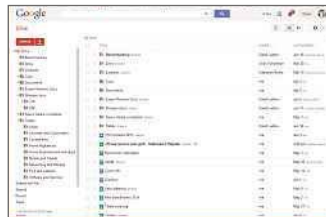
Antivirus and firewall tools ■ Protects online shopping and banking ■ Identity and privacy tools ■ Dangerous-website alerts ■ New software updater ■ Secure-connection VPN ■ Advanced ad-blocking system ■ Multi-device version ■ Compatible with Windows 10

### ONLINE STORAGE

#### Google Drive

**From free** from [drive.google.com](http://drive.google.com)  
**Tested:** Issue 389

Google Drive is easy to use and has lots of free storage. The Windows software integrates with Explorer, so saving and syncing files is like keeping them in any other PC folder.



#### KEY FEATURES

16GB free storage ■ Web-based office software ■ Works with XP, Vista, 7, 8+ and 10 ■ Chrome browser add-on ■ Android and iOS apps ■ 100GB extra storage for £1.36 per month; 1TB for £6.01 per month; 10TB for £60.16 per month

### WEB DESIGN

#### Xara Web Designer 11 Premium

**£69.99** from [www.xara.com](http://www.xara.com)  
**Tested:** Issue 385

Xara Web Designer 11 is a great tool for anyone who wants a good-looking website without having to use HTML or CSS code. The interface is easy to use and the software includes all the tools you need to create flexible sites that change depending on the size of the screen.



#### KEY FEATURES

90+ templates ■ WYSIWYG design ■ Create responsive websites ■ Embed codes ■ Add HTML ■ Online editing ■ FTP uploader ■ Hosting (requires registration) ■ Browser preview (Chrome, Firefox, IE, Opera)

### Web User Gold Award winners

#### ANDROID KEYBOARD

##### SwiftKey

**NEW!**

**Free** from [bit.ly/swiftkey416](http://bit.ly/swiftkey416)

**Tested:** Issue 416

SwiftKey is the king of Android keyboards with an unmatched combination of features, usability and performance.



#### STICKY-NOTES TOOL

##### Stickies

**Free** from [bit.ly/stickies415](http://bit.ly/stickies415)

**Tested:** Issue 415

Stickies is simple to use, lets you display almost anything in its notes and has lots of useful options.



#### ANDROID CAMERA APP

##### Open Camera

**Free** from [bit.ly/open414](http://bit.ly/open414)

**Tested:** Issue 414

Open Camera is by far the best replacement for your phone's camera app, and offers an unrivalled selection of tools.



#### DUPLICATE SCANNER

##### AllDup

**Free** from [bit.ly/alldup413](http://bit.ly/alldup413)

**Tested:** Issue 413

AllDup frees up space on your hard drive by deleting duplicate files. Unlike similar tools, it's completely free.



#### READ-IT-LATER TOOL

##### Pocket

**From free** from [getpocket.com](http://getpocket.com)

**Tested:** Issue 412

Pocket's free version is perfectly adequate for most users, especially its excellent, tag-based organising tools.



#### ENCRYPTION TOOL

##### VeraCrypt

**Free** from [bit.ly/veracrypt411](http://bit.ly/veracrypt411)

**Tested:** Issue 411

VeraCrypt's powerful encryption and container-style protection make working with encrypted files very easy.



#### WINDOWS LAUNCHER

##### Listary

**From free** from [listary.com](http://listary.com)

**Tested:** Issue 410

Listary offers superfast access to your files and programs. Its simple, intuitive interface is a joy to use.



# Best Free Software

## MEDIA CENTRE

### Kodi 17

kodi.tv

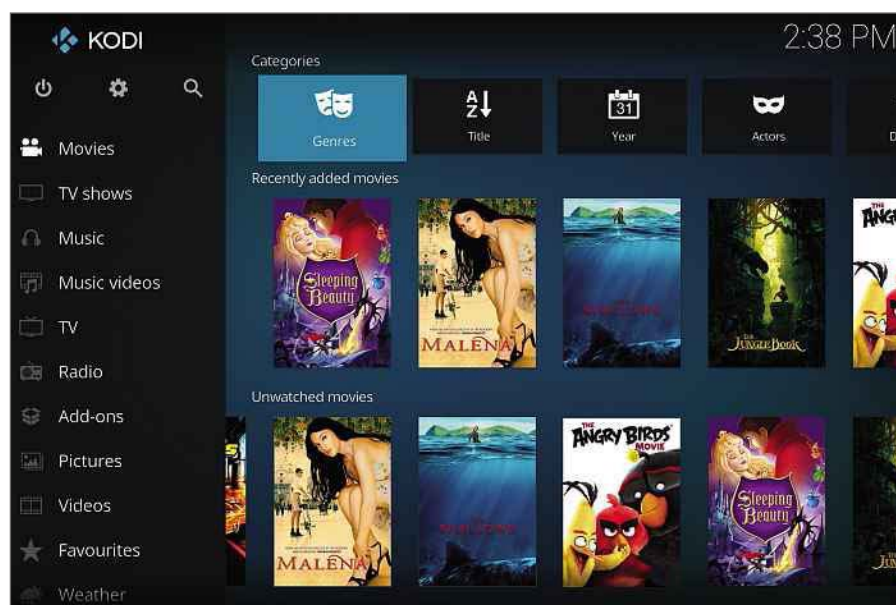
**Min requirements:** Windows XP/  
Vista/7/8+/10, Mac OS or Linux

**File size:** 80MB

As we mentioned in last issue's 'Watch Anything on Kodi' cover feature, the popular media centre is constantly being tweaked and improved. No sooner did we go to press than Kodi 17 – also known as Krypton – arrived.

As with previous versions, the software lets you play your own videos and audio files, and install unofficial third-party add-ons to get extra features, such as streaming TV shows and movies.

Krypton applies several major changes, the most notable of which is a new default skin called Estuary (there's also a touch-enabled variant called Estouchy). If you'd rather keep Kodi's old Confluence skin, the good



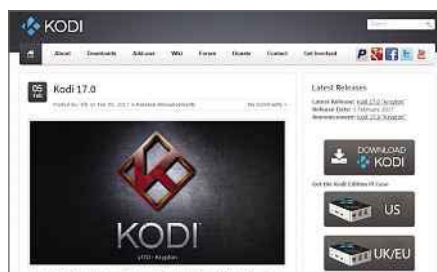
news is you can get it back through the add-ons repository.

The software settings have been made clearer in this new build, so it's easier to understand what they do, and there's a new button for adding more media sources. Support for live TV and the recording of video streams has been improved, too.

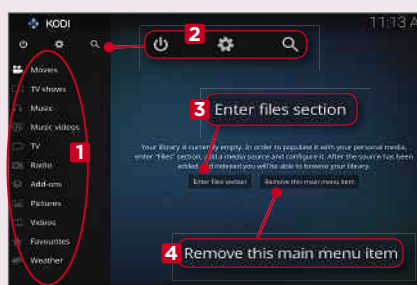
Kodi 17's music library offers better tagging and handling of album and art information, and the video player has been rewritten to make streaming smoother. There's also a new web interface called Chorus2, which lets you

browse your media and start playback on your Kodi device without touching it. If you like to control Kodi with a game controller, it's now much easier to add one to your setup.

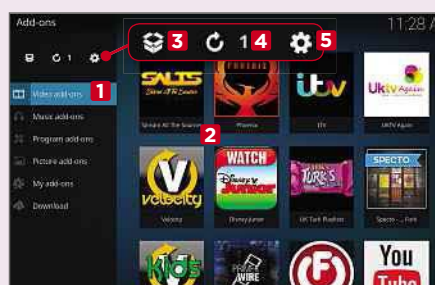
Finally, should you try to install an add-on from outside the Kodi repository, you'll now be warned that doing so could pose a risk to your system's stability and security. Note that if you already have Kodi installed, the new version will overwrite it but keep your settings and add-ons. However, older add-ons may be incompatible with the new build, so be warned.



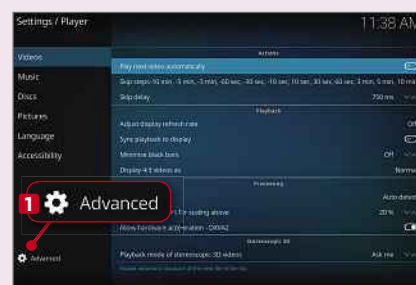
## MINI WORKSHOP | Get started with Kodi 17



**1** Kodi 17's new look makes it much easier to access the program's menus. The categories appear in a strip down the left-hand side **1** below the power options, system settings and search function. **2** You can add your own files for each section **3** and remove options you don't use from the menu. **4**



**2** Open the Add-ons section to see any previously installed add-ons, or to install new ones. Hover over one of the categories **1** in the left-hand panel to see its contents. **2** You can add new add-ons through the Add-on Browser, **3** install any pending updates **4** and access the settings. **5**



**3** Kodi offers a selection of settings screens – choose from Player, Media, PVR & Live TV, Service, Interface, Skin, Profile, System, System info, Event log and File manager. Each section can display Basic, Standard, Advanced and Expert settings. Click the button in the bottom left **1** to toggle through the choices.

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



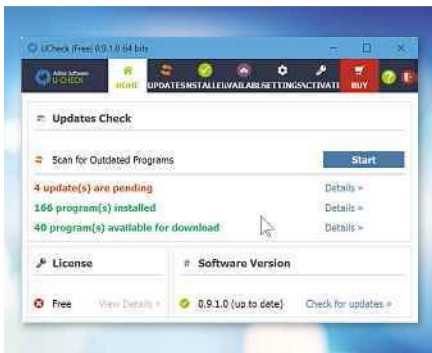
## GIF VIEWER

### AniView

[codedead.com](http://codedead.com)

**Min requirements:** Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10 **File size:** 3MB

AniView is an open-source animated-GIF viewer for your Desktop. To use it, go to File, Open and point the program in the direction of a saved GIF (you can't currently drag and drop files onto the program window). You can jump between other GIFs in the same folder using the large Back and Forwards buttons. It's a simple app, but there are some advanced options available, including the ability to export all the frames in an animation.



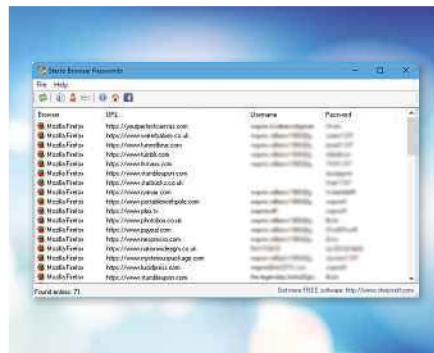
## SYSTEM UPDATER

### UCheck

[bit.ly/uccheck417](http://bit.ly/uccheck417)

**Min requirements:** Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10 **File size:** 19.9MB

UCheck scans your system for outdated software and lets you download the newest versions – where available – to keep programs running smoothly and securely. You can sometimes download and install an update directly through the program in two clicks; if not, you'll be directed to the software developer's website. UCheck also includes links to popular free programs you might be interested in downloading.



## PASSWORD MANAGER

### SterJo Browser Passwords

[www.sterjosoft.com](http://www.sterjosoft.com)

**Min requirements:** Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10 **File size:** 748KB

If you use more than one browser, you might have passwords saved in one but not in another. SterJo Browser Passwords pulls together all your passwords from all your browsers, and presents them in a single list displaying the browser, site URL, username and password. Simply right-click to copy the details you require. There are installer and portable versions of the program available.

## New Windows Apps

### TVPlayer

[bit.ly/tvp417](http://bit.ly/tvp417)

**Min requirements:** Windows 10

**File size:** 21.8MB

This app lets you watch more than 60 live television channels for free, including those from the BBC, ITV, Channel 4 and 5. Upgrade to TVPlayer Plus for £5.99 a month for additional channels.



### PGA Tour

[bit.ly/pgatour417](http://bit.ly/pgatour417)

**Min requirements:** Windows 10

**File size:** 42.3MB

If you're a fan of golf, this official app will keep you fully up to date with the PGA Tour. You can view the leaderboard, search for players, inspect courses and more.



### Flights Radar

[bit.ly/flightr417](http://bit.ly/flightr417)

**Min requirements:** Windows 10

**File size:** 18MB

This is a global flight-tracking app for Windows 10 that displays real time information. You can search for individual flights, or see those in a chosen location or from a particular airline.



## IMAGE EDITOR

### RawTherapee 5

[rawtherapee.com](http://rawtherapee.com)

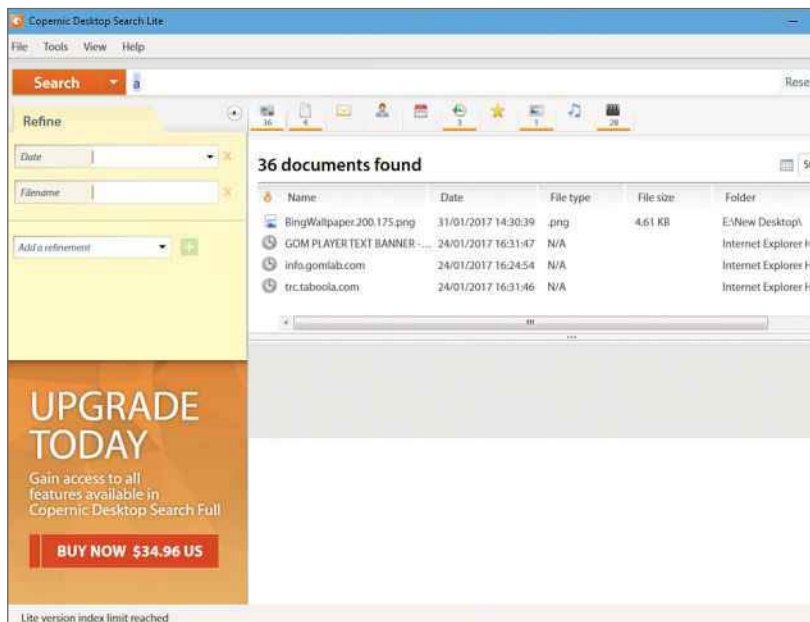
**Min requirements:** Windows Vista/7/8+/10

**File size:** 19.2MB

High-quality digital cameras offer a RAW image option in addition to the normal JPEG format. A RAW file is like undeveloped film – it requires your computer rather than your camera to generate the image file.

RawTherapee is a photo editor designed to work with RAW files, but it can also handle JPEG, TIFF and PNG images. This isn't really a program for novice photographers – there's quite a steep learning curve – but it's undeniably powerful, and packed with advanced features.

The latest version adds a number of new tools and functionality, giving you even more ways to improve your photos.



## FILE FINDER

### Copernic Desktop Search Free 6

[www.copernic.com](http://www.copernic.com)

**Min requirements:** Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10

**File size:** 99.5MB

Copernic indexes your hard drive to make it easier to find specific files, and offers many more options than Windows' built-in search tool.

Make sure you click the grey Download button to get the free version of Copernic rather than the trial edition of the \$34.95 (£28.21) paid-for one, and select the Lite option when you first run it. There are some restrictions with this version – it's limited to indexing 75,000 files and doesn't let you search for Microsoft Outlook emails and contacts, or files and documents on external and networked drives.

The new version improves performance, previews more files and can index a wider range of file types.

## SYSTEM TOOL

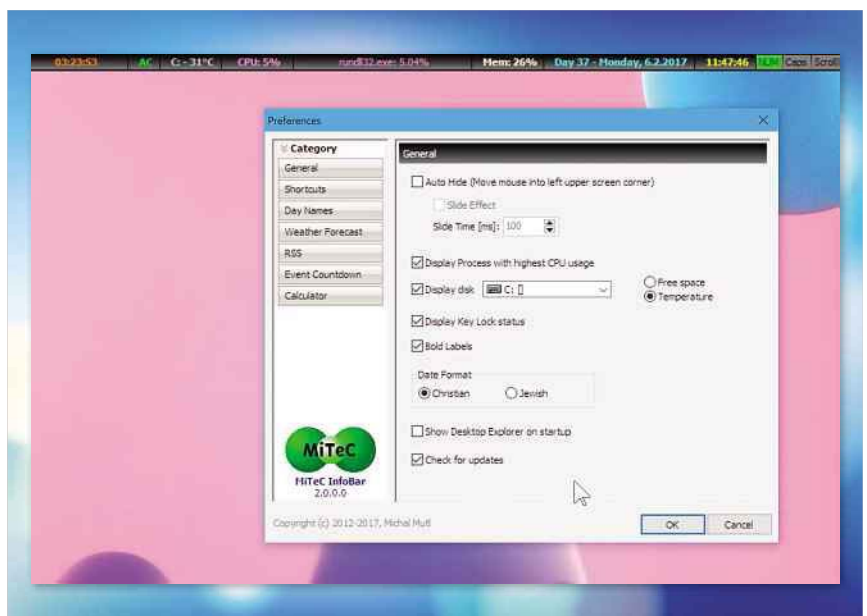
### MiTeC InfoBar 2

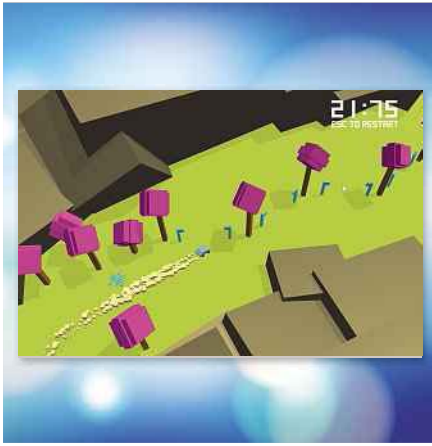
[www.mitec.cz](http://www.mitec.cz)

**Min requirements:** Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10 **File size:** 1.4MB

MiTeC InfoBar is a toolbar that sits at the top of your screen displaying all sorts of useful information, including news headlines, current weather conditions, the date and time, processor and memory usage, system 'up time' (how long it's been on for) and the status of the Num, Caps and Scroll Lock buttons.

The news ticker pulls stories from Reuters by default, but you can add your own feed choices by clicking the RSS button at either end of the toolbar. Clicking the Star button on the far left provides access to a list of additional tools, including a calculator, calendar and notepad.





## GAME

### Hook It, Drift It, Race It

[bit.ly/hookit417](http://bit.ly/hookit417)

**Min requirements:** Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10 or Mac OS

**File size:** 25.5MB

This is a short but fun racing game in which you have to navigate a track in as fast a time as possible. To move the car, line up your direction with the 'hook', then click and pull your mouse backwards and let go to fling the vehicle forwards. You have to avoid obstacles and drive through gates – there's a time penalty for any you miss.

## Don't install...

### SysTools Gmail Backup

[bit.ly/sys417](http://bit.ly/sys417)

**Min requirements:**

Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10

**File size:** 14.8MB

Why pay \$29 (£23.22) to back up the messages in your Gmail account when they're effectively backed up in the cloud already? SysTools Gmail Backup places this high price on a task other programs perform for free. Sure, it offers a choice of four folder-backup formats, but how many do you really need?



## ...Install this instead

### MailStore Home

[bit.ly/mail417](http://bit.ly/mail417)

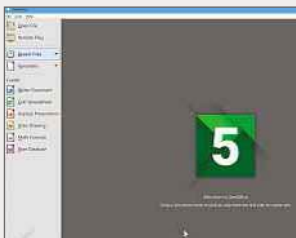
**Min requirements:** Windows Vista/7/8+/10

**File size:** 10.2MB

Free for personal use, the powerful MailStore Home keeps all your emails backed up in one place, so you never lose an important message again. It works with most major email services, including Gmail and Outlook. Just select the account(s) to back up and the program will archive your mail boxes, cleverly reducing their size by only saving the first instance of an attachment. All your emails are saved in a central location and you can read, search and restore them, or burn messages to CD or DVD. MailStore Home fully encrypts all email databases, and lets you password-protect archives so that nobody else can open them.



## UPDATED | New tweaks and fixes for your favourite free programs



## OFFICE SUITE

### LibreOffice 5.3

[www.libreoffice.org](http://www.libreoffice.org)

**Min requirements:**

Windows XP/Vista/7/8+

**File size:** 233MB

LibreOffice is a free, open-source alternative to Microsoft Office. The new build adds an experimental ribbon-based interface, a colour-palette system and a cross-platform text-layout engine. The new LibreOffice Online feature allows browser-based collaborative editing.



## ART PROGRAM

### FotoSketcher 3.30

[www.fotosketcher.com](http://www.fotosketcher.com)

**Min requirements:**

Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10

**File size:** 8.4MB

FotoSketcher lets you transform photographs into stylish works of art. In this latest update, you can interrupt an applied effect at 'x%' – which is useful for those times when a half-finished result looks more interesting than a complete one. There's a new abstract effect, too.



## SECURITY TOOL

### Smart PC Locker Pro 2.7

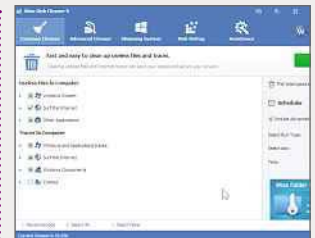
[bit.ly/pclock417](http://bit.ly/pclock417)

**Min requirements:**

Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10

**File size:** 2.5MB

This lightweight tool lets you temporarily lock your PC, preventing unauthorised access by anyone who doesn't enter a password. The new version fixes a problem with the removal of saved hotkeys, and adds the option to lock the PC when it awakes from sleep or hibernation.



## SYSTEM CLEANER

### Wise Disk Cleaner Free 9.42

[www.wisecleaner.com](http://www.wisecleaner.com)

**Min requirements:**

Windows XP/Vista/7/8+/10

**File size:** 5.4MB

Wise Disk Cleaner removes junk and cleans up Windows. The latest version improves the automatic update and advanced cleaner features, and improves various translations. Be sure to decline the bundled junk during installation. ■

GET FREE SOFTWARE FIRST subscribe to Web User at [subscribe.webuser.co.uk](http://subscribe.webuser.co.uk)



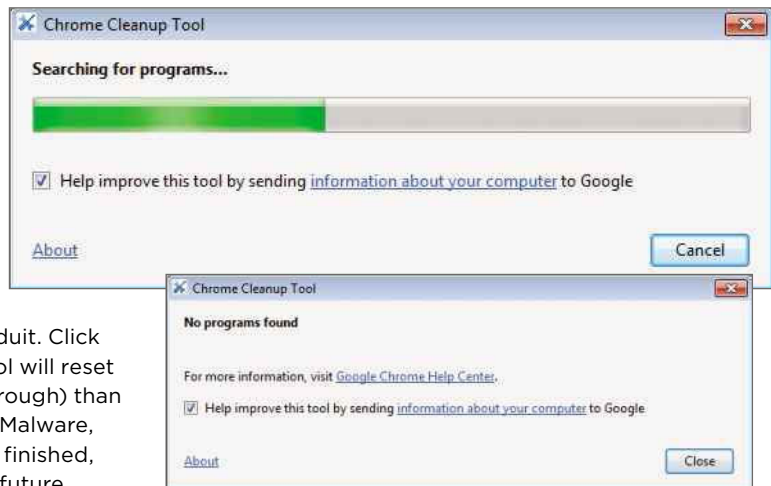
# Best New Browser Tools



CHROME

## Remove hidden junk from Chrome

There are few things more annoying than having your search provider and homepage changed by a PUP (potentially unwanted program) or seeing unsightly popups and toolbars obstructing your browser. If you notice that Chrome is behaving oddly, you might be able to fix the problem by using Google's Chrome Cleanup Tool ([bit.ly/cleanup417](http://bit.ly/cleanup417)), which was formerly called the Software Removal Tool. Download and run it, and it will search for programs causing conflicts with Chrome, including notorious offenders such as SearchProtect, SmartWeb, Mail.ru, Wajam and Conduit. Click 'Remove program' to get rid of the junk, and the tool will reset Chrome to its default settings. It's faster (if less thorough) than using security software such as Malwarebytes Anti-Malware, but note that it automatically deletes itself once it's finished, so you'll need to download it again if you need it in future.



