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STREAM PHOTOS FROM YOUR PHONE TO YOUR COMPUTER

Master the powerful AirServer app **p35**

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active

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Learn something new in every issue

RECOVER OLD FILES



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What You Must Change ON YOUR EMAIL

Tweak these settings NOW to become an Email Expert

- Categorise emails into groups
- Avoid spam servers
- Find lost messages
- Download & back up emails
- +** Move to a new service



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WHY YOU SHOULD UPGRADE TO WINDOWS 10 PRO




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With email, the gap between what you normally do and what you can *potentially* do is massive – probably wider than in any other area of computing. The iceberg’s tip is simply typing then pressing send. But beneath the waves are clever tools for scheduling emails, categorising them, searching them, and even restoring those you’ve accidentally deleted. We explain these and many more in our Cover Feature.

For me, the most useful tips are on page 51. I’ve learnt the hard way over the years that if you don’t set up precise methods for cataloguing emails, you’ll miss or forget about

countless important messages (pay rises, marriage proposals, Lottery wins – that kind of thing). Who knows how my life would’ve been different?

But my favourite emails are from readers. Your observations on computing are typically witty, astute and sardonic, often going against what you’re being told to think by the technological elite. Your feedback on the magazine, both bad and good, is also welcome. Please stay in touch.

Daniel Booth
editor@computeractive.co.uk



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Average time Brits spent online every day during lockdown, a record high - p10

32 million
Number of times data-stealing Chrome extensions have been installed - p11



2GB
Amount of RAM the 64bit version of Windows 10 requires - p68

HOW TO USE SNIPCA URLS

We use snipcas to turn long URLs that are hard to type into ones that are short and simple. They aren’t websites themselves, which means they won’t be recognised if you type them into Google. Instead, you need to type them into your browser address bar, then press Enter. Doing this will take you to the correct website.

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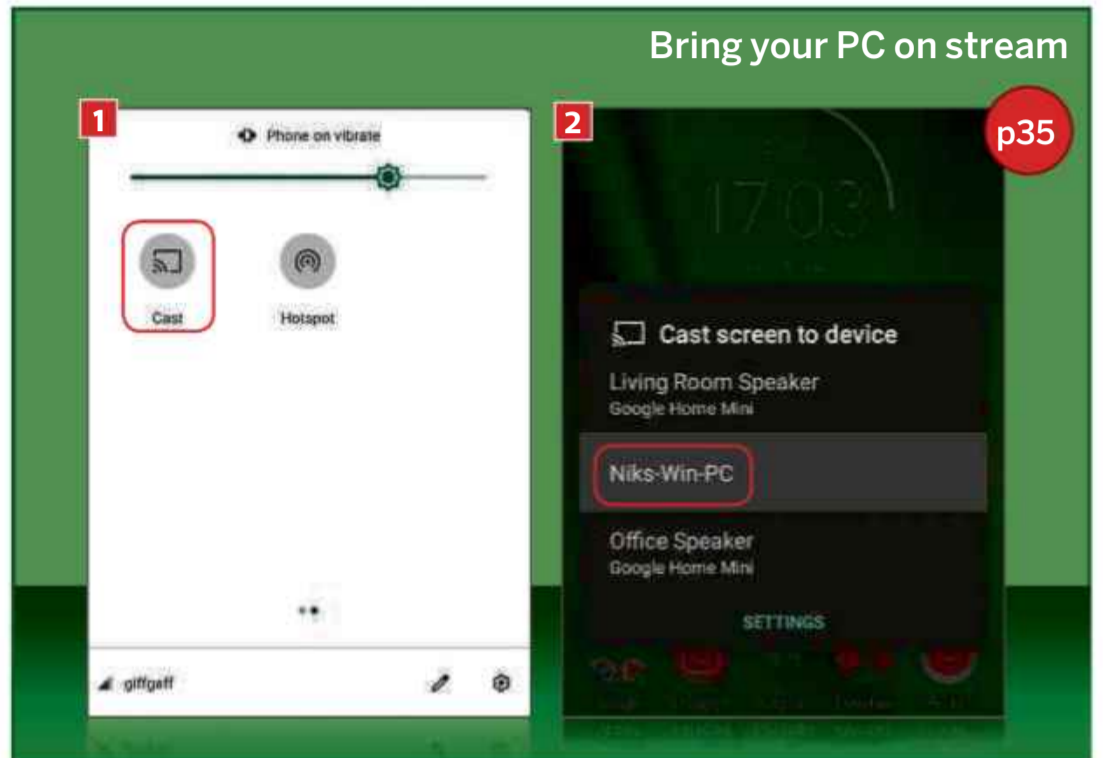
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What You Must Change **ON YOUR EMAIL**

Tweak these settings
NOW to become an
Email Expert



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FEATURE
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Why you should upgrade to

Windows 10 Pro

Leave Home, Go Pro

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Ofcom to ISPs: keep helping customers who can't pay bills

Telecoms regulator Ofcom has called on internet service providers and mobile networks to continue supporting customers who are struggling to pay their bills as

a result of the coronavirus pandemic.

In March, as lockdown began, many companies said they would provide assistance to vulnerable customers who were having financial difficulties. While details were sketchy, some firms confirmed they wouldn't disconnect people who had missed payment deadlines, while there were reports of others writing off customers' debts.

Ofcom said this support was vital because the pandemic has "changed how we live, with people more dependent than ever on home phones, mobile or broadband services".

It now wants firms to extend support as lockdown eases, in order to keep prioritising help for people who still find it difficult to pay their bills. In particular, it wants companies to give customers advice on managing debt, and to work with charities that offer assistance.

It also urged companies to



disconnect non-paying customers "only as a last resort", and instead to consider moving them to a cheaper tariff, or letting them delay their payment.

The regulator advised customers to contact their provider as soon as possible if they think they may miss a payment. It said: "Your provider can talk you through the options they have in place to help you manage your situation".

Broadband and phone companies have already taken extraordinary measures to keep people connected during the crisis. This included a deal

to give NHS frontline staff more mobile-data access, voice calls and texts at no extra cost. The Government says 500,000 NHS workers have benefitted from this arrangement.

Firms also agreed to prioritise broadband improvements for NHS staff forced to work from home, helping them carry out video consultations and download and upload large medical files. Some companies even upgraded NHS staff to faster speeds without any extra charge.

 How helpful has your provider been during lockdown? Let us know: letters@computeractive.co.uk

WHAT WE THINK

If the economy doesn't enjoy a V-shaped recovery, millions of people will be unemployed for years. They'll find it increasingly difficult to pay their bills, and yet finding a job is now almost impossible without internet access. Companies will come under intense pressure to help fix this catch-22, but don't expect them to advertise this too prominently. They prefer to make vague public statements that sound constructive, then treat customers on a case-by-case basis. If you foresee money problems, don't wait for official announcements. Instead, phone your provider now and make your case.

Tune into FM and AM radio until 2032

You'll be able to tune into FM and AM radio stations for at least another 12 years after the Government announced a reprieve for analogue radio. Nearly 60 per cent of all radio listening is now digital, but it has grown much more slowly than experts predicted.

Ofcom was due to consider renewing analogue licences in 2022, but the Government has pushed this back to 2032, saying that FM and AM "remain an important platform for millions of listeners".


Its decision has been taken partly to preserve the future of

commercial radio, which looks less certain following massive falls in advertising revenue during the coronavirus pandemic.

Media minister John Whittingdale said the move "ensures there is no disruption for loyal listeners of treasured FM and AM radio services



such as Classic FM, Absolute Radio and TalkSport over the next decade".

 How do you listen to radio – analogue or digital? Let us know: letters@computeractive.co.uk



You'll like this...

O2 is bringing 4G to 91,000 extra postcodes (www.snipca.com/35325)



but not this...

Email scammers are targeting British Gas customers (www.snipca.com/35326)

Courts shut scam that used fake Martin Lewis backing

An online scam that falsely claimed it was endorsed by MoneySavingExpert founder Martin Lewis has been closed by the courts, but only after it stole almost £1.5m from victims.

GPay Ltd ran adverts for its XtraderFX website on social-media sites, including Facebook, promising to make users rich in a Bitcoin trading scheme. It used images and made-up quotes from trusted figures like Martin Lewis to add credibility.

At least 108 clients lost cash in the scam, even when they opted for insurance that was meant to cover any financial losses. When customers tried to withdraw their funds, they were told to provide a photo ID, a utility bill and debit or credit-card details. XtraderFX didn't ask for this information when setting up customers' accounts.

It's believed the scam was



run by an Israeli-Bulgarian cyber-crime gang. GPay was registered to an address in Slough, but had abandoned this by the time investigators visited.

Martin Lewis said: "I don't know whether to dance a jig that these despicable scum have been shut down, or cry that they managed to take so many people's money".

He added: "I've been fighting scam ads with my face on for four years now – sadly, thousands have appeared. It's always been tough to get at the actual scammers, which is why I

sued Facebook to try and cut off their publicity."

Lewis previously threatened to take Facebook to court for allowing adverts that showed his name and image in thousands of scam adverts. He dropped the case after Facebook promised to launch a tool for reporting scams and donated £3 million to a Citizens Advice project to help tackle scams.

He has also warned people about fake adverts on MSN News, Twitter, Instagram, Yahoo and in search results.

Read more about this on MoneySavingExpert: www.snipca.com/35300.

IN BRIEF

GOOGLE STOPS SAVING PHOTOS AND VIDEOS

Google has stopped automatically backing up images and videos from social-media sites to its Photos app. It means that images and videos you receive in apps like WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger won't be added unless you do so manually (follow Google's instructions at www.snipca.com/35308). Google made its decision to "save internet resources" because people are sharing more photos and videos during the coronavirus pandemic. It doesn't affect content Google has already backed up.

ADD WHATSAPP CONTACTS BY QR CODE

You'll soon be able to add WhatsApp contacts by scanning a QR code (pictured), rather than typing in their name and phone number.



It's one of several new tools WhatsApp is adding, including dark mode for its web and desktop version. Read more at www.snipca.com/35309.

'Set aside' busy tabs in Microsoft Edge

A new Edge extension lets you temporarily 'set aside' a group of open tabs, helping to clear space in the browser if you've opened too many. You can easily restore the tabs with just two clicks.

The extension, called Tabs Aside, brings back one of the most popular tools in the original version of Edge, launched in 2015 with Windows 10. However, Microsoft ditched the tool when it relaunched Edge in January, after rebuilding the browser using Google's Chromium [source code](#).

It's been made by independent developer Michael Gordeev, who says it comes in useful when "you'd like to get those tabs out of the way sometimes, but they're



maybe not worth saving as actual bookmarks".

To install the extension, visit its page in the Edge Add-ons store (www.snipca.com/35306) then click Get. Its icon will now appear in your browser bar (1 in our screenshot).

When you next have several tabs open that you'd like to set aside, click the icon, then click 'Set current tabs aside' 2 in the box that appears. Your open tabs will then disappear,

leaving you to start a new browsing session in Edge.

To bring these tabs back at any point, click the icon again, then click 'Restore tabs'. If you've set aside more than one group of tabs, you'll see the most recently saved at the top, down to the earliest at the bottom.

The extension is also available for Google Chrome from www.snipca.com/35307 – click 'Add to Chrome'.

TOMORROW'S WORLD



Japanese firm Fujitsu has built artificial intelligence that will let companies track how well staff wash their hands. It's based on crime-surveillance systems that detect suspicious body movements, so presumably will also be able to tell company bosses when workers have sneakily shoved a bottle of antibacterial handwash into their pocket. We all know now how prized they have become during lockdown.

IN BRIEF

NEW VIC-20 RELEASED IN TIME FOR XMAS



The VIC-20 is making a comeback with a new full-size version (pictured), complete with more than 30 games. Made by Retro Games Ltd, it will be released in October priced £109.99. It will plug into TVs via **HDMI** (watch more at www.snipca.com/35287). Released in 1981, the original VIC-20 was the first computer to sell one million units.

LINK TO TEXT WITHIN A WEB PAGE

Google has released a Chrome extension that lets you create a link for a piece of text within a web page. To install 'Link to Text Fragment', visit www.snipca.com/35293 then click 'Add to Chrome'. Next, highlight some text online, then right-click it and select 'Copy Link to Selected Text'. The text will briefly turn yellow. You can now paste the link wherever you like.

THE WORLD'S GONE MAD!



Sales of webcams may have rocketed since lockdown, but so too have freckle-removal pens (pictured). Apparently, seeing our faces in countless video chats has made us more aware of 'blemishes' like freckles and moles. Skin doctors want the pens banned because they can scar faces, and make cancerous melanomas hard to spot.



Update Computer Misuse law to fight scams, urge experts

Computer users in the UK are at a greater risk of being attacked by scammers because our "outdated" Computer Misuse Act (CMA) makes it hard for authorities to investigate them.

Cyber-security experts have urged the Government to update the 30-year-old law to better reflect the formidable threat posed both by scammers and rogue states that support hackers.

In an open letter to Boris Johnson, a group including trade association techUK, security firms McAfee and F-Secure, and think tank Demos said the law hinders investigators because they have to request permission before they're allowed to



examine computers suspected of being used in crimes.

They point out that the CMA was originally intended to protect telephone networks. This means it criminalises many of the tactics cyber-security experts use to fight hacking and malware.

The letter says that fighting hackers often requires "the

scanning and interrogation of compromised victims' and criminals' systems to lessen the impact of attacks and prevent future incidents".

In such cases "criminals are obviously very unlikely to explicitly authorise such access".

It adds that the aim of the act was to "prevent computer hacking before the concept of cyber-security existed". When it passed in 1990, just 0.5 per cent of the population used the internet. The letter calls for reform so the law is closer to that in countries like the US and France, where individuals' privacy is maintained but authorities have more freedom to inspect criminals' computers.

BRITS REPORT 1M SCAM EMAILS

The public have sent more than 1 million emails to the National Cyber Security Centre's new Suspicious Email Reporting Service since it launched in April. Ciaran Martin, head of the

Centre, said the milestone was "testament to the vigilance of the British public". You can report emails you think are scams by forwarding them to report@phishing.gov.uk.

iPad update omits weather & calc apps

Apple has announced an update for iPadOS - its operating system for iPads - but disappointed many users by not adding calculator and weather apps to the device.

It revealed details of iPadOS 14 in June (www.snipca.com/35270), saying that a new "compact design" means you can search the device without leaving the app you're using (pictured).

However, despite weather and calculator apps being some of the most popular tools on iPhones (which run



iOS), Apple has yet to bring them to the iPad.

Frustrated users say that the iPad's bigger screen particularly suits the calculator tool because it would be easier to press buttons that appear when you rotate your iPhone

into landscape mode.

Responding to criticism, Craig Federighi, Apple's senior vice president of Software Engineering, said it's "obviously easy" to create a calculator app, but Apple will do so only when it can make one that's "distinctive and great".

He also said that while it would be straightforward to make a bigger version of the iPhone's Weather app, Apple would rather build a new app for the iPad that takes advantage of the device's larger screen.

Microsoft shows off new Windows 10 Start Menu

Microsoft has revealed what its redesigned Start Menu might look like, as it works towards relaunching it some time next year.

The company's aim is to move away from Live Tiles – which contain information that updates in real time – to more basic, static icons. They were one of Microsoft's key innovations in Windows 8 and are also part of Windows 10, but many users have found them distracting and confusing.

Live Tiles are likely to remain in some form, but they will be less integral to the

overall design of the Start Menu.

Another change is that tiles and icons will have a background that matches the colour mode you've set on Windows. So, if you've set it to Light mode, tiles and icons will also have a light mode.

This is shown in the screenshot right, which is one of four that Microsoft shared on Facebook (visit www.snipca.com/35239 then click the right-pointing arrow that appears when you hover your



cursor over the image).

The Start Menu will look like this when you turn off Live Tiles. Currently, icons appear in solid blocks of colour that don't reflect which colour mode (light or dark) you've set in Windows.

These screenshots show a work in progress rather than the final design, but they give a strong indication of what the Start Menu will look like when the redesign appears, probably some time in 2021.

WORD FINDS TYPING ERRORS IN SEARCHES

Microsoft Word will soon start showing results for words that you may have misspelled when searching for them, just as search engines already do. In its blog (www.snipca.com/35261),

Microsoft gives the example that searching for 'technincian' will find the correctly spelt 'technician'. It will also find synonyms, and different forms of a word, such as 'USA' and 'United States'.

O2 refunds customers 15 years late

O2 has finally refunded some customers a full 15 years after they were overcharged, though some thought it was a scam.

The letters confirming the refund were headed with the logo of Spanish firm Telefonica, O2's parent company, causing some people to suspect they were fake.

O2 confirmed they were genuine after people posted them on social media (pictured). One customer, Glenn Pegden, wrote on Twitter (www.snipca.com/35246): "Wow! Just got an unexpected refund cheque from O2 for credit I had on my



phone when I left them, back in 2005! I didn't chase them, I didn't know it was due, they are just going around fixing 15 year old mistakes. Nice work Telefonica!"

The refunds varied greatly, with one customer saying they had been offered £127, while another was sent a cheque for about £2. In the letter, Telefonica said the

refunds included four per cent interest.

O2 said it identified a group of overcharged customers in January, but delayed sending the cheques until the coronavirus lockdown had been eased.

The company said: "We identified a billing issue which meant some customers were charged twice on their final bill before leaving O2. We have been contacting those affected to apologise and send their refund".

It also claimed it had made efforts to trace former customers' latest addresses.

• O2 customer? Don't fall for this scam – see page 11

IN BRIEF

BOOST YOUR SIGNAL WITH EE'S 'SMART WIFI'

EE has announced its 'Smart WiFi' service, which gives you 'discs' to boost your signal, just like mesh Wi-Fi. For an extra £10 a month on top of your existing contract, EE will send you a BT Smart Hub router, a disc (pictured) and a 4GEE WiFi Mini device with a 2GB data limit per month. After receiving your first disc, you can request up to two more to extend your signal further. Read more on EE's site: www.snipca.com/35244.



ISP COMPLAINTS RESUME AFTER LOCKDOWN

One of the bodies for investigating complaints about broadband and phone providers has resumed dealing fully with cases, after reducing its workload during lockdown. Ombudsman Services (www.ombudsman-services.org) said it began a "more normal way of working" at the start of July. Along with CEDR (www.cedr.com), it provides an Alternative Dispute Resolution for customers unhappy with their provider's response.

ADOBE TELL YOU TO STOP USING FLASH

Adobe will soon start advising you to uninstall Flash Player before 31 December, when it will end support for the plug-in. In a new support page (www.snipca.com/35249), Adobe said it will remove all download links to Flash from that date, and prevent Flash-based content from running. Visit the site for a link to uninstalling Flash.

Question of the Fortnight

How did lockdown change our internet habits?

We stayed at home, protected the NHS, and Zoomed our family

One of the most striking aspects of this internet age is how quickly new forms of communication can catch on. And in extraordinary times, this can happen with remarkable speed. In January, 659,000 people in the UK were using the video-chat tool Zoom. Three months and one lockdown later, that had soared to 13 million.

This astonishing figure comes from Ofcom's 2020 Online Nation report (www.snipca.com/35238), an annual analysis of how the UK uses the internet. When other programs are counted (Skype, FaceTime etc), Ofcom found that 71 per cent of people made at least one video call a week in April – up from 35 per cent two months



Other factors were bored young adults watching more videos on YouTube (daily viewing time nearly doubled

and Government websites also saw big jumps.

Ofcom's report, taken from a survey of 3,000 people aged 13 and over, appears to support what's become a consensus among technology experts: that lockdown accelerated some trends that were already well established.

For example, over the past decade there's been a steady move away from the office towards working from home. For many companies, the reliability of video-chat software during lockdown has convinced them that remote working is the future. Many offices will remain shut or will only partially reopen.