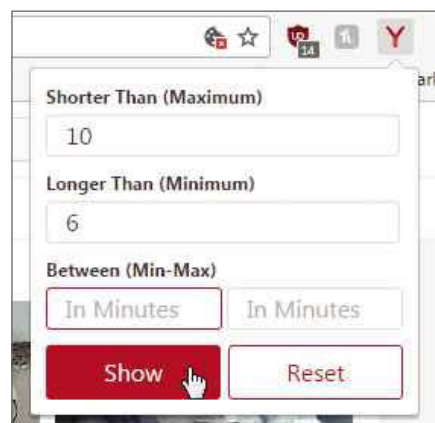
## Avoid clickbait on Facebook

Are you tired of clicking links on Facebook that look interesting but turn out to be nothing but ad-swamped drivels spread over as many pages as possible? We know we are, so we're delighted some bright spark has created This Is Clickbait ([bit.ly/bait417](http://bit.ly/bait417)) to save you wasting time on articles you "won't believe" or "must read now". Once installed, this new extension uses 'deep learning' to determine whether the title of a link that appears in your news feed indicates clickbait, and warn you if it does. It even provides a clickbait-percentage rating in instances when an article isn't completely worthless but uses clickbait tactics. We found the add-on worked very well, correctly identifying copious clickbait from BuzzFeed and The Lad Bible, while

exempting BBC News and rating a Huffington Post article 67.98% clickbait.

## Filter YouTube videos by length

When you search for something on YouTube, the results usually include a mixture of brief clips, longer videos and full-length TV shows and films.



You can filter these by duration, but you're only given two options: Short (less than four minutes) or Long (over 20 minutes), which is where YouTube Pickalen ([bit.ly/youtube417](http://bit.ly/youtube417)) comes in handy. This new tool lets you hide all videos that are shorter or longer than the times you specify, or don't match a precise length, so you can quickly find content for your desired duration.

Just click the toolbar button, enter your time parameters and click Show to remove all videos outside of those limits. Click Reset to make them appear again.

## Summarise any web page in seconds

There's so much interesting stuff to read online these days and so little time – especially when articles ramble on for thousands of words. You can get the gist of a lengthy piece without perusing the whole thing by installing the new Chrome extension Tlida ([bit.ly/tlida417](http://bit.ly/tlida417)). When you click its toolbar button, Tlida analyses the page you're currently viewing and summarises its content as four bullet points. It works quickly and with surprising accuracy, picking out key names, facts and quotes. We spotted a few glaring omissions in its synopses, but generally Tlida is an excellent time-saving tool.



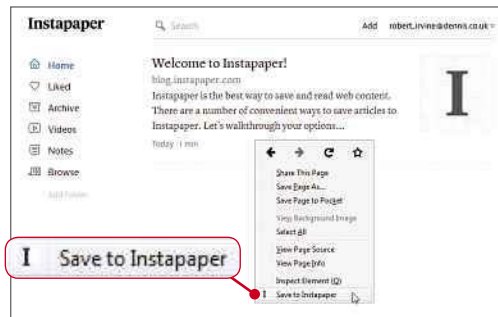
This fortnight's most useful tips and add-ons to help you get the most from Chrome, Firefox, Opera and more



## FIREFOX

### Save online content to Instapaper

It's been a long time coming, but read-it-later tool Instapaper has finally got around to releasing an official add-on for Firefox ([bit.ly/insta417](http://bit.ly/insta417)) to join its existing tools for Chrome, Opera and Safari. The new extension for the popular free service, which won a *Web User Silver Award* in Issue 412, lets you easily save web articles and videos to view whenever you want, either by clicking its toolbar button or by right-clicking the item and choosing 'Save to Instapaper'. Sadly, the keyboard shortcut chosen by Instapaper – Ctrl+Shift+S – already performs another function, so the company is working on a fix. Saved content can be organised into folders, annotated with highlights and comments, and stripped of ads and other distractions to make it clearer to read.



### Browse Quora without logging in

Chances are that you're familiar with Quora ([www.quora.com](http://www.quora.com)), the question-and-answer site where you can request or provide advice on any topic you think of. Quora has an irritating flaw, though, in that you need to register to access its content using either your email address, or Facebook or Google account, which means your quest for knowledge could impinge on your privacy. You can beat this restriction by using Quora Login Bypass ([bit.ly/quora417](http://bit.ly/quora417)) to – you guessed it – bypass Quora's login procedure. It works automatically, but for some reason searches for the term "Quora is awesome" as it does so, perhaps out of guilt for its sneaky hack. Naturally, you can't post on Quora without registering, but you're free to browse the site as you wish.



### Mute background tabs automatically

Suppose you're listening to music in your browser, but then happen to open a new page with an auto-playing video and another with a noisy advert.



The resulting cacophony will have you frantically clicking the tiny mute icons to silence each tab, by which time your ears are splitting, the dog is barking and the neighbours are banging on the wall. Happily, there is a solution in the form of Smart Tab Mute ([bit.ly/mute417](http://bit.ly/mute417)), which restricts audio playback in Firefox to one tab at a time and automatically silences background tabs. When you close the current tab, the audio on the previous one will be restored, and you can choose never to mute specific sites, so you don't miss important notifications. The add-on is also available for Chrome ([bit.ly/mutechrome417](http://bit.ly/mutechrome417)).

## OTHER BROWSERS

### Cast from Opera to your TV

Google added a Cast option to Chrome last year, to let you view content from the browser on your television, but did you know Opera also offers built-in Chromecast support?

The feature is tucked away but easy to activate: just type `opera://` flags into your address bar and press Enter to access Opera's secret Experiments section. Scroll down to the Media Router setting, select Enabled from the drop-down menu and click 'Relaunch now'. When you want to cast a web page or online video to your TV, simply right-click it and choose Cast, just as you would in Chrome.



### Block annoying adverts in Edge

We've often recommended uBlock Origin as a lightweight alternative to Adblock Plus and now the popular ad-blocking tool is available for Microsoft Edge (as well as Chrome, Firefox, Opera and Safari). The versatile ad blocker – or "wide-spectrum blocker", as it prefers to be called – can be installed from the Windows Store ([bit.ly/ublock417](http://bit.ly/ublock417)) and, like other browsers, uses constantly updated filter lists to remove adverts, trackers and malware from the web. You can also create a whitelist of sites on which to always allow content.





# Best Free Apps



## App of the Fortnight

### NAVIGATION

#### Google Maps

[bit.ly/gmaps417](http://bit.ly/gmaps417)

(varies with device)

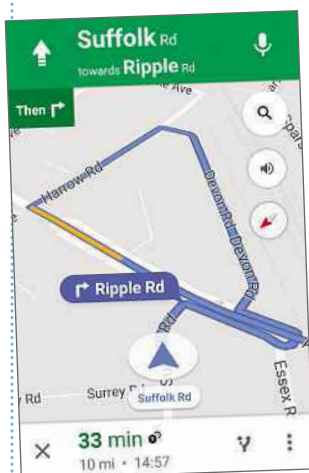
The powerful new Android version of Google Maps provides you with real-time traffic information, turn-by-turn directions, public-transport updates and recommended places to refuel – yourself as well as your car. ‘Google Maps – Navigation & Transport’, to give the app its full title, has faced stiff competition in recent months. Innovative new driving apps such as AutoBud ([theautobud.com](http://theautobud.com)) and offline navigation tools such as RunGo ([www.rungoapp.com](http://www.rungoapp.com)) left the old Google Maps looking rather limited. So Google has turned Maps into the only app you need to get from A to B and explore whatever location you find yourself in.

You’ll notice the difference as soon as you open it. A new panel below the map suggests where to get breakfast, lunch or dinner nearby, depending on the time of day. Swipe up for details of these eateries, then swipe further to find other useful places nearby (supermarkets, petrol stations, cash machines – even florists) and to see users’ photos of your current locale. And that’s just the default Places tab. Next to it are transport tabs with up-to-the-minute travel information, directions on screen and out loud, and even an ETA (estimated time of arrival) for the mode you choose and current conditions. There’s support for Uber and other cab services, as well as local public-transport schedules for 15,000 cities worldwide.

Navigation apps succeed or fail on speed and accuracy, and the new Google Maps doesn’t disappoint. Maps and directions load and refresh instantly, provided you’ve got a decent internet connection. If you’re heading abroad or want to limit your mobile data usage, you can download routes and areas for offline access. They expire after 30 days to save space on your device, which is a welcome feature in an app that’s brimming with them.



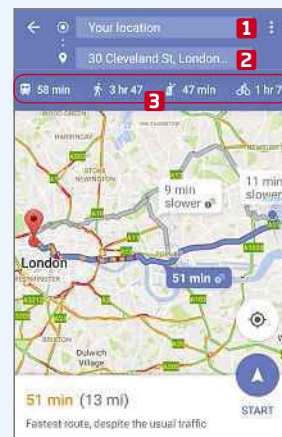
UPDATED



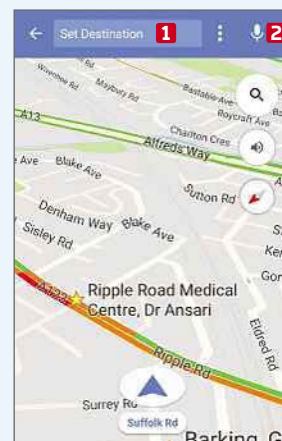
### MINI WORKSHOP

#### Get real-time driving directions using Google Maps

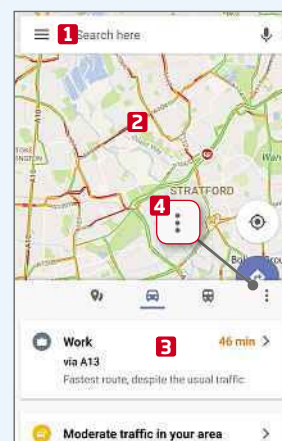
**1** Open Google Maps, which is pre-installed and updated automatically on Android. As ever, the map shows your current location. Tap the Driving icon. By default, you’re shown the fastest route to your saved workplace. Tap Work, then tap Start for turn-by-turn directions. Enter new start **1** and end **2** points if you want. To change transport mode, tap the bus/train, walking, taxi or cycling icons. **3**



**2** Alternatively, tap the menu icon, then tap ‘Start driving’. This instantly loads a satnav-style display. Tap Set Destination, **1** then tap one of the preset icons, which include Parking and ‘Petrol stations’. You can enter a postcode or place name instead. You’re then given an ETA and distance. Voice directions are enabled by default; tap the speaker icon to switch them off. **2**



**3** To see traffic conditions at a glance, tap the menu icon, **1** then tap Traffic. This automatically overlays the map with red, orange and green lines to indicate conditions in real time. **2** Swipe up from the bottom of the screen for details. **3** To see cycling, satellite and/or terrain features overlaid on the map, tap the three-dot icon, **4** then toggle the layers on and off.



Our rating



# This fortnight's top free and paid-for apps for Android, iOS and Windows phones and tablets, and smart TVs

## PAYMENT

### PayQwiq from Tesco

[www.payqwiq.com](http://www.payqwiq.com)

 4.2  7.1

Tesco has finally rolled out its contactless payment app across the whole UK, six months after launching it in Edinburgh and London. PayQwiq is designed to get you through the checkout in Tesco stores faster by using a QR code and your saved card details – although it'll take a bit of practice before this is actually quicker than whipping out your physical card. As an incentive for using the app, you get an extra 50 Clubcard points the first 10 times you use it. The app is PIN-protected to boost its security and there's a payment limit of £250.



Our rating



NEW

## COMPUTING

### Blynk

[www.blynk.cc](http://www.blynk.cc)

 4.0.3  8

Turn your phone or tablet into a programming dashboard for a microcomputer such as a Raspberry Pi ([www.raspberrypi.org](http://www.raspberrypi.org)) or Arduino ([www.arduino.org](http://www.arduino.org)), using this intriguing new app that started life a couple of years ago as a Kickstarter project ([bit.ly/kickblynk417](http://bit.ly/kickblynk417)). You could use Blynk to set up a home-automation system, a CCTV hub or even an air-traffic control centre for your drone. The makers insist that you don't need any coding expertise, but it may help to have a relative under the age of 15 who finds all this stuff second nature.



Our rating



NEW

## KIDS

### Lego Life

[bit.ly/legodroid417](http://bit.ly/legodroid417)

[bit.ly/legoios417](http://bit.ly/legoios417)

 4.1  8

The internet is full of forums for Lego fans to swap ideas and show off their creations, but they can be intimidating places, so Lego has launched its own social app for under-13s. Comments are strictly moderated, profile photos are all Lego Minifigures and no adverts are allowed – except, unsurprisingly, for Lego products. Kids can post photos of their builds, follow other users, compete in challenges, watch videos and comment on posts using special Lego emoji. It's potentially a five-star app, but it needs to sort out its technical teething troubles.



Our rating



NEW

## HEALTH

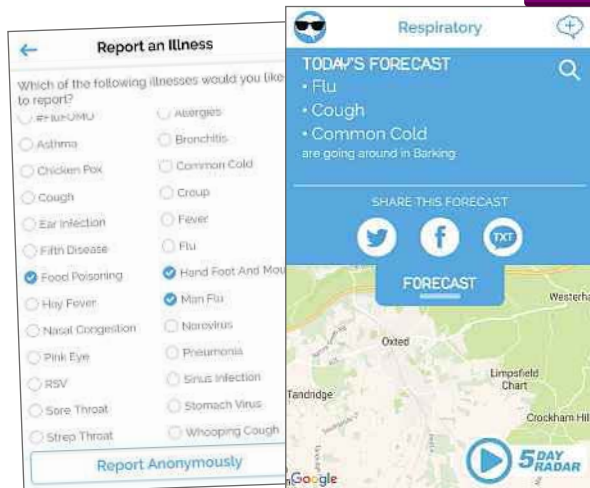
### Sickweather

[www.sickweather.com](http://www.sickweather.com)

 4.0.3  8

What lurgy is lurking round your corner? You can find out which bugs are currently afflicting your area – or workplace, school or the city you're about to spend a spring break in – using this real-time map of maladies.

Sickweather crowdsources more than six million illness reports every month. It draws data from Facebook, Twitter and so on, then automatically turns it into an accurate, up-to-date map of the world's current conditions. There's even a '5 Day Radar' that forecasts where today's bugs will travel next. Give the app location access to discover the disorders on your doorstep, then set alerts if you want to be notified when certain conditions are coming your way. You can, of course, contribute your own tales of torment to the database, too (tap Report Anonymously if you prefer). Sickweather is ever so slightly vulgar, and we love it.



Our rating



NEW

## GET THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO ANDROID

Our updated Android MagBook is packed with 148 pages of apps, workshops and advice to unlock the full potential of your tablet and phone.



### Discover how to:

- Master new tools in Lollipop and Marshmallow
- Stop apps leaking your personal data
- Record anything on your phone and tablet
- Prevent updates from wrecking your device
- Remove hidden junk so it never comes back
- Switch from iOS without losing data

Order it now from Amazon at [bit.ly/androidbook2016](http://bit.ly/androidbook2016)

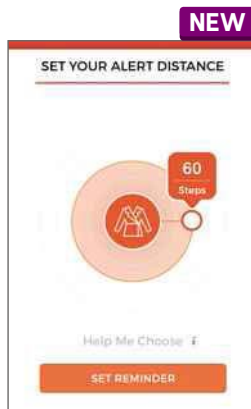
## REMINDERS

### Don't Leave It

[www.dontleaveitapp.com](http://www.dontleaveitapp.com)



You'll never again leave home without your wallet, keys or umbrella, using this location-based memory aid that assumes you'll remember to take your iPhone or iPad. It's very easy to use. Before you leave the house, tap one of 80 preset items, which bizarrely include Dog, Liquor and Clothes as well as more common forgettables, then set an Alert Distance (the default is 60 steps). This creates a virtual geographical boundary – a geofence – that triggers an alert when you cross it. It may sound sinister but it's really just a step-counting app with notifications built in. It's free to use, but there's an in-app purchase of 99p to remove ads.



Our rating



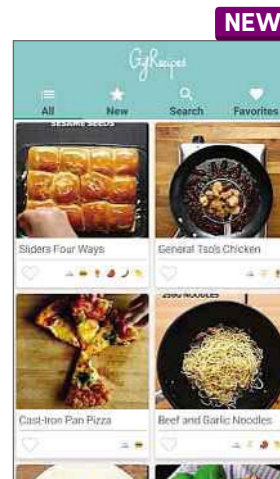
## COOKING

### Gif Recipes

[bit.ly/gifrecipes417](http://bit.ly/gifrecipes417)



Follow 1,200 video recipes without having to endure the sound of a chef waffling over the top. Search for whatever tickles your tastebuds, or tap New to see the latest recipes in the form of GIFs. The videos are all filmed from the cook's point of view, and most are very easy to follow. Tap the screen to pause, then tap again to continue playing. Below the video, you'll find further details about the recipe and user comments, and if you love a dish you can tap the heart to add it to your Favorites. It's a shame about the full-screen ads, though.



Our rating



## 5 NEW APPS WORTH PAYING FOR

### PC SYNC

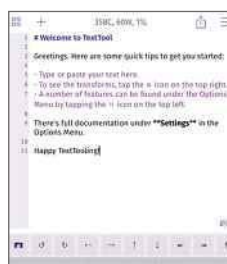
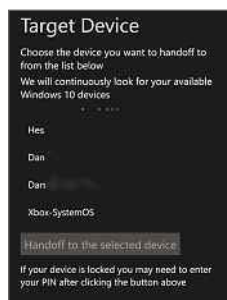
#### Hand Off

[bit.ly/handoff417](http://bit.ly/handoff417)

Price: £1.49



Transfer – or “hand off” – a work in progress (half-written document, half-read web page) from one Windows 10 device to another, then pick up where you left off. Works on PC and Xbox as well as Windows 10 phones and tablets.



A fiver is a fair price for this powerful word processor and text editor, which includes a scripting engine, text transform support, keyboard shortcuts and more.

### BOOKS

#### Epic!

[www.getepic.com](http://www.getepic.com)

Price: From £3.79 per month



Keep the kids and grandkids (or yourself) entertained with this fantastic digital library of more than 20,000 children's ebooks, audiobooks and educational videos.



### PRODUCTIVITY

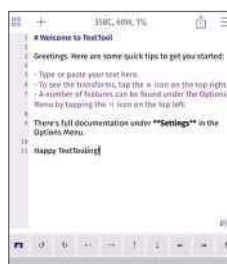
#### Control Procrastination

[bit.ly/control417](http://bit.ly/control417)

Price: £1.99



Break your procrastination habit by using this app to temporarily block distracting websites in Safari. You're then prompted to think twice (“are you sure you want to start browsing Facebook?”) before removing the block.



### INTERNET

#### Wi-Fi Widget

[bit.ly/widget417](http://bit.ly/widget417)

Price: 99p (introductory price)



See, test and share your Wi-Fi network from your lock screen. The app is especially useful for quickly sharing your Wi-Fi password with visiting friends and family.



Hand Off



Control Procrastination



TextTool 2



Epic!



Wi-Fi Widget





## Best New Mobile Games

## VIRTUAL PET

## My Talking Hank

[bit.ly/hank417](http://bit.ly/hank417) 4.1  8

Talking Tom, the virtual cat that responds to your every word and touch, has billions of fans worldwide and he now has a canine equivalent called Hank. As with Tom, the aim of the game is to keep your pet well-fed, rested and relieved, while collecting gems around his island and taking photos of the other animals he encounters. But the really fun part is that when you speak to Hank, he'll talk back to you in his doggy voice. Be warned that the game contains in-app purchases, so shouldn't be left in the hands of unattended youngsters.



Our rating

★★★★☆

## NEW

## SIMULATION

## The Wolf

[thewolfimulator.com](http://thewolfimulator.com) 4  8

"Mouth is alive with juices like wine, and I'm hungry like the wolf," sang Duran Duran and, as you'll discover from this howlingly good role-playing game, Simon Le Bon wasn't joking. You assume the character of a wild wolf (choose from species including grey, dhole and black) who must survive in the wilderness by building strength and developing skills to become the alpha of the pack. The Wolf's hunting mode lets you search for prey such as rabbits, foxes and deer, and you can cooperate with other players to take on opponents.



Our rating

★★★★★

## NEW

## PUZZLE

## Unblock Me Free

[bit.ly/unblockme417](http://bit.ly/unblockme417) 2.3.3  7

If you fancy something less involved than feeding a dog or being a wolf, Unblock Me is a simple, addictive puzzle game that trains your brain. You move a trapped red block out of the onscreen board by swiping other blocks out of the way, which may sound easy but you need to free the red block in as few moves as possible, and the puzzles become increasingly complex as you progress. There are four difficulty levels with hints to help you when you get stuck, although you only get a set number for free. It's a shame about the annoying ads, too.



Our rating

★★★★☆

## UPDATED

 Don't install...

## SuperMacro

[bit.ly/super417](http://bit.ly/super417)

We never cease to be amazed at some of the rubbish floating around the Play store and this app for creating time-saving macros on your phone is a shining example. Not only is its description page poorly translated – "hard are you to hand the simple repetitive tasks?" – but it seems confused about whether your device needs to be rooted or not. It even states: "This app does not work!", an assertion borne out by many disappointed user reviews.

...Install this instead 

## MacroDroid

[bit.ly/macro417](http://bit.ly/macro417) 4

Any app that makes life easier has got to be worth installing and MacroDroid is one of the most useful we've seen, automating the repetitive, boring tasks that you perform on your phone every day. For example, it automatically turns on Wi-Fi when you launch a streaming app such as Netflix or Spotify; replies to text messages asking "where are you?" with your current location; and plays a sound when your battery is fully charged, so you don't need to keep checking. The free, ad-supported version limits you to five 'macros' and some require your device to be rooted, but it's so simple and handy that we wouldn't be surprised if you upgrade. ■





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What you're about to read is completely true, unlike many stories you see online. **David Crookes** exposes the facts behind fake news

**36** 22 Feb - 7 Mar 2017

says 62% of US adults get at least some of their news from social media. It means there's an increasing likelihood of someone sharing fake news and you clicking it out of curiosity.

### Isn't a lot of this just entertainment?

Yes, some of it is. Spoof-news sites such as The Onion ([www.theonion.com](http://www.theonion.com)), NewsThump ([newsthump.com](http://newsthump.com)) and The Daily Mash ([thedailymash.co.uk](http://thedailymash.co.uk)) have been around for a while, providing satirical commentary on current affairs. But they don't pretend to carry real news and it's usually obvious that their stories are jokes (although some are still taken at face value and shared). Awareness of these sites is so high that the hashtag #NotTheOnion is often used on Twitter by people sharing a real story that beggars belief.



The Daily Mash is one of many sites offering a satirical take on the news

### What do fake-news creators get out of it?

Motives vary, but aside from political persuasion, money is at the root of much fake news. Indeed, a lot of fake sites have been traced to the city of Veles in Macedonia where teenagers can reportedly earn thousands of euros a day making up stories for website owners ([bit.ly/veles417](http://bit.ly/veles417)). The sites then earn revenue through advertising and often promote big brands next to fake news, which gives them a veneer of legitimacy.

### But why do companies run their ads on these sites?

They don't do it deliberately – it's down to the complexity of online advertising. Internet ad agencies take space on websites and then rotate the adverts that appear. The advertisers have no knowledge of or control over where their ads are displayed. MPs hope to cut the funding of fake-news sites by examining how advertising is bought, sold and placed online.

### Why aren't social networks clamping down?

They are. As well as removing the ability to spoof domains, Facebook is calling on

its members and US fact checkers to report fake news stories, which it will flag up with an explanation as to why the story is being disputed. The company is also looking at ways to use members' behaviour to identify fake news, and has suggested that stories that are read and then not shared may be a "sign that the story has misled people in some way".

Facebook is also a member of the First Draft Partner Network ([bit.ly/first417](http://bit.ly/first417)), along with the BBC, Twitter, The Guardian, YouTube, Channel 4 News, Sky News and many more. This is a coalition of platforms and publishers that looks at the best ways to verify content that's been posted on social media.

### What about Google?

Google has been punishing fake news sites by banning them from carrying Google ads on their pages. It has targeted around 200 websites so far, prohibiting adverts on sites that propagate "misrepresented content". Google has also vowed to invest in better detection, fearing the fake-news writers will try to trick the system.



Facebook tries to detect and highlight fake-news stories shared by users

### Could all this affect 'real' news?

Definitely. The mainstream media is worried that fake news causes general distrust and there is an added danger that a time-pressured journalist could find a hoax story on social media and report it as being true. But it's not just the news itself that can be faked. Recently, a man called Greg Bryan falsely described himself as a multimedia sports journalist for *The Star* in Sheffield and tweeted transfer rumours and news about Sheffield United football club. The paper was forced to publicly deny that he was linked to the publication.

## HOW CAN I SPOT A FAKE NEWS STORY?

Even if a news story appears outlandish, that's not to say it's not real. Here are four ways to check for fakery



**1** Look at the source, the site's URL and the presence of quotes. See if the story is verified elsewhere, on a well-known news outlet such as BBC News. If you can't find any legitimate backup to a claim, it could be fictional.



**3** Follow the BBC's Reality Check service @BBCRealityCheck on Twitter. This was set up during the EU referendum and is dedicated to looking out for fabricated stories on Facebook, Instagram and other social media.



**2** Visit a fact-checking website such as Snopes ([snopes.com](http://snopes.com)), FullFact ([fullfact.org](http://fullfact.org)) or FactCheck ([factcheck.org](http://factcheck.org)). These reveal the truth behind a great number of urban legends, myths, rumours and fake stories.



**4** Install Slate's Chrome extension This Is Fake, ([www.thisisfake.org](http://www.thisisfake.org)), which spots fake news on Facebook and lets you warn others. Also try BS Detector ([bit.ly/bs417](http://bit.ly/bs417)) and Official Media Bias Fact Check ([bit.ly/bias417](http://bit.ly/bias417)).

# Download Paid-For Sof

## COVER FEATURE

Not all tech prices are rising – in fact, many have been scrapped completely. **Wayne Williams** picks the 20 best formerly paid-for programs and apps that you can now download for free



PREVIOUSLY COST UP TO £10

### CHAT APP

#### WhatsApp

[www.whatsapp.com](http://www.whatsapp.com)

##### How much did it cost?

It used to cost a nominal 69p a year.

##### Why is it now free?

Facebook acquired the app in 2014 and made it entirely free in 2016 – probably in an effort to increase the user base.

##### What's so good about it?

WhatsApp provides an easy way to chat with friends and share media, for free. You can also call friends directly in the app, which is available for iOS, Android, Windows Phone, PC and Mac. Messages



are secured using end-to-end encryption, so you don't need to worry about snoopers.

Because WhatsApp is so popular, many of your friends and contacts are likely to have it already, but you can

easily invite anyone who doesn't to download and start using it.

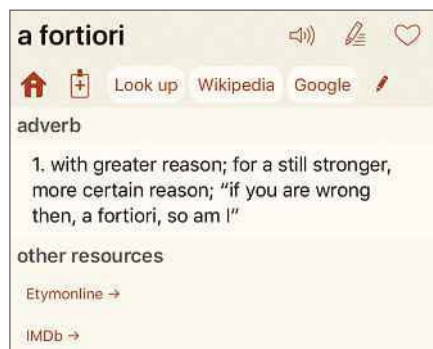
##### What's the catch?

Facebook had intended to use WhatsApp data to customise advertising on the social network but following an outcry, it dropped the practice in the UK and Europe. Hopefully that will remain the case.

### REFERENCE APP

#### Terminology for iPhone

[bit.ly/term417](http://bit.ly/term417)



##### How much did it cost?

It was previously priced at 79p.

##### Why is it now free?

The app hadn't been updated in a while and wasn't generating much revenue. After giving it away free in a Starbucks promotion, which created a surge of renewed interest, the developer decided to create a new version and make it free.

##### What's so good about it?

Terminology is described as "a browser for the English language" and includes a full offline dictionary with concise definitions for words and phrases, a thesaurus and a reference tool. You can use it to quickly look up something on the web or in other apps.

##### What's the catch?

The app is free, but ad-supported. There's also a \$1.99 (£1.59) in-app 'Pro' unlock that removes ads and enables custom action editing and a dark theme.

### MUSIC APP

#### Hype Machine for iOS and Android

[hypem.com](http://hypem.com)

##### How much did it cost?

The popular music-discovery app used to cost \$3.99 (£3.20).

##### Why is it now free?

Hype Machine was unable to make enough money from sales of its paid-for app, so it switched to an ad-based model instead.

##### What's so good about it?

Hype Machine scans thousands of posts from music blogs and aggregates the content, making the songs shared on the blogs available to listen to on your mobile device. You can search by track name or artist to view all the matching blog posts and songs.



Most of the artists featured are rather obscure or up and coming, but it's a great way to find new music. You can preview a new album in full every week.

##### What's the catch?

The app is now ad-supported and no longer has the useful option to download music to listen to offline.

# Software That's Now FREE!

**W**e're so used to reading about tech prices going up – from broadband to iOS apps – that it's both a surprise and a pleasure to learn that a once-expensive product is now available for free.

Obviously, as you see in *Web User* every issue, there are plenty of brilliant free programs and apps around, but Premium and Pro versions of software have the advantage of being unrestricted, offering many more features and being free of ads and nags.

Over the last year, many quality tools you previously needed to pay for have become completely free. In this feature, we round up our favourites – full software, not free trials – and explain why you should download them.

Our list of newly free products includes image editors, photo filters, professional video tools, system and security software, iOS and Android apps, and much more, and will save you a grand total of at least £1,327. We also show you how to use two of our favourite new freebies.

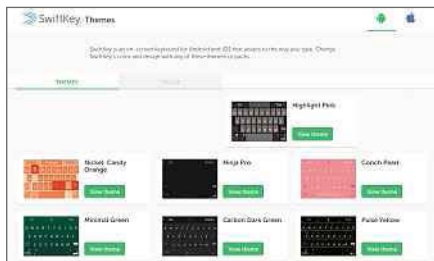
## KEYBOARD THEMES

### SwiftKey Premium themes

[open.swiftkey.com](http://open.swiftkey.com)

#### How much did it cost?

The award-winning mobile keyboard used to charge up to \$1.99 (£1.58) for each of its attractive themes.



#### Why is it now free?

Although an exact reason hasn't been given – beyond the company wanting to spread some Christmas cheer (the themes went free at the start of December 2016) – SwiftKey was purchased by Microsoft last year, and it's likely the software giant didn't see any point in charging for themes.

#### What's so good about it?

If you use the popular SwiftKey keyboard on your Android or iOS device, the themes let you completely change its look. With over 100 themes on offer, you're bound to find a design that you like. In addition to making the themes free, SwiftKey launched some new Vivid themes, which are also free.

#### What's the catch?

None that we can see, which is especially pleasing because SwiftKey was our Gold Award-winning Android

keyboard in Issue 416 ([bit.ly/webuser416](http://bit.ly/webuser416)).

## SYSTEM TOOL

### Ultimate Settings Panel

[www.ultimatesettingspanel.co.uk](http://www.ultimatesettingspanel.co.uk)

#### How much did it cost?

This powerful Windows-tweaking software previously sold for £3.99.

#### Why is it now free?

The developer decided to consolidate the Lite and Pro versions of the software into a single full-featured free program.

#### What's so good about it?

Ultimate Settings Panel provides instant access to more than 280 Windows tools and settings, many of which are usually hidden away and difficult to find. A set of tabs along the top lets you select a version of Windows, or an area of the OS, and the available tools then appear as buttons below. We featured a Workshop about Ultimate Settings Panel in our last issue.



#### What's the catch?

Accessing the download link on the website is a little tricky because you get redirected to the parent company website.

## PASSWORD MANAGER

### LastPass Multi-Device Access

[lastpass.com](http://lastpass.com)

#### How much did it cost?

If you wanted to sync your LastPass passwords between different devices – PCs, tablets and phones – you had to pay \$12 (£9.60) a year.



#### Why is it now free?

Announcing the change, LastPass said: "By offering LastPass for free across all your devices, we're making it that much easier for everyone to make good password habits the norm. Because when you have a password manager that goes everywhere you do, you have a strong foundation for securing and taking control of your identity".

#### What's so good about it?

LastPass stores your passwords securely and syncs them between any devices you use. It can save and fill in passwords, generate unguessable logins and store notes securely. It also supports two-factor authentication for an extra layer of protection.

#### What's the catch?

LastPass still has a Premium tier that costs \$1 (80p) a month and provides extra features, such as family sharing and 1GB of encrypted file storage.

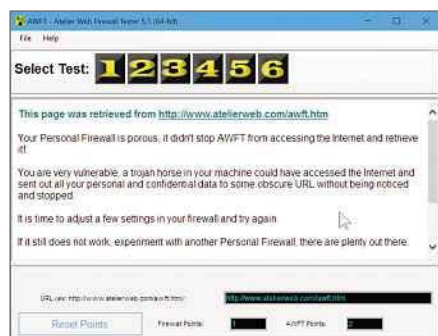


**PREVIOUSLY COST £10 TO £29.99**

## SECURITY TOOL

### Atelier Web Firewall Tester

[www.atelierweb.com](http://www.atelierweb.com)



#### How much did it cost?

It used to be priced at \$19.95 (£15.98).

#### Why is it now free?

The generous developers simply made the decision to make it freeware.

#### What's so good about it?

A firewall is supposed to protect you from incoming and outgoing threats, but how do you know for certain that yours is working as intended? Atelier Web Firewall Tester performs a set of tests and tells you just how secure your firewall really is.

#### What's the catch?

You need a bit of technical knowledge to understand the result. The program doesn't officially support Windows 10 (although we found it worked), and hasn't been updated in a while. However, it's ad-free and doesn't come with bundled junk.

## SECURITY APP

### Avast Mobile Security

[bit.ly/ams417](http://bit.ly/ams417)

#### How much did it cost?

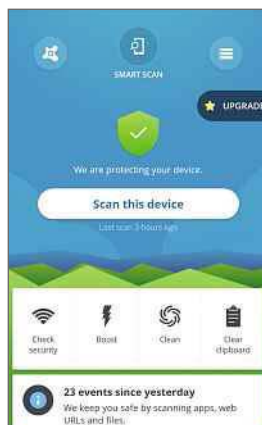
The Android app used to cost \$19.99 (£16.02) per year

#### Why is it now free?

Avast made the decision to switch Mobile Security to a free, ad-based model.

#### What's so good about it?

The free version contains many of the features that you originally had to pay for. The app includes antivirus, a call blocker, app locker, privacy advisor, firewall, charging booster, RAM boost, junk cleaner, web shield, Wi-Fi scanner and Wi-Fi speed test.



#### What's the catch?

Some previously available features, such as the firewall and network-usage meter, have been discontinued. Avast has also introduced a new paid-for version that's ad-free.

## NOTE-TAKING TOOL

### Instapaper Premium

[www.instapaper.com/premium](http://www.instapaper.com/premium)

#### How much did it cost?

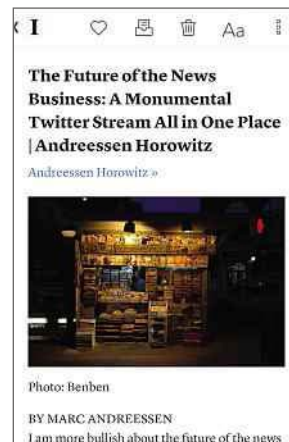
Until recently, the premium version of the bookmarking and syncing service cost \$29.99 (£23.90) a year.

#### Why is it now free?

Instapaper was acquired by Pinterest last year and this gave the company the finances it needed to drop its paid-for version.

#### What's so good about it?

Instapaper lets you save unlimited articles, videos and web pages, and sync them across the web and to iOS and Android. It offers full text search for articles, unlimited notes, speed reading and more.



#### What's the catch?

Nothing. Instapaper Premium is now completely free and there are no ads to worry about. It won the Silver Award in our comparison of read-it-later tools in Issue 412 ([bit.ly/webuser412](http://bit.ly/webuser412)).



## MINI WORKSHOP | Remove unwanted programs with Ashampoo Uninstaller 5



**1** The main menu provides four options – you can uninstall any existing applications **1** or install and monitor a new program. **2** You can also access Windows tools **3** and turn on automatic installation monitoring. **4** Any recent installations are shown here. **5** The menu bar at the top **6** takes you to the different areas.



**2** Click the Uninstall button and you'll be shown a list of items you can remove. **1** You can sort this by clicking the column headings: name, manufacturer, install date and size. **2** Select a program to see if its installation was logged or not. **3** Click the Uninstall button above **4** to remove it.



**3** The program will remove the unwanted item along with any leftover junk. The Tools section **1** includes some useful system tools sorted into categories **2** which include System Maintenance, File Tools and Windows-Tools. Select a tool to launch it. You can customise Ashampoo Uninstaller under General, Options.

## SLIDESHOW CREATOR

### ScatterShow

[bit.ly/sshow417](http://bit.ly/sshow417)

#### How much did it cost?

It used to be \$30 (£24) and even now you can find it for sale on various websites, including Amazon, for around £20 ([bit.ly/buyss417](http://bit.ly/buyss417)).

#### Why is it now free?

The developer is offering ScatterShow for no money in exchange for you signing up to its mailing list.



#### What's so good about it?

ScatterShow lets you turn your photos into a video slideshow that

you can save to your computer, share on Facebook or upload to YouTube. You can pull in photos from your PC, phone, Instagram and social-media accounts. It's easy to use and has plenty of great options. The program is available for both Windows and Mac.

#### What's the catch?

You need to enter an email address to access the download links and get a serial number to activate the software. However, you can make up an address because it won't be checked.



**PREVIOUSLY COST £30 TO £99.99**

## DISC-AUTHORING TOOL

### Ashampoo Burning Studio 2017

[bit.ly/burn417](http://bit.ly/burn417)

#### How much did it cost?

Ashampoo Burning Studio 18, which this program is based on, costs £39.99.

#### Why is it now free?

This is really a cut-down and renamed version of the current paid-for edition of Burning Studio.

#### What's so good about it?

It can do pretty much anything you'd want from disc-authoring software, including writing data to CDs, DVDs and



Blu-rays; creating (and ripping) audio discs; making and burning disc images;

and printing covers and labels.

#### What's the catch?

Burning Studio 2017 is missing some features from Burning Studio 18, such as presets for writing music for your car's particular radio model, but don't let that put you off.

## UNINSTALLER

### Ashampoo Uninstaller 5

[bit.ly/auninstall417](http://bit.ly/auninstall417)

#### How much did it cost?

It originally cost £48 (\$59.99).

#### Why is it now free?

Our second free pick from Ashampoo is an older version its Uninstaller, which is updated at least once a year.



#### What's so good about it?

Uninstaller 5 can uninstall programs speedily, then scan and remove leftover remnants. It also monitors new installations and comes with 12 system tools, including a drive cleaner, Registry optimiser and disk defragmenter.

#### What's the catch?

You need to enter your email address to get a free activation key during installation. You'll also be nagged to buy other Ashampoo software. See our Mini Workshop on the opposite page to find out how to uninstall programs using Ashampoo Uninstaller 5.

## MEDIA CENTER

### Plex Media Player with Plex Pass

[www.plex.tv](http://www.plex.tv)

#### How much did it cost?

The Plex Pass – Plex's premium subscription service – used to cost \$39.99 (£31.90) per year.

#### Why is it now free?

With rival Kodi ([kodi.tv](http://kodi.tv)) now so popular, the Plex team want to encourage more users to try its software, particularly the features that were previously paid-for.

#### What's so good about it?

You can run a central media server and access your content from any device

running Plex. It works on Windows, Mac, Linux and embedded systems such as Raspberry Pi. There are also mobile apps available.

#### What's the catch?

None. If you like Plex, you can now use the Media Player without any restriction and there's less of the legal stigma that accompanies Kodi.



## DEFRAGMENTING TOOL

### Vopt

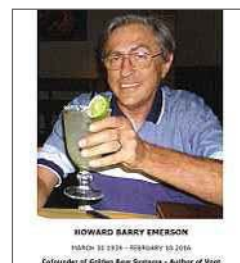
[www.goldenbow.com](http://www.goldenbow.com)

#### How much did it cost?

Vopt formerly retailed for \$40 (£32) for one computer, \$150 (£120) for five systems, \$240 (£192) for 10 systems and \$550 (£441) for 25 systems.

#### Why is it now free?

Sadly, the program's author (below) passed away last February, and the software was made free in accordance with his posthumous wishes.



#### What's so good about it?

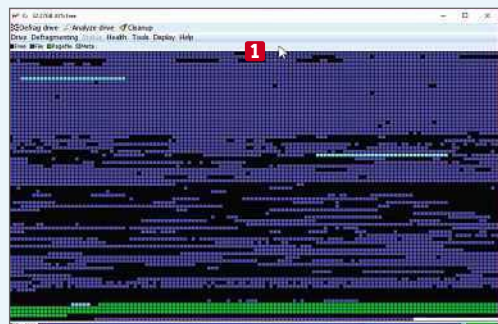
Windows comes with its own disk defragmenter, but third-party tools such as Vopt – one of the oldest

Windows defrag tools – do a better job. It can also clean up your system.

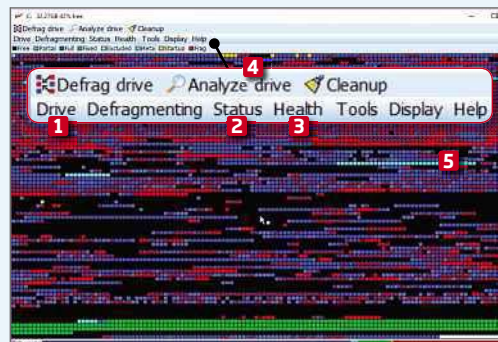


## MINI WORKSHOP

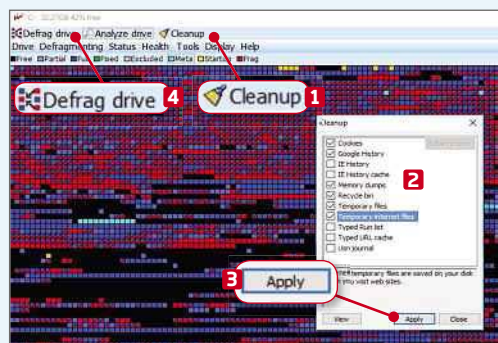
### Keep your PC running smoothly using Vopt



**1** Install Vopt and save the licence key as a TXT file to the folder at C:\Program Files (x86)\Golden Bow\Vopt 9. Run the program and it will analyse your drive and show a colour-coded disk-usage map. **1** Blue squares are file data, black are free, cyan are Windows metafiles, and green are fixed Windows files.



**2** Switch to a different disk by clicking Drive. **1** You can see the disk's status (how many files, how much fragmentation and so on) **2** and check its health. **3** Click the 'Analyze drive' button **4** to perform a full scan. It will present you with a new usage map, **5** showing other details, including fragmentation.



**3** Ideally, before defragmenting a drive, you should remove any junk files because you don't want to waste time, space and resources shuffling them around the disk. Click the Cleanup button, **1** choose what to remove **2** and click Apply. **3** When done, close that window and click 'Defrag drive' **4** to begin the disk-optimisation process.

### What's the catch?

You need to download the registration file from the website and copy it to the program's folder in Windows to unlock the software. Also, there (obviously) won't be any updates or bug fixes. It will defrag SSDs if you ask it to, which isn't something to be recommended. See our Mini Workshop, left, to find out how to use Vopt.

### FILE MANAGER

#### Konvertor

[www.konvertor.net](http://www.konvertor.net)

### How much did it cost?

It used to be \$60 (£48) and some download sources such as Softonic ([bit.ly/buyk417](http://bit.ly/buyk417)) are cheekily still selling it for that.

### Why is it now free?

The company hasn't given a reason, but we suspect it struggled to sell



enough copies at that price, especially since there are plenty of other free file managers available.

### What's so good about it?

Konvertor is a smart alternative to the Windows file manager. Its two-panel, multi-tabbed interface makes it easier to copy and move files between locations, as well as delete, rename, and search for them. It can display the contents of most files, including documents, images and videos.

### What's the catch?

There's no catch, but the software does include a Donate button.



**PREVIOUSLY COST OVER £100**

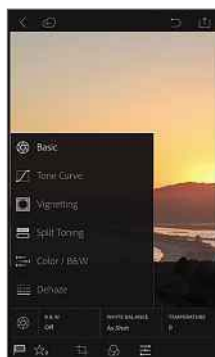
### IMAGE-EDITING APP

#### Adobe Lightroom Mobile

[bit.ly/lightroom417](http://bit.ly/lightroom417)

### How much did it cost?

To get Lightroom on mobile devices, users previously needed to sign up to Adobe Creative Cloud, which still costs from £8.57 a month or £102.84 a year (the minimum term you can sign up for). This subscription provided access to Lightroom (for Desktop as well as mobile and web), plus Photoshop CC.



### What's the catch?

The free version does away with the cloud-specific features it originally offered, so you can't sync changes between the mobile and Desktop versions of Lightroom.

### PHOTO ENLARGER

#### Reshade Image Enlarger

[reshade.com](http://reshade.com)

### How much did it cost?

The program originally retailed for \$129 (£102.89) and some online stores are still flogging it for that amount.



### Why is it now free?

There's no official word from the developer, but it's likely that the paid-for version wasn't selling enough copies.

**What's so good about it?**

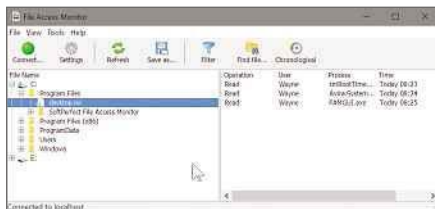
Enlarging smaller images often produces disappointing results because they lose sharpness and are marred by artefacts and jagged edges. Reshade Image Enlarger uses special photo-enlargement algorithms to produce cleaner results and can zoom an image by up to 2,000%. It also comes with plenty of advanced options.

**What's the catch?**

There isn't one. It's entirely free, with no bundled junk, and you don't need to enter any personal details to get the software.

**SYSTEM MONITOR****SoftPerfect File Access Monitor**

[bit.ly/fam417](http://bit.ly/fam417)

**How much did it cost?**

This file system-monitoring software was previously \$149.99 (£119.63).

**Why is it now free?**

The software was made free after being discontinued.

**What's so good about it?**

It monitors all file-system activity on your PC, including file creation, file deletion, and reads and writes. You can filter the details and it can be used to identify possible problems and malware infections.

**What's the catch?**

There's no support and there will be no further updates or releases.

**PHOTO FILTERS****Google Nik Collection**

[www.google.com/nikcollection](http://www.google.com/nikcollection)

**How much did it cost?**

Before Nik Software was acquired by Google in 2012, its image-editing Photoshop plugins and tools were priced at a whopping \$500 (£401). The software giant reduced this to \$149.99 (£119.63) before dropping the price tag altogether.

**Why is it now free?**

Google has a history of releasing paid-for products for free after acquiring the original software developer, and this is just another instance of that.

**What's so good about it?**

The fantastic Nik collection consists of seven plugins for Photoshop – Analog Efex Pro, Color Efex Pro, Silver Efex Pro, Viveza, HDR Efex Pro, Sharpener Pro and Dfine – that work on both Windows and Mac. The filters are excellent and can transform ordinary photos into something much more impressive.

Although the plugins are designed to be used in Photoshop, they work perfectly in other image editors such as Paint.NET ([www.getpaint.net](http://www.getpaint.net)).

**What's the catch?**

It's a fairly sizable 429MB download and if you want to use the plugins in Paint.NET you'll first need to install the free PSFilterPDN plug-in ([bit.ly/psfpdn417](http://bit.ly/psfpdn417)).

**ANIMATION SOFTWARE****OpenToonz**

[bit.ly/toonz417](http://bit.ly/toonz417)

**How much did it cost?**

Before March last year, prospective purchasers had to call the sales office to get a price and the software reportedly cost thousands. The new Premium version costs £301 (€349).