Much of Ofcom's report comes from a survey conducted last September, when 73 per cent adults said they send messages (voice and text) using online services. Here, the phone apps WhatsApp and Facebook

THE FACTS

- Brits spent an average of four hours online every day during lockdown
- Seven in 10 people made video calls at least once a week
- Zoom usage rose from 659,000 to 13 million

Messenger reign supreme. Indeed, almost as many people use them as use traditional text (SMS) messaging.

There's one important caveat to all these figures: they're a percentage of internet users, not *all* adults in the UK. Ofcom says that 10 per cent of adults (around five million) never use the internet, a figure that's remained stable since 2014 – though lockdown may have forced many people to go online for the first time.

How much of this change will prove permanent? Ofcom confidently predicts a new internet era, claiming lockdown will leave “a lasting digital legacy” and has “radically changed the way we live, work and communicate online”.

We agree mostly. The world of work in particular will never be the same again. But we don't think consumer behaviour will change all that much. People will still want to eat at restaurants, drink down the pub, and have their two weeks in the Med. It's just that they might also be Zooming at the same time.

“ Before lockdown, 22 per cent of over-65s made video calls every week – this figure rose to 61 per cent by April ”

earlier. Around seven per cent used video calling for the first time because of lockdown.

The largest increase was among over-65s. Before lockdown, 22 per cent made video calls every week. This rose to 61 per cent by April.

All this video chatting led to a milestone in internet use: for the first time, we spent an average of four hours a day online, a marked increase on the 3 hours and 29 minutes measured as recently as last September.

from 17 minutes in January to 32 minutes in April), and more online shopping (rising from 10 minutes and 21 seconds to just over 12 minutes).

Following the news was crucial, too. In April people were spending three minutes more on news websites every day than they were three months earlier. The BBC was the clear winner here, with 78 per cent of adults saying they used the corporation's services for information. NHS

Protect your tech

Scams and threats to avoid, plus new security tools

WATCH OUT FOR...

Chrome extensions that steal your data

What's the threat?

Security researchers have discovered more than 100 browser extensions for Chrome that were stealing data from users. Once they were added to Chrome, criminals could use them to take screenshots of your computer, read what's stored on your Windows clipboard, steal login details saved in cookies and track what you type on your keyboard.

The extensions, detected by US firm Awake Security, had proved extremely popular with users. They'd been downloaded 32 million times in total, which is remarkable given that very few extensions generally have been installed more than 10 million times.

Ironically, many of the tools claimed to warn users about potentially dangerous websites, while others offered to convert file formats. They had been specifically designed to avoid detection by antivirus software, and

therefore managed to sneak into the Chrome Web Store.

Awake believes the extensions had all been made by the same criminal gang, but hadn't so far identified which one.

How can you stay safe?

First, visit www.snipca.com/35234, where Awake has listed the IDs of each extension. These are the unique codes that appear in an extension's URL. If any of your extensions contain one of these codes, uninstall it immediately.

Google has removed most of these extensions from the Chrome Web Store (<https://chrome.google.com/webstore>), so the immediate threat has gone. But hackers will never stop targeting Chrome. With two billion users, it's simply too juicy a target, so always be cautious when installing extensions. Ideally, stick to



those recommended by *Computeractive*.

Increasingly, criminals are dressing up malware as fake security tools. The extension in the screenshot above is one such example. Called TheSecuredWeb, it promises to alert you when you're about to visit a site that contains malware. But Chrome itself offers excellent protection from web scams, so it's debatable whether you need another layer of security.

New tools | Malwarebytes Premium 4.1.1.71

One of the first things you should check after installing a Windows Feature Update is whether your security tools are still working properly. Security programs can easily be knocked sideways by the complexities of these major updates.

One of the victims of the May 2020 Update is Malwarebytes Premium. Many users have taken to Malwarebytes' forums (www.snipca.com/35235) to report recent problems with version 4.1, including repeatedly crashing, general slowness, and videos stuttering.

Some users said they fixed the problems by switching off Malwarebytes' 'Ransomware Protection' feature, but weakening your defences is hardly an acceptable solution. Instead, install version 4.1.1.71 (or later), which



Malwarebytes released in early June to fix the glitches.

At the time of writing it remains a beta release, so you'll need to open Malwarebytes' Settings, then click General and turn on the 'Beta updates' slider (see screenshot). Next, click the About heading, followed by 'Check for updates'.

ScamWatch

Readers warn readers

Don't update O2 info

I'm an O2 customer, so I do occasionally receive genuine text messages from the company. But one message recently seemed like a scam. It read: "Payment for your latest bill could not be processed by your bank. Please update your information via", followed by a link. My finger hovered over the link and I almost tapped it, until I thought about checking my bank account. It showed that the payment had gone through, so I had nothing to worry about. I contacted O2, who told me they were aware of the scam. I searched online, and saw that several local and national newspapers had exposed it.

Simon Webb

 Warn your fellow readers about scams at letters@computeractive.co.uk

Letters

Tell us what's on your mind



Working from home means I can keep my staff

✉ In Issue 583 Iain Furlong said companies are forcing people to work from home as a way to cut costs. As the owner of a small business, may I ask why cutting costs is a bad thing? Lockdown has hit us badly, and we're going to have to find significant savings in order to continue.

The easy way to do this would be to make staff redundant, but I don't want to do that. The only alternative is to give up some office space to save money spent on rent, and ask people to work from home. That saved money will mean I can afford to carry on paying their salaries. Would Mr Furlong prefer these workers to be on the dole?

Paul Kellaway



✉ I can see both sides of the debate about working from home. I've worked from home for six years now. I live alone, and started a new office job last year, hoping to do a couple of days in the office and a couple of days at home, but for various reasons that didn't happen the way I hoped. My cost of living shot up, so I left the job and went to a more flexible company.

I work better alone – I always have done. But those who are used to having people around them will have experienced a huge culture shock.

A friend does a bit at home and a bit in the office. He was shocked when I told him that the last few months have felt no different to me, but that's because I'm used to finding distractions from my loneliness and channeling it into hobbies such as gaming and motorcycling. He doesn't have anything like that lined up, so he's felt a big social gap.

Matthew Curtis

Retuning our TV wiped our HD shows

✉ Regarding Frank Prince's question in Issue 582 ("Why do I get 'No signal' on my TV?", Problems Solved, page 67), in early October last year a message appeared on our Ultra HD TV (which had been giving us perfect pictures) telling us we'd have to retune our TV on 16 October as a consequence of changes to the transmissions. This we duly carried out, only to find that we had lost all of our HD programmes.

Nothing we tried would bring them back, so we rang the Freeview helpline, but they were no help whatsoever. They finally told me that I would have to realign our aerial to another transmitter, at our own expense. We pointed out that we are pensioners on a very limited income and after much argument they finally sent an engineer who, after two visits and a new aerial, was unable to find an alternative transmitter and left matters even worse than they were before.

They also told us there was nothing more they could do as the 700 and 800 MHz signals, currently used for HD transmission, had been earmarked for the proposed new high-speed network and were being closed down.

We've sent many emails to Freeview, MPs and Ofcom, pointing out that this arbitrary decision to deny a service that we have enjoyed for many years could be considered a breach of our human rights – but so far to no avail.

We don't live in an isolated location, but just south of Farnham in Surrey. One wonders how many others are being denied HD TV as the frequency shutdowns are rolled out across the country.

John & Margaret Payne

Beware dangers of posting pics of grandkids online

✉ I'm sympathetic to the Dutch grandmother who was ordered by the courts to remove online photos of her grandchildren (News, Issue 582, page 9). But I have twin three-year-old granddaughters, and a nine-year-old granddaughter. They are all blonde, blue-eyed and lovely (of course they are!), but due to the dangers of the internet we always get permission from their parents before posting anything online. In fact, most of the photos are posted *by* their parents. We are very proud of them, but as a retired police officer I am well aware of the dangers.

David Abbott

Two spaces: the final frontier for Microsoft's arrogance

✉ Issue 581's 'What's All the Fuss About?' on Microsoft's decision to show two spaces after a full stop as a grammatical error is another example of the company's arrogance. When I worked in a ministry in the 1970s, the extra space was standard procedure. The reason given was that the space left after a stop was so small it often failed to clearly distinguish the start of a new sentence. I have been a two-spacer ever since!

Happily, LibreOffice lets me choose without insulting my intelligence. Interestingly, my 1960s Concise English Dictionary used two spaces, but my 2005 Compact Oxford English



Dictionary uses one. Admittedly, there is a bigger problem today, well illustrated on the internet, which is the inability to write coherent and readable sentences at all.

Terry Sims

Microsoft should make Feature Updates optional

Regarding the ongoing discussions about Windows updates, I don't agree they should be totally scrapped, but what Microsoft should do is make Feature Updates (as opposed to security fixes and patches) completely optional.

In the days when Windows had different editions - 95, 98, XP etc - the consumer had a choice whether or not to upgrade, at least for a long time before support was ended. Now we are forced to do it and we may not want (or need) the extra features which come out.

I look after three laptops. Sometimes there are problems with an update, sometimes they are all fine. The May 2020 Update installed on one of my laptops with no problems, but the other two are still to get it, so who knows?

Lorna Gibbon

Where there's a Will, there's a way to upgrade laptops

I'd like to thank Will Stapley for the fantastic article 'How to Upgrade an Old Laptop' in Issue 582 (pictured). I thought SSDs were pretty expensive so hadn't considered one for

my ageing laptop, but when Will said he bought one for £43, I was interested in getting one. I bought the same SSD as Will (a Crucial MX500 from Amazon www.snipca.com/34975), and also the same external drive enclosure (£8 from Amazon www.snipca.com/34968).

I was a bit nervous as I had never before taken the back off my laptop, but with a tiny bit of force it came off easily.

Swapping the drives was pretty straightforward. I then booted up my laptop while pressing down F2 and installed a fresh version of Windows 10. I had it up and running in no time at all and after reinstalling all my programs it was working just like before, apart from the fact that it now boots up in under a minute when before it took forever, while Malwarebytes now takes two minutes to run rather than nine as it did before. I now use my old hard drive for backing up after fitting it into the enclosure.

Allan Macrae



STAR LETTER

Storing files online isn't as secure as NAS drives

In Issue 583 Philip Howells' letter recommends paying a lifetime subscription fee to an online storage provider ('Don't forget the drawbacks of NAS drives'). While I can certainly see benefits in using online storage space, this approach can't

guarantee protection against the inadvertent transfer of virus-infected files to the online server and back again.

This isn't the main issue for me, however. A quick search on a number of the lesser-known (and therefore cheaper) storage providers throws up repeated user problems such as slow transfer speeds, unreliable connections and considerable system outages.

While these alone cause me concern, I am even more worried about the possibility of the provider disappearing completely. This has already happened



to me, in fact. I took out a lifetime subscription, only for the provider to close and disappear into the ether after I had been using the service for less than 12 months.

I would caution anyone to undertake in-depth research before parting

with any money for a budget 'lifetime' subscription. In this case, you may well find that the money spent on a decent NAS setup instead is well worth it.

Of course, but unfortunately too late, I now appreciate that 'lifetime' simply means the lifetime of the provider that you use. Who knows how long that could be in some cases?

Thanks for a great, informative magazine - I'm off now to buy one of the NAS setups you recommended in Issue 582 (pictured).

Tim Mallinson



The Star Letter writer wins a Computeractive mug!

Thanks for keeping it up during lockdown

I just wanted to say thank you for continuing to produce *Computeractive* under these difficult lockdown conditions. Six issues produced out of the office is no mean feat, and the fact that the quality and content hasn't suffered a bit is testament to the dedication and hard work of all your team.

There have been so many unsung heroes during this pandemic who receive little mention or thanks for the work they do. We would not have kept going without the continued services of the bin men, the postmen and women, the delivery drivers, warehouse employees and more.

My older sister is a teaching assistant who, with a handful of others, continued to keep their primary school running for the children of key workers while the main teaching staff remained at home throughout.

My work involves planning services for new-build estates and the team I work with, all from their own homes, have continued to produce a high quantity of work with no dip in either quality or performance. I hope this experience for us will usher in a positive change in the way we all work. We've proved we can do it.

Michael Crouch

CA SAYS Thanks Michael - and to everyone else who emailed us with messages of support during lockdown. They helped to keep us going, particularly throughout those early weeks in March and April when the crisis was at its most severe. It was pleasing to read that *Computeractive* dropping through your letterbox every fortnight helped to maintain a sense of normality.

More importantly though, it was heartening to see the country come together to recognise the dedication of people whose work is often overlooked.



We stand up for your legal rights

Have I been ripped off by buying a Chromebook?

Q I bought an Asus Chromebook from PC World a couple of years ago on the assumption it didn't need any security programs installed. Now fewer than three years later, I am getting messages saying my Chromebook won't receive automatic software and security updates from July this year. Asus says it's Google's fault. The sales assistant at PC World didn't warn me that the computer wouldn't be supported after three years. I feel cheated. Do I have a case against PC World?

Roger Perry

A This is a fascinating case, but not one that's easy to resolve. Roger may be able to seek redress from PC World, but it would depend on whether he could prove what the sales assistant told him at the time of purchase. Retailers can breach the Consumer Rights Act if they don't reveal "specific characteristics" of an item when the customer buys it. This can include the item's durability - ie, how long it's likely to last.

What's crucial is whether Roger could have expected PC World to state what the



Chromebook's lifespan would be, and specifically that it wouldn't last as long as a Windows 10 laptop. We think the sales assistant had a duty to explain this, even if Roger didn't ask about the Chromebook's lifespan. In other words, it's such an important characteristic of the Chromebook that withholding the info was reducing Roger's ability to make an informed choice. After all, you can be sure that PC World sold the *benefits* of Chromebooks once Roger expressed an interest. It should've clarified the limitations also.

PC World may be able to argue that it wasn't aware of the Chromebook's lifespan, but we think this would make it guilty of incompetence. It's not hard to discover this information: companies and customers alike can check the lifespan of Chromebooks on Google's site (www.snipca.com/35227).

We're going to enjoy presenting this case to PC World. We'll let you know what happens.

CASE ONGOING

Should warranty paperwork be included?

Q I recently bought an HP X360 i7 laptop from an Amazon Marketplace trader. The order was fulfilled by Amazon, but on arrival I noticed there was no paperwork referring to a warranty. Does that mean I'm not protected by a warranty?

Rick Berej

A No, the lack of paperwork doesn't mean Rick isn't covered by a warranty. If the laptop was listed on Amazon as having a warranty, that's all the proof he needs that, legally, he's entitled to one. HP normally offers 12-month warranty for new laptops. But if the laptop is refurbished, the warranty will be provided by the seller, and it will probably be shorter - around three months is typical. Depending on what kind of laptop he has, he needs to ask HP or the seller how long his warranty lasts.

However, regardless of the warranty, Rick is covered by the Consumer Rights Act. This means he's entitled to a repair, refund or replacement should he find any inherent faults - in which case he should contact Amazon first because it is acting as the 'fulfillment agent' in this transaction.

CASE CLOSED

CASE UPDATE

Apple inspects iPhone for inherent fault



One of the key cut-off dates in consumer law is six months after purchase. Before this, companies have to prove that a fault isn't inherent. After this, you have to prove that it is inherently faulty, usually by paying for an independent inspection.

That's what Harry Barnes might have to do, as he seeks a refund from Smart Cellular (www.smartcellular.co.uk) for the £599 he spent on an iPhone, which he says repeatedly keeps switching off.

We explained in Issue 581 that the company was now attempting to repair his iPhone, having first claimed it had been lost in the post. Since then, it has admitted that it doesn't have technicians qualified enough to check to see whether there is an inherent fault, so it has sent the phone to Apple for examination.

Harry could claim that Smart Cellular has had its one chance to repair the iPhone, and that he should not be penalised just because the company doesn't have people with the necessary expertise to inspect it.

But crucially, Smart Cellular doesn't think there is a fault, inherent or otherwise. Even if it did admit there was a fault, the onus would fall on Harry to prove this because more than six months have passed since purchase. This wouldn't be easy, so instead Harry should let Apple get on with fixing the device. He's in a strong position because Smart Cellular has agreed that if Apple finds an inherent fault, it will refund him or replace the device. We'll keep an eye on this intriguing case, and let you know what comes of Apple's reports.

Should I cancel my direct debit with Three?

Q I'm unable to connect either my Galaxy S20 phone or Galaxy Tab S6 tablet to the various **FTP** servers I need to use as a website administrator. Three, my mobile provider, claimed that the problem was the app I was using, but that's not the case. Other people are complaining online about the same problem. Can I cancel my direct debit with Three if it can't resolve the problem?

Dave Johnson



Three.co.uk

A Dave can cancel his direct debit, but we never advise doing this before taking some formal steps. First, he should ask Three for a deadlock letter to set out what it has tried to do to fix the problem. With this, he can take the matter to an ombudsman for a ruling. If he wins his case, Three would have to reimburse him for the months he paid, plus additional damages because he wasn't able to get the service he was paying for.

If he didn't do this and simply cancelled

without contacting Three, the company might mark him down as a 'delinquent' payer. This could lead to him being visited by bailiffs while the complaint remains unresolved.

Dave had been in touch with Three about the problem, and the company suggested numerous fixes, but all these have failed. In frustration he gave the company a deadline to put it right, which has now passed without success. He now needs to decide whether it's time to ask for that deadlock letter.

CASE ONGOING

Why does PayPal work with this company?

Q I ordered drill batteries from a company called Batteries Plus (www.batteriesplus.co.uk), paying via PayPal, but nothing has arrived. It's impossible to contact the company because the phone is constantly engaged and the online form doesn't work. Checking comments online, I can see that the company has a bad reputation.

Shouldn't PayPal refuse to work with companies that have such poor

customer service?

Billy Armstrong

A That's a good question. PayPal relies on its customers reporting companies, so if you have a complaint about one you should send details via www.snipca.com/35226.

Since first emailing us, Billy has got back in touch to say the batteries have now arrived and are working well. That's

good news but it doesn't absolve the company from accusations of poor customer service.

We found it hard to contact the company, which is based in Longfield, Kent. The number on the website was always engaged, while there's no direct email address, only an online form on which you have to input a **CAPTCHA** image, though one is never generated. There are complaints about this online, as well as for items not being delivered.


Eventually we managed to speak to the company on a number based in Darlington, more than 250 miles from Kent. The person confirmed the number was for Batteries Plus, and we will call back for more info on Billy's case.

CASE ONGOING



CREDIT WHERE IT'S DUE

BattDepot warned me battery wasn't right

 I recently had a problem with my Toshiba laptop's battery. It worked fine when the charger was plugged into the mains, but when unplugged the battery depleted really quickly until only 40 per cent remained. Then it would shut down immediately.

Unfortunately, the charger cable gave up recently as well. Luckily my wife also has a Toshiba, which uses the same type of charger cable, but it was a problem when we both needed it, so I ordered a new cable


and better battery from BattDepot (www.battdepot.com), paying through PayPal.

The following day they emailed me suggesting I had ordered a battery that was incompatible with my laptop and they advised I should cancel and re-order.

How nice that they didn't just send it and follow the 'well you ordered it, tough luck' route.

Great service by a company that knows their business and are total professionals. I won't hesitate to use them again or recommend them to anyone.

Andy Hodgson

 Has a company impressed you with its customer service? Please let us know: editor@computeractive.co.uk

Contact
BattDepot

- **Email** supportus@battdepot.com
- **Live chat** www.snipca.com/35126

Grow Your Family Tree



If your ancestors remarried and had more children, you should follow **Nick Peers'** advice to...

Add step-relatives to your family tree

How can you add step-relatives to a family tree while keeping it looking neat and logical? It's a question reader David Lee asked us. He wants to add a stepfather, stepbrothers and stepsisters that were born after his great-grandmother remarried, following her husband's death at Ypres during World War One.