**Why is it now free?**

Digital Video, the Italian studio behind Toonz, was acquired by Japanese publisher Dwango last year. Part of the purchase agreement was that an open-source version of Toonz would be released – hence OpenToonz.

**What's so good about it?**

Toonz is used in the creation of 2D animation and has been used in the past by the world-famous Japanese anime company Studio Ghibli and the team behind animated series *Futurama*. There are no restrictions so you can use the software for any animation, including commercial creations, without paying a thing. OpenToonz is available for Windows and Mac.

**What's the catch?**

It's tricky for novices to master and some features from Toonz have been removed or modified in this version. It lacks some customisation options, too, but it's still an unbelievable freebie. ■

**NEXT ISSUE**

on sale Wednesday 8 March 2017

# Your Complete Guide To... STAYING ANONYMOUS

Every tool you'll ever need to hide your identity from hackers, scammers and government spies

**PLUS...**

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Transfer and convert movie memories before it's too late
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# Best safer-browsing tools



Since Web of Trust (WOT) lost the confidence of web users (see our news story in Issue 411), **Andy Shaw** has been testing the alternatives

**Webutation** | [www.webutation.net](http://www.webutation.net) | ★★★★★☆  
FEATURES ★★★★★ PERFORMANCE ★★★★★ EASE OF USE ★★★★★

WebUser  
GOLD  
AWARD

## What we liked:

Webutation is a website that lets you type in the address of a site you want to check the integrity of and see the results immediately (as long as it's a website that's been scanned previously). There's also a browser add-on available for Chrome and Firefox (though there are reports of compatibility problems with recent versions of Mozilla's browser) and a bookmarklet that works in any browser.

The combination of the website and the Chrome add-on is what we like most about the service. Neither is perfect, and the other award-winning services in this test do a better job individually as a website and an add-on, but they don't offer the same combination of instant protection and research tools.

Webutation uses a selection of resources to build its opinion of a website, pairing information from Google's Safe Browsing database ([bit.ly/safe417](http://bit.ly/safe417)) and an unbranded website-antivirus scanner. It also uses a 'social reputation' score, gathering information from Wikipedia, a parental-guidance rating, WOT and Webutation's own users' reviews. This is all put

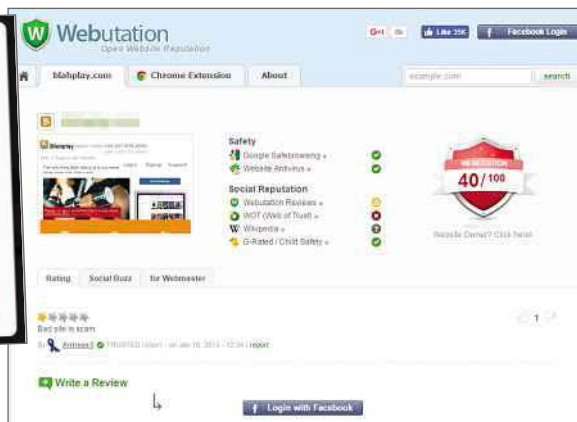


together to give each site a trust score out of 100.

The Chrome add-on only does one thing, which is to block your access to sites that fall below a certain level. For example, when we tried to visit a site that only had a Webutation score of 40 out of 100, the screen went black and a warning appeared. You can get around this warning but it provides a useful indication of whether a site is worth further investigation before you risk visiting it.

## How it can be improved:

Other add-ons put ticks or green lights next to results in Google searches so you get an up-front, at-a-glance safety check, but Webutation offers no indication of whether a site is safe or not



until you've clicked on it. Also, the link back to the website from the add-on is wrong, so you still need to research blocked sites manually.

## OUR VERDICT

**When it comes to the crunch, none of the services we've reviewed here is perfect and there's plenty of room for improvement. But Webutation's combination of a block that stops you in your tracks, backed up by a database built on trusted services and real users' experiences, is about as good as it gets.**

**URLVoid** | [www.urlvoid.com](http://www.urlvoid.com) | ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★ PERFORMANCE ★★★★★ EASE OF USE ★★★★★

WebUser  
SILVER  
AWARD

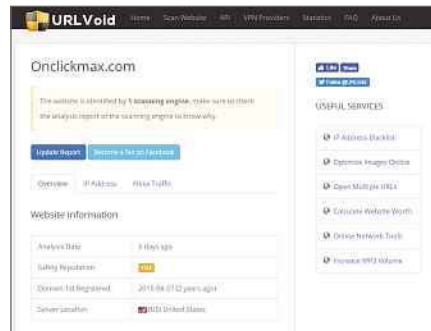
## What we liked:

URLVoid is a website that's screaming out for someone to make a browser tool out of it. It's similar in concept to Webutation's online database of site information, but instead of using just a few trusted services, it follows the VirusTotal ([www.virustotal.com](http://www.virustotal.com)) model and scrutinises every site it tests using a long list of external resources, including the ones associated with most of the other products we've reviewed here.

Unlike VirusTotal, where a problem flagged up by just one or two sites could be taken as a false positive, we would recommend that you take URLVoid's individual recommendations of one or two warning flags more seriously, because none of the tools in this test is as comprehensive as we'd like, and URLVoid goes a long way to counter this with its breadth.

## How it can be improved:

There's no browser add-on to warn you of threats as you surf, which means



you're probably going to have to install one of the other services as well. You could use URLVoid in conjunction with Webutation: when the latter blocks a site, you could use URLVoid's extended reputation database to look up information on it.

## OUR VERDICT

If URLVoid had a browser add-on, it would win our Gold Award in a flash. It looks and feels like the excellent VirusTotal and is a fantastic resource, but it would be a lot easier to use if it had a browser add-on.

**Avast Online Security** | [bit.ly/avast417](http://bit.ly/avast417) | ★★★★★  
 FEATURES ★★★★★ PERFORMANCE ★★★★★ EASE OF USE ★★★★★

WebUser  
BRONZE  
AWARD

## What we liked:

Avast Online Security is a Chrome add-on that's had almost as chequered a history as WOT, because some time ago it inserted adware that led shoppers toward particular sites.

Thankfully, it's since been cleaned up.

This was the only add-on we tested that flagged torrent sites as potentially suspicious in Google search results when we used the dubious search term 'download rogue one free'. They were only greyed out as questionable, rather than marked as completely suspicious, but we felt this was a solid step in the right direction if you want your browser to protect you from potentially harmful sites.

The add-on also blocks advertising and social-media trackers, which you might find useful if you don't already have another tool that does this.

## How it can be improved:

The software successfully marks up Google searches, but it doesn't flag



advertising links. Also, it only works with Google and doesn't examine links in DuckDuckGo or Bing searches. The additional tracking and blocking tools are useful, but a dedicated tool such as Ghostery ([www.ghostery.com](http://www.ghostery.com)) will give you more control over what is blocked and what isn't, which we find preferable to Avast's blanket approach.

## OUR VERDICT

Avast Online Security does little more than just check your links as you browse, though it does this reasonably well and queried some sites that we had our doubts about, which the other services had let through without question.

## BEST OF THE REST

### Bitdefender Traffic Light

[bit.ly/bdtl417](http://bit.ly/bdtl417)

Bitdefender Traffic Light is an add-on for Chrome, Firefox and Safari, but we found that it wasn't as strict as Avast. That said, it called out an innocuous site just for having Facebook links on it. You may or may not agree with Facebook tracking your location but it's probably not something that would put most people off visiting a site.



### Avira Browser Safety

[bit.ly/avira417](http://bit.ly/avira417)

Avira's add-on, available for Chrome and Firefox, is a basic reporting tool that sits in the corner of your browser. We found its icon confusing, because it's always red and when it encounters a page with trackers, a small green icon appears over the top, implying that the site is safe but that it's blocking the trackers. We found this distracted us from the core ability we wanted, which was for the software to warn us of more serious dangers.



### Norton Safe Search

[safeweb.norton.com](http://safeweb.norton.com)

Norton's service lets you check the reputation of websites. However, its Safe Search add-on takes over Chrome's search tool entirely, so when you type a search term into the address bar, it opens in Norton's own search engine. This may provide a protected environment but we weren't impressed by such heavy-handed tactics.



# Reboot anything from anywhere



reboot

Nothing fixes problems as quickly as turning a device off and on again. **Edward Munn** explains how to reboot your router, PC and phone, wherever you are



## Reboot your router

Rebooting your router at regular intervals keeps it running smoothly, but if you're the sort of person who forgets to do this (and we know we are!), you can automate the process so that it happens at the same time every day. Whichever model of router you have, the easiest way to do this is to use a simple timer plug (see below). You can set this to turn the power off for a minute and then switch it back on, forcing your router to reboot. It's a good idea to buy one with a high power (wattage) rating because you can then run a surge-protected power line from it and reboot your modem, router and any other network devices all at once. A digital power timer should offer the

greatest flexibility – some mechanical models only offer settings of 15-minute intervals. For even more control over the process of rebooting your router, including the option to

*Use a timer plug to reboot network devices when it's most convenient*

change your schedule while you're out, try a smart plug such as the TP-Link HS100 ([bit.ly/smart417](http://bit.ly/smart417)). Bear in mind that these networked devices rely on a connection to your router, so if you set one to switch off the router rather than restart it, you may not be able to switch it back on remotely.

If you have a BT Home Hub, you can reboot your router remotely using the My BT app ([bit.ly/mybt417](http://bit.ly/mybt417)), as well as check your recent bills and the status of broadband in your area. To reset your router using the app, simply open the side menu, swipe up to 'Restart my Hub' and press the button to confirm.

**My BT lets you reboot your router remotely from another network**

If you use a different type of router and you want to reset it without getting out of your seat, you can usually do so from your web browser – provided you know the administrator username and password. Type your router's IP address (usually <http://192.168.1.1>) into the address bar of your browser and log in to access its settings page. If you don't know your admin username and

password, try Nirsoft's dedicated tool (search for RouterPassView at [www.nirsoft.net](http://www.nirsoft.net)). Settings menus vary from router to router, but you can usually reboot your device simply by clicking the button to Apply or Save changes on its basic settings page. Altering a setting and then switching it immediately back to its original configuration should force this button to appear if it's greyed out. You need to be on the same network as the router to take advantage this method, but it could still save you having to walk up and down stairs repeatedly if you need to perform multiple reboots.



## Restart your PC remotely

If you want to reboot your PC remotely to install the latest updates,

the easiest way is to install a free remote-desktop app such as Chrome Remote Desktop ([bit.ly/chromeremote417](http://bit.ly/chromeremote417)) or Team Viewer ([www.teamviewer.com](http://www.teamviewer.com)).

Chrome Remote Desktop is our preferred option because it's so easy to set up and use. Once you've downloaded the app, run it and click the Get Started button under My Computers. Next, click Enable Remote Connections, enter a six-digit PIN and click OK. Click Yes when asked to install the Chrome Remote Host service. Confirm your account and enter your PIN to finish the process. Your PC



Desktop is always running in the background, even on startup. This means you can reconnect to your PC as soon as it's rebooted, even before entering your Windows password.

Chrome Remote Desktop is also available from the Google Play Store ([bit.ly/chromea417](http://bit.ly/chromea417)) and lets you perform all the same actions from your Android device. If you need to reboot your PC while you're away from it, this is the easiest way bar none.



## Schedule your PC to reboot

You can set your PC to reboot to a schedule without having to install any software or

apps. First, type `taskschd.msc` into the Start menu and press Enter to open the app. Click the 'Create basic task' button, give your task a name ('Reboot on Sunday', for example) and click Next. The window that appears asks 'When do you want the task to start?' Choose an answer that suits you from the list, then click Next. Once you've confirmed your choice, you'll see the Action page. From here, select 'Start a Program' and click Next. In the box for 'Program/script', type `shutdown` and then, in the 'Add arguments' box, enter `-r -f -t`. Alternatively, if you want your PC to shut down rather than restart, enter `-s` in the place of `-r`. Finally, click Next to review your configuration and Finish to complete the setup.



*Schedule your PC to reboot at the same time every week with Task Scheduler*



## Reboot your phone or tablet

Samsung phones and tablets can be set to restart at regular intervals to ensure

they're always running well. To set this up on your Samsung device, open the Settings menu, tap the Search button and type `Auto restart`. Tap the top result, switch the feature to On and enter the time and days you want your device to restart. If your Android device is made by a different company and is



*Set your Samsung device to restart at the same time every night*

rooted, you can try installing Power Schedule ([bit.ly/powerschedule417](http://bit.ly/powerschedule417)) from the Google Play Store. This lets you perform daily reboots as well as setting schedules for Aeroplane mode, Wi-Fi, Bluetooth and data connection (you don't need to root your device to use these other features). ■

## WHY YOU SHOULD REBOOT REGULARLY



Rebooting your computer, phone or router refreshes its software, clearing out problematic code and freeing up precious memory. If something stops working properly, there's a good chance that rebooting will solve the glitch and save you trawling through Task Manager to investigate the cause of the problem. For a PC, rebooting also enables Windows to install important updates, which can fix more persistent glitches. If you've ever left your PC running for days at a time, you might notice that it starts to run slowly, and the quickest and easiest way to remedy this is usually a reboot. The same is true of routers.



Whatever the cause, when your internet connection starts wavering, a quick reboot of your network devices should make everything work again.



*Shut down your PC on the go using your phone or tablet*

should now appear in the app under My Computers. If you've set Chrome to sync apps across all your devices, you'll now be able to open Chrome Remote Desktop on any of your computers and click your PC's name from the list to access it remotely.

The app gives you full control over the PC, so you can click the Start button to select Power and Restart to reboot your computer. Best of all, Chrome Remote

# What your phone LEAKS about you



Last issue, we revealed what personal info is shared by your browser. In part two, **Robert Irvine** looks at the privacy hole in your pocket

## If you're holding your phone

Here's an experiment: place your phone on a flat surface, then launch your mobile browser and visit the website

What Every Browser Knows About You ([webkay.robinlinus.com](http://webkay.robinlinus.com)). Swipe down the page to the Gyroscope section and the site will tell you: "Your Device is probably laying on a Table". Now, pick up your phone and the text will instantly change to say: "Your Device is probably in your Hands".

*Your phone's compass tells the web when you're holding the device*

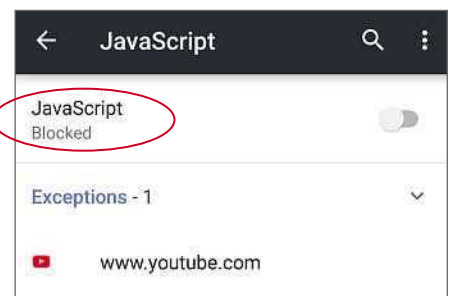


Spooky, eh? Well, not really, when you consider that most smartphones have a built-in compass (or gyroscope) that shares your device's orientation with the web so you can accurately use

services such as Google Maps. Unless you can hold your phone *completely* still, the ultra-sensitive compass sensor will reveal that your phone is not immobile.

### How to plug the leak

You can't disable the compass on your phone, but you can stop your mobile browser leaking your device's orientation and info about your operating



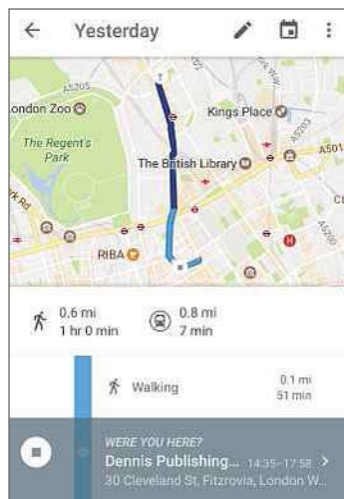
*Turn off JavaScript in your mobile browser to protect your privacy*

system and hardware by turning off JavaScript. For example, in Chrome for Android, tap the three-dot menu button, choose Settings and tap 'Site settings'. Select JavaScript and set the slider to Blocked. You can add exceptions for sites that require JavaScript to display properly.

## Everywhere you've been

Although your phone has many legitimate reasons for sharing your location – such as getting directions, checking the weather and geo-tagging photos – you may feel less comfortable that it stores details of every place you go. Apple says this is "to learn places that are significant to you and provide you with personalised services", while Google claims it "helps you get better results and

*Your phone stores and shares details of all the places you've been*



recommendations across Google products". Both companies insist that you're in control of this data, but it still feels like your every move is being stalked.

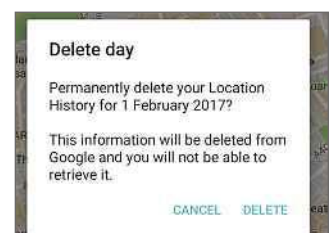
To see what your Android phone leaks about your travels, launch Google Maps, open the main menu and tap 'Your timeline'. Here, you'll find a list and a map of all the places you've been over the past day, week, month and beyond, as well as the distance covered and even whether you were walking, driving or on public transport.

On your iPhone, go to Settings, Privacy,

Location Services, System Services and tap Frequent Locations to see the places you've visited recently and most often.

### How to plug the leak

To erase Google Maps data for a specific day, open the menu in the top-right corner of your timeline and choose 'Delete day'. For a more thorough wipe, select Settings and tap 'Delete all Location History', then set Location History to Off.



*Delete specific days or your entire location history*

On iOS, tap Clear History and switch off Frequent Locations.

## Things that you're interested in

Adverts that appear on your phone aren't merely annoying, they can also be creepy – seeming to know what you've been looking at and even where you are. This is because both Google and Apple build an advertising profile of you, based on the things they think you like, the places you go and your estimated age, gender, parental status, income and more. This data is then shared with Android and iOS apps, so they can target you accordingly and convince you to tap their ads. It's like having a spy in your pocket, constantly reporting back to advertisers.

### How to plug the leak

To stop personalised ads on Android, find the Google Settings app – on some phones you tap Google within the standard Settings app. Select Ads, then choose 'Opt out of Ads Personalisation' and tap 'Reset advertising ID' to clear your profile.

On iOS, go to Settings, Privacy, Advertising and tap Limit Ad Tracking and Reset Advertising Identifier. You can also turn off location-based advertising in Privacy, Location Services, System Services.

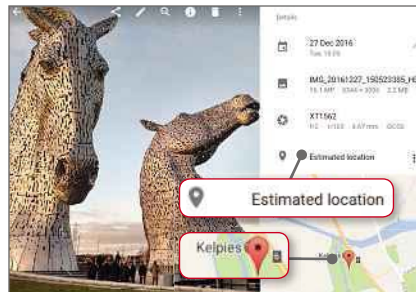
Changing these settings won't stop adverts altogether, but it will prevent them from tracking you.



Turn off personalisation to stop ads knowing too much about you

## Where your photos were taken

All digital cameras record EXIF (Exchangeable Image File) data, which stores various details such as when a picture was taken, the ISO speed and the aperture. But phones go a step further by including the location, too. This makes it easy to browse photos taken in the same place, and saves you tagging them manually, but if you share your snaps online it could compromise your privacy. For example, a selfie shot in your bedroom could show a stranger – and a potential burglar – where you live.



Photos uploaded from your phone may reveal where they were taken

### How to plug the leak

Some photo-sharing services, including Facebook and Instagram, automatically strip the EXIF data from the images you upload. But if you're



Turn location services off to stop your phone geo-tagging your photos

sharing to Google Photos, Flickr or other big names, be aware that you may be leaking your location. The easiest way to stop this happening in Android is to go to Settings, Location and switch the slider to Off (although this also prevents other apps from knowing where you are).

In iOS, go to Settings, Privacy, Location Services, Camera and set Allow Location Access to Never.

## Which Wi-Fi networks you use

Free Wi-Fi is everywhere these days, so it might not concern you that your Android phone stores and shares the names of wireless networks you've connected to – after all, it makes reconnecting much faster. The trouble is that hackers can easily create spoof Wi-Fi hotspots that harvest this information and use it to pinpoint exactly where you've been: from your home address to the hotel where you're staying or your favourite coffee shop. This leaves you vulnerable to 'man-in-the-middle' attacks that steal your personal data when you connect to one of your regular networks. It can even affect supposedly encrypted connections.

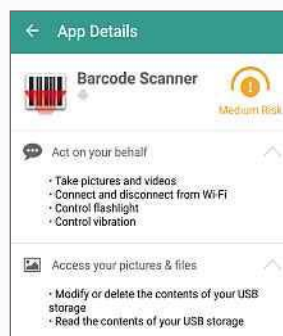
### How to plug the leak

The first precaution you should take is not to leave your Wi-Fi turned on all the time, because this means that your phone is constantly scanning for – and leaking the details of – networks you've used before. Second, you can install a free app called Wi-Fi Privacy Police ([bit.ly/wifi417](http://bit.ly/wifi417)), which prevents your phone from sending out the names of Wi-Fi hotspots, so no-one can see which you've used and where. The app also stops you blindly connecting to dubious, unknown access points that are masquerading as genuine, well-known ones. ■

## WHICH APPS CAN'T YOU TRUST?

As of Android 6 (Marshmallow), Google has made app permissions easier to control. To check there's nothing dodgy already lurking on your device, run a scan with MyPermissions Privacy Cleaner ([bit.ly/perm417](http://bit.ly/perm417)), which tells you which apps pose a threat to your personal information. Suspicious permissions include 'Modify your contacts', 'Use your precise location', 'Draw over other apps on your behalf', 'Control Near Field Communication (NFC)' and 'Read your text messages', although some sound scarier than they actually are.





There's an iOS version of MyPermissions ([bit.ly/permios417](http://bit.ly/permios417)), although this focuses more on unsafe privacy settings across social networks. Note that some features in the Android app, such as editing permissions, are only available in the paid-for edition.



Wi-Fi Privacy Police stops your phone leaking data about Wi-Fi hotspots

# Broadband Deals

Call FREE on 0800 083 2357 to switch your broadband

	Provider	Package name	Monthly price	Contract length	Broadband speed	Allowance	First-year cost*
1		Sky: Broadband	<b>£28.99</b> (£18.99 for 12 months)	12 months	17Mbps max speed	∞ unlimited	<b>CHEAPEST</b> <b>£227.88</b>
2		TalkTalk: Broadband	<b>£25.50</b> (£20.00 for 12 months)	12 months	17Mbps max speed	∞ unlimited	<b>£240.00</b>
3		EE: Broadband	<b>£28.50</b> (£21.00 for 18 months)	18 months	17Mbps max speed	∞ unlimited*	<b>£252.00</b>
4		Virgin: Broadband	<b>£45.00</b> (£29.00 for 12 months)	12 months	50Mbps max speed	∞ unlimited*	<b>£348.00</b>

Terms & Conditions apply - see ISP sites for details

\* Fair-usage or restriction policy applies.

Data supplied by [www.broadbandgenie.co.uk](http://www.broadbandgenie.co.uk). Correct as of 7 February 2017.

**Ofcom**

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 active

**GET A FASTER & SAFER HOME NETWORK** – Essential new software and the best expert tips

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Weds  
1 March**



# Take a Screen Break

Give your eyes a rest from your computer by taking our fortnightly challenges. Can you guess our song-title emoji and solve our word puzzle?

**WIN A MAGBOOK!**  
Be the first to send the correct answers to [webuser@dennis.co.uk](mailto:webuser@dennis.co.uk) to win the *Definitive Guide to Google Hidden Tools*



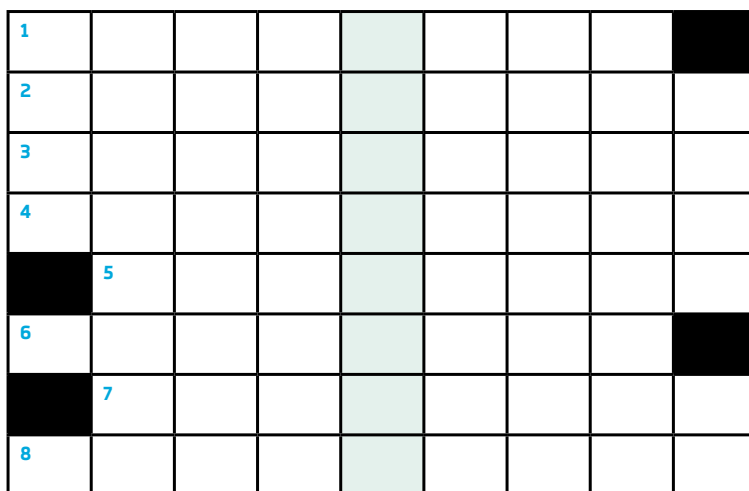
## CAN YOU GUESS THE SONG TITLES FROM THE EMOJI?

1		2	
3		4	
5		6	

## WEB USER WORD PUZZLE

Enter the answers in the grid to reveal a computer term in the highlighted column

- Spanish cheese made from sheep's milk
- 1971 film starring Michael Caine (3,6)
- Nirvana album
- Scotland's oldest university (2,7)
- Character from Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations*
- Spanish cyclist, winner of the 2007 Tour de France
- Conservative Prime Minister from the Victorian era
- Metallic chemical element that burns with a bright white light



## COMPETITIONS

### WIN 1 OF 3 GigaGate Starter Kit

Home-networking specialist Devolo has launched GigaGate, a high-speed Wi-Fi bridge that transmits a gigabit internet signal from a router to a secondary location. It creates a precise connection that delivers fast speeds at key locations in your home. To enter, email your address to [webuser@dennis.co.uk](mailto:webuser@dennis.co.uk) with 'bridge' in the subject line. For more info, follow @devoloUK on Twitter and watch Devolo's YouTube channel: [www.snipca.com/23094](http://www.snipca.com/23094).



WORTH  
£219.99  
EACH

### WIN 1 OF 5 VideoStudio Pro X10

The latest version of Corel's award-winning VideoStudio software comes with impressive new features and effects. You can create movies in minutes with video templates or edit freely on the multi-track timeline. There are over 1,500 customisable effects, transitions and titles. To enter, email your address to [webuser@dennis.co.uk](mailto:webuser@dennis.co.uk) with 'videostudio' in the subject line. For more info, visit [www.videostudiopro.com](http://www.videostudiopro.com) and follow @VideoStudio on Twitter.



WORTH  
£59.99  
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# Practical WebUser

16 pages of workshops, tips, projects and problem solving

## Browse the web with Opera Neon

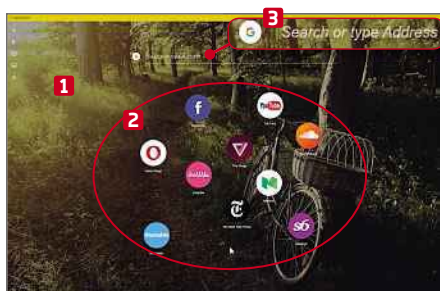
[bit.ly/neon417](http://bit.ly/neon417)

Opera Neon is a new “concept browser” for Windows and Mac that has been designed from scratch. Here’s what you need to know

**M**ost browsers don’t differ much from one another and offer similar features and design. That’s not the case with Opera Neon, a futuristic new browser that’s taken a fresh approach to its design from the ground up. It uses Opera’s existing engine, so pages should render perfectly, but it looks like nothing you’ve seen before. Tabs have been replaced with

bubbles that bob about when dragged. There’s a pop-out video window, a split-screen mode, the ability to capture images as you browse and more. Standard features such as private browsing are included, too.

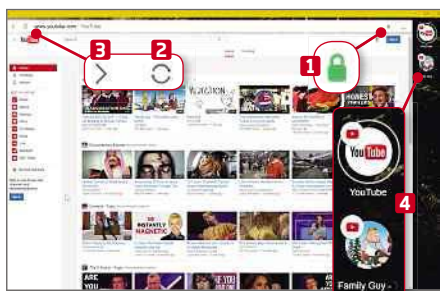
Two free wallpapers are available for Opera Neon, which you can download from [bit.ly/newall417](http://bit.ly/newall417) (scroll down to the section called ‘A little something extra’).



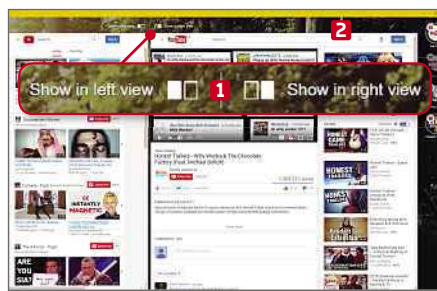
**1** Opera Neon opens at the Speed Dial start page, which uses your Desktop wallpaper as a background. **1** Floating bubbles offer links to 10 popular sites; **2** just click one to open the site in a new window. Alternatively, you can enter a web address or some search terms in the omnibox. **3**



**2** When you search for something, the browser tries to guess what you’re looking for, refining its suggestions as you type. **1** As well as guessing what you might be searching for on the web, it also links to recently accessed files from your computer. **2** Select one and Opera Neon will try to open it in a new window.



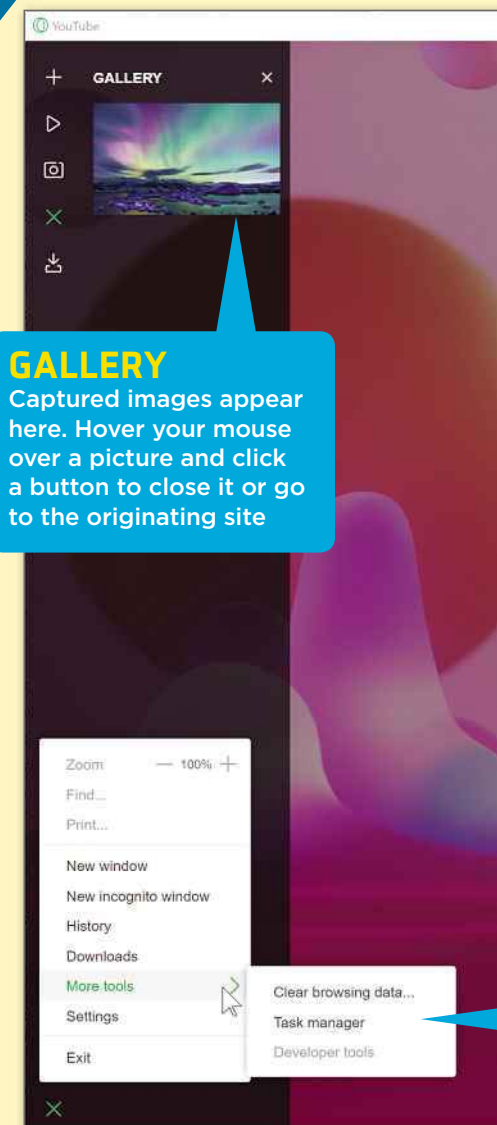
**3** Web pages load as you would expect. A green padlock icon appears when you visit a secure site, **1** and you can click a button to refresh the page. **2** Back and Forward buttons **3** appear only when you’ve done some browsing. Tabs are displayed as bubbles in a column on the right. **4** Click one to switch to it.

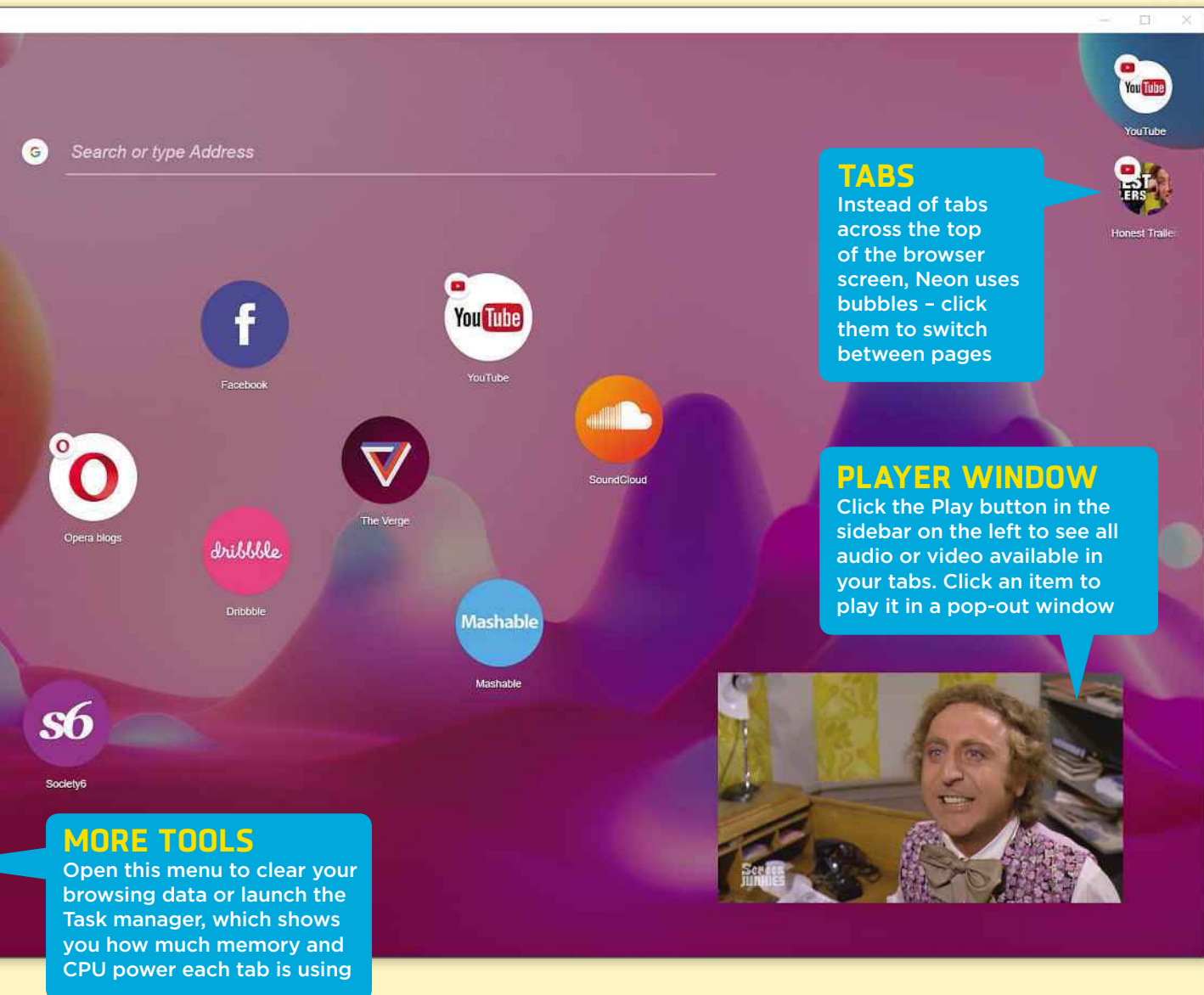


**4** Opera Neon supports split-screen browsing. Drag one tab bubble over another and Neon gives you the option to show it to the left or right of the current page. **1** Drag the bubble to the option you want and it opens beside the existing page. **2** You can resize either pane by clicking and dragging.



**5** Hover your mouse over a tab. An X **1** appears, which you can click to close the tab. You can also minimise a page to return to the main screen. If you drag a tab to the Speed Dial page, it will stay there until you close it. **2** When you close a bubble on the Speed Dial screen, it vanishes in a puff of smoke.

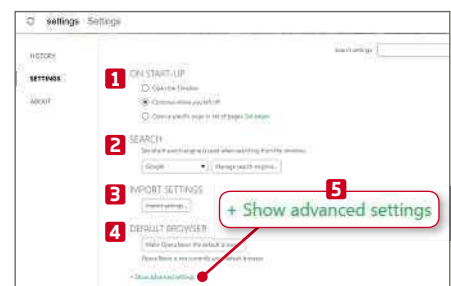




**6** The browser comes with a built-in screen-capture tool. To use it, find something on the web that you want to record and click the Snap tool **1** on the left. Click and drag to draw around the area you want to capture. The image is then saved to the Gallery. Click the Gallery button **2** to view it.



**7** Click the menu button at the bottom-left of the browser. **1** From here, you can open a new window or start an Incognito session. If you select the latter, a new window opens with the incognito wallpaper **2** to show that you're in private-browsing mode. A ninja **3** also appears in the corner for good measure.



**8** Choose Settings from the menu to select the startup behaviour **1** and search engine. **2** You can also import settings from other browsers **3** and make Neon the default. **4** Click 'Show advanced settings' **5** to manage your privacy, passwords, web content, download location and more.



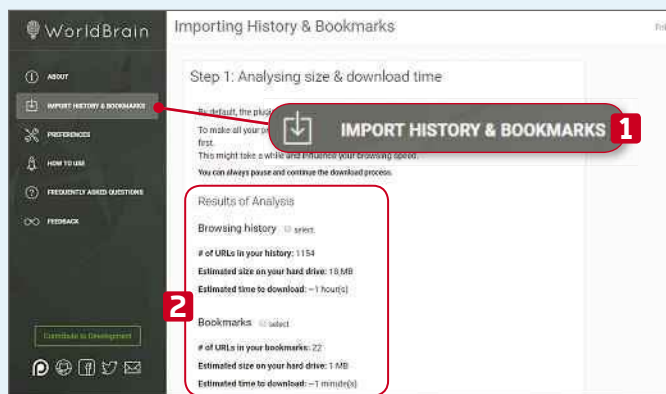
# Find anything in your browser history

WorldBrain: [bit.ly/worldbrain417](https://bit.ly/worldbrain417) | 10 mins | Chrome

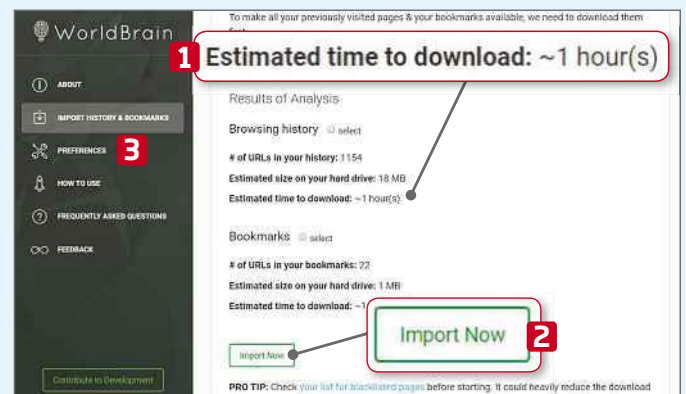
**H**ave you ever remembered reading something interesting on the web, then searched your browser history trying to find it again? It's not the best method, because most browsers only save the titles and URLs of websites you've visited, making it impossible to find a web page unless you know those particular keywords.

WorldBrain overcomes this problem by letting you perform full-text searches of all web pages and PDFs you've loaded in your browser. The search tool can be accessed quickly and easily from the browser's address bar and it lets you filter results according to when the web pages were viewed.

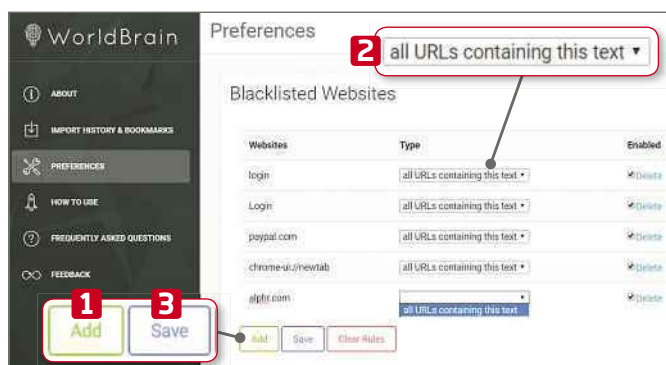
By default, WorldBrain only stores pages you visit after you installed the extension, but to get up to speed right away you can set it to download your entire web history and bookmarks (after first blacklisting any domains you don't want it to save). The extension is currently only compatible with Chrome but it's set to be released for Firefox soon.



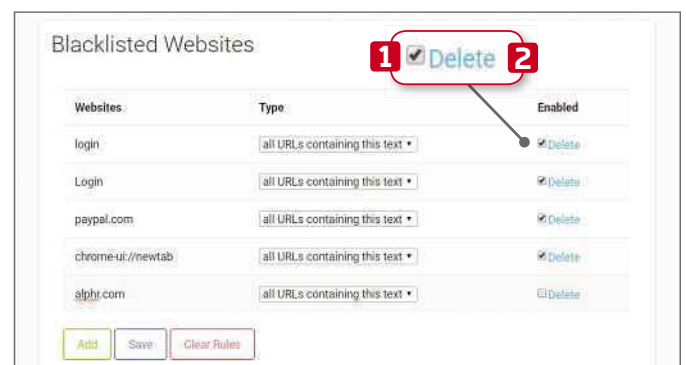
**1** Install WorldBrain and its 'About' page loads. By default, the extension only stores pages you visit after it's installed, so click 'Import History & Bookmarks' **1** to import sites you've visited previously. This page displays the number of URLs in your history and bookmarks, and their total file size. **2**



**2** The time it will take to import the information is indicated. **1** Tick the appropriate boxes for 'Browsing history' and Bookmarks, then click Import Now **2** to import this data. To reduce the download time, first open Preferences **3** to choose which sites are blacklisted from WorldBrain.



**3** To blacklist a new site, Click Add **1** and enter its URL in the box (it will be labelled 'Type your text here'). Next, choose 'all URLs containing this text' from the drop-down menu **2** and click Save **3** to add your rule.



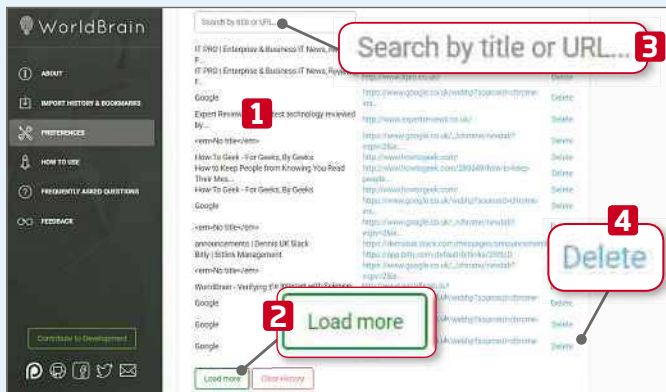
**4** Go back to the 'Import history and bookmarks' page and the number of URLs and bookmarks will automatically update to reflect your changes. You can temporarily disable a rule in the blacklist by unticking it **1** or delete it altogether by clicking the appropriate Delete button. **2**



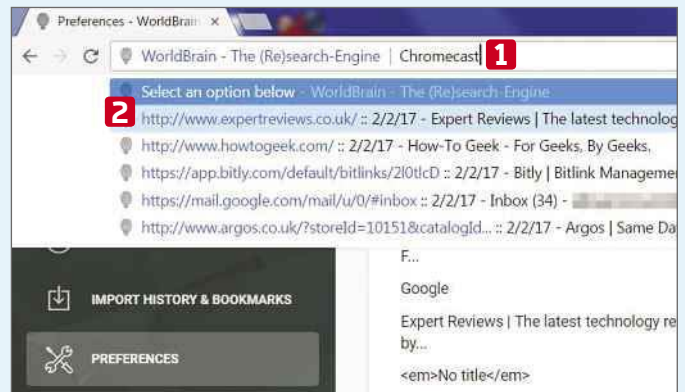
## EXPERT TIP

### Edward Munn says

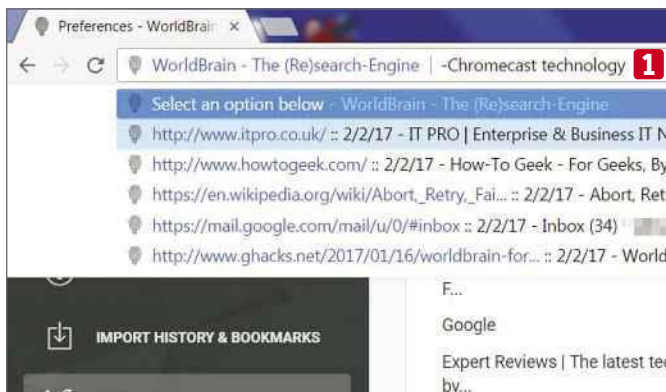
WorldBrain doesn't only save content from standard web pages - you can also use it to search words that appear in files you've opened in web apps such as Google Docs. If your search produces a lot of results, simply add the name of the service it appeared in to narrow the search.



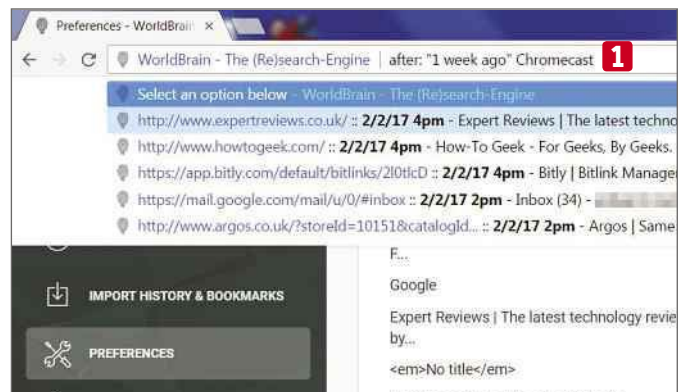
**5** Further down the Preferences page, you'll find a summary of all the pages the extension has saved. **1** Click 'Load more' **2** to expand the list or use the Search box **3** to find a specific entry. You can delete stored pages by clicking the appropriate buttons. **4**



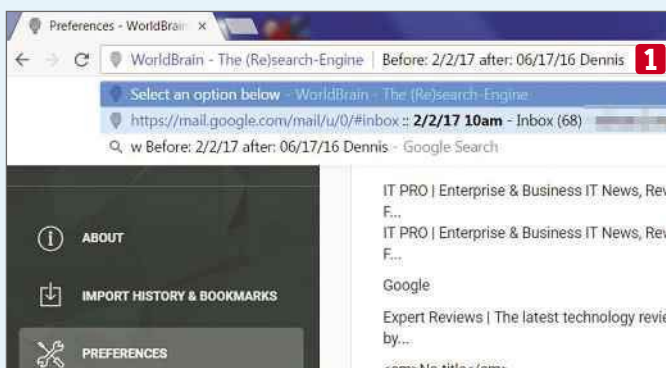
**6** To search with WorldBrain, simply click in your browser's address bar, then press 'W' and the Tab key or Space bar. When you enter your search term, **1** the extension displays a list of results **2** that match your query.



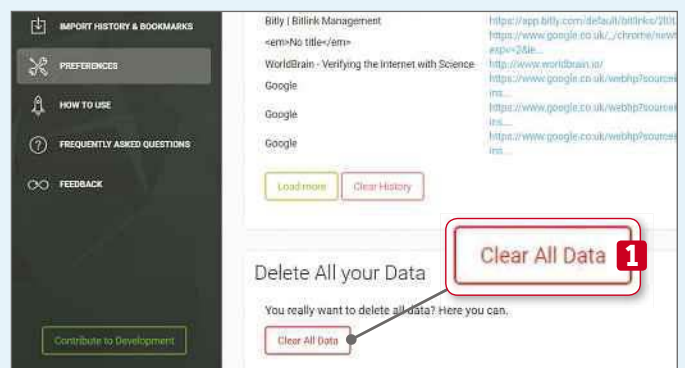
**7** To exclude a word or phrase from your search, use a minus sign (-) in front of the keyword or phrase. For example, -Chromecast technology **1** finds pages that include the term 'technology' but not 'Chromecast'.



**8** You can also search for pages visited during a specific time frame by using before: and after: to specify the period. For example after: "1 week ago" Chromecast, **1** finds all references to 'Chromecast' from pages visited in the last week.



**9** You can use specific dates to search - Before: 2/2/17 after: 06/17/16 Dennis. **1** WorldBrain only shows results when web pages contain all the keywords in your search term. Entering a phrase in quotation marks means the words must also appear in that exact order on the web page.