Add multiple partners in Family Tree Maker

Happily, all the major genealogy programs support multiple families. Let's take Family Tree Maker (FTM) as an example. If you navigate to your great-grandmother's entry in your tree, you'll see a small avatar icon appear next to their name with the number '1' next to it



Click this icon in a relative's entry in Family Tree Maker to add more spouses

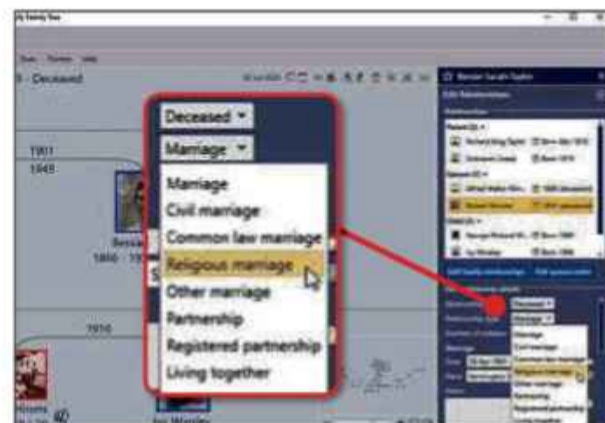
if they're married (see screenshot below left). Click this and you'll see a pop-up menu appear. Select 'Add Spouse' and you'll be able to create a new partner from scratch or select an existing person in your family tree.

Once added, this icon will now show a '2' next to it. Click again and you'll see both partners listed, with an asterisk next to the selected partner. Select the other partner and that person's tree will be selected. From here you can add children, as well as develop the step-parent's own tree if you want. To return to your own family view, click the avatar button again next to your great-grandmother's name and select your blood ancestor.

The two families remain hidden from each other when you navigate your tree, so you'll usually only see your blood relatives. But both families will appear in relevant charts and reports via the Publish tab. If they don't appear, look for options like 'Include other spouses' (found in FTM's Options box for the Family Group Sheet report).

Select the relationship type

In RootsMagic, you need to right-click your great-grandmother's entry in Pedigree View, then choose Add followed



My Family Tree lets you define different types of relationship, including 'Living together' and 'Religious marriage'

by Spouse. Once added, right-click your great-grandmother again and choose Add, then Child. From here you'd select the stepfather's entry before adding the child to that family.

My Family Tree's tool works in a similar way. Right-click your great-grandmother's entry and choose Add Relationship, then Spouse/Partner. Both spouses will appear next to your great-grandmother when viewing her tree, and all children from that relationship will be shown. To filter the tree so it only shows the children from one of the partnerships, click the relevant father.

Most programs treat all partnerships as marriages, so you'll only see references to spouses, husbands or wives. My Family Tree is one of a select few that lets you precisely define the nature of each relationship.

With your great-grandmother selected, click the Relationships button under the 'Edit person' details pane on the right. Select a spouse or partner from the list, and you'll see dropdown options to define both relationship status and marriage. These offer a wide range of options – for example, status can range from engaged and married to deceased and divorced, while there are a dozen relationship types to choose from (see screenshot above).

Your Genealogy Problems Solved

Assuming you have several photos ranging from childhood to old age, what is the default age you should use for a person's family-tree photo?

Kevin Mullarkey

There's no hard or fast rule – it's entirely down to personal preference. You could, for example, define your own rule – aim for photos of people in their twenties or

thirties, with obvious exceptions for ancestors who died younger.

I like to use photos that are personally evocative, so in the case of my grandparents, their default photos are ones from their later years when I remember them best.

Have a genealogy question for Nick? Email letters@computeractive.co.uk with 'Grow Your Family Tree' in the subject line.



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Best Free Software

Will Stapley recommends new programs that won't cost you anything

DOWNLOAD MANAGER

Free Download Manager 6.10

www.snipca.com/35315

What you need: Windows 7, 8.1 or 10

Browsing the web and downloading files go hand in hand, but even the latest browsers fall short when it comes to managing your downloads, such as controlling speeds and resuming failed downloads. If you want more control, consider installing a download manager such as Free Download Manager (FDM).

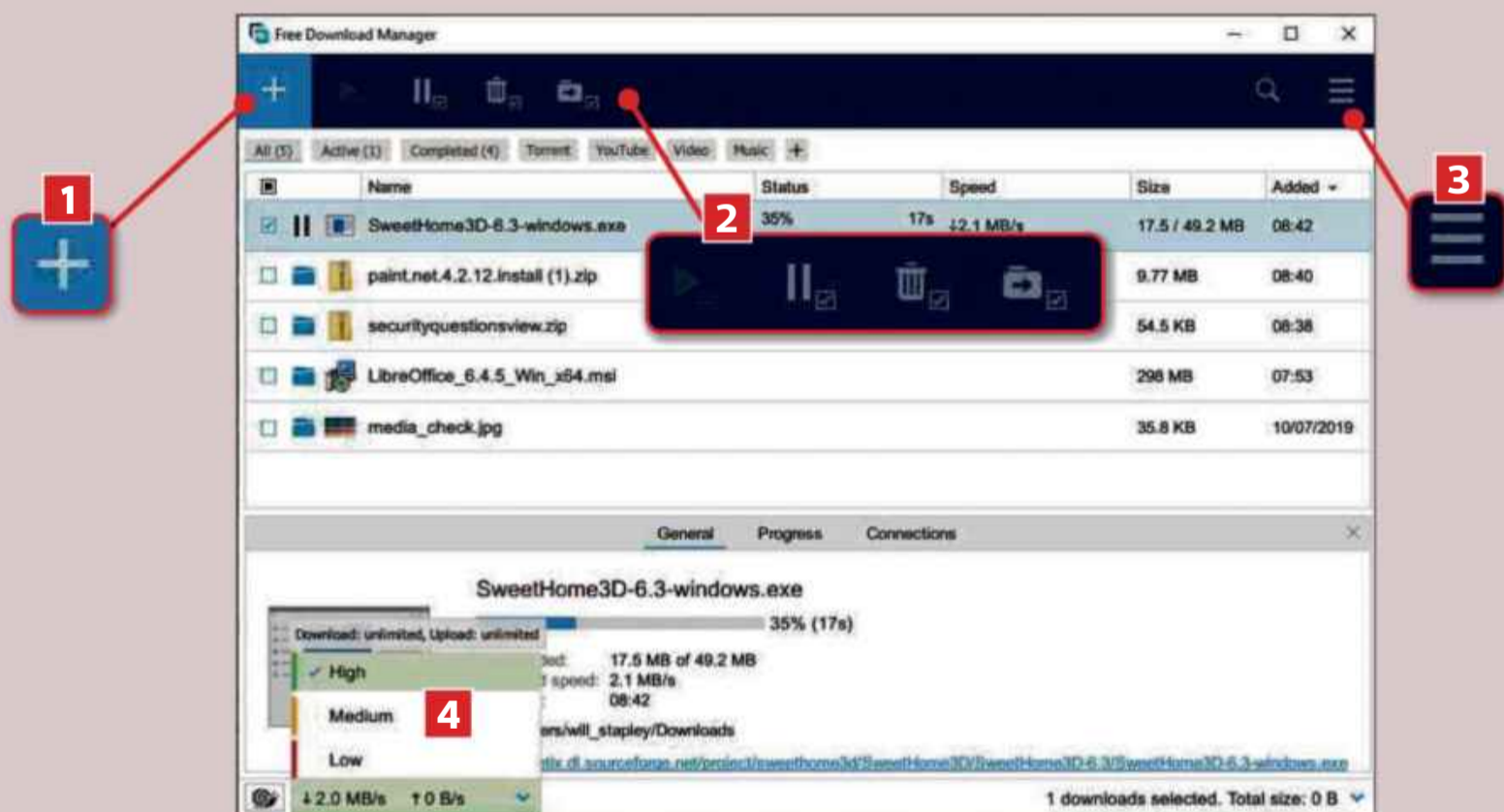
You can start downloads by pasting links directly into FDM, as illustrated below, but it also seamlessly integrates with Chrome, Firefox and (new to this version) Microsoft's revamped Edge browser. Once you've installed the extension for your browser, FDM will intercept all downloads you begin (if instead you want your browser to download a specific file, just hold Alt while clicking the download link).

FDM shows a confirmation window before downloading a file, giving you the option to change where the file will be saved and schedule the download for later. This is useful if, say, you're in a video call and don't want a large download

reducing call quality by using all your **bandwidth**.

Version 6.10 of FDM also includes improvements such as better support for file downloads from Google Drive and videos from Facebook. Previously, it often failed to intercept these, meaning they would be downloaded by your browser instead. And when a download is interrupted, such as when your internet connection temporarily goes down, FDM is now able to restart the download when the connection is restored.

Finally, if you're a fan of portable software, you'll be pleased to hear FDM lets you copy the program to a USB stick. You can then use this on other computers, such as those in public libraries. You won't have to install anything, and all files you download will be saved directly to your USB stick. To create a portable version of FDM, click the menu button, then 'Create portable version'.



1 Click this button to add a download link to FDM. If you've already got a download link copied to your clipboard, it will be pasted into the box for you.

2 Use these buttons to pause, resume and cancel selected downloads, as well as move the download file to a different folder on your PC.

3 To add FDM to your browser, click this menu button, 'Preferences...', then Browser Integration. Select your browser from the list, then follow the instructions to add the extension.

4 Use this control to adjust the speed of your downloads and therefore how much bandwidth they use. Go to the Network Limits section of the settings to set the limits for High, Medium and Low.



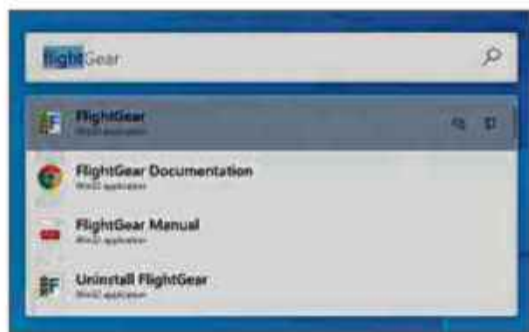
SYSTEM TOOL

PowerToys 0.19

www.snipca.com/35313

What you need: Windows 10

Microsoft's impressive suite of Windows-tweaking tools keeps getting better (to download it, visit the link above, then scroll to 'Assets' and click the file ending '.msi').



Although there are no new programs in this release, it includes over 100 fixes and improvements to the seven existing tools. Many of these relate to PowerToys Run, which debuted in the last release and serves as an alternative to using the Start menu when searching for programs and files. Pressing Alt+Space reveals a small search window, with results appearing below as soon as you start typing (see screenshot above). All desktop items are now included in your search results, while hidden files are omitted. PowerToys is constantly being updated. To make sure you always have the latest version, go to its settings, click General, then turn on 'Download updates automatically'.

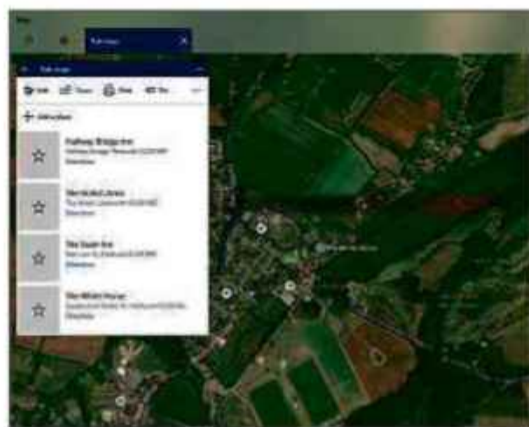
MAPPING TOOL

Windows Maps 10.2003

www.snipca.com/35312

What you need: Windows 10

Although not as comprehensive as rivals such as Google Maps, the Windows Maps app for Windows 10 includes some useful tools that will appeal to map users. These include being able to draw a route by hand and then find out its length, and using the tabs along the top to switch between locations. This version adds new tools, including being able to set your time of departure when using it to get driving directions (these will then be calculated based on expected traffic at that time).



You can also now share Collections within Windows Maps (see screenshot above). Similar to the Collections tool in Edge, this lets you group a selection of locations, then share them with friends and family (useful when providing stop-off points for a country walk).

WHAT SHOULD I DOWNLOAD?

We tell you what software & apps to use

What can I use in place of Lotus Organiser?

Q As a recent convert to your magazine, I am finding it most useful and informative, so I'm hoping you can help with my problem. I've used Lotus Organiser for a number of years to store names, addresses, dates, etc. However, it recently stopped working in Windows 10. Could you suggest a replacement?
David Woodward

A PIMs (personal information managers) such as Lotus Organiser used to be commonplace, but with most people shifting to online organisers (such as those offered with Google accounts) their popularity has waned and your options are now limited. Those that are available are mostly aimed at business users and come with hefty price tags (such as Pimero, which starts at £54 – www.snipca.com/35314).

One option is to simply use the Microsoft tools that come with Windows 10, specifically the People and Calendar apps (you'll find these by searching for them in the Start menu). However, although the two link up neatly (and also work with the Windows Mail app), you might not like the way they operate as separate programs and their design is very different to what you'll be used to with Lotus Organiser.



Our recommendation would be to use the excellent Thunderbird (www.thunderbird.net). It's primarily an email program, but there's nothing stopping you from using it purely to manage your contacts, addresses and important dates. Within the main window, you can quickly switch to the Address Book (press Ctrl+Shift+B), and Calendar (Ctrl+Shift+C or click the button in the toolbar – see screenshot above).

Bear in mind that Thunderbird will ask you to add an email account every time it loads, but pressing Escape quickly dismisses this. However, it's a great email program, so you might want to consider using it to check your email too (see our Cover Feature on page 50 to find out how to do this, and more).

Do you need our advice on what software to use? Just email us at letters@computeractive.co.uk

HOW I USE...

ImBatch

When **Will Stapley** received some photos that looked terrible, this batch image-editing tool sorted them out

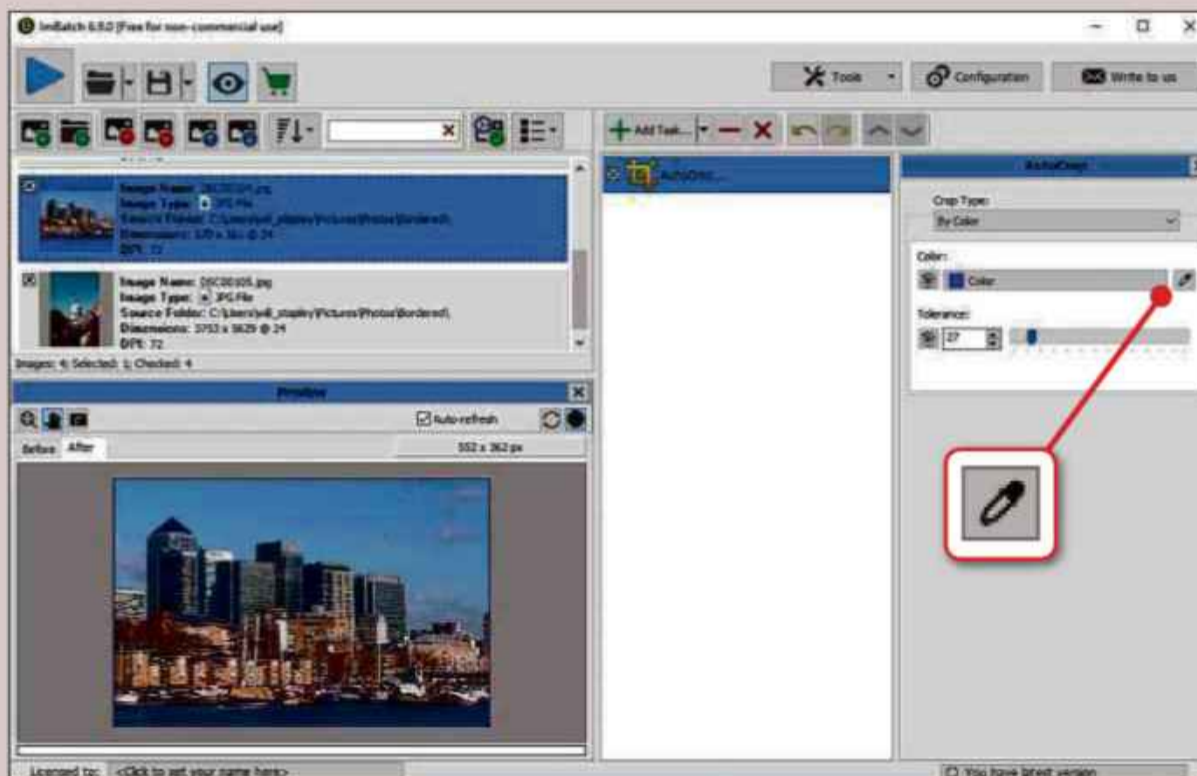


Although I often use image editors to tweak brightness levels in my photos, revealing detail that would otherwise be hidden (see our Cover Feature in Issue 583 for how to do this and more), I'm careful not to tweak *too* much. Clever filters might make a sunset look more attractive but if it's not a true representation of the real thing, what's the point?

Then there are those 'enhancements' that actually make photos look worse. For example, I recently received a large collection of photos from a friend. He'd decided to add a blue border to each one – presumably in an attempt to make them look like they were in photo frames. Instead, they just looked dreadful. And with nearly 100 photos in the collection, cropping the borders myself would have taken a long time. Enter image-editing tool ImBatch (www.snipca.com/35266), which leapt to my rescue.

ImBatch lets you apply a wide range of edits to a selection of images or an entire folder. I wanted to do the latter, so once I'd opened the program, I clicked the folder icon with a '+' sign in a green circle (top left). In the top-left pane, ImBatch confirmed it had found all my images, displaying thumbnails of each one.

With my photos queued, it was time to do some cropping. I clicked 'Add Task...' (top centre), then selected AutoCrop. With the task added to my edit list in the right-hand pane, I clicked it once to open the AutoCrop settings. Within the 'Crop Type:' box you can choose from several ways to



The AutoCrop tool lets you crop a specific colour in your photos

crop your images. As my images all had the same border colour, I selected By Color, then clicked the colour-selection tool (pipette icon – see screenshot above). Using the preview window (bottom left), I clicked the blue border within one of the photos to set it as the colour to crop.

ImBatch lets you quickly turn tasks on and off (click the small 'x' to the left of the listed task) so you can see how they affect your images. By doing this with the AutoCrop task, I realised that it was cropping areas of blue sky on some photos mistaking them for sections of the border, resulting in the images getting cropped too much. To resolve this, I moved the Tolerance slider within the AutoCrop settings to the left until only the border was being cropped.



To avoid overwriting originals, save your edited images to a different folder

I then added a second task: Save As (in the Save category). If you don't add this task, ImBatch overwrites your original photos. While in this case I had no intention of keeping the bordered originals, I wanted to be sure the border removal had been successful before I got rid of them. After selecting the Save As task, I clicked the small folder icon (second of the two icons in the Folder section – see screenshot above) and chose a folder to save the edited photos to.

With everything set, all that remained was for me to click the Start button (blue arrow, top left) and wait for ImBatch to trim my unwanted borders.

WHAT I'D LIKE TO SEE IN IMBATCH

ImBatch has a Shift Time task that should sort out incorrect **timestamps** in photos, but no matter how hard I try it has absolutely no

effect on mine. It's a real shame, because I've got countless images with incorrect timestamps – mostly the result of my camera's built-in clock resetting itself.

Named & Shamed



Jonathan Parkyn puts the boot into tech villains, jargon-spouting organisations and companies peddling junk

WARNING: JUNK AHEAD

Junk offender: iObit Advanced SystemCare 13.5

You'll probably already be acquainted with my regular iObit-themed rants. But for anyone unfamiliar with the name, iObit is a software company that has seemingly devoted itself to an ongoing mission to fill the world's computers with junk.

At first glance, iObit's free tools often look very useful – software updaters, password generators and so on. But some harbour unwanted software in



their installers, while others amount to little more than glorified adverts for the company's paid-for programs. Advanced SystemCare Free is guilty on both charges.

On its web page, iObit claims the tool can thoroughly clean your PC, increase internet speeds and boost start-up times. But download it, and Advanced SystemCare soon reveals its true colours. Fail to notice the microscopic 'Custom Install' link (see screenshot **1**) and you'll end up installing several iObit

background processes and services (look at all those pre-ticked boxes in screenshot **2**), which will actually slow down your start-up.