**10** WorldBrain stores its information on your PC. To delete all the pages the extension has saved, open its Options page from chrome:extensions, then scroll down to 'Delete All your Data' and click Clear All Data **1**



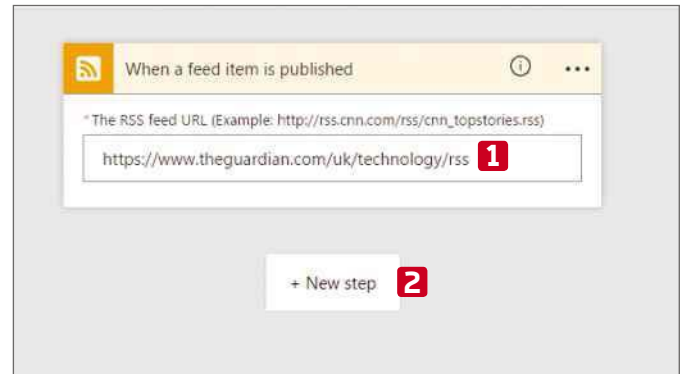
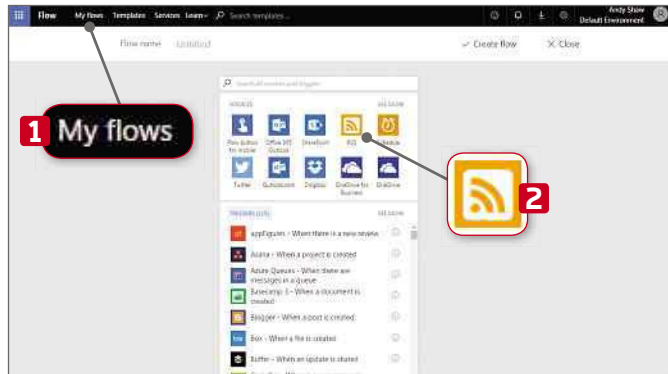
## Get notifications for interesting site updates

**H**ow often have you wasted time visiting your favourite websites to find that there's nothing new, or nothing that you're interested in reading? You can avoid such unnecessary visits if you set up Microsoft Flow to monitor sites

for relevant new articles. You'll need a Microsoft account to log in and the Flow app installed on your mobile device to receive notifications.

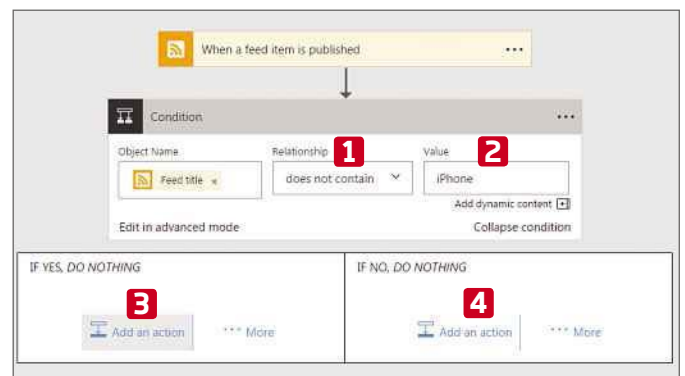
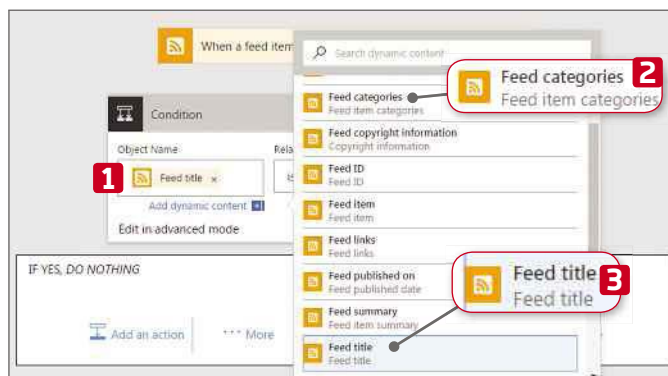


**Microsoft Flow:** [flow.microsoft.com](http://flow.microsoft.com) | 10 mins | **Any browser**



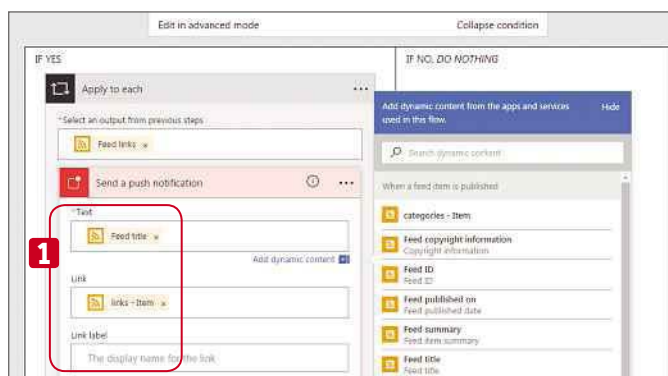
**1** Install the app on your mobile device, then switch to your PC and sign into the Flow website at [flow.microsoft.com](http://flow.microsoft.com). Click 'My flows' **1** and choose 'Create a flow from blank'. Click the RSS button **2** in the Services section or choose it from the Triggers list below.

**2** On the next page, make sure Triggers is highlighted and click RSS again. You then need to copy or type the RSS address of your chosen site into the box. **1** Some sites display an RSS logo; others may need you to dive into the code to find it. We show you how in step 6. Click 'New step' **2**.



**3** To get an update every time your chosen site publishes something new, click 'Add an action'. If you'd prefer to filter out some stories, click 'Add a condition'. In this case, click the latter. Click inside the Object Name box **1** and choose an element to filter from, such as categories **2** or title **3**.

**4** Select a filter type from the Relationship box **1** and type the words that you want to filter in or out into the Value box. **2** You can then choose whether an action will occur if the condition is true (click 'Add an action' in the Yes box) **3** or not (click 'Add an action' in the No box). **4**



**5** In the Services box, choose 'Push notification', then 'Push notification' again. Fill in the info you want the alert to include when it sends a message to your phone. **1** You can also set it to perform a different action, such as sending an email. When you're finished, click 'Create flow'.

**6** To find the RSS feed of a site that doesn't provide a link, click Chrome's menu button and choose 'More tools', then 'Developer tools'. Open the search box **1** (with Ctrl+F and type RSS. If the site has a hidden feed (many do) it should provide you with an address that will work. **2**



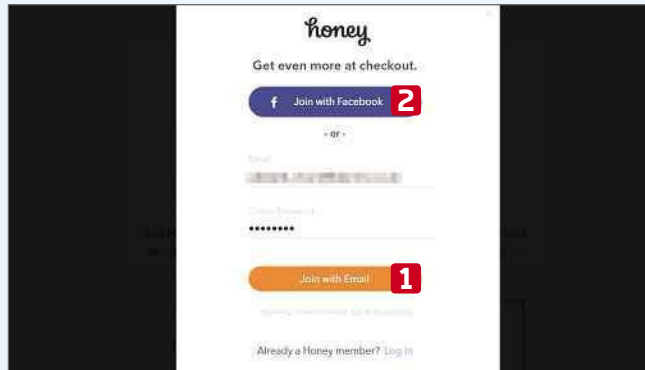
# Save money on your online shopping

**H**oney is a brilliant browser add-on that automatically finds and applies discount codes when you shop online, to save you money. It doesn't work with every shop on the internet but you'll be pleased you installed it

**Honey:** [joinhoney.com](http://joinhoney.com) | 5 mins |

when it does.

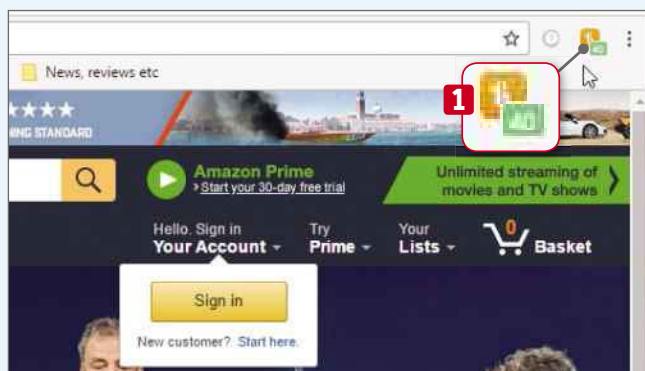
What's more, Honey lets you earn cashback on certain sites, even when you don't apply discount codes.



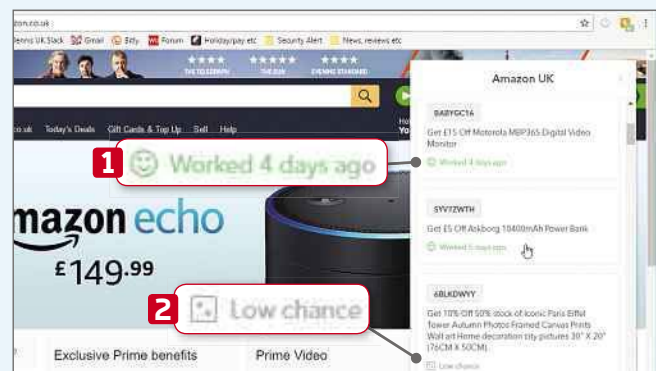
**1** Install Honey, enter your email address and password, then click the button to set up your account **1** or sign up with Facebook. **2** Next, visit a website you intend to buy something from, select your items and proceed to the checkout.



**2** If Honey has codes for the site, a pop-up appears to alert you. **1** Click Apply Coupons **2** and Honey will try all the available codes. When it finds the best voucher to maximise your savings, a window opens to let you know how much cash Honey has saved you.



**3** You can check if discount codes are available for a site before you get to the checkout by looking at Honey's toolbar icon. **1** It turns orange and displays a number if there are codes available, or remains greyed out if no compatible coupons are found.



**4** Clicking the icon when it's orange reveals the full list of available codes and you can check if a code has been used recently **1** or if there's a low chance **2** of it working. Clicking a code copies it to your clipboard, so you can enter it manually at the checkout.



**5** When a site offers cash bonuses, a symbol is displayed next to its name. **1** Click Activate **2** to enable the bonuses. Clicking the Account icon **3** shows your current Gold balance, which can be converted to US Amazon vouchers (PayPal bonuses will be supported in the future).

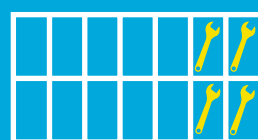


**6** To browse popular and trending stores, click Honey's icon at any time and select the magnifying glass. **1** You can use the search bar **2** to find specific stores and browse their available codes without having to visit the shop's own web page.

# Weekend Project

Get to grips with some serious PC DIY to boost your computer's performance

MTWTFSS



How to...

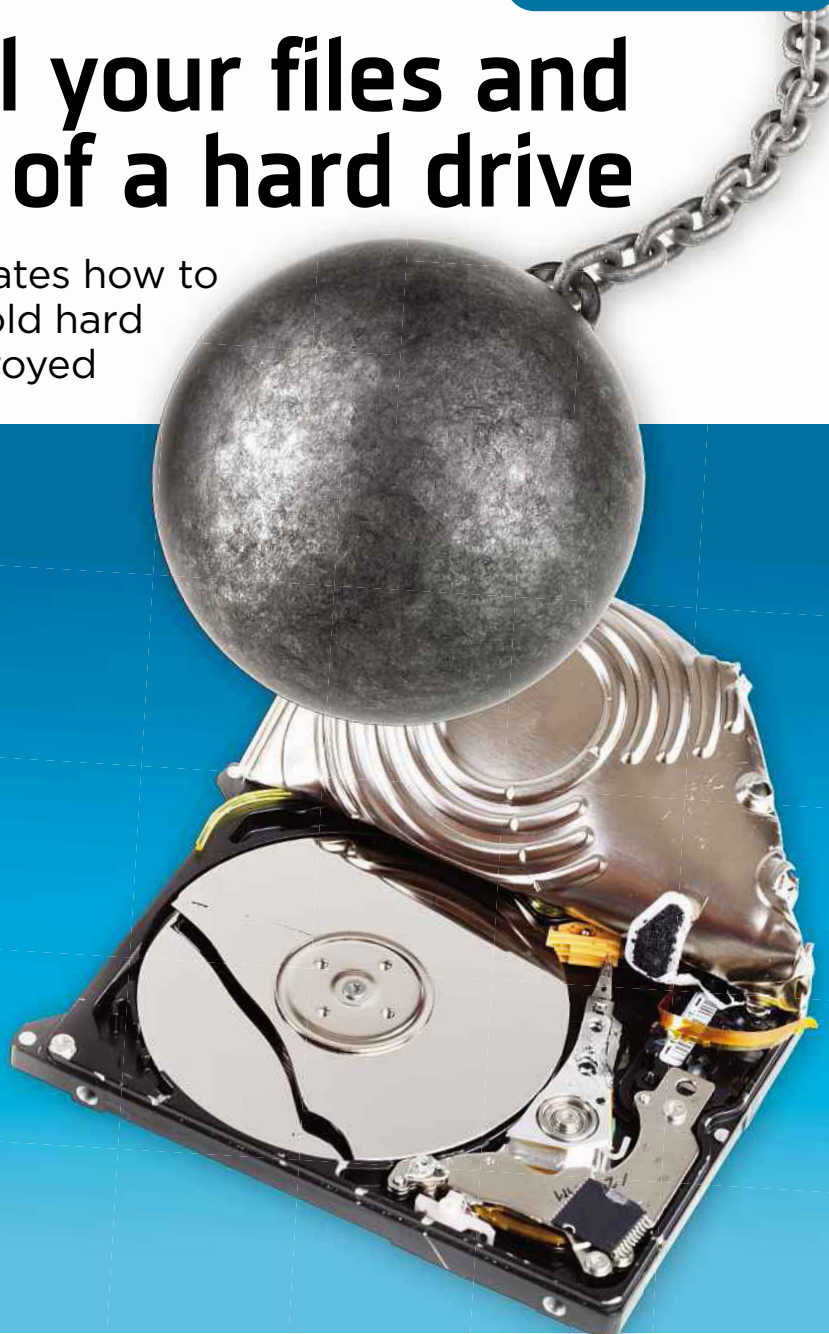
## Erase all your files and dispose of a hard drive

Wayne Williams demonstrates how to make sure the data on an old hard drive is well and truly destroyed

If you're thinking of disposing of an old PC or hard drive, whether by taking it to the tip or selling it on, it's vital that you securely wipe all the data it contains. That doesn't just mean formatting the drive, because it is easy for anyone with the know-how to restore and recover the data.

Last year, secure-erasure specialists Blancco Technology Group bought 200 second-hand hard drives and solid-state drives, and were able to recover personally identifiable information from two-thirds of them. The restored data included emails, company spreadsheets, photos and more.

In this Weekend Project, we look at how you can properly wipe a drive using free software, and demonstrate some physical ways to ensure that the data can never be recovered.



### The software solution

It's easy to assume that formatting a drive will wipe all the information it contains, but actually it only makes it a little harder to access the data. For example, free software such as Recuva ([bit.ly/recuva417](http://bit.ly/recuva417)) can easily restore files from a freshly formatted drive.

To thoroughly wipe a drive so the data it contains can't be recovered, you need a program that will overwrite the

contents numerous times. The best-known tool for this task is Darik's Boot and Nuke, usually referred to as DBAN ([dban.org](http://dban.org)). The program can be run from a CD, DVD or USB memory stick, and will securely erase a drive's contents.

There are other similar programs you can use, such as CBL Data Shredder ([bit.ly/cbls417](http://bit.ly/cbls417)), which erases both individual files and entire hard drives. There are Windows and DOS versions

available. The two DOS versions let you write the software to floppy disk (if you like to pretend it's still the Nineties), CD or USB memory stick. The Windows version lets you erase files from within the operating system and can wipe any drive attached to your computer, with the exception of the drive that Windows is installed on. You can choose which wipe method to use from a selection of options or create your own custom approach.



**Darik's Boot and Nuke (DBAN) is one of the best known disk erasers**

Follow our Mini Workshop, below, to wipe your hard drive using CBL Data Shredder.

HDSHredder 4 Free ([bit.ly/hdsh417](http://bit.ly/hdsh417)) is also worth a look and can be written to and run from a CD or USB memory stick, or installed in Windows if you don't plan on wiping the main drive. The free version has some limitations – you don't get the broad selection of deletion methods found in the paid-for edition and it's not as speedy, but you can still choose the number of overwriting passes to make.

The popular system-cleaning tool CCleaner ([bit.ly/cclean417](http://bit.ly/cclean417)) also includes

an option to wipe hard drives. See our Mini Workshop on page 61 for instructions on using CCleaner's Drive Wiper.

If you're booting into a tool like DBAN, it doesn't matter which operating system is on the hard drive because the software will destroy everything. Wiping a hard drive could take a couple of hours, depending on its size and how thorough you want to be. We would recommend using the strongest method offered with the most number of passes, and leave it running overnight. If you're selling your drive (on its own, or in a PC) you can



**HDSHredder 4 Free is very good, but has some limitations**

install a fresh version of Windows once the drive has been wiped, safe in the knowledge it no longer contains any of your personal information.

For obvious reasons, remember to back up absolutely everything you want to keep before proceeding because once the drive has been wiped, your data will be gone for good and there will be no way to recover it.

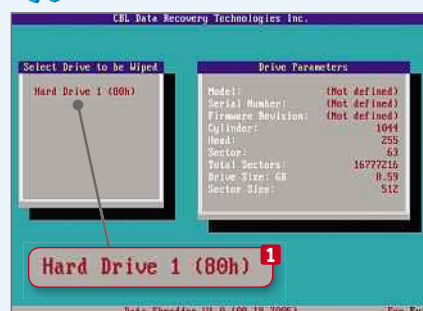
## Total destruction

One physical way to wipe a hard drive is to use a degausser. This machine generates a magnetic field that wipes the data stored on the drive's mechanical platters. It's a very efficient method and can clear a large volume of drives quite quickly, which makes it better suited to large companies and government organisations, rather than individuals.

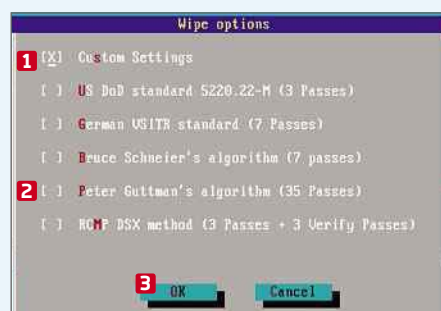
*A degausser wipes a drive's magnetic platters, but the machines are primarily aimed at businesses*



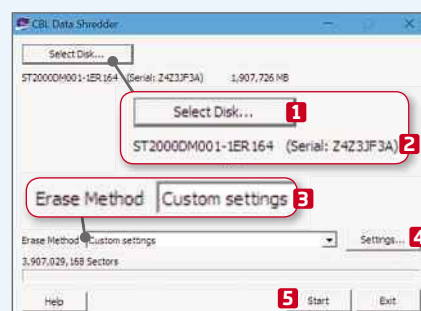
## MINI WORKSHOP | Wipe a hard drive using CBL Data Shredder



**1** If you only have one drive (with Windows installed on it) that you wish to wipe, download the bootable CD version and write it to disc. This is an ISO file and can also be written to a USB memory stick using Rufus ([rufus.akeo.ie](http://rufus.akeo.ie)). Boot into it, then select the drive to wipe. **1**



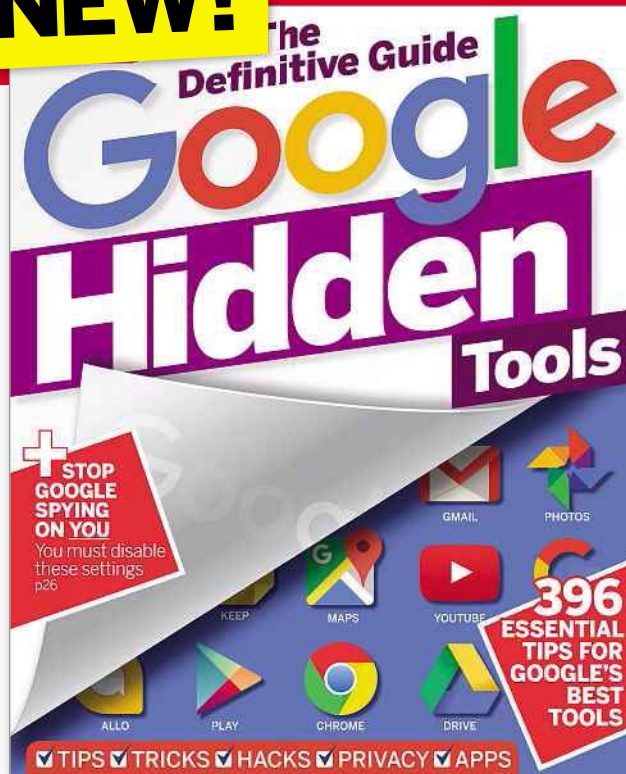
**2** Select the wipe option you require. You can choose your own custom settings **1** or pick one of the presets. Gutman's algorithm **2** performs 35 passes and is very thorough. Select OK. **3** If you've chosen Custom, you'll be asked to define some settings. When you next select OK, it will begin wiping the drive.



**3** You can also wipe a drive from within Windows. Install the Windows version of the software and run it as an Administrator. Click the Select Disk button **1** and choose the drive to shred. **2** Select an Erase method, **3** click Settings **4** to customise it, then click the Start button. **5**

# WebUser Bookstore

**NEW!**



## THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO GOOGLE HIDDEN TOOLS

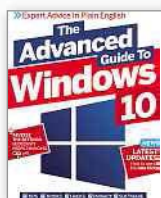
In the new and updated Definitive Guide to Google Hidden Tools, the experts at *Web User* and *Computeractive* lift the lid on Google's most popular services to reveal more than 390 ways to make them even more efficient, useful and tailored to your needs. You'll find clever new add-ons for Chrome, smart hacks for YouTube and handy tools and tricks for Google Maps, Drive, Gmail and more. It's an essential guide to unlocking the hundreds of secret settings, options and tools that Google offers.

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**Smashing a drive to pieces will prevent recovery, and provide some stress relief!**

However, a degausser can cost from a few hundred pounds to thousands, and there are cheaper – and better – methods available.

Physically destroying a drive will make it absolutely impossible to recover the information on it. Like trying to read a letter that's been burned – there's no way to view the page's contents and get back the words it contained.

To make it easier to destroy the data, you should open the hard drive to access or remove the platter (or platters) from inside. Platters can be made of metal, or glass and ceramic, depending on the drive. However, you can simply destroy the entire disk if you prefer.

There are lots of different ways to destroy a drive or platter, but some work better than others. Don't, for instance, try



**Drilling holes through a drive is one of the most effective ways of destroying it and preventing data recovery**

to microwave or burn a drive because it can give off dangerous fumes.

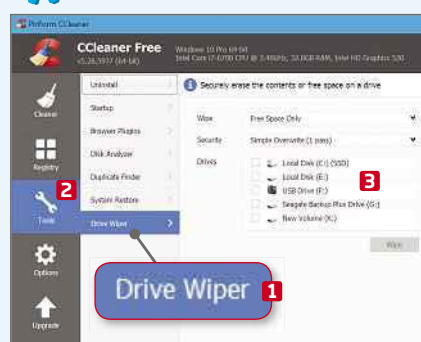
You could smash a drive to pieces using a sledgehammer or trash the platters with a regular hammer. Drilling holes through the drive is one of the best approaches. You'll need a strong drill bit, and should drill holes in multiple places in the drive. If you don't have a drill, then

hammering thick nails into the hard drive will do the same job. You could also try sanding the platter. You can be as creative as you like, so long as the drive is entirely unusable afterwards.