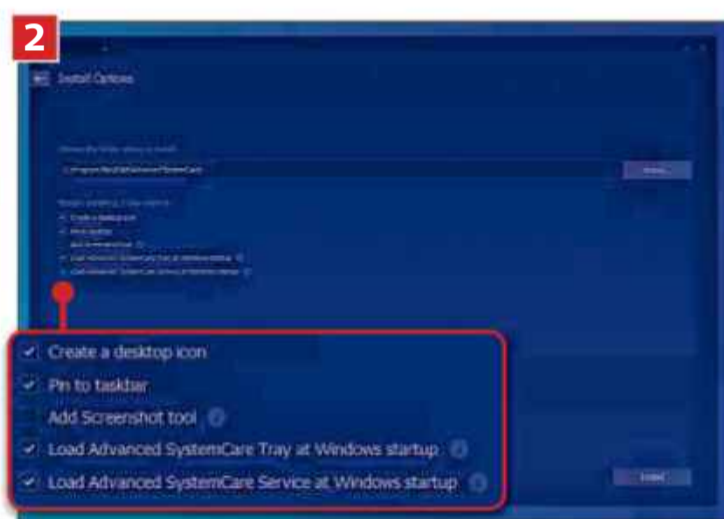
The installer will also attempt to foist unwanted software on you as you click your way through the screens. And, once it's installed, you'll find it clutters your screen with plenty of unnecessary **widgets** and notifications – all pretty ironic for a tool that promises to “deeply clean junk files”.

What really annoys me, though, is

the way that Advanced SystemCare pesters you to pay for its Pro version. Use it to scan for and 'fix' problems and it'll give your PC a middling 'Good' health status, along with the suggestion that the only way to improve your health status and fix hundreds more 'problems' is to pay £16. Don't be tempted.



Don't have a microscope? Then you'll miss this link...



...and end up slowing your computer's start-up.

WHAT ARE THEY TALKING ABOUT?



WHAT THEY SAY

Rolf Harms, Microsoft

www.snipca.com/35196

“About a decade ago, we wrote on this blog how we used a data- and model-driven approach to guide us to the cloud as the future of enterprise computing. Today, we're applying the same foundational approach while benefiting from the power of our cloud and AI capabilities to unpack today's source of great uncertainty: COVID-19.”

WHAT THEY MEAN

Forget a vaccine, all we need is Microsoft to 'unpack' coronavirus.

JONATHAN'S VILLAIN OF THE FORTNIGHT

Danielle Bulley

Many of us have fantasised about getting back at an ex-employer we didn't like. But Danielle Bulley from Tockwith, North Yorkshire, took things one step further.

The 58-year-old woman was the director of a property marketing business that went into liquidation in 2018. When a new company was formed from the old one's assets (and Danielle wasn't invited back), she used her inside



knowledge to log into the company's Dropbox storage and remotely erase more than 5,000 essential files. This cost the firm £100,000, leading to its collapse.

I'm assuming Danielle is still looking for another job.

But at least she's got something new to put on her CV – an 18-month community order, awarded to her by York Crown Court under the Computer Misuse Act.

PC | £800 from PC Specialist www.snipca.com/35220

PC Specialist Magma R1

Upper crust

We've seen AMD's top-end Ryzen processors not only equalling the performance of rival Intel chips, but stretching the performance of desktop PCs to new heights. The new Ryzen 3 3100 aims to do the same for budget PCs, offering higher performance than Intel's ninth-generation i3 at lower prices than 10th-generation chips.

“Plenty of PCIe, memory slots, SATA connections and drive bays make it easy to upgrade”

This class of processor has already risen well above the baseline required to make everyday Windows 10 operations feel comfortably responsive, and single-core performance is more than adequate. When it comes to more challenging tasks, the four cores now support two program threads apiece for a total of eight, just like Intel's considerably pricier i3-10100 processor. That's impressive for a low-end chip, and enough to make jobs like



editing high-res photos and 4K video practical, as long as your ambitions are realistic. It's also an effective partner for AMD's Radeon RX 5600XT GPU, which our tests found superior to the Nvidia GeForce GTX 1660. In this price bracket you'll have to make some sacrifices in the graphics settings to get the most demanding 3D games running smoothly at 4K resolution, but if you stick to 1080p Full HD or 2560x1440, the most common monitor resolutions, you can expect very smooth frame rates at very high quality.

PC Specialist's P209 midi tower case is a neat black metal chassis with a strip of multi-coloured LEDs down the front and a glass left-hand panel. Windows 10 Home is installed on a modest 256GB SATA SSD, which managed read and write speeds of 523 and 405 megabytes per second respectively in our file tests – much slower than the best NVMe drives, one of which you could add in the motherboard's single M.2 socket, but about three times faster than a traditional hard drive. You get one of those too, and three of the plentiful USB ports are 10Gbps Gen2 for fast external SSDs.

A smattering of PCIe and memory slots, SATA connections and drive bays adds up to reasonable upgradability all round, and there are three DisplayPorts, as well as a single HDMI output, for multiple monitors. Basic 802.11n Wi-Fi is included as well as Gigabit Ethernet, although you'll want to add a faster 802.11ac or 802.11ax dongle if your main connection to your broadband and home

SPECIFICATIONS

3.6GHz AMD Ryzen 3 3100 quad-core processor • 16GB memory • 6GB AMD Radeon RX 5600 XT graphics • 256GB SSD • 1TB hard drive • 1x USB-C port • 2x USB 3.0 Gen2 ports • 3 USB 3.0 Gen1 ports • 4x USB 2.0 ports • Gigabit Ethernet • HDMI and DisplayPort outputs • Windows 10 Home • 458x208x400mm (HxWxD) • One-year warranty www.snipca.com/35220



network will be wireless.

The Magma R1 is a very capable general-purpose and gaming system for the money. Our only caveat is that the cheaper Magma S1 (£599 from PC Specialist www.snipca.com/34821, see our review, Issue 581, page 22) ekes out higher multi-core performance from the older Ryzen 5 2600X processor and includes a very quick NVMe SSD, making it a faster system for resource-heavy work. Its very limited expandability and basic Nvidia GeForce GTX 1650 graphics card, however, leave the R1 looking like a better buy.

VERDICT A value-for-money PC with smooth performance and some scope for upgrading



ALTERNATIVE

PC Specialist Magma R1 £599 Makes excellent use of an older AMD processor, though availability can be erratic



LAPTOP | £1,253 from Amazon www.snipca.com/35228

Asus ZenBook Duo UX481

Double trouble

How many screens does a laptop need? Lenovo tried two with its Yoga Book, but the second, using black-and-white **E-ink**, didn't serve enough purposes to justify having to type on imaginary keys. Apple's Touch Bar goes for one and a bit, giving the MacBook Pro a narrow strip of controls that are relevant to each program. Asus's ScreenPad turned the trackpad into a virtual numeric keypad, expanded in the ZenBook UX434 (£1,000 from Amazon www.snipca.com/35231) into a miniature monitor showing a user interface for compatible apps.

“Accurate main screen and long battery life can't compensate for its design flaws”

The ZenBook Duo settles on a solid one-and-a-half screens, complementing the main Full HD panel with a half-height touchscreen crammed in behind the keyboard. This brings a sad reversal of fortune for the trackpad, which ends up squeezed into a portrait shape on the right. It's the opposite of widescreen, as becomes obvious when you try to move the cursor all the way from left to right and have to take two goes. It does work, but you might prefer a mouse.

The backlit keyboard is surprisingly good, with well-spaced key caps that snap crisply as they depress. But there's nowhere to rest your wrists, and in a confined space, such as on a train or plane, you have to type like a Tyrannosaurus rex. It's no coincidence that the fossil record offers scant evidence of dinosaurs mastering the qwerty keyboard.

Our meter found the 14in screen covered nearly 96 per cent of **sRGB**



colours with spot-on accuracy. That's adequate for creative work, but in this price bracket you could get Dell's brighter XPS 13 or a 13in MacBook Pro, with higher resolution and wider **P3** colour.

Is half an extra screen better? Only a few programs, such as those from Adobe, make intelligent use of it, and viewing it from a flat angle compromises colour and contrast. The Intel i7-10510U chip stayed cool in our tests, but was still slower than some laptops with eighth-gen CPUs, and well behind the budget Ryzen 3 3100 in the desktop PC on the opposite page. The inclusion of an Nvidia GeForce MX250 **graphics card** makes 3D gaming possible, but only at a basic level.

Battery life of 11 hours 49 minutes in our video-playback test was exceptional, however, and the slim navy-blue aluminium case, although not the sleekest in design, has plenty of ports and a useful **microSD card** slot. Wi-Fi 6 (**802.11ax**) and a webcam with Windows Hello face recognition are built in.

SPECIFICATIONS

1.8GHz Intel i7-10510U quad-core processor • 16GB memory • 2GB Nvidia GeForce 250MX graphics card • 512GB SSD • 14in 1920x1080-pixel screen • 1920x515-pixel touchscreen • Webcam • 802.11ac Wi-Fi • Bluetooth 5 • USB-C port • USB Gen2 port • USB Gen1 port • HDMI port • microSD card slot • Windows 10 Home • 20x323x223mm (HxWxD) • 1.55kg • One-year warranty www.snipca.com/35237

HOW WE TEST

Computeractive is owned by Dennis Publishing, which employs a team of specialist technical reviewers. You'll often read references to our benchmark testing, which is a method of assessing products using the same criteria. For example, we test the speed of every PC and the battery life of every phone and tablet in exactly the same way. This makes our reviews authoritative, rigorous and accurate.

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We award every product that gets five stars our Buy It! stamp of approval. It means we were

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PRICES

Our reviews contain a link to the best price we found online at the time of press.

VERDICT There's much that impresses in this unique laptop, but its concept is fundamentally flawed

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

ALTERNATIVE Dell XPS 13
From £1,199 Look out for our upcoming review of this more conventional laptop



TABLET | £500 from Huawei www.snipca.com/35240

Huawei MatePad Pro

Limited edition

If you've been keeping up with the news, you'll probably have a lot of questions about Huawei, beginning with 'Why can nobody pronounce it?'. The name is a Western phonetic rendering of a play on words in Chinese characters. Say the 'u' as a short pursing of the lips, more like 'w'; the 'a' fairly short; and the 'ei' as in 'beige'. As for the 'h', whether or not to pronounce it is a matter of dialect, as in 'white'. The company itself suggests 'wah-way'.

“If you can live without Google Play, this is impressive”

Donald Trump has spent months complaining about Huawei's ties to the Chinese government and trying to persuade Boris Johnson to exclude it from our 5G infrastructure. The consequences remain to be seen, but amid all the kerfuffle, Google – as a US corporation – found itself banned from supplying to Huawei. While Huawei can still install Android on its phones and tablets, it can't include Google Play Store, which users normally depend on for apps and services. Ironically, the original fuss was never about phones or tablets, only network kit made by a different branch of Huawei, but that's trade wars for you.

It's bad news for devices like Huawei's otherwise stunning P40 Pro, a top-end phone that's all screen on the front and



umpteenth cameras on the back. Even if you can find the apps you want outside the Google Play Store, or use Huawei's Phone Clone app to copy them off your previous device, most won't work fully (or at all) without live access to Google Play services, such as Maps. There are lots of tips around the internet for getting over this, but who wants a brand new phone that has to be coaxed into working? Huawei's AppGallery is nowhere near comprehensive enough to solve the problem.

When it comes to the MatePad Pro, though, it doesn't feel like such a deal-breaker. At £500, this tablet sits between the size and price of the 10.2in iPad and 11in iPad Pro and has specs to match, with a very fast Kirin 990 processor and a sharp screen that accurately covers both sRGB and the wider P3 colour space.

Currently available only in matt grey, its case isn't waterproof and is described as 'glass fibre', implying reinforced plastic, although it's unclear if this refers to the chassis or just the finish. Either way, it feels solid despite its extreme slimness, and the narrow bezel looks premium, with a keyhole notch for the webcam – which, like the rear camera, is surprisingly good.

On the tablet, Huawei's decent version of Android gains a 'PC mode' and the

SPECIFICATIONS

10.8in 2560x1600-pixel screen • 13-megapixel rear camera • 8-megapixel front camera • 128GB flash storage • USB-C port • Nano Memory card slot • 802.11ac Wi-Fi • Bluetooth 5.1 • 246x159x7.2mm (HxWxD) • 460g • One-year warranty www.snipca.com/35245

ability to open two apps side by side, although it's not as clever as iPadOS. Without Google Play, we were still able to copy the Netflix and Spotify apps from an Android phone, and the AppGallery includes essentials like Microsoft Office. Like Amazon's Fire OS, it's restrictive, but in ways you might not mind. The battery can be charged via USB-C or wirelessly, and lasted an excellent 12 hours 21 minutes in our video-playback test.

So in the end it comes down to value for money. The MatePad Pro is bigger, significantly more powerful and has a better screen and more storage than Samsung's Galaxy Tab S6 Lite (see our review, Issue 582, page 23), but with an M-Pen stylus (£100) it's £250 pricier. At the time of writing, however, Huawei is throwing in both the pen and a keyboard case (£130) for a total of £500. That deal is worth considering. This is a tablet that's prevented from doing everything, but will do many things very well.

VERDICT The Google Play ban is a serious drawback, but this is a high-specification tablet for the money

★★★★★

ALTERNATIVE Samsung Galaxy Tab S6 Lite £349 Slower, but very good value, with a pen included and Google Play



VIRTUAL-REALITY HEADSET | £399 from Currys www.snipca.com/35254

Oculus Rift S

The eyes have it

The Oculus Rift was the first practical virtual-reality headset and was aimed at consumers with a powerful gaming PC to connect it to. It's rivalled by the HTC Vive and Valve Index, both at higher prices, as well as Sony's cheaper PlayStation VR, which works with the PS4 instead of a PC.

The Rift S supersedes the original Rift, and the first thing you might notice is that it costs the same as the Oculus Quest (see our review, Issue 557, page 26), which doesn't need a PC. Both consist of a head-mounted unit with a built-in 3D display, offer similar motion tracking and come with two handheld controllers. But the Quest runs games on a built-in Snapdragon 835 smartphone processor, limiting it to a small range of VR titles. The Rift S uses the processor and **graphics card** in your PC. Any recent system that runs 3D games well should do – and you can choose from both the Oculus and SteamVR libraries as well as accessing your Windows 10 desktop.

“PC-connected VR headset isn't quite a world apart”

Physically, the Rift S has a much chunkier padded headband that properly supports the VR unit rather than just strapping it to your head. You can keep your glasses on, although you should take care not to let them touch the built-in lenses; a button adjusts the distance. (Prescription lens inserts are available from around £60: see www.snipca.com/35257). There's no physical control to cater for

SPECIFICATIONS

1440x2560-pixel display • 80Hz refresh rate • 2x handheld controllers • Requires a PC running Windows 10 with DisplayPort, USB 3.0, internet connection • Headset 563g • Two-year warranty www.snipca.com/35260



how far apart your eyes are, known as interpupillary distance (IPD), so you have to use software settings to correct for this. Audio is

from speakers that don't sound as good as the Quest, but you can plug your own earphones into a 3.5mm audio jack.

Wireless technology still isn't up to connecting the headset to your PC, so – unlike the Quest – the Rift S comes with a five-metre cable, requiring a **DisplayPort** and a USB port. At least it still benefits from built-in tracking cameras, removing the need to set up external sensors. This also means you can switch to seeing what's really in front of you without removing the headset, saving a lot of fuss.

The new screen, **LCD** instead of **OLED**, isn't as vivid but looks clearer, with less chance of noticing the pixels. Oculus reckons motion tracking is better than the Quest, and software updates have improved it further, although we found the Touch controllers occasionally failed to register movement.

VERDICT It's relatively easy to use, reasonably priced and works fine, but the Rift S still leaves us waiting for the next big breakthrough in VR

★★★★★

ALTERNATIVE Oculus Quest **£399** If you don't have a gaming PC and don't mind a limited choice of VR games, this is still a good low-hassle option



DO I REALLY NEED...

A secured-core computer?

What is it?

Microsoft announced the concept in 2019 in response to an upturn in malware that targets a computer's firmware – the programming code that loads first when you boot up and manages hardware and software. Summarising the problem in foolproof terms, Microsoft's David Weston explained: "A lot of badness happens if your firmware goes wonky."

What does it do?

In slightly more technical terms, a secured-core PC (like the Microsoft Surface Pro X, pictured) incorporates a set of features that protect against malware at a deeper level. Most PCs since Windows 8 come with Windows Secure Boot, which checks on startup that the operating system hasn't been meddled with. But this process is controlled by firmware. If the firmware itself has been nobbled, it's as if the security guard is working with the robbers. To prevent this, Intel and AMD have begun building a trusted platform module (TPM) into their processors. The TPM contains unique encrypted data that's used by secured-core PCs to authenticate themselves to, well, themselves. Other features also help to protect the Windows **kernel**, prevent unauthorised **code** being run, and keep your **biometric** login safe from hackers. Similar technology is used by Apple.



What's the catch?

There shouldn't be any downside to secured-core. But it could be compromised by mistakes in processor design, as with the Meltdown vulnerability discovered in 2018. And there may still be ways for the many other chips inside PCs to let malware in.

So can I do without it?

Maybe, but with it installed, malware has higher barriers to climb.

ROUTER | £280 from Amazon www.snipca.com/35288

Netgear Nighthawk EAX80

The joy of six

Also known as the AX8 8-stream WiFi 6 Mesh Extender, this is the first product we've seen that's designed to give you the advantages of Wi-Fi 6, the marketing term for the new 802.11ax standard, without replacing your existing Wi-Fi router. That's particularly helpful if you have a combined modem and router or just don't want to have to reconfigure everything to create a brand new home network.

“Get Wi-Fi 6 speeds in larger homes with blind spots”

You can connect the EAX80 to your router with an Ethernet cable, letting it take over the work of broadcasting your wireless network with the same name and password you already use (unless you want to change it). Or, if your router is already decent but doesn't give you high speeds in the furthest corners of your house, you can set up the EAX80 further away and connect it wirelessly as a mesh extender.

The Nighthawk app makes configuration straightforward, although it took us a few

minutes, and then just gives you basic information like details of what devices are connected.

It's a stretch to call this a mesh Wi-Fi system, considering there's only one box and it doesn't use a dedicated backhaul channel to communicate with the base router. With support for eight streams, half on the 2.4GHz band and half 5GHz, we did get excellent speeds all round our test home, but not quite as fast as with Netgear's two-box Orbi RBK852 Wi-Fi 6 mesh kit (£710 from Amazon www.snipca.com/34246), which also offers more features. At well under half the price, that's hardly a disappointment. Although it's still not cheap, this is a good way to add Wi-Fi 6 without fuss.

If you don't mind replacing your router, on the other hand, we got pretty similar speeds with D-Link's DIR-1960 (£105 from Amazon www.snipca.com/32849, see our review, Issue 564, page 25) at distances of up to 10 metres, even though it's only 802.11ac. So unless you have a larger home, a lot of devices or tricky

SPECIFICATIONS

Dual-band 802.11ax Wi-Fi extender • 4x Gigabit Ethernet ports • USB 3.0 sharing port • Setup app requires Android or iOS 11 or higher device • 106x279x197mm (HxWxD) • 860g • One-year warranty www.snipca.com/35289



wireless blind spots, you may not need to spend as much.

VERDICT An easy way to upgrade, but the cost of Wi-Fi 6 still feels quite high compared to the benefits

★★★★★

ALTERNATIVE

Netgear Orbi RBK50
£300 If you want a new router as well as wide range, this two-box 802.11ac kit is nearly as fast



WHAT SHOULD I BUY?

We solve your buying dilemmas

Is Windows 10 S fine for my needs?

Q I'm thinking of getting a new laptop, with a budget of around £500, but many of the ones I see are listed as running Windows 10 S. Will this be OK?