Be sure to wear protective eyewear and gloves when attacking a drive because pieces of a shattered platter can fly off and are razor sharp. ■



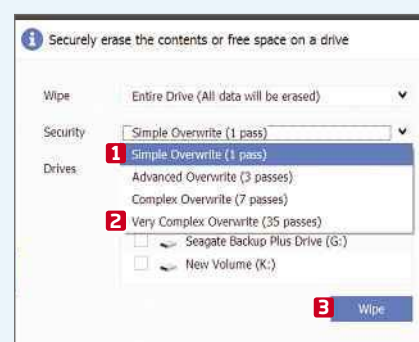
## MINI WORKSHOP | Erase a drive using CCleaner's Drive Wiper



**1** CCleaner is best known as a system and Registry cleaner, but it also comes with a selection of other functions including a Drive Wiper, **1** which you'll find under Tools. **2** Select this and all the drives connected to your PC will be displayed in a list. **3**



**2** CCleaner recognises all types of storage, from USB memory sticks to Android phones (provided they are connected as USB storage). Tick the box for the drive you want to erase, **1** then click the Wipe drop-down box and choose 'Entire Drive (All data will be erased)'. **2**



**3** Click the Security drop-down box and choose a wipe method. A Simple Overwrite **1** performs only one pass, which may not be enough. Very Complex Overwrite uses Guttmann's algorithm and makes 35 passes, **2** which is much more thorough. Click Wipe **3** to begin.

## NEXT ISSUE

**How To...** Rescue video from old formats you can't play

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- STEP 3** Tap '**Subscribe**'



## ...via the Zinio app

- STEP 1** Search for *Web user* via the search box in the *Shop tab*
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# Web User Masterclass

Our experts show you what you need to do to **make your Wi-Fi more secure**, whether you're at home or using a wireless hotspot

## Access your router's IP address and settings

**T**o access the internet, your devices have to connect to your router – either via an Ethernet cable or wirelessly. The router acts as a gateway to the internet from your home network, and it's vital that you make it secure.

To access your router's setup program and configure its settings, enter its IP address into a browser. If you don't know your router's IP address, press Windows+R, type `cmd` and press Enter. Type `ipconfig` at the command prompt and press Enter. Look for the Default Gateway label and the series of figures next to it – something like 192.168.1.254.

You'll only see it listed under the connection that you're currently using, so if you're on Wi-Fi, look for it under 'Wireless LAN adapter'. If you're on a wired connection, look

```
C:\WINDOWS\system32\cmd.exe
Ethernet adapter VirtualBox Host-Only Network #3:

Connection-specific DNS Suffix . . . : 
Link-local IPv6 Address . . . . . : fe80::7985:716b
IPv4 Address. . . . . : 192.168.56.1
Subnet Mask . . . . . : 255.255.255.0
Default Gateway . . . . . : 

Wireless LAN adapter Local Area Connection* 12:

Media State . . . . . : Media disconnected
Connection-specific DNS Suffix . . : 

Wireless LAN adapter WiFi:

Connection-specific DNS Suffix . . : home
Link-local IPv6 Address . . . . . : fe80::f5fc:b6b3
IPv4 Address. . . . . : 192.168.1.83
Subnet Mask . . . . . : 255.255.255.0
Default Gateway . . . . . : 192.168.1.254

C:\Users\Roland>
```

*Find the router's IP address with `ipconfig` at the command prompt*

for it under 'Ethernet adapter'.

Type the number into your browser's address bar and press Enter. The

browser will load the router's setup program and you then need to enter your password to access the settings.

## Change the router password

The password for accessing your router's setup tool is usually set by your ISP or the router's manufacturer. If your router uses a default password that's the same on all the devices supplied by that company, you should change it. Default passwords can easily be found by searching Google, which means hackers and malware could access your

router, steal information by monitoring internet activity or take control of your connection completely.

Type your router's IP address into a browser to access its settings and log in. Every router model has different menus, so we can't give exact instructions. The username and password may be printed on a label on the back or the base of your router, or provided in a manual.

**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.**

Once you're logged in, look for the option to change the password, then enter a new one.



*You need a password to enter the router settings – if you haven't already, set a new one*

## Enable the router's firewall

All routers have a built-in firewall to stop people on the internet accessing them, and the computers and devices connected to your home network. It's important to check that your router's firewall is turned on.

Enter your router's IP address into a browser, log in and look for the firewall settings. On a BT Home Hub 3, for example, click A-Z next to Help, then click Firewall. It should be set to allow outgoing connections and block all unsolicited incoming connections.



**Make sure your router's firewall is switched on and hasn't been disabled**

## Set Wi-Fi encryption

Your wireless network should be encrypted and protected with a password, otherwise there's nothing to stop your neighbours connecting to it. Who knows what they might be accessing on the internet? If they're up to no good, you could get the blame because it's *your* Wi-Fi.

If you have to enter a password to connect devices to your Wi-Fi network, then everything is fine. If you don't, go to the router setup tool in a browser, log in and find the wireless section. Look for Security among the various settings – the usual options are WPA/WPA2, WEP or None.

Choose WPA/WPA2 because this is the most secure. 'None' is completely insecure and WEP was cracked years ago, so if the router is set to WEP, change it to WPA/WPA2. If you enable WPA/WPA2 or change the password, your computer and all your devices will be disconnected. Select the Wi-Fi network in the usual way (click the network icon in the PC's taskbar) and enter the new password to get online.

## Recover a lost Wi-Fi password

If you've forgotten or lost the password for your Wi-Fi network, you can still access the router's settings via an Ethernet cable, which only costs a few pounds. Connect a PC to the router and you can then enter the router's IP address into a browser to access the setup tool. Once in, you can set a new wireless password.

## Beware of public Wi-Fi

Wi-Fi hotspots in public places such as cafés, shopping centres and hotels are great for getting online without using your mobile phone data. However, they may not be secure, so you should avoid accessing online banking, shopping and other sites where you have to log in or provide credit card details. If you're worried about someone spying on your activities on an insecure Wi-Fi network, you could use a VPN to create a secure connection. VPN apps are available in the Android and Apple stores.

# TAKE IT TO THE NEXT LEVEL

More advanced tips for when you're feeling brave

## Install a VPN

A VPN (virtual private network) increases your Wi-Fi security by creating a secure, encrypted internet connection. The VPN sits between your browser and the website you are accessing, acting as an intermediary when you connect to the web. When you visit a website, the VPN service fetches the web page, encrypts it and sends it to your browser, so even if someone is spying on your internet activities, they won't be able to make sense of it.

As well as protecting your browsing when you connect to public Wi-Fi hotspots, a VPN can be used at home on your PC and devices to stop your ISP tracking your online activities.

The easiest way to set up a VPN is to download a Windows, Android or iOS app that configures everything automatically. Most VPNs charge a subscription fee, but there are a few free ones, usually with limits on the amount of data that can be transferred. CyberGhost ([www.cyberghostvpn.com](http://www.cyberghostvpn.com)), Avira Phantom VPN ([bit.ly/avir417](http://bit.ly/avir417)) and SurfEasy ([www.surfeasy.com](http://www.surfeasy.com)) offer free VPN. The Opera browser ([www.opera.com](http://www.opera.com)) has SurfEasy built in, so it doesn't need any additional software installed.

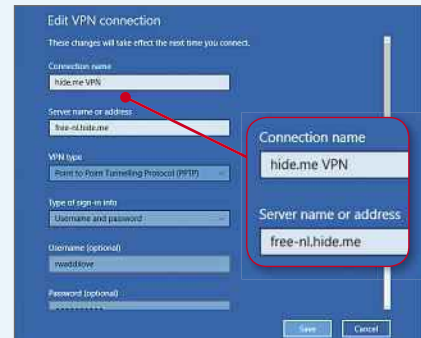
## Set up a VPN

If you'd rather not download software, you can manually set up a VPN without it. Windows, iOS and Android all support VPNs.

To set this up in Windows 10, press Windows+i to open the Settings app, click Network & Internet and select the VPN section on the left. Click 'Add a VPN connection'. A form appears with several boxes to fill in.

To get the information you need, you still have to sign up with a VPN service. You can get a free account at hide.me ([hide.me](http://hide.me)), for example, but don't download any software. Set the connection name to **hide.me VPN**, the server name to **free-nl.hide.me**, set the VPN type to 'Point to Point Tunnelling Protocol' and enter the username and password you used to sign up to the hide.me website.

Click 'Change adapter options' on the VPN page in Settings, right-click 'hide.me' and click Properties. Set the 'Data encryption' to 'Require encryption', select 'Allow these



**Enter the data to set up a VPN in Windows, Android and iOS**

protocols' and click OK. Whenever you want to secure your internet connection, click the Wi-Fi icon in the taskbar and select 'hide.me VPN'.

Other VPNs use different settings but are set up in the same way.

## Who is on my network?

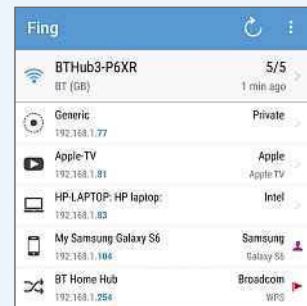
With all the security features we've discussed here, your home Wi-Fi should be secure. You can confirm that there are no unauthorised people or devices accessing your network by checking which devices are connected to it.

Go to the router setup program by entering its IP address. This may be enough to display your router's connected devices, but you may have to log in and find the relevant section to see them. Every router model has a different menu.

If you want to find out who is connected to your home network and can't be bothered to fiddle around with your router's setup tools, there are several free apps available that you can use.

Fing ([bit.ly/fing417](http://bit.ly/fing417)), for example, from the Google Play Store, works with Android phones and tablets. It scans your network and takes a few seconds to list all the connected devices.

You can run any of these free scanners when you want to check for devices on your network.



**Use Fing on your Android phone to look for intruders on your network**

# Ask the Expert

**Roland Waddilove**, computer programmer and PC journalist since 1981, answers all your technical questions. Email us for help at [webuser@dennis.co.uk](mailto:webuser@dennis.co.uk)



## GENERAL PC

### Remove black squares from icons

**Q** I use the 32-bit version of Windows 10 on a desktop PC and nearly every time I boot up, my Desktop shortcuts – for email, browser, Google and so on – are all displayed with a black square covering them. A restart usually fixes the problem but it doesn't work every time.

I have used a cache-refreshment tool but this doesn't work for long before I am back in a loop again. Do you have any ideas how to fix this, please?

**Bryan Lillywhite, via email**

**A** Icons aren't stored with the programs they represent but are kept in a cache where they can be accessed quickly. Sometimes the cache can become corrupt, which causes the shortcuts to display incorrectly. Clearing or refreshing the cache usually solves the problem.

Right-clicking the Desktop and selecting Refresh may help, but it might only refresh from the cache



**Corrupted cache files can be fixed by giving the hard drive a thorough clean**

which, in your case, may be corrupted. A cleanup could fix the problem. Click Start, expand Windows Administrative Tools and click Disk Clean-up. When the window appears after the initial scan, click 'Clean up system files'. Select everything except Recycle Bin (if you want to keep your deleted files), then click OK.

Another possible fix is to press Windows+I to open Settings. Click System and select the Display tab. There is a slider to change the size of text and objects. Use it to change the size, restart Windows and then drag it back to the original setting. This might refresh the icons.

## GENERAL PC

### Speed up a slow PC

**Q** My laptop is slow and lagging very badly. When I type, I have to wait for the words to appear. The whole PC is working at a snail's pace. I am using Chrome. How can I speed it up?

**Wayne Smith, via email**

**A** PCs can appear to run very slowly for five to 10 minutes after they are switched on. This is because Windows, security software, web browsers and other programs check for updates as soon as they are launched. If updates are found, they are downloaded and may be installed.

If your PC is still slow after 10 minutes, the problem is probably due to software that automatically starts with Windows and runs in the background. Press Ctrl+Shift+Esc to open Task Manager and select the Start-up tab. This lists some of the programs that start with Windows. Ignore anything you don't recognise, but look for programs you don't need or don't use. Select them and click Disable or, better still, go to 'Programs and Features' in the Control Panel and uninstall any software you don't use.

Windows Defender can also slow down your PC. If you are using it, consider an alternative such as Avast ([www.avast.com](http://www.avast.com)), AVG ([www.avg.com](http://www.avg.com)) or Avira ([www.avira.com](http://www.avira.com)).

## EMAIL

### Delete Outlook folders

**Q** I have a new Windows 10 PC and use Outlook for my emails. The emails are synced with both my iPad and iPhone, but I found that some of my email folders were not recognised by Outlook on my PC. Although the icon is there, I can neither read from nor put emails into the folder. However, I can do so using both my iPhone and iPad.

I have worked around this by creating a new folder and using the iPad to move all the stored emails from the old folder to the new one. This lets me access my old emails from all my devices.

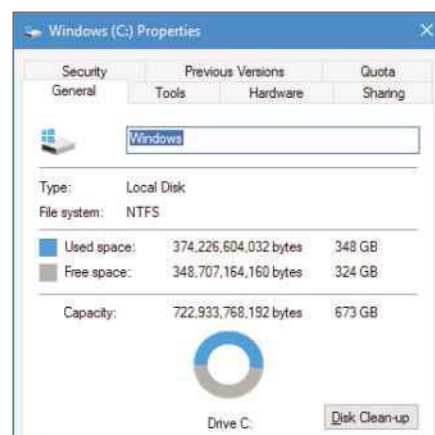
However, I am now left with the original folder (now empty) in the Outlook data file list and the system won't allow me to remove it. In attempting to do so, I right-click the

folder, go to delete folder, follow the directions, but get an error message.

**Barry Chambers, via email**

**A** Outlook refers to three different things: a Windows program, a mobile app and a website. If your email account is at the outlook.com website, go there in a web browser. Right-click a folder and select 'Empty folder' to empty it (make sure there are no subfolders), then right-click it again and select Delete. Outlook (the program), will sync with the Outlook website and any deletions will be mirrored.

If the folder doesn't exist on outlook.com then there has been a sync error. For some reason it is in Outlook, but not outlook.com. In Outlook, click File, Account Settings, Account Settings and click the Repair option.



**Right-click your hard drive and select Properties to see how much space is free**



A hard drive that's almost full will also slow down a PC. Open Explorer and, on the left, select This PC. The C: drive's free and used space is displayed – you can see this in more detail if you right-click the drive and choose Properties. If there is less than 2GB of free space, you need to delete unused files or programs to increase the space available. An external USB drive can be used to store videos, photos and music, which could free up several gigabytes.

## VIDEO

### Download a DVD database

**Q** I have a laptop with a list of 400 DVDs on it, which I would like to add to a database using a barcode scanner. I don't know how to do this and I do not have much money so I need a cheap option, preferably using free software!

**Denis Waknell, via email**

**A** There are several DVD and movie databases for storing the details of your collection but most are paid-for and, if you want them to read barcodes, you usually have to pay extra for a barcode reader.

If you are looking for a free service, Invelos Software DVD Profiler ([invelos.com](http://invelos.com)) is one of the best. All its tools are enabled for up to 50 DVDs – beyond that, some are locked until you pay. However, you might not miss these locked options and the program's basic functions will continue to work for unlimited DVDs. There's no barcode reader, but you can type the barcode number yourself and the program will fetch the DVD details and artwork from online databases.

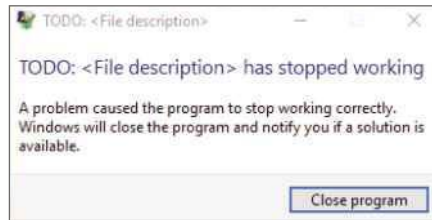
Movie Collector ([bit.ly/dvds417](http://bit.ly/dvds417)) is another useful program for storing DVD collections. It supports a barcode reader app on the iPhone and Android, so adding DVDs couldn't be easier. The free PC program has a limit of 50 DVDs – if you want to add more, you have to buy it. The barcode-reader app also requires payment and the total cost of both is around £40. If you manually input the barcodes, the price is under £20.

## GENERAL PC

### Stop annoying pop-ups

**Q** My new Acer desktop PC pops up an annoying error message every 10 minutes or so, sometimes many times over. It refers to a piece of code used by programmers to help them track their work. How do I get rid of it and stop it interfering with my workflow?

Often, when I am typing, I find that



**Philip's error message is too general to show which program is crashing**

everything stopped a while back due to this error message.

**Philip Clark, via email**

**A** Looking at the screenshot you provided (above), it is clear that a program on your computer is crashing, but the message doesn't say which one. This error is sometimes caused by Wild Tangent Games, which can be bundled with new computers. The error on your PC could be caused by a similar pre-installed program.

Right-click the taskbar and select Task Manager. Select the Start-up tab and look for anything you don't need, then select and disable it. Open 'Programs and Features' in the Control Panel and look for Wild Tangent Games – or anything else you don't use – then uninstall it.

## SECURITY

### Is Cleverbridge fake software?

**Q** I bought Issue 414 of *Web User* ([bit.ly/webuser414](http://bit.ly/webuser414)) because I have been concerned about fake software such as

ScanGuard. I followed the advice on page 43 to remove fake software, and everything worked well up to starting my PC in safe mode. Thereafter, I used your advised site [www.malwarebytes.com](http://www.malwarebytes.com) and had a horrendous time trying to figure out if the Cleverbridge website that appeared was what I needed, or if it was an interloper that had latched on to your instructions.

I received an invoice, saying my payment of £25.14 was authorised, and was provided with a key to download the software. I have not yet used it because it didn't come direct from Malwarebytes. Am I in danger of downloading false software or is the site genuine?

**Kenneth Collins, via email**

**A** Many software developers do not take payments themselves and use another company instead. It can be worrying when you click the Buy button on a website to be sent to another site – one you have perhaps never heard of – and it is good to be suspicious when this happens. However, Cleverbridge is a well-known payments processor that handles the payments for many top companies, including Malwarebytes. A scammer is unlikely to use it and, if detected, would be kicked out. It is therefore almost certain this is a genuine transaction. Refunds are available from Cleverbridge if you purchased in error. Go to [www.cleverbridge.com](http://www.cleverbridge.com), click Contact and then Customer Support.

## HARDWARE

### Lapsed hardware support in Windows 10

**Q** I have been unable to use my LG mouse scanner since I installed Windows 10. I had no problems running the mouse on the same PC when it had Windows 7 installed. Is there an update or a workaround?

**Michael Gallagher, via email**

**A** Is it the LG Scanner Mouse LM-100/150? According to LG's website ([bit.ly/lgmo417](http://bit.ly/lgmo417)), Windows 7 was the last version it worked with and it is not compatible with Windows 8 or 10. You can download the software from that web page and try it, but don't be surprised if it fails.

The only solution is to upgrade to a newer device that works with Windows 10. For example, the IRIScan



**IRIS makes mice that can also scan pictures and documents**

Mouse 2 ([bit.ly/iris417](http://bit.ly/iris417)) – a mouse and scanner combo – is compatible with Windows 10. It costs £39, which is quite reasonable considering you are getting two devices in one.

There are several all-in-one printer/scanner/copiers that are reasonably priced, too. For example, the HP DeskJet 3630 ([bit.ly/hpscan417](http://bit.ly/hpscan417)) prints, scans and copies, works with Windows 10 and only costs £29.99. If your printer is due for replacement – or is running out of ink – it may be worth considering.



This fortnight Roland dismantled his apparently broken keyboard only to find it rammed with cat hair

# Your Top Tips

Our pick of the best advice from our readers. To get help or offer it to others, visit [forum.webuser.co.uk](http://forum.webuser.co.uk)



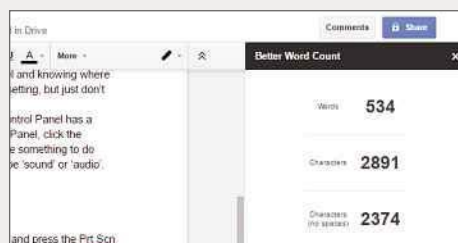
## TOP TIP

### OFFICE

## Run a live word count in Google Docs

Google Docs ([drive.google.com](http://drive.google.com)) is handy for writing letters, reports and other types of documents. If you need to know how many words or characters you've written, go to the Tools menu and select 'Word count'. Better still, you can press Shift+Ctrl+C. If you select some text and press Shift+Ctrl+C, Google Docs shows the number of words in the selection.

If you want a continuous update of the number of words and characters in a document, go to Add-ons, 'Get add-ons'. Find an add-on called Better Word Count and click the '+ Free'



*See how many words and characters there are in a Google Docs document*

button to install it. Then go to Add-ons, Better Word Count, Open Tools. A panel opens on the right with a word count that updates as you type.

**Tracy Collier, via email**

press the Prt Scn key. You can use this trick to take screenshots of web pages, games and other things you may need to keep as a record. Windows saves them in C:\Users\YourName\Pictures\Screenshots, but for easier access go to the Pictures folder in Explorer, click and drag the Screenshots folder and drop it under 'Quick access' in the sidebar at the top. From here you can view your screenshots in one click.

**Brian Palmer, via email**

### ONLINE STORAGE

## Drag files to Google Drive

An easy way to copy files to your Google Drive storage is to click and drag them to your web browser. Go to [drive.google.com](http://drive.google.com) in a browser (Chrome is best), then drag one or more files from an Explorer window or the Desktop and drop them on the browser window. Files are uploaded to whichever folder you're viewing. You can use your Google Drive storage to back up important files or free up space on your hard drive.

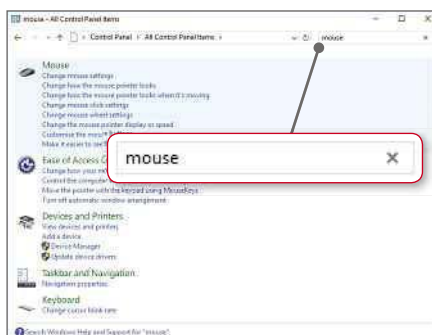
**Ben Hachman, via email**

### GENERAL PC

## Search the Control Panel

There must be over a hundred settings in the Windows Control Panel, which can make it hard to find the one you want. Thankfully, Control Panel's search tool makes this much easier. If you want to change a mouse setting, for example, open Control Panel, click the search box in the top-right corner and type 'mouse'. If you want to change something to do with the screen, type 'screen', or if you have a sound problem, type 'sound' or 'audio'. Windows shows links to all the settings that are relevant to your search.

**Colin McGuire, via email**



*Use the Control Panel's search box to find the Windows settings you want*

### EBOOKS

## Use up your Kindle credit before borrowing books

If you have an Amazon Prime membership, selecting slow delivery rather than next-day delivery earns you a £1 credit, which you can use, among other things, as a Kindle credit. Prime membership also lets you borrow some Kindle books at no extra cost. You can borrow one a month but you must return it before you can borrow another. Recently, I downloaded a book to borrow, but because I had some credit, I bought it by accident. I notified Amazon and received a refund.

Unfortunately, the book was recorded as 'borrowed', but because I hadn't actually borrowed anything, I couldn't return it and borrow something else. Amazon didn't believe me at first but eventually allowed me to borrow another book. The moral of the story is to use up your credit before you borrow a book.

**FratPark, Web User Forums**

### GENERAL PC

## Access screenshots quickly

To save the contents of your screen as an image, hold down the Windows key and

### GENERAL PC

## Rotate display in Windows

If you want to rotate your screen, you can usually do so by pressing Ctrl+Alt+an arrow key. Most people will probably never need to turn their display sideways or upside down, but if you've somehow altered your screen accidentally, this is an easy way to put it right.

**Madeline, Web User Forums**



*If your screen is upside down, press Ctrl+Alt and the up arrow to put it right*



## GENERAL PC

## Restore files and folders

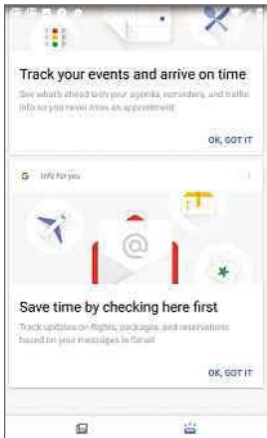
If something goes wrong and you notice that files or folders are missing in Explorer, right-click the parent folder, such as Documents, and select 'Restore previous versions'. Several versions will be listed. Select one and restore it to put everything back as it was.

Mike Grahame, via email

## ANDROID

## Find appointments quickly

I've noticed that the Google app now gives you handy prompts about appointments it finds in your Gmail



Google's new Upcoming tab shows reminders and details of future events

emails. Last week, for example, I'd booked an appointment for the optician and I received a notification on the day telling me what time I'd have to leave work in order to make it on time! When I tapped the notification, it told me that I could find all the important details about any flight, appointment or

delivery that appears in my emails by tapping the Inbox icon in the Google app. This section also shows upcoming events, reminders and even travel information, including how long it will take you to get home from your current location!