Kieran Walker

A Windows 10 S, or 'Windows 10 in S mode', has slightly fewer functions in return for extra security and efficiency. You can only add programs from the Microsoft Store, not bought or downloaded from

anywhere else. While this prevents you installing tools that fiddle around with your system, it helps to avoid malware and may also run a bit faster. But it limits you to Microsoft Edge as your main browser and cuts out some popular software, such as Adobe's Creative Cloud (including Photoshop), as well as older programs that might still work with Windows 10. If that's a problem, you can simply go to Settings and switch from S mode to normal Windows 10 (see screenshot). The only catch is that you



can't switch back.

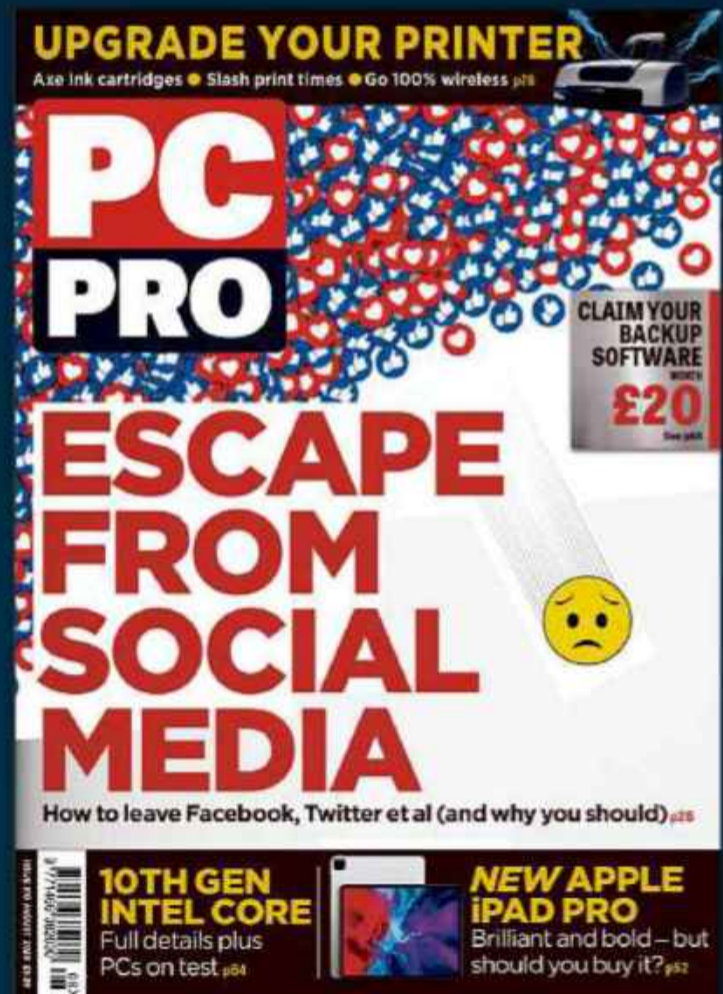
A separate issue is laptops that run Windows 10 (S or not) on a Qualcomm Snapdragon processor are incompatible with a lot of software and accessories, so you should steer clear of these.

Do you need advice on what you should buy? Email us at letters@computeractive.co.uk

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EXTERNAL HARD DRIVE | From **£85** from Amazon www.snipca.com/35263

Seagate Backup Plus Hub

Hard bargain

You could be forgiven for thinking hard drives were the washed-up has-beens of storage. **SSDs** are more exciting these days, with even basic **USB 3.0** drives like Seagate's One Touch (£73 for 500GB from www.snipca.com/34455, see our review, Issue 578, page 24) reading files at more than 400MB per second (MB/s). This desktop hard drive could only manage a maximum of 188MB/s **reading** and 153MB/s **writing**, plummeting to single figures in trickier random-access tests.

That's not bad for a mechanical drive, though, and it's quiet, too, taking advantage of its relatively large case to run without a fan – like an SSD. The big

SPECIFICATIONS

External hard drive • 4TB to 14TB capacity • USB 3.0 Gen1 interface • 2x USB 3.0 Gen1 ports • 118x41x98mm (HxWxD) • 1kg • Two-year warranty www.snipca.com/35264

advantage, of course, is price. At the time of writing, the Backup Plus Hub could be found at £85 for 4TB, £109 for 6TB, £139 for 8TB or £190 for 10TB. (There are 12 and 14TB options, but we couldn't find them in stock). At a low of just over £17 per terabyte for the 8TB, that's a steal compared to SSDs, especially considering it's only 13 years since the first 1TB hard drive, Hitachi's Deskstar 7K1000, cost £250.

You'll be hard pushed to find cheaper storage, yet the Backup Plus Hub doesn't stop there. Seagate's software lets you transfer files wirelessly from your Apple or Android device, via your PC, and gives Mac users the choice of reformatting or accessing the drive as Windows **NTFS** for easy swapover. Two USB 3.0 pass-through ports on the front can be used for data connection or charging.



VERDICT An exceptionally versatile external hard drive for this price – ideal if you don't need portability

★★★★★

ALTERNATIVE

Seagate Expansion Portable 4TB **£85** For the same price, this works without mains power but lacks the Hub's features



SMART WATCH | From **£195** from Amazon www.snipca.com/35267

Samsung Galaxy Watch Active2

Time to get fit

Samsung's Galaxy Watch (see our review, Issue 542, page 26) is a leading Android rival to the Apple Watch, and this latest version introduces a larger screen and two watch sizes. A 'touch bezel' is now standard, meaning the black area around the screen can be used to adjust options.

There are also tweaks to the built-in heart-rate monitor and GPS, but the most dramatic new feature, an electrocardiogram (**ECG**), won't start working until it gets regulatory approval. The ability to estimate blood pressure is

SPECIFICATIONS

1.4in circular 360x360-pixel Super AMOLED touchscreen • Optical heart sensor • ECG (subject to activation) • 802.11n Wi-Fi • Bluetooth 5 • GPS • Optional 4G • Requires Android 5 or higher phone or iPhone 5 with iOS 9 or higher • Two-year warranty www.snipca.com/35268

also promised for the near future.

How much does all this cost? Samsung lists the regular Aluminium edition at £359 for the 40mm size and £379 for 44mm, with a £90 discount to £269 or £289, in pink or black. Shopping around online, we found Amazon offering the 44mm in black for £255 and in pink for just £196, both matching Samsung's inclusion of a free wireless charger. The **4G** LTE edition, which connects without Wi-Fi and comes in stainless steel with a classier leather strap, starts at £489 reduced to £399 from Samsung, and we couldn't find it cheaper.

This makes it hard to rate on value, but with its traditional round design and vibrant screen it's a very good smart watch, with comprehensive features including swim and sleep tracking.



Battery life is short, promising only 'a day and more'. But on the plus side, limited integration with high-end fitness products won't bother most buyers.

VERDICT Plenty of convenience and fitness features, but you might want to wait until they all work – and do shop around for deals

★★★★★

ALTERNATIVE

Apple Watch Series 3 **£199** This discounted older model is good value, but the Series 5, with ECG, starts at £399



PHONE | £80 from Nokia www.snipca.com/35301

Nokia 1.3

Finnish article

This is an Android phone that costs 80 quid. That's almost a tenth of the price of the iPhone 11. It has a screen. The screen turns on and icons appear. You can touch them and, eventually, apps open. The 5.7in IPS LCD screen has a resolution described as 'HD+', which is as good as saying a bit more than HD, but not much more. In practice, it looks fairly sharp and shows 80 per cent of roughly the right sRGB colours. Although there's a thick border on three sides and an even thicker border at the bottom, the keyhole camera notch makes it feel like a modern phone, if you don't look too closely. The case is plastic and comes in black, cyan (blue) or sand (sort of gold, but more like brown+).

“If you only want to spend £80 on a phone, you should probably buy this one”

The Nokia 1.3 runs Android Go, a slimmed-down version of Android for phones that can't quite manage Android. It can play basic games like Candy Crush Saga. It cannot run advanced titles like Call of Duty. It's an Android phone that costs 80 quid. Does it have a fingerprint reader? Face recognition? Depth-sensing Lidar? Of course not.

On the back is a camera. On the front is another camera. They take pictures. The pictures look a bit dark, unless it's actually dark, in which case they don't look much like anything, unless you use the flash. Then some bits look bright. In sunshine, if you turn on HDR, you can get passable photos as long as you keep your hand still, because there's no optical stabilisation. You can also shoot video at

5.7in 1520x720-pixel screen • 8-megapixel rear camera • 5-megapixel front camera • 16GB flash storage • MicroSD card slot • 802.11n Wi-Fi • Bluetooth 4.2 • 3G/4G • Android 10 Go • 147x71x9.35mm (HxWxD) • 155g • One-year warranty
www.snipca.com/35302



720p resolution.

If you only want to spend £80 on a phone, you should probably buy this one. The Xiaomi Redmi 7A (£104 from Amazon www.snipca.com/35304, see our review, Issue 569, page 28) is better, and its battery lasted 13 hours 30 minutes in our video-playback test, three hours longer than the Nokia 1.3. However, it costs about £25 more. Vodafone's Smart V10 (£105 from www.snipca.com/35305) is better again, and worth the extra, but only comes on Vodafone's network, with a £10 minimum pay-as-you-go.

VERDICT This is a decent back-to-basics smartphone, representing value for very little money

★★★★★

ALTERNATIVE

Vodafone Smart V10
£105 Not bad for a 32GB twin-camera phone if you add a top-up and unlock it later



GADGET GRAVEYARD

Devices that never caught on
Pocket PC



What was it?

Launched by Microsoft in 2000, Pocket PC was a specification for a class of handheld device running Windows Mobile, a version of the cut-down Windows CE operating system equipped with a set of default apps. Email and simplified web browsing were supported, but the first devices could only access the internet through a PC. At prices from around £300, Pocket PCs typically relied on stylus-operated LCD screens, but some also had BlackBerry-style keyboards.



Why did it die?

Pocket PC embodied one of Microsoft's most persistent problems: Windows brought little extra to mobile. Although some devices proved quite popular, the platform struggled to compete with cheaper PDAs (personal digital assistants) from the likes of Palm, and as smartphones arrived the whole category became obsolete. The Pocket PC name was dropped in 2007, leaving Windows Mobile to limp on until 2010, when it was superseded by Windows Phone – which didn't catch on either.

NEXT ISSUE

On Sale **Weds 29 July**

Dell XPS 13 (2020)

With new screen and CPU, is it the perfect laptop?



Amazon Fire HD 8 (2020)

Faster tablet with Alexa for under £100

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Our pick of products that have won the **Buy It** award

LAPTOP

HP Envy 13 (2019)
£870 from www.snipca.com/34945
Tested Issue 568



Thanks to eighth-gen Intel processors and dedicated Nvidia MX250 graphics, this sleek aluminium laptop offers a practical combination of all-round processing power and portability, topped off by 8 hours 30 minutes battery life – and the touchscreen is now excellent too.

ALTERNATIVE Dell XPS 13 Gets the most out of Intel CPUs, now tenth-gen, but there's no GPU option and the cheapest sensible configuration is £999 from www.snipca.com/33309

DESKTOP PC

Palicomp Intel Mercury
£600 from www.snipca.com/34223
Tested Issue 576



If you don't need advanced gaming, your money's well spent here on a six-core Intel i5-9600K processor overclocked to 5GHz. 16GB of memory and a full terabyte of fast SSD storage round off a powerful PC with good expansion potential.

ALTERNATIVE Chillblast Fusion Onyx Ryzen Adds decent 3D graphics and a 6GB Nvidia GeForce GTX 1660 Super. £1,120 from www.snipca.com/34675

APPLE IPAD

Apple iPad 10.2in
£349 from www.snipca.com/24022
Tested Issue 566



This enlarged edition of the basic iPad is superb value. With a great screen and plenty of processing power, it supports Apple's Pencil stylus (£89) and Smart Keyboard (£159). The 32GB storage could be tight, so consider 128GB at £449.

ALTERNATIVE iPad Mini With 64GB, the improved Mini has an even better, but smaller, screen than the otherwise similar 10.2in iPad at a similar price. £399 from www.snipca.com/33050

ANDROID TABLET

Samsung Galaxy S6
£619 from www.snipca.com/34752
Tested Issue 571



Although it resembles the iPad Pro, this competes more directly with the basic iPad and, considering the included S Pen stylus and generous 128GB of storage, costs about the same. It's less powerful, but a great tablet if you prefer Android.

ALTERNATIVE Amazon Fire HD 10 Now with USB-C, this is more limited and has no stylus option, but works well for the money. £150 from www.snipca.com/33473

APPLE IPHONE

Apple iPhone 11
£729 from www.snipca.com/32938
Tested Issue 565



At over £300 less than the iPhone 11 Pro, this has two rear cameras rather than three, but it's a superb phone for the money and takes fantastic photos and video. With full-day battery life, the only flaw is its 64GB of unexpandable storage – 128GB is £50 extra.

ALTERNATIVE iPhone SE With a single camera and smaller screen but the same powerful A13 processor and 64GB storage as the iPhone 11, it's great value. £419 from www.snipca.com/34773

ANDROID PHONE

Samsung Galaxy A70
£350 from www.snipca.com/32856
Tested Issue 564



This eagerly awaited phone hasn't let us down. The cameras are great, taking photos with a clarity to rival Google's Pixel phones, while the screen is exceptional. Battery life is staggering – 25 hours in our video-playback test. An outstanding phone.

ALTERNATIVE Xiaomi Mi 9 This year's surprise mid-range phone, with superb screen and triple camera. £499 (64GB, or £549 for 128GB) from www.snipca.com/31683



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

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

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

The competition prize is courtesy of Freewheel.co.uk

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

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

Buy It

Our pick of products that have won the **Buy It** award

EBOOK READER

Amazon Kindle (2019)
£70 from www.snipca.com/31621
Tested Issue 555



Now with built-in light and audiobook support, this budget model is fine for most users, though limited by its 4GB of storage. The Paperwhite (£120) is even sharper, waterproof, and has bigger storage options as well as a cellular data option (£100 extra).

ALTERNATIVE Kobo Clara HD
Not waterproof, but has more lighting options to avoid blue light. £110 from www.snipca.com/32586

SECURITY SOFTWARE

Kaspersky Internet Security 2020
£14.99 from www.snipca.com/21532
Tested Issue 564



Kaspersky Internet Security has won our past nine antivirus tests and the 2020 version is now available at an exclusive reader discount on our Software Store. Go to the link above for a one-year, one-device licence or buy a two-year, two-device licence for just £26.99.

ALTERNATIVE Norton 360 Deluxe
Almost as good as Kaspersky, but blocks more legitimate software. £15 from www.snipca.com/32069

PHOTO EDITING

Serif Affinity Photo
£24 from www.snipca.com/23739
Tested Issue 498



Designed for both full-time professional image retouchers and the rest of us keen amateurs, this is a beautifully designed and comprehensive program for both Windows and Mac users, although so far it performs better on Macs.

ALTERNATIVE Xara Photo & Graphic Designer For all-round design and drawing plus photo filters, this affordable app has a lot to offer. £50 from www.snipca.com/26514

PC MONITOR

BenQ GL2780
£160 from www.snipca.com/34834
Tested issue 581



This budget 27in screen offers accurate sRGB colour with good contrast, plus auto brightness and low blue light modes. Speakers are built in. Using TN LCD rather than IPS, it needs to be viewed straight on, but works well for games too.

ALTERNATIVE Philips Brilliance 241B7QPIKEB With a great picture, stylish design, speakers and webcam, this 24in Full HD IPS is an excellent smaller screen. £184 from www.snipca.com/34869

ROUTER

D-Link DIR-1960
£87 from www.snipca.com/32849
Tested Issue 564



Giving us download and upload speeds of 460Mbps and 375Mbps respectively, this is phenomenal value. Even two floors away we got 329Mbps and 284Mbps. It has four Ethernet ports for wired devices and a USB 3.0 socket to share storage via your network.

ALTERNATIVE Synology RT2600ac Comprehensive sharing features, controls and plenty of add-on apps complement excellent long-range performance. £218 from www.snipca.com/30710

PRINTER

Epson Expression Premium XP-6105
£96 from www.snipca.com/35017
Tested Issue 554



With many leading all-purpose printers having sold out during lockdown, this white version of the XP-6100 wireless six-ink printer/scanner/copier is a good choice for photos first and text second. It's easy to use and speeds aren't bad, but ink costs can work out high.

ALTERNATIVE Epson WorkForce 7710DWF Although its price has drifted up from a low of £132, this full A3+ printer/scanner/copier is a very practical buy. £200 from www.snipca.com/35016

COMPETITION

Win 1 of 5 devolo Magic 2 LAN Triple Starter Kits



devolo

Devolo's Magic 2 LAN Triple Starter Kits contain adapters equipped with three Gigabit LAN ports, delivering a maximum speed of 2,400Mbps. You can also use it to expand an existing network, allowing you to dispense with a LAN switch in your home office or living room.

Once you set it up, you'll enjoy a fast, reliable internet from around your home, letting you stream the

latest films in 8K, transmit sensitive data securely to online storage, or enjoy multi-player games online.

All of devolo's Magic devices are compatible with routers and other devices certified by the HomeGrid Forum.

To enter this competition, email your home address to cacomp@dennis.co.uk with 'Magic 2' in the subject line by midnight 28 July. Good luck!

You can buy the devolo Magic 2-2400 LAN Triple Starter Kit from Amazon (www.snipca.com/35099) priced £139.99. For more information on devolo products visit www.devolo.co.uk and follow @devolog on Twitter.

MESH ROUTER

BT Whole Home Wi-Fi
£172 from www.snipca.com/26990
Tested Issue 496



BT's set of three discs, managed from an Apple or Android app, connects to your broadband and spreads high-speed Wi-Fi all around the house. Reception is far better than a single router, and the price is lower than any rival.

ALTERNATIVE Zyxel Multy X
These two pillow-shaped boxes are powerful enough for most homes and provide four Ethernet ports apiece. £250 from www.snipca.com/27309

SOLID-STATE DRIVE

PRICE DROP

Samsung 970 Evo Plus 500GB
£98 from www.snipca.com/31265
Tested Issue 552



Although its price has fluctuated since we tested it at £99, this is a very fast (over 3GB per second) M.2 SSD unfazed by tests that make others slow to a crawl. Also consider the Adata XPG SX8200 Pro if you find it a bit cheaper.

ALTERNATIVE Crucial MX500 500GB
As fast as an SSD can get in the traditional 2.5in SATA format, this is a great-value upgrade. £60 from www.snipca.com/30188

WEB DESIGN

Xara Web Designer Premium
£70 from www.snipca.com/34150
Tested Issue 453



This visual program makes creating sites more like laying out a document than writing HTML code, and sites can be responsive, meaning they look good on big and small screens. A cheaper, basic version is also available for £35.

ALTERNATIVE Incomedia WebSite X5 v13 Evolution It may feel basic, but this program outputs efficient HTML code and responsive pages. £39 from www.snipca.com/31179

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Workshops & Tips

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HOW TO...

Stream photos from your phone to computer

by Nik Rawlinson

What you need: AirServer software **Time required:** 30 minutes

With a Google Chromecast or Apple TV connected to your TV set, it's just as easy to stream media – including photos – to your telly as it is to watch it on your phone. It's also a whole lot more comfortable, as you can sit back and enjoy it on the big screen at the same time as anyone else in the room.

But if you have an old set that lacks the required **HDMI** port, or you've already used up all the available ports on your

TV, neither of these is an option. Worse, because they're specifically designed for connecting to a TV, they're incompatible with your PC.

Thankfully, there's a fix. It's only the Chromecast and Apple TV hardware that's incompatible. The piece of code that makes them work runs perfectly in Windows, which means streaming to your desktop PC or a laptop set up in the lounge is just as easy.

We'll be using a piece of software



called AirServer for this feature, which you can install directly from the Microsoft Store at www.snipca.com/35199. If you're running Windows 7 or 8.1, or have Windows 10 but can't access the Microsoft Store (or prefer not to use it), visit www.airserver.com/PC and click the Download button.

1 Decide which AirServer you need

A licence for AirServer costs €16.99 (around £15), which is much cheaper than a Chromecast or Apple TV. However, you can run it in trial mode to check that it does what you want. How long you get to test it depends on how you download it. If you opt for the Microsoft Store version (www.snipca.com/35199), clicking 'Free trial' gives you seven days. However, clicking the separate Get button on the same Store page, gives you 14 days before you need to pay.

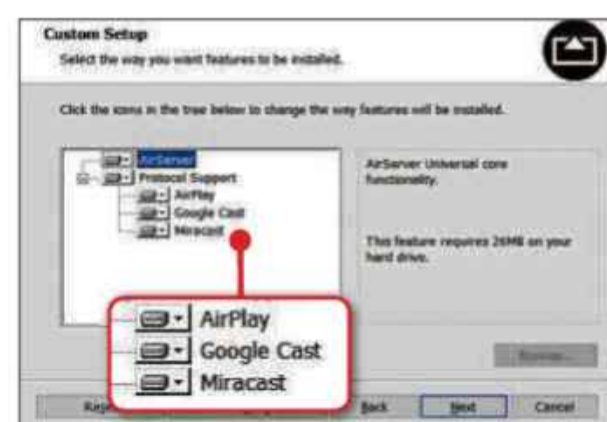
The version you can download directly from the AirServer site gives you 31 days for free. However, while the versions from the Windows Store don't add a

watermark to your content, the download from www.airserver.com/PC places a 'trial' badge in the corner. It isn't as intrusive as a full-screen watermark, though, so you can probably live with this until you're sure you want to buy AirServer.

The version we installed from the Microsoft Store occasionally froze or dropped the connection to our phone. We had to manually reinstate this before we could continue browsing our photos on the PC. We had no such problems with the version installed from AirServer's site, so that's the one we're using here.

2 Install AirServer

Open the AirServer download in your Downloads folder and



AirServer can work with AirPlay, Google Cast and Miracast – leave all three enabled

click Next on the first two screens of the installation instructions. The second 'Next' lets you choose which streaming services you want to enable (see screenshot above), with AirPlay, Google

Cast and Miracast turned on by default.

The first two of these work with Apple and Android devices respectively. Miracast works like a wireless monitor connection, so is compatible with a wide range of devices including, but not limited to, phones, laptops and tablets. We'd recommend leaving them all enabled unless you have a specific reason for excluding one or another (as we'll explain later).

Check the licence agreement and, if you agree with it, tick the appropriate box and click Next. On the following screen, select 'I want to try AirServer Universal'. Click 'Next' twice, then decide whether you want AirServer Universal to launch when your PC starts. The default option is No, which we'd recommend sticking with as there's no point having the service running the whole time your PC is awake if it's not in use. If you do want to start it when your PC boots, choose one of the other two launch options.

Click Next one last time, then Install, then confirm that you're happy for the program to make changes to your computer. 'Launch AirServer when setup exits' will now be ticked. Leave this as it is and click Finish. In the future, if you haven't set it to run when someone logs in and you need to launch it, you'll find it on the Start menu.

When it first runs, AirServer will give you two options: Buy or Try. Click Try, followed by Finish. A notification will slide in from the right of your screen to tell you that AirServer is running (sitting among the hidden icons to the right of the taskbar). Click the small up arrow in your taskbar to reveal them, then click the AirServer icon to open its menu. Click 'QR Code for AirServer Connect...' and a large, square barcode will appear on screen (see screenshot below).

Scanning the QR code with your phone pairs it with AirServer on your PC



How I stream from my phone

I don't have a satellite dish, cable or aerial, so all my entertainment is streamed, and often it's quicker and easier to open an app and stream to my TV. Streaming to a laptop comes a close second when I'm not at home. The ability to use the same setup to show photos to visiting friends and family is a bonus.

Nik Rawlinson



How do you stream videos and photos?
Please let us know: letters@computeractive.co.uk

3

Connect your phone to AirServer

Download AirServer Connect for iOS (www.snipca.com/35201) or Android (www.snipca.com/35202) and launch the app. What happens next depends on whether you're using an Android or iOS device.

On iOS, launch the app, then tap the Scan QR Code button. Tap OK when your phone warns you that an app called Connect wants to access the camera, then frame the barcode on your PC screen using the camera on the back of your iPhone. It only needs to glimpse it for a second to pair the phone and your PC.

On Android, our PC was detected and appeared in a list of available devices. If yours does the same, tap it. However, if your phone doesn't manage to detect any PCs running AirServer, tap the image of the QR code at the top of the screen, immediately to the right of the words AirServer Connect, then tap Allow when it asks if you're happy for it to take pictures and record video. Frame the QR code using your phone's camera and it will be detected and captured.

The Android app warns you that from that point on everything you do will be captured and displayed on your screen. Tap 'Start Now'.



In iOS, you'll see the option to mirror your screen in the Control Centre

4

Stream from your phone

You've now done all you need to do to stream whatever's showing on your phone to your PC screen. Starting the stream again in the future depends on whether you're running iOS or Android.

On iOS, streaming is managed through the Control Centre. If you're using an iPhone 8 or earlier, swipe up from the bottom of the screen to reveal it; on an iPhone X or later, swipe down from the clock at the top of the screen. Within the Control Centre, you'll see an option for Screen Mirroring (see screenshot above). Tap this, then tap the device you'd like to send the output to. If you have more than one device set up on your network, choose your computer by tapping its

ADD BLUETOOTH TO AN OLD RADIO

Once you've tried streaming photos from your phone, you can use a similar process to stream audio to a radio.

Many modern radios have Bluetooth built in but, if yours doesn't, it's easy to add it if it has an auxiliary input (this is sometimes labeled AUX). You'll need a cheap Bluetooth receiver, like this £12.99 TaoTronics Bluetooth 5.0 receiver (www.snipca.com/35221, pictured right), and an appropriate cable. This outputs the signal it receives via a 3.5mm jack. You can easily pick up a cable with a jack at each end (£5.99 from www.snipca.com/35207) or, if your radio has a pair of phono connectors, a jack-to-phono cable (for example, www.snipca.com/35208). You should be able to use the same cables to connect the receiver to a standalone speaker that lacks Bluetooth, or use the speaker's built-in cable, if it has one and it's terminated by a 3.5mm jack.

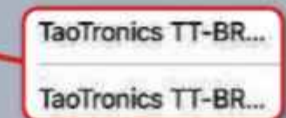
Connect the Bluetooth receiver to your radio or speaker and switch to the



This TaoTronics receiver will add Bluetooth to a radio



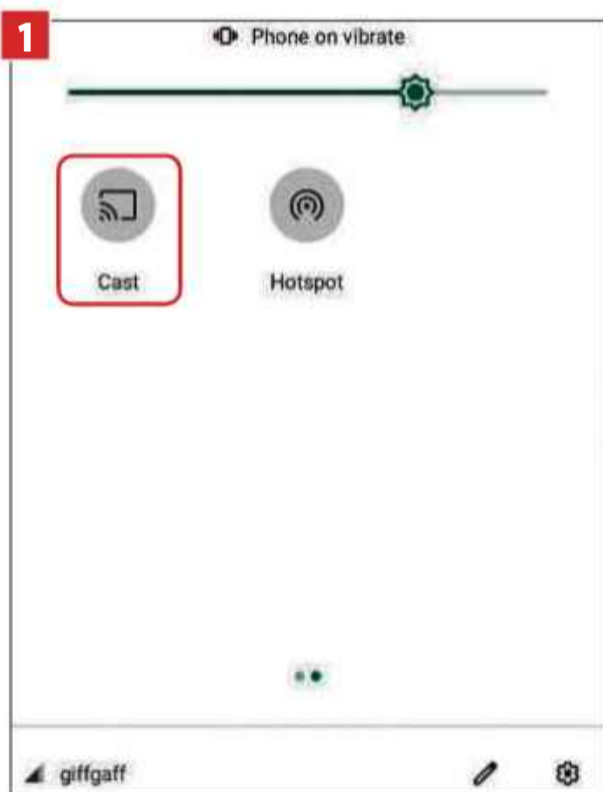
Once you've paired a Bluetooth device with your phone, it will be added to a list of trusted devices for future use



auxiliary input. Now open the Bluetooth menu on your phone. On iOS, you'll find this by opening Settings and tapping Bluetooth. On Android, open Settings and tap 'Connected devices' followed by 'Connection preferences', then Bluetooth.

Make sure the Bluetooth receiver is switched on, and pair it with your phone. On iOS, your device will automatically search for the receiver and, when it spots it, will list it in the Other Devices section

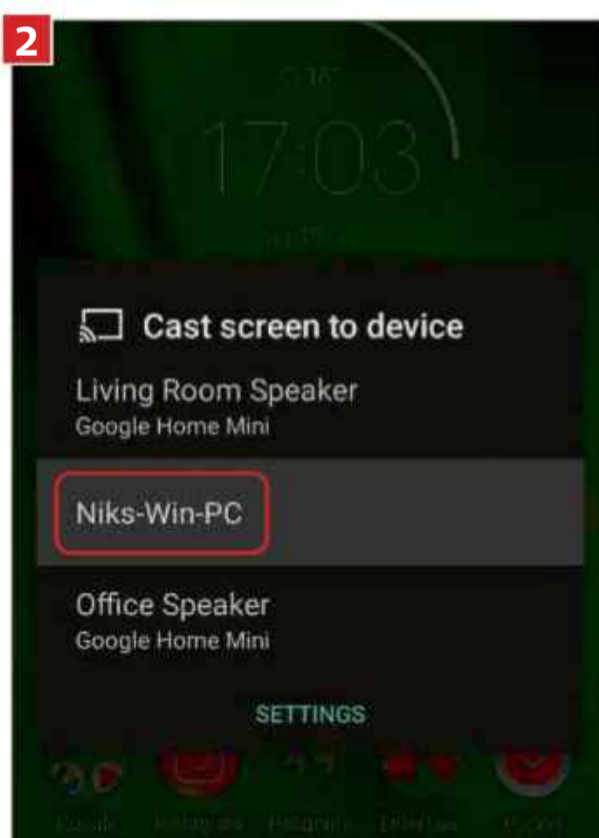
at the bottom of the Bluetooth screen. Tap it to pair. On Android, tap 'Pair new device' to start your phone searching for the device. When it spots it, tap it to pair. You only need to perform this pairing operation once. Afterwards, your phone will recognise and trust the Bluetooth device. Choosing it from the Bluetooth menu (see screenshot above) will select it as the output device for whatever audio is playing.



Mirror everything that happens on your Android screen by tapping Cast...

name (in our case, it's Niks-Win-PC).

If you're using Android, switch to whichever app you want to mirror, then tap the cast icon, which appears at the top of compatible apps, like YouTube and Google Photos. You can alternatively stream everything you're doing by mirroring everything that happens on your phone, even when you're switching



...then tapping the name of your computer

between apps, by swiping down from the top of the screen to open your notifications. Expand the toolbar at the top of the screen and, if Cast isn't shown, swipe to reveal it. Tap 'Cast' (see screenshot 1), then tap the device you want to send the screen to which, again, will be the name of your PC 2.

If you don't know what your

computer's name is and you're seeing several devices, open Windows' Settings by pressing Windows+I, then tap System, followed by About. Your computer's name is shown beside 'Device name' in the 'Device specifications' section.

5 Choose less demanding stream if necessary

AirServer has several options that are worth exploring if you're not getting optimum performance. Once again, click the up arrow on your Windows taskbar to reveal your hidden icons, then click the AirServer icon, followed by Settings. Start by disabling any casting services you aren't using. If you're an Android user, for example, disable AirPlay and Miracast. If you're using iOS, disable Miracast and Google Cast.

If you're playing video and the soundtrack isn't being sent to your computer, check that you've selected the correct speakers by switching to the Audio tab, and if the video itself is stumbling, choose a less demanding stream from the Mirroring tab.

By default, AirServer presents video at the highest possible quality, so select an alternative like 720p or 1024x768 from the dropdown menu.

Workshop 1

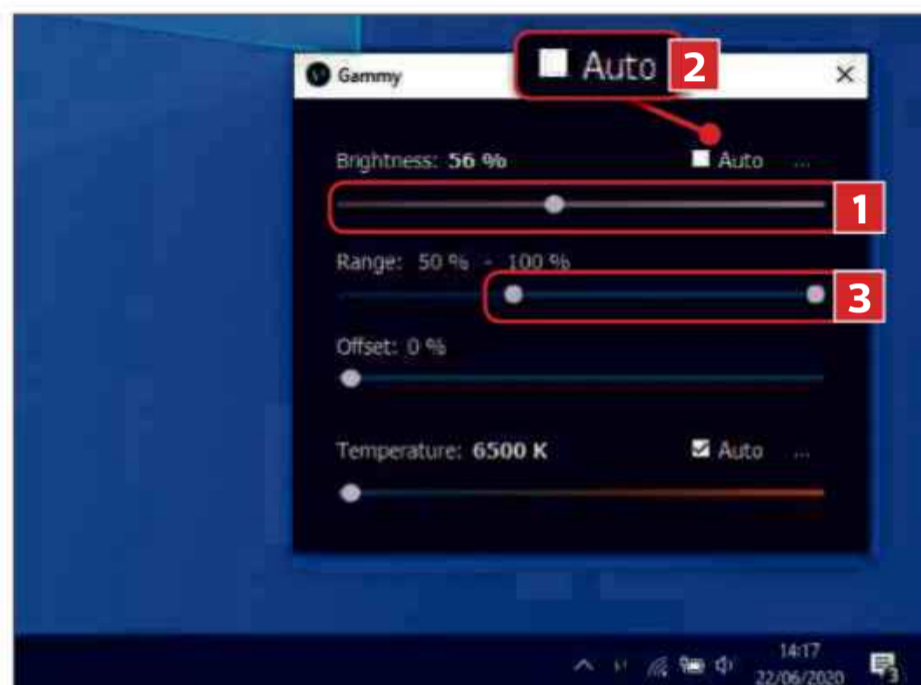
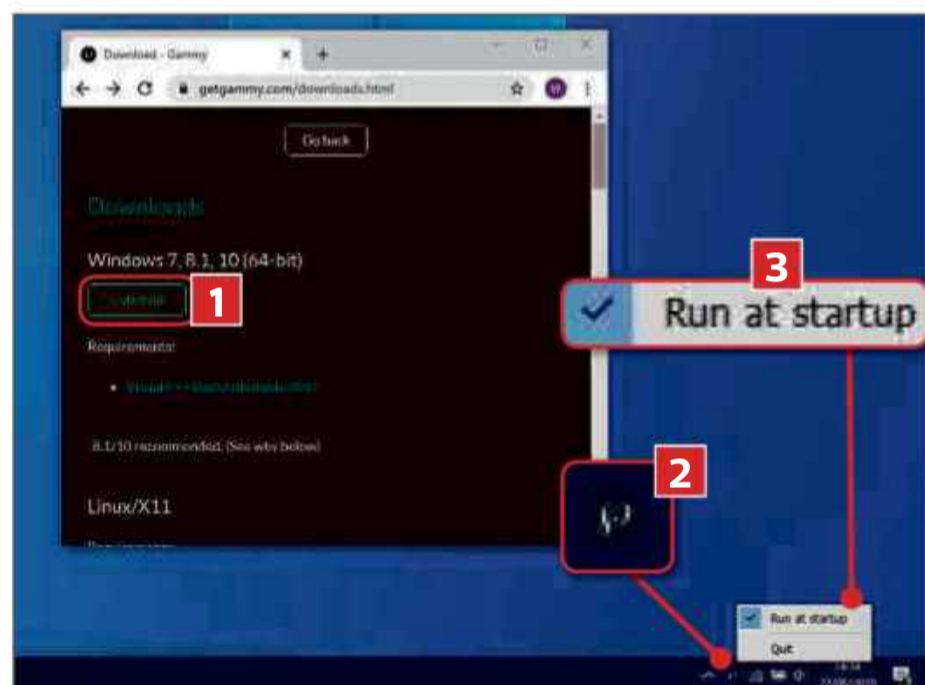
Stop your monitor hurting your eyes

What you need: Gammy; Windows 7, 8.1 or 10

Time required: 30 minutes

Adjusting the brightness of your monitor can be a fiddly task. Brightness controls are often tucked away behind or to one side of your screen, and you'll probably need to adjust them several times a day as daylight changes. Save yourself this hassle by installing Gammy. This small tool adjusts your monitor's

brightness levels to suit whatever is on your screen, dimming it when you're looking at a document with a white background, then brightening it when you switch to a window with a dark backdrop. Once you've set it up, it runs smoothly in the background, saving you from eye strain whatever the conditions.

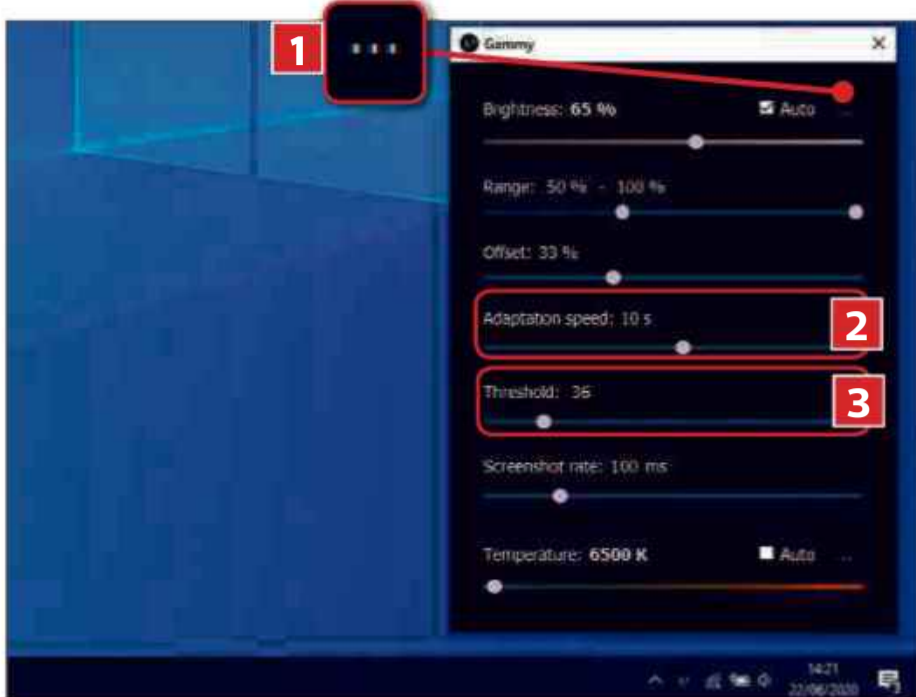


STEP 1 Download Gammy by going to www.snipca.com/35222 and clicking the green link at the top (version number is 0.9.58 at the time of writing **1**). Open the ZIP file that downloads and copy the folder within it to a location on your PC (we opted for `c:\program files\gammy`). Now double-click the 'gammy.exe' file within this folder. The Gammy icon will appear in your system tray **2** (click the small up arrow if you can't see it). Before changing any settings, it's worth setting Gammy to run when you boot Windows. Right-click the icon, then click 'Run at startup' **3** (repeat this procedure if you want to stop it loading automatically).