George Knowles, via email

## APPS

## Find your recent Google Maps searches

Following a recent tip about sending Google Maps locations from your PC to your phone, I wanted to point out that there's an easy way to access previous Google Maps searches. Provided you were logged in when you made a Google Maps search on your PC, you can tap the search bar on Google Maps for Android to see recent searches – they're below the shortcuts for 'Restaurants', 'Petrol stations' and 'Cashpoints'. Tap the 'More from recent history' button to scroll through a full history of your searches in Google Maps. Alternatively, swipe a little further and Google Maps filters locations that are 'Nearby from your history'.

This handy tool provides continuity between your PC and your phone, and you can access these options even when

you're using the app for directions rather than simply searching for a location.

Tom W, via email

## SECURITY

## Check suspicious activity on your Microsoft account

Last week I logged into Skype, which I don't do very often, and was shocked to find that there were a number of unfamiliar names in my contacts list. I don't know how long they'd been there but my first concern was that my account might have been hacked. I've used Google's 'Recently used devices' tool to check for suspicious activity on my Google accounts in the past, so I assumed Microsoft must offer something similar. Sure enough, you can check all recent activity associated with your Microsoft account at [account.live.com/activity](https://account.live.com/activity). One activity in the list stood out immediately because its 'approximate location' was Turkey. When I expanded the item, the description said it was an 'unsuccessful sync' and there was no need to change my password.

Unfortunately, I couldn't work out where the contacts had come from because the tool only showed activity from the past month, so I decided to delete the contacts, change my

>	25/01/2017 16:14	Successful sign-in	United Kingdom
>	28/01/2017 11:14	Successful sign-in	United Kingdom
>	20/01/2017 14:38	Automatic Sync	Turkey
	Protocol: Exchange ActiveSync	Time: 20/01/2017 14:38	Look unfamiliar? Secure your account.
	IP: 78.182.208.230	Approximate location: Turkey	
	Account alias: ed.munn@gmail.com	Type: Unsuccessful sync	
>	09/01/2017 09:30	Successful sign-in	United Kingdom

Microsoft lets you view a summary of all recent activity on your account

password and enable two-step verification on my account. To do this, visit [bit.ly/step417](https://bit.ly/step417), then scroll down and click 'Setup two-step verification'. Below this, you'll also see a 'Setup identity verification app' option, which offers even faster secure logins if you usually have your phone to hand.

Ed Wright, via email

## GENERAL PC

## Open calendar in Windows 10

I recently discovered that you can open a calendar with one click in Windows 10 by clicking the date and time on the taskbar. I use Google Calendar for my important appointments and events, but if you just want to check which day a particular date falls on, this is the quickest and easiest way I know.

Joel Nash, via email

## BLUNDER OF THE FORTNIGHT

## SOCIAL

## Sign out of Facebook remotely

Last week, I left my Facebook account logged in on someone else's PC. It wasn't even a friend or relative's PC, but belonged to a hotel I'd been staying in, and I was worried that someone might be able to trawl through my messages and get their hands on my private information.

Unfortunately, I'd already left the hotel by the time I realised what I'd done, so I had to pay expensive data-roaming charges on my phone to find out how to log out of the PC remotely.

The easiest way is to open the Facebook app on your phone, tap its main menu and scroll down to Account Settings. From here, choose Security and look for 'Where you're logged in'. The app tells you how many devices you're currently signed in on. Tap this option to see the devices. The app shows you when you last accessed

Manage Active Sessions	
Your Active Sessions	
<b>Current session</b>	
Location: [redacted] United Kingdom (Approximate)	
Device Type: Facebook for Android on Android 6	
Device Name: Facebook for Android	
If you see an unfamiliar device or location, remove it to end its session.	
Last accessed: Today at 13:10	
Location: [redacted] United Kingdom (Approximate)	X
Device Type: Chrome on Windows 10	
Device Name: Chrome on Windows	
Last accessed: Yesterday at 15:00	
Location: Unknown	X
Device Type: Chrome on Windows 7	
Device Name: Chrome on Windows	
Last accessed: 5 February at 19:24	
Location: [redacted] United Kingdom (Approximate)	X

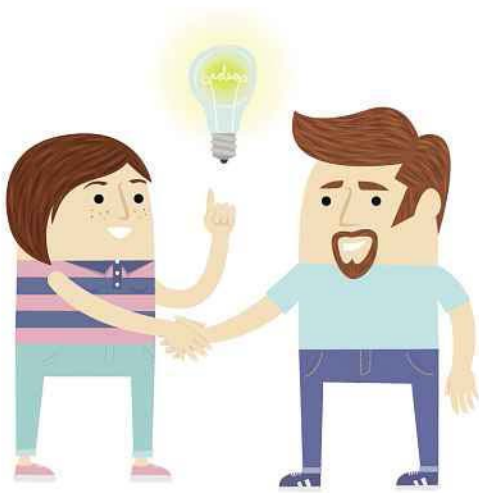
You can log out of Facebook remotely using its Android app

Facebook from each device, its location (if available) and the type of device. To log out of a device, simply tap its X. Now no-one will be able to spy on your private messages.

Adam Wade, via email

Have you managed to fix a tech-related disaster? If so, please send your story to [webuser@dennis.co.uk](mailto:webuser@dennis.co.uk)





# Readers' Helpdesk

Our pick of the best solutions posted on our reader forums. Visit [forum.webuser.co.uk](http://forum.webuser.co.uk) – it's friendly and free!

## GENERAL PC

### Should I print labels for my CDs and DVDs?

**Q** Can anyone tell me if there's anything wrong with printing circular labels to stick on CDs & DVDs? Are they prone to coming off when the disc is being spun at high speeds? Are they just a sticky label or are they glued on?

**Scooby, Web User Forums**

**A** If you must add labels to your CDs and DVDs, you can buy a printer that prints directly onto compatible discs or use a business that offers this service. However, printing, inks, labels and glues are generally best avoided, because the active layer of a disc is very close to the label side. I have manufactured software CDs with ink logos printed on them and when you held them up to a light, you could see damage to the reflective layer in the same pattern as the label. The disc might still work, but you risk shortening its life and losing the data stored on it. Where possible, it's best to label the plastic box the disc is stored in. Microsoft Publisher provides templates to create labels and if you don't have MS Office, you could try LibreOffice ([www.libreoffice.org](http://www.libreoffice.org)) for free.

**Helmut and George, Web User Forums**



**Labelling a CD could damage it and leave its data unretrievable**

## SOFTWARE

### Should I use a tool for deleting empty folders?

**Q** Can anyone recommend software for removing empty folders from my computer, please?

**um\_please, Web User Forums**

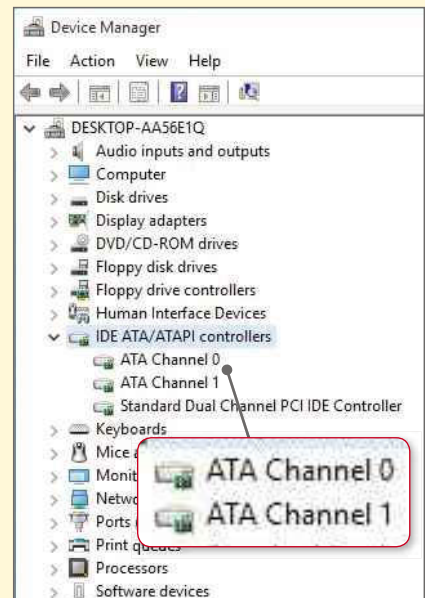
## HARDWARE

### Why won't my PC recognise its optical drive?

**Q** I have a Samsung SH-222 DVD Writer installed in my PC. The BIOS recognises it but Windows 10 doesn't. I've tried inserting bootable discs in the drive that have booted in the past as soon as they are inserted, but nothing happens. The disc whirrs, the tray opens and closes, but nothing appears on the screen or in This PC. There isn't even anything under 'Devices & drives'.

**dave1510, Web User Forums**

**A** A friend of mine had a similar problem that I managed to fix. Open Device Manager by searching for it. Under 'IDE ATA/ATAPI controllers', delete the entries for 'ATA Channel 0' and 'ATA Channel 1' by right-clicking each one and selecting Uninstall. Next, reboot your PC and the items should be reinstalled, making the drive appear in This PC.



**Uninstall ATA Channels 0 and 1 to make a Samsung optical drive reappear**

Before making any big changes to my drivers, I routinely create a new restore point using System Restore, so that I can revert to my previous configuration if something goes wrong.

**tornado, Web User Forums**

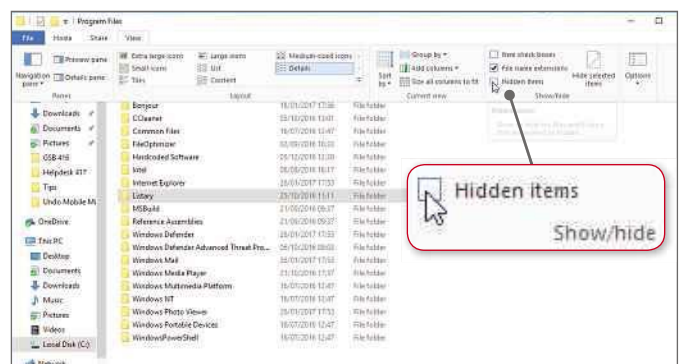
**A** I would never use a program to delete empty folders because it would only be able to identify that the folder is empty and not why. I make all decisions as to whether to remove empty folders myself.

For example, if a folder has been left behind from an uninstalled program, I might remove it, but otherwise it's usually best left alone. Removing folders related to currently installed programs could stop the program working or it might just recreate the folder. What's more, some folders that appear to be empty might actually contain important

hidden files.

Empty folders shouldn't take up much space, so there's no reason to concern yourself with them. If you decide to use a tool for removing them, make sure you create a backup first.

**Stewart40 and calimanco, Web User Forums**



**Make sure that Windows is set to display hidden files before trying to delete empty folders**

## Star Email

Mug  
winner



## Let's hear more about Chromebooks

In response to Robert's request for readers' thoughts on what we'd like to see more of in *Web User* – see Homepage, Issue 416, ([bit.ly/webuser416](http://bit.ly/webuser416)) – I would love to see more articles about Chromebooks, the Chrome OS operating system and related subjects. Perhaps you could even have a dedicated page in every issue as you currently do for Best New Browser Tools.

There are lots of developments in the world of Chromebooks at the moment, such as the introduction of Android apps, and I'm sure Chromebooks are rather a hazy area for many people. I for one would certainly appreciate more information. You



have run some excellent articles on Chromebooks in the past, but a regular page would be fantastic.

I bought the cheapest refurbished Chromebook I could find a year ago as

a trial, because I didn't quite know what to expect, and I'm delighted with it. I just love the simplicity and the fact that I don't have to worry about Windows updates or install and maintain antivirus software. The lack of malware on Chromebooks compared with Windows PCs is a real treat. I realise Chrome has its downsides, as most things do, and I still have my Windows 10 laptop for when I need it.

I'd also like to add that I would be totally lost without *Web User* and its sister magazine, and want to thank everyone for the great articles.

**Nigel Thomas, via email**

## Reflections on Radio Garden

I'd like to agree with Martin Fletcher in his recent letter concerning the excellent new website Radio Garden ([radio.garden](http://radio.garden)), as featured in What's New Online in Issue 414 ([bit.ly/webuser414](http://bit.ly/webuser414)). This site reminds me of the days when

we had a shortwave receiver and eagerly scanned the wavelengths hoping to find those elusive, faraway stations.

Radio Garden is an innovative site, although it has a few shortcomings, such as the speed at which it 'plants' sound seeds, maps that lack locations and an inability to save stations. However, this is not to detract from this site, which is presumably still evolving.

Might I suggest a couple of ways to overcome the missing station-saving facility? First, you can bookmark the station in your browser. Alternatively, make a note of the station ID and use an app such as TuneIn Radio to access the station and create a favourite.

**Ray Burrows, via email**

## Netgear routers won't accept dollars

I thought you might like to hear about some of the problems I've experienced with the Netgear Nighthawk X4S D7800 modem router you recommended ([bit.ly/webuser388](http://bit.ly/webuser388)).

Contrary to your reviewer's trouble-free experience, my attempts to connect to Plusnet didn't go smoothly. I found that the modem wouldn't establish a connection either manually or

automatically. From past experience, however, I did have an inkling of what might be causing the problem.

Back in 2013 – again, after reading good reviews – I bought a Netgear DGND3700. This modem also refused to establish a connection to Plusnet. After spending considerable time and effort with very patient technicians at Plusnet (their excellent service is the main reason I have always remained a customer), I finally worked out what the problem



Sprouting live radio streams

## Quiz Answers: Issue 416

- 1 **Cold Feet**
- 2 **Dinnerladies**
- 3 **The Walking Dead**
- 4 **Twin Peaks**
- 5 **The X Files**
- 6 **Father Ted**



**WINNER!**

Neaven William was the first to email us the correct answers and wins our *Definitive Guide to Google Hidden Tools*



WORD PUZZLE

**Firewall**



“ I could barely use my phone without going into the garden and holding it aloft like an Olympic torch ”

**Turn to page 74 to find out what's making Barry mad this issue**



was. For some reason, the modem was mishandling the '\$' character in my Plusnet password. After some weeks, Netgear corrected the problem.

I decided to test my suspicions about the Netgear Nighthawk by replacing the '\$' in my password. Unfortunately, it didn't solve the problem so I went on to remove the next special character, an '&'. This sorted the problem and the modem promptly connected to Plusnet. That wasn't the end of the story, however, because the next time I used the modem, it failed to connect again.

I use three other special characters in my Plusnet password for extra security and testing all the characters was a very time-consuming task, especially when the process failed. Also, Plusnet's servers weren't too happy with me repeatedly connecting, disconnecting and changing passwords. I'm surprised that a company of Netgear's reputation allowed such a serious bug to creep into its firmware in the first place.

*IM Williams, via email*

## High subscription fees drive people to Kodi

I thought I'd share my opinion on your Kodi article (Issue 416). It now appears that the Exodus add-on is dead, which is a great shame.

In recent news, there have been police raids on individuals selling 'fully loaded' Kodi boxes, which allow users to watch TV, films and subscription sport for free (see page 8). However, what the authorities fail to see is the reason why

this is such a lucrative business (eBay is littered with sellers of these devices).

ISPs recently started sending out toothless letters to torrent users trying to educate them to become legal, so why isn't Federation Against Copyright Theft (FACT) doing the same? At the end of the day, it's still copyright infringement.

I do hope Kodi lives on and continues to provide the same experience we currently have, but if it does cease to be, it would be nice for the bosses at Sky and Virgin Media to take stock of Kodi's success and adjust their pricing to a level that allows everyone to afford the subscription content they're trying to access elsewhere. Sadly, I don't think this will happen. Once the green-eyed monsters at those companies get their way, it's a lose-lose situation for all of us.

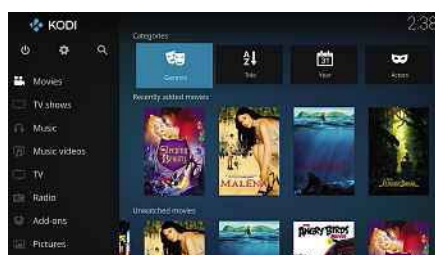
*Simon Mellor, via email*

## Kodi is too convoluted for me

On receiving my latest edition of *Web User*, I couldn't help noticing the headline on the cover: 'Watch Anything On Kodi'. When I saw that you had a six-page article about software, I thought I should take a closer look.

Now, I am a senior reader, but I like to think of myself as reasonably computer literate, so it really shouldn't have presented any problems. Downloading the software was easy, but the first thing I noticed was the very dated appearance of each page. I then read your instructions on how to install Kodi add-ons. You remarked that the process was rather convoluted, which really was an understatement.

I tried several times to install Fusion



Installer, and failed. The menu options in your instructions didn't match those on my screen. Maybe Kodi has been updated since you wrote your piece? [*Web User says*: yes it has – see page 26]. I managed to find some instructions on the internet but I couldn't see how to minimise Kodi so that I could refer to them while using the program.

In the end, I admitted defeat and uninstalled Kodi from my computer. Perhaps when the developers have updated it to bring it into the 21st century, I'll take another look.

*D Moll, via email*

## How do you drive a driverless car?

Colin Helms' response to my Star Email in Issue 415, 'Who's to blame for driverless car accidents?', raises some points about the question of liability.



Firstly, current legislation regarding who is 'in charge' of a motor vehicle can be less than straightforward, addressing such matters as where you were sitting if you were inside the vehicle, where the keys were and whether or not the engine was running.

These factors all have a bearing on the presumption of intention to drive. Current case law says that pretty much all you have to do is exercise control over the vehicle to be a driver. This raises the question: how do you drive a driverless car? Surely if you have a driverless car, it's your intention to be transported by the vehicle, leaving you with little or no input to the physical act of driving? Granted, it could be argued that you could override the computer program that's 'in charge', but I can't see why the mere fact that you were in the car when an accident occurred would in itself be

**Our 2016 Back Issues Disc is on sale now from Amazon, visit [bit.ly/wudisc16](http://bit.ly/wudisc16)**





proof of liability. As I said before, insurance companies (who will face claims) and lawyers (who make large fees from handling claims) will be or should be having thoughts about this.

*Alan Lesley-Bayne, East Kilbride*

## BT shouldn't overcharge customers

In your Inbox pages in Issue 416, Brian



Aldridge asked how BT could justify its exorbitant prices. Well, I hope Brian turned to page 8 of the same issue, because in the penultimate paragraph of the Need To Know story he would have found the answer. It appears that BT has been involved in an unfortunate accounting scandal in Italy that has wiped half a billion pounds off its profits. According to the *Guardian*, Italian prosecutors have also opened their own investigation into BT Italia over alleged false accounting and embezzlement.

So it's little wonder the company is struggling to make ends meet and has presumably been forced to increase its broadband and line-rental prices to make up the deficit.

This is very unfair, in my opinion, because BT's customers shouldn't have to suffer for its financial wrangling. But then I gather Sky isn't much better. What's a poor web user to do?

*Derek Kirby, via email*

## Companies should pay to share our info

I've been thinking for some time about companies such as Google, Amazon, Sky and others that get paid by other companies to show us adverts.

As these companies are sharing our names and other information, I think it's about time they gave us ordinary computer users some recompense. In fact, they should pay each and every person whose information they have shared. I don't think it's fair that these companies should be able to do what they like with my information or anybody else's without awarding us some type of payment.

*Terry Green,  
Web User  
Forums*



## What you say...

### APPLE HAS OVERTAKEN SAMSUNG AS THE BIGGEST MAKER OF PHONES, BUT WHICH COMPANY MAKES THE BETTER PHONES?

Samsung, without a doubt. I currently use a Galaxy S6 and a Tab S. They're solid, dependable devices I can trust.

*Gary Olsen @Gary\_Olsen*

I prefer Sony. I have two Z3 phones, and their batteries are great. After two years, I still get 1.5 days per charge. They're fast and waterproof too.

*Alan McClean*

Got both. I used to love the Galaxy, but the amplifier keeps breaking, so I need the volume up high to listen to music. The iPhone is good but I'm lucky to get 12 hours out of a charge.

*Paul Emsley*

OnePlus make better phones. They're solid and fast – and 30% cheaper than the Samsung.

*Kieren Dight*

### WOULD HAVING TO GIVE ACCESS TO YOUR BROWSING HISTORY STOP YOU VISITING THE US (bit.ly/us417)?

The thought of visiting a country that would elect Trump puts me off.

*Rich Grove @Rich\_Grove*

I'd tell them I don't own a phone or a social-media account, and I don't have the internet. I mean, why even ask? The National Security Agency knows already.

*Andrew Wakeman*

I wouldn't want to visit the US. It's far from safe these days with everyone getting shot.

*Joanne Evans*

Seems like a complete invasion of privacy to me. But then again the NSA probably has it already.

*Peter Blunkett*

### A NEW APP PAYS YOU £10 FOR TAKING A PHOTO OF A CAR THAT'S PARKED ILLEGALLY. WOULD YOU USE IT (bit.ly/parking417)?

At face value, it seems like a good idea until you realise you get paid £10 for a £60 fine. You're the one doing all the work.

*Pete Fitzsimmons*

No, not on private land. That's not illegal – it's a civil matter.

*Jenny Jacks @JenJacks3*

If it included people who park in disabled spaces, I'd do it for nothing.

*Richard Morgan*

If there was something like this for taking photos of drivers on their phones, then yes!

*Colin Wallace*

### DO YOU THINK THE THREAT OF 'FAKE NEWS' IS GENUINE OR OVERBLOWN?

It's a real problem. On Facebook, I see fake news being shared every day by gullible people who are outraged by its contents. People need to learn to fact-check anything they share.

*David Batty*

It's genuine and scary. Before Brexit and the US election, Facebook and Twitter were full of political nonsense and lies.

*Joey Lopes @djJoeyLopes*

The recent EU referendum was conducted with fake news from both sides, wasn't it?

*Shamus Doherty*

Fake news is like my porridge – I take it with a pinch of salt.

*Cunningham Hutchison  
@chutchyhutchy*

# ! Page 404



Barry Collins sees red as he tries and fails to escape from his failing mobile network

## Oh how I want to break Three

I have been trying to leave the Three mobile network for over a month – ‘trying’ being the operative word.

Just before Christmas, the Three network in my area took a considerable turn for the worse. Reception has always been iffy indoors, but now I could barely place or receive any calls without going into the garden and holding my phone aloft like an Olympic torch. The neighbours called social services twice.

So, I rang Three (from my landline, obviously) and explained my predicament. The call centre put me through to the False Sincerity Department, which agreed that this was a trifle inconvenient and offered me a £5 per month discount on my contract. No technical checks, no questions asked – just take our fiver and get off the support line, will you?

I refused, patiently explaining that missing all my incoming calls and having to stand in the belting rain to ring my mum wasn't worth the £30 per month they were still planning to charge me, but my friend from Three said they would need seven days to get a technician out to find out what had gone wrong.

Seven days of missed calls passed before Three rang again. The call dropped, of course, because they

rang my mobile, but after I rang back, fought my way through the 18 different menu options and sat through a dozen choruses of East 17 hold music, Three concluded there was nothing wrong with its network. However, if I could wait another seven days, there was



engineering work planned on my local mast that might improve matters.

“Hang about,” I respond. “If there’s nothing wrong with my network, why are you sending out an engineer next week? And what exactly have you been doing for the past seven days, while supposedly investigating my problems?”

I hear furious mouse-clicking noises in the background, as the headset jockey urgently searches for the ‘Yikes, we’ve been rumbled’ section of his support script, then inquires:

“Would you like

£5 per month off your contract?”.

After a somewhat terse exchange of views, I am elevated to the senior support commander, who after checking my date of birth and postcode, and subjecting me to another 11 verses of East 17 agrees that the service is

unacceptable, and I can take up the ‘special offer’ of paying £200 to be freed from the remaining 11 months of my contract. Like a belligerent contestant on *Deal or No Deal*, I tell the Banker where he can stick his offer, before finally we reach a compromise: I can send back my phone in exchange for walking away free of charge.

Except first Three needs to send me a special envelope to return the phone, and that could take – you’ve guessed it – seven days. More than 10 days and two phone calls later, I’m still waiting for this envelope to arrive, and so I remain a Three customer against my will.

I could take my complaint to the mobile-phone ombudsman, Cisas, but they give companies a staggering eight weeks before they’ll even look at your complaint, and up to another six weeks to issue an adjudication. That’s almost four months. A friend of mine is currently a juror at a serious fraud trial at The Old Bailey, and that will last only 12 weeks. God knows, I want to break Three.

“I hear furious mouse-clicking noises in the background as the headset jockey urgently searches for the ‘Yikes, we’ve been rumbled’ section of his script”

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