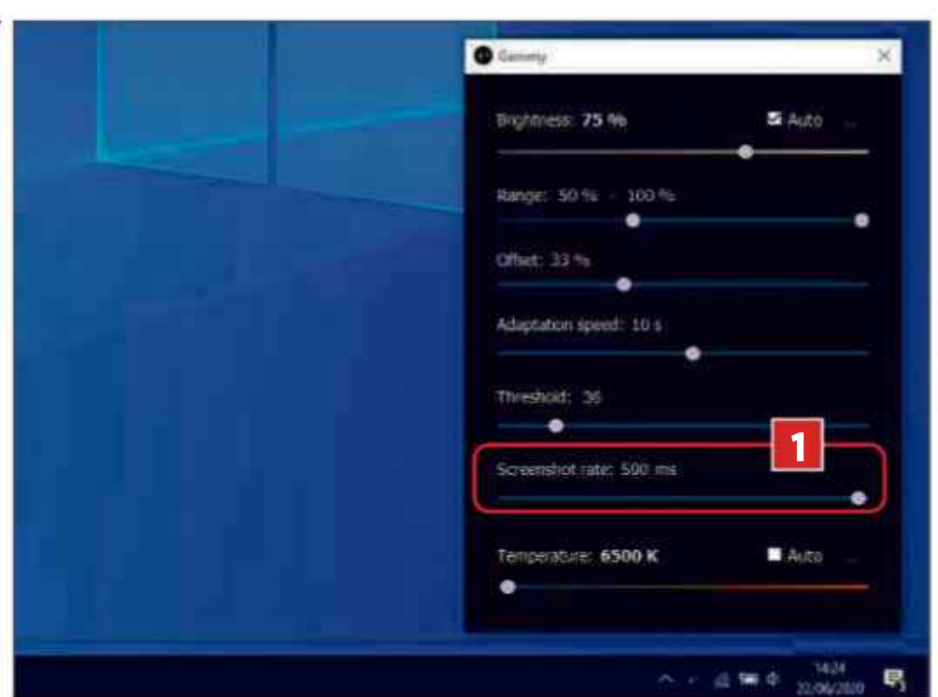
STEP 2 Open Gammy's settings by double-clicking its system-tray icon. The Brightness slider **1** lets you adjust your screen's brightness. To set it to a fixed level, untick the Auto box **2**, then move the slider to the left or right to adjust the brightness. However, we want Gammy to adjust brightness for us depending on what's on the screen, so tick the Auto box again. When you do this, you'll see your screen's brightness adjusts as Gammy detects what windows you have open. To prevent Gammy making the screen too dark or too bright, move the two markers on the Range slider accordingly - we've set ours so that it doesn't go below 50 per cent brightness **3**.



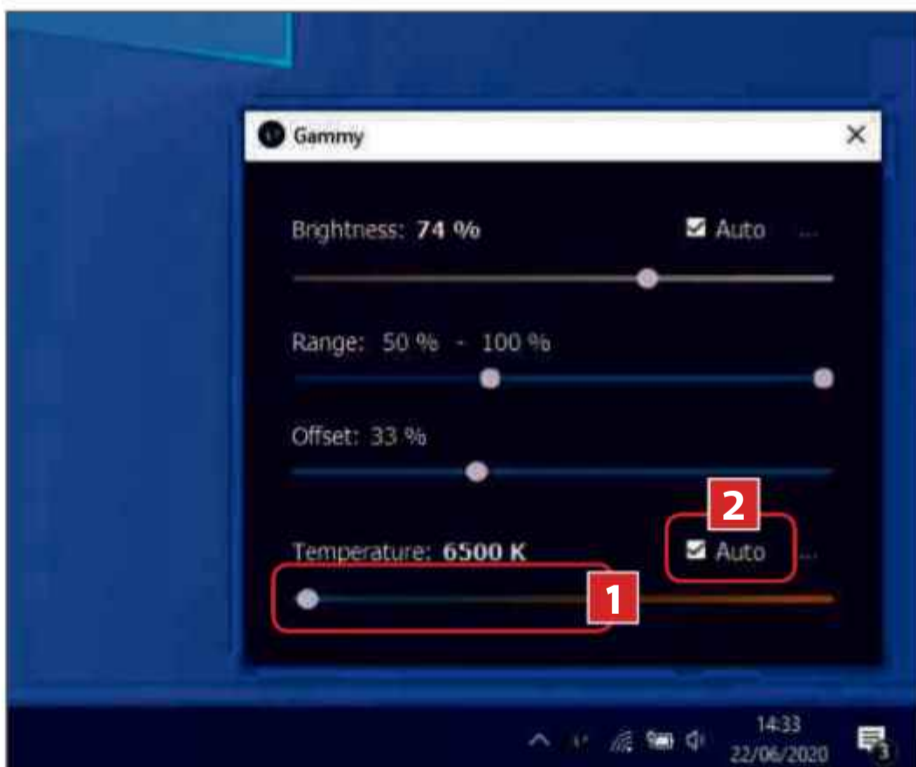
STEP 3 You can fine-tune how Gammy works. Using the Offset slider **1**, you can boost the brightness level Gammy chooses by a certain percentage. By default, if Gammy detects that your screen is displaying a predominantly white window, for example, it will drop the brightness to around 20 per cent. If you find this leaves it too dim, you can set the brightness level to increase automatically by a set amount using the Offset slider. Gammy will continue to adjust the brightness depending on what you're viewing, but each time it does this the Offset value will boost the brightness level further.



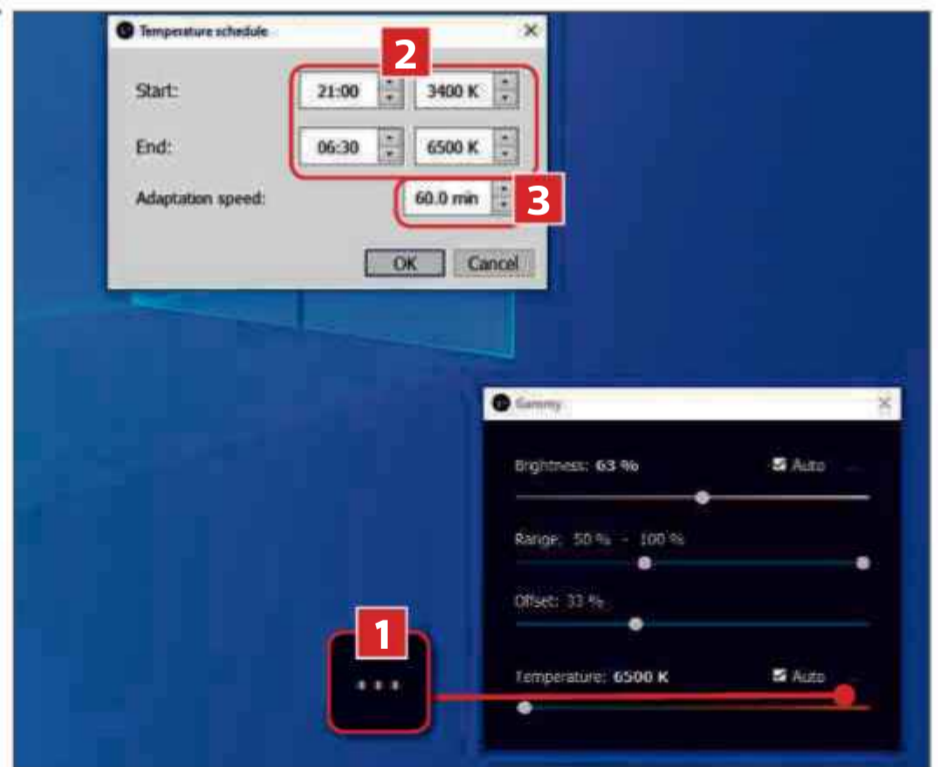
STEP 4 For further control over Gammy, click the three dots at the top right **1**, then drag the window up to reveal the additional settings. The 'Adaptation speed' slider **2** determines how long each change in brightness takes to be applied. For instant changes, drag the slider all the way to the right. However, this can be distracting, so we recommend setting it to around 10 seconds for a more gentle transition. If you find Gammy is changing levels too frequently, move the Threshold slider **3** to the right. Gammy will now ignore slight changes in colours on your screen, and only adjust things when larger sections undergo changes.



STEP 5 When running, Gammy works by taking rapid screenshots of whatever is on your screen (these aren't saved; they're only used to calculate the required brightness level). For most people, this screenshot rate can be left at its default, meaning one is taken every 100 milliseconds (ms). However, if you have an old PC, this may slow it down. To help combat this, drag the 'Screenshot rate' slider **1** to the right. The further you go, the longer the delay between screenshots and the less demanding Gammy will be on your PC. The slowest setting is 500ms, but this will also reduce how quickly Gammy can calculate the optimum brightness level for your screen.



STEP 6 Gammy can make it easier to view your screen at night by changing its colour temperature. You can change this yourself by moving the Temperature slider **1**. Move it left for a cooler temperature (a light blue tone, which is more suitable during the day) and right for warmer tones (red/orange, best at night). Alternatively, tick the Auto box **2** and Gammy will automatically change the colour temperature depending on the time of day.



STEP 7 To fine-tune the colour-temperature settings, click the three dots **1**. A new window will open, where you can set colour temperature start and end times. Here, we've chosen a warm 3400K temperature for night time (starting at 9pm), with a cooler 6500K for daytime hours (starting at 6.30am) **2**. Use the up and down arrows next to each setting to adjust them, or simply type the values in. We've also chosen to enter 60 minutes in the 'Adaptation speed' box **3**, meaning it will take an hour to switch between our chosen colour temperatures. If you prefer a more rapid change, you can reduce this accordingly. Click OK to save your changes.

Workshop 2

Add better right-click options to Windows

What you need: Ultimate Windows Tweaker; Windows 10

Time required: 20 minutes

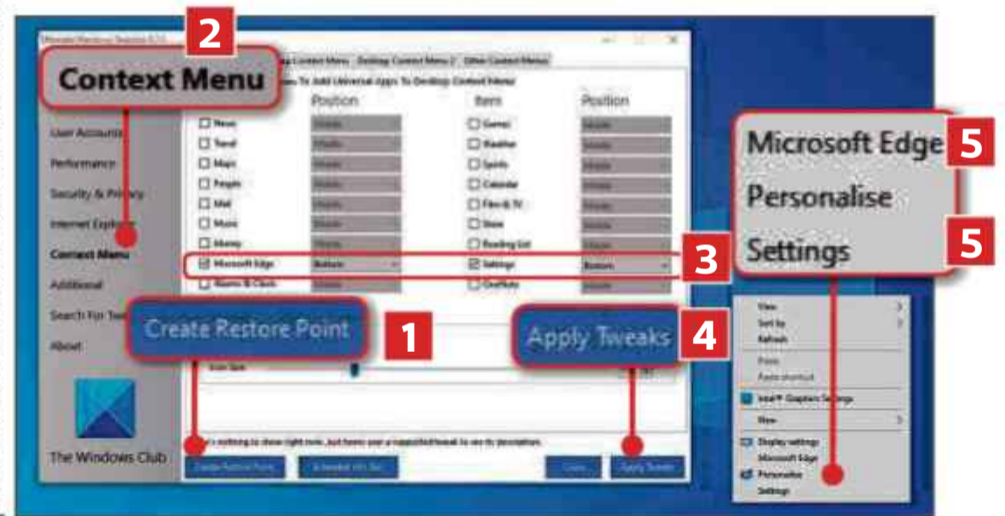
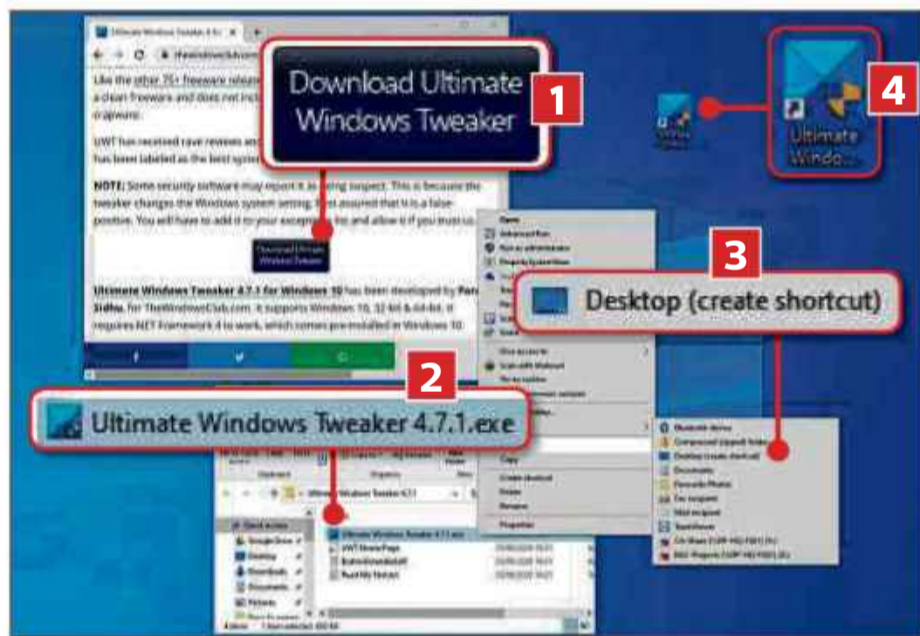
Right-clicking a file, folder or your Windows desktop reveals a list of handy options (called the context menu), which lets you pin programs to your Start menu, open files using specific programs and more. But why stop there?

Here, we reveal how Ultimate Windows Tweaker (UWT) provides a vast array of new options you can add to your right-click menu, and also lets you remove some of the default Windows options you never use.

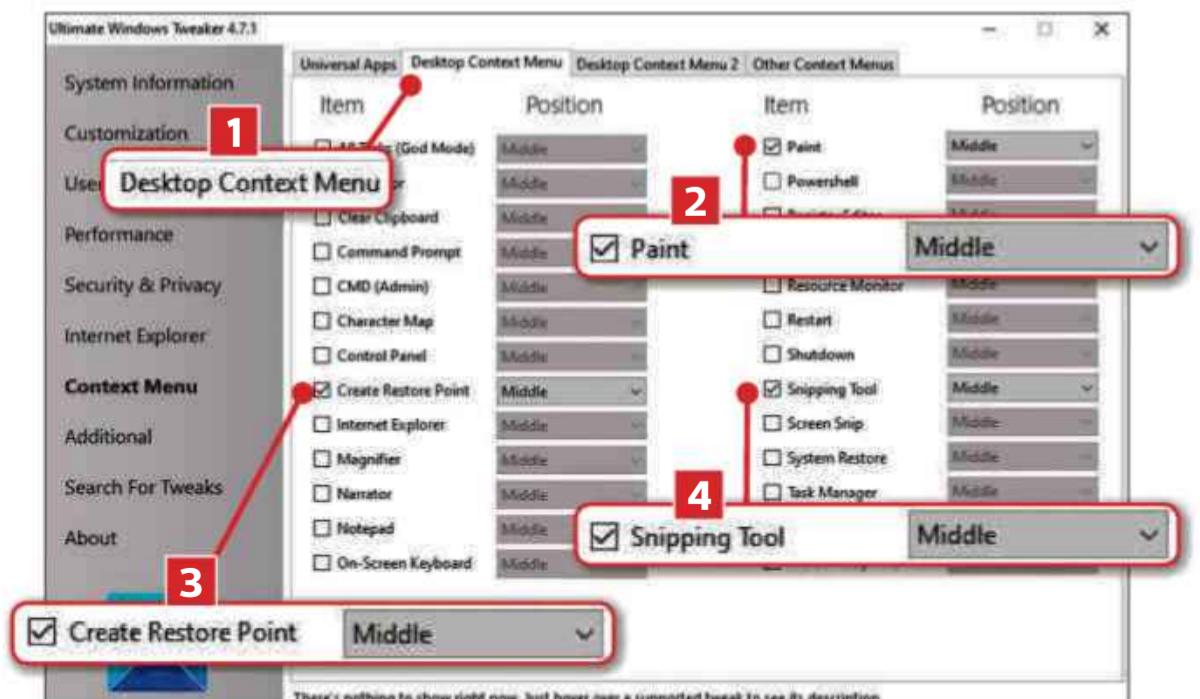


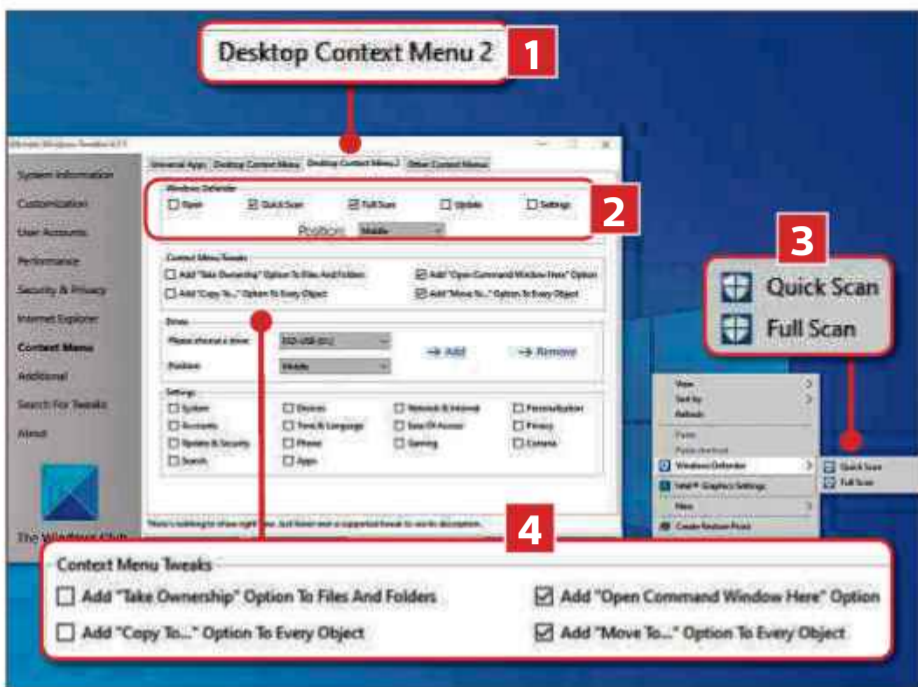
STEP 1 Download UWT from www.snipca.com/35233. Avoid the fake Download buttons (these are just adverts) and instead scroll down towards the bottom of the page and click the black Download Ultimate Windows Tweaker button **1**. Open the ZIP file, extract the files to a folder on your PC, then open this folder. If you want to have quick-access to the tool, right-click the EXE file **2**, select 'Send to', then 'Desktop (create shortcut)' **3**. A shortcut icon will now appear on your desktop **4**. Double-click this to run UWT.

STEP 2 Before making changes, click Create Restore Point **1** to create a **system restore point** (letting you quickly reverse all changes if necessary). Select 'Context Menu' on the left **2**. You'll see a list of Windows apps, which can be added to your right-click menu by ticking the relevant boxes. Using the box to the right of each, you can choose whether they sit in the top, middle or bottom section of the menu. Here, we've added entries for Microsoft Edge and Windows' Settings app **3** to the bottom section. To save your changes, click Apply Tweaks **4**. Your taskbar will temporarily disappear as Windows Explorer restarts. Right-click an empty section of your desktop and you'll see the new options **5**.

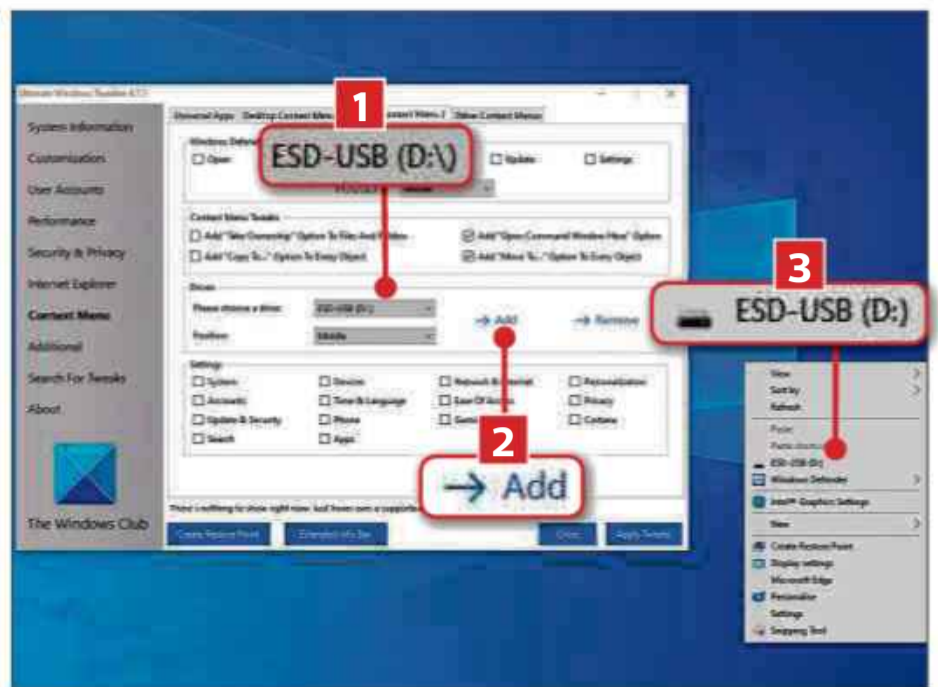


STEP 3 UWT can add much more than Windows tools to your right-click menu. Select the Desktop Context Menu tab **1** to view them. As in Step 2, you can add or remove items by ticking the relevant box and choosing which section of the right-click menu it sits in. We're adding Paint **2** (Microsoft's impressively simple image editor), Create Restore Point **3** (a handy shortcut for System Restore) and Snipping Tool **4** (one of the screenshot tools built into Windows).

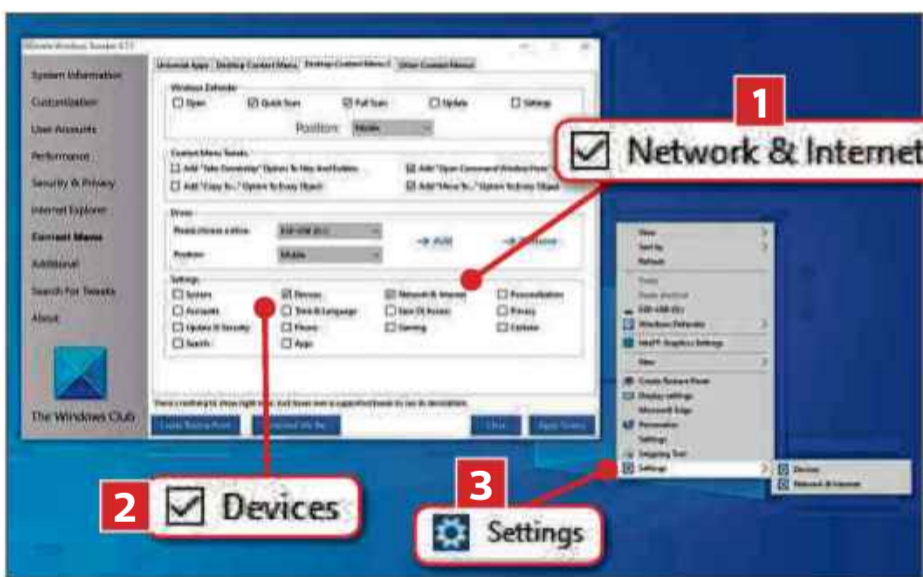




STEP 4 The Desktop Context Menu 2 tab **1** contains additional shortcut options. In the top section, you can choose to add shortcuts to Windows Defender (Microsoft's antivirus tool), which is great for running an impromptu virus scan **2**. Any of the options you select here will be added to a Windows Defender sub-menu – here we've opted for the Quick Scan and Full Scan options **3**. In the section below this, you can add options to open a Command Prompt window in a specific folder, as well as handy 'Move to' and 'Copy to' commands for files **4**.

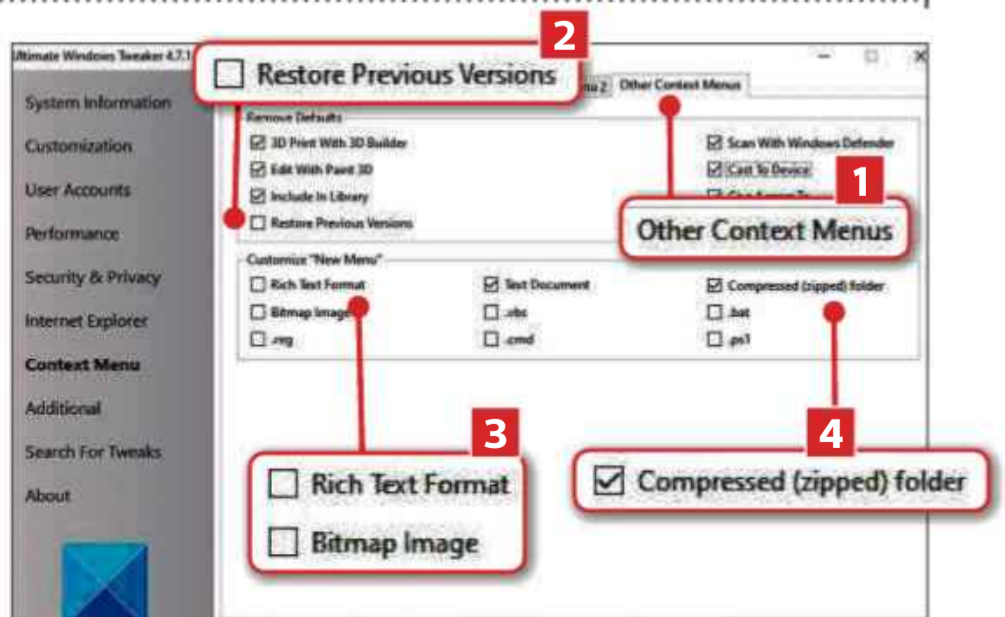


STEP 5 This latest version of UWT adds a Drives option, which lets you open any of your hard drives in File Explorer. Select the relevant drive, then click the Add button (unlike with other settings, you don't need to click Apply Tweaks to confirm changes to this option). You can also use it to create a shortcut for your USB sticks. First, make sure you have a USB stick inserted (if not, close UWT, insert the stick, then re-open UWT). Your USB stick should now be listed in the 'drive box' dropdown menu of drive box **1**. Select it, then click Add **2**. Now, whenever you have a USB stick inserted, you can open it in File Explorer by right-clicking the desktop and selecting the new drive's shortcut **3**.



STEP 6 In the Settings section of the Desktop Context Menu 2 tab, you can add shortcuts to some of the most useful tools in the Settings app. For example, adding the 'Network & Internet' **1** option lets you quickly fix Wi-Fi problems, while Devices **2** directs you to the Settings page for turning on/off Bluetooth devices and adding/removing printers. As with the Windows Defender options in Step 4, any options you select will be added to a sub-menu of your context menu – this time called Settings **3**.

STEP 7 You can also keep things tidy by removing some of the Windows default options you don't use. Select the Other Context Menus tab **1**, then look in the Remove Defaults section at the top. Any option you tick here will be removed from the right-click menu (as before, you can restore them by removing the tick). We've removed all but the Restore Previous Versions option **2** (see our feature on page 62 for more on restoring file versions). In the section below this, you can change which options appear when selecting New from the right-click menu. We've chosen to remove two that were selected by default ('Rich text format' and 'Bitmap image' **3**) and add the 'Compressed (zipped) folder' option **4**, which lets you quickly create a new ZIP archive.



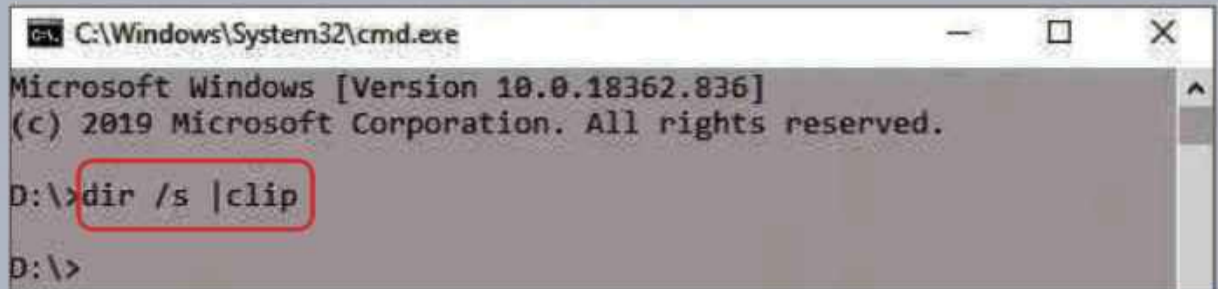
Readers' Tips

TIP OF THE FORTNIGHT

Open USB sticks faster in Command Prompt

One item I enjoyed in Issue 581 was your Workshop on page 40 ('Create a searchable inventory of your USB Sticks'). I have followed your instructions and it works perfectly.

Here's one little shortcut for the instructions. Navigate to the memory stick in File Explorer (as explained in Step 1 of your Workshop) and click in the folder title area. This will show a highlighted drive ID. Type **CMD** and press Enter. This will take you into Command Prompt, within the required drive. Once there, type **dir /s |clip** (see screenshot). This takes you to Step 3 of your Workshop, where you continue to



follow the instructions. One of the differences with this method is that Command Prompt does not open in Administrator mode.

In earlier versions of Windows 10, you could open Administrator mode by navigating to the folder as described above, clicking 'File', hovering over

Open Command Prompt and then clicking 'Open command prompt as Administrator'. In more recent versions of Windows 10, this method of accessing Command Prompt from the folder file menu has been replaced by PowerShell.

Harry Hawksworth



Harry wins a copy of our 2019 Back Issue CD [Buy it on Amazon www.snipca.com/33711](http://www.snipca.com/33711)

GENEALOGY

Search criminals' tattoos online

Further to the Grow Your Family Tree feature on tracking down ancestors' prison records (Issue 583), I'd like to recommend that readers also visit Digital Panopticon (www.digitalpanopticon.org), which has over 90,000 searchable records for criminals convicted at the Old Bailey between 1780

and 1925. Last year it added a database of searchable tattoos – apparently, 58,000 of the convicts in the records had them!

In the screenshot (below left), you'll see that you can search by the type of tattoo ('australia', 'britain' and 'death' are some of the subjects).

Prison History (www.prisonhistory.org) is also useful, in particular its searchable map of 19th-century prisons, many of which were still operational in the 20th century.

Stephen Boyle



HARDWARE

Update your laptop's SSD driver

I noticed that my wife's new laptop was taking an age to reboot. Given that it came with a Radeon SSD, I was a bit surprised. So I did some tests and

noticed it took 80 to 90 seconds to shut down, even straight after a reboot.

After some research, I upgraded Radeon's driver to the latest version recommended. The process was well designed and uncomplicated. The shutdown time is now down to about 13 seconds. I think this should be on the list of things to do with a new PC. Windows updates alone don't get the job done.

Dave Antcliffe

SOFTWARE

Turn photos into art using FotoSketcher

In Issue 581, Keith Mutch asked how he could turn photos into art (page 19). You gave a couple of recommendations, but omitted a really brilliant (and free) app called

Why I stopped using...

Foxit Reader

If there's one thing I've learnt in my 30 years of using computers, it's that most programs are cluttered with tools I never use. Foxit was one such tool. It offered much more than I ever needed.

And what I use instead...

All I need from a PDF is to open, search and print it. That's the essence of

Slim PDF (www.snipca.com/35127). You can do basic editing, like adding highlights or squiggly lines, but I hardly ever feel the need to. Instead I just download a PDF to my PC then drag it into Slim PDF and click Print (see screenshot).

It's not suited to people who need to share and collaborate on PDFs. And you have to pay to convert PDFs to other formats, like Word documents. But the free version is good enough for me. I get



lots of PDFs from members of my bowls league, and I simply save them and print.

Robert Blake

Tell us why you stopped using a website, app or program: letters@computeractive.co.uk



FotoSketcher (www.snipca.com/35157). This basically does more or less the same as the £30 Dynamic Auto-Painter (DAP, www.mediachance.com/dap) that you recommended. It's the most wonderful little program. There are options to process photos as watercolour, coloured pencils, oils, oil pastels, even as cartoon-like pop-art, with quite a good deal of control over each process, such as brush thickness, depth of effect and more. The screenshot (above) shows a photo taken in the Lake District (on the left) transformed into a picture (on the right) using the 'brushstrokes' setting.

Like DAP, the process can take a while. I've found that reducing the photo size from its default dimensions (to, say, A4) before processing, cuts this time down dramatically, typically to a minute or less. I've been using the program for a year or two and highly recommend it.

Chris Lazenby

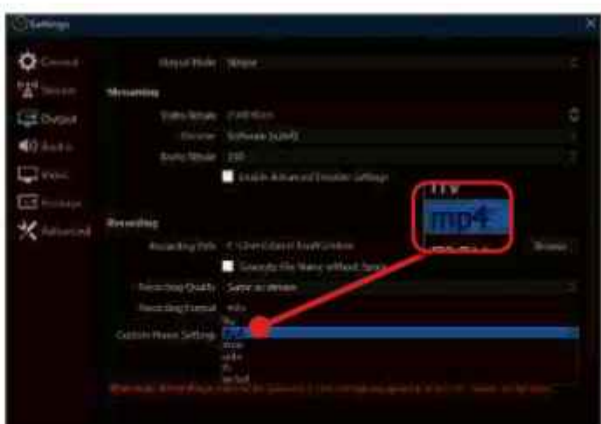
SOFTWARE

Change OBS Studio's default file format

✓ Like Will Stapley (see 'How I Use', Issue 581, page 20), I use OBS Studio (www.obsproject.com) to record videos. However, one annoyance is the way that by default OBS saves videos in the .flv format. Most video-sharing sites like YouTube generally support MP4.

To change the file type to MP4, click File, followed by Settings then select Output. In the dropdown menu next to 'Recording format' choose MP4 (see screenshot below) and click OK. Any future videos you record will be saved in this more universal format.

Ben Ward



Reader recommends...

BenQ EW3270 monitor

£419 from Amazon www.snipca.com/35121

✓ My original monitor (AOC Q3279AWF) had been a good buy, but was not quite up to present-day gaming. So after much searching, I decided to buy the BenQ EW3270 4K HDR monitor.

It has good, wide viewing angles and comes with two HDMI ports, one DisplayPort, one USB-C port, and a 3.5in audio output. Picture and contrast is very good, with blacks looking properly black. I've not seen any whitening of the screen at the edges, even at an angle. The sound quality of the built-in speakers is adequate as long as you don't expect 'surround sound'.

I run my own server to play the game



Rust (www.snipca.com/35122), and my previous monitor was slow resolving the picture and caused delay at times. This has been solved with the BenQ, and the picture is razor-sharp.

David Butler

✉ Want to recommend hardware or software to fellow readers?

Email letters@computeractive.co.uk

NAS

Select automatic updating on your NAS drive

✓ Thank you for Issue 582's Cover Feature on NAS drives. It was of particular interest to me because I own Synology's DS218play, which is the drive you used for your instructions.

One thing I'd like to add to your advice is that while most NAS drives will update their system software automatically (applying security fixes for example), you may need to turn this on first.

On the DS218play, automatic updating is disabled by default, so you need to open the Control Panel and click 'Update & Restore', DSM Update, 'Update settings' then select the 'Automatically install the new update' option. Choose a day and time for your updates to take place, then click OK.

Ken Arnold

EBOOKS

Convert ebooks to read on Kindle

✓ In Issue 582's Readers' Tips Louise Frier said that her Kindle can only

read books bought from Amazon.

This is not correct. You can use Calibre (<https://calibre-ebook.com>) to convert books to MOBI or AZW file formats (which the Kindle can read) from many other formats, such as ePub and PDF. You then just need to copy the converted books to your Kindle. I've done this many times for my wife, who has one of the early Kindles.

However, Louise is right that Project Gutenberg (www.gutenberg.org) is a good source for classics. I've also found ManyBooks (<https://manybooks.net>, pictured below left) to be a comprehensive source of ebooks, both classic and more modern.

Andrew Wallace

BROWSERS

Open a new Chrome window quicker

✓ By accident I have discovered a very useful feature in Google Chrome. Usually I have multiple tabs open and very often want to compare something on different tabs. I knew that you could

open a new window by clicking the three vertical dots top left, then 'New window' (or by pressing Ctrl+N), but you can also click a tab and drag it down. Do this and a new window automatically opens.

Ian Wills



Phone and Tablet Tips

ANDROID & iOS

Enter text without typing



Using Optical Character Recognition (OCR), a scanning app can take a picture of a page and convert its contents into editable digital text. It's handy, but can be cumbersome if you only need to scan a short piece of text because many such apps can only capture text within their own interfaces. You then need to export the text if you want to use it in a separate app.

Developer Anyline has rethought the process from scratch. Its free apps for iOS and Android (www.anyline.com/

anyline-keyboard) replace your iPhone or Android device's keyboard, so any text the app scans goes directly into the app you're already using.

It has presets for capturing passports, vouchers, serial numbers, barcodes and more, allowing you to quickly capture gift-token codes, Wi-Fi passwords and more, at which point they're dropped directly into the text field you were editing when you scanned the text.

When installing, you'll need to grant permission for it to use your camera and control your phone, but the setup process guides you through this, after which long-pressing the keyboard icon lets you switch from your phone's default keyboard to Anyline (see screenshot left).

The iOS keyboard currently only supports English-language input, but Android users can also capture German, French, Italian, Spanish and Arabic.



ANDROID & iOS

Turn off facial recognition when wearing a facemask



Now that it's compulsory to wear a facemask in many shops and on public transport, you may no longer be able to use facial recognition to unlock your phone. Rather than wasting time while it fails to recognise you, and then trying an alternative method of gaining access, you can turn off Face ID on iOS and 'Face unlock' on Android at least until face masks are no

longer required.

Face ID is supported on the iPhone X and later and, as well as unlocking your phone, you can use it to authorise contactless payments. To turn it off, open Settings and tap 'Face ID & Passcode', then tap Reset Face ID. If you only want to turn it off for unlocking your phone, tap iPhone Unlock instead.

On Android, you can unlock a Google Pixel 4, confirm payments and sign into some apps. To turn this off, open Settings, then tap Security followed by 'Face unlock'. Enter your PIN or password or, if you use a pattern to enable your phone, swipe your preset pattern on the grid. Now, under 'Use face unlock for', turn off the option for 'Unlocking your phone'.

iOS

Set your iPhone torch's brightness



Control Centre is more than just a dashboard for checking your phone's settings: its icons carry useful information and provide access to a number of hidden functions. Open it by swiping up from the bottom of the screen, or down from the top-right corner, depending on which iPhone model you have.

Tapping an icon such as Wi-Fi or Bluetooth switches that feature on and off, but long-pressing it gives you more options, like selecting which wireless network you want to use. Our favourite is the torch. Hold down on this icon and

BEST NEW APPS

What you should install this fortnight

BirdGuides

Free

iOS www.snipca.com/35272

Android www.snipca.com/35273

As keen twitchers know only too well, rare birds can be here today and gone tomorrow. The best way to learn what's about and where is often word of mouth. With bird guides, you can log your



sightings, and see what fellow birdwatchers have spotted nearby, and include mammals, butterflies and dragonflies, too. If you're prepared to travel, search sightings by rarity for some unique spotting.

My Movies 3*

Free (for 50 DVDs)

iOS www.snipca.com/35276

Android www.snipca.com/35277

If you built up a large DVD collection in the days before streaming, scan their barcodes using My Movies 3 and you'll quickly



catalogue your whole collection (and when we say quickly, we mean it – we scanned 18 titles in less than two minutes). You can then track what you want to keep, what you can sell and even what you've lent out so favourite titles don't go astray.

Tell

Free

iOS www.snipca.com/35274

Android www.snipca.com/35275

Late-working parents and grandparents who can't visit their families can still read bedtime stories to young family members.

Tell lets you narrate classic stories from the Brothers Grimm, Beatrix Potter and more



which, when played back in your own voice, are accompanied by pictures. A selection of stories are free, but some require a subscription which, after a free month's trial, costs £39.99 a year or £4.99 a month.

*Contains in-app purchases

you can pick from one of four brightness levels (see screenshot right), which is handy for parents who need to venture into a sleeping child's room without waking them – or anyone who needs to use the torch



but wants to reduce its impact on the battery life by dimming it slightly.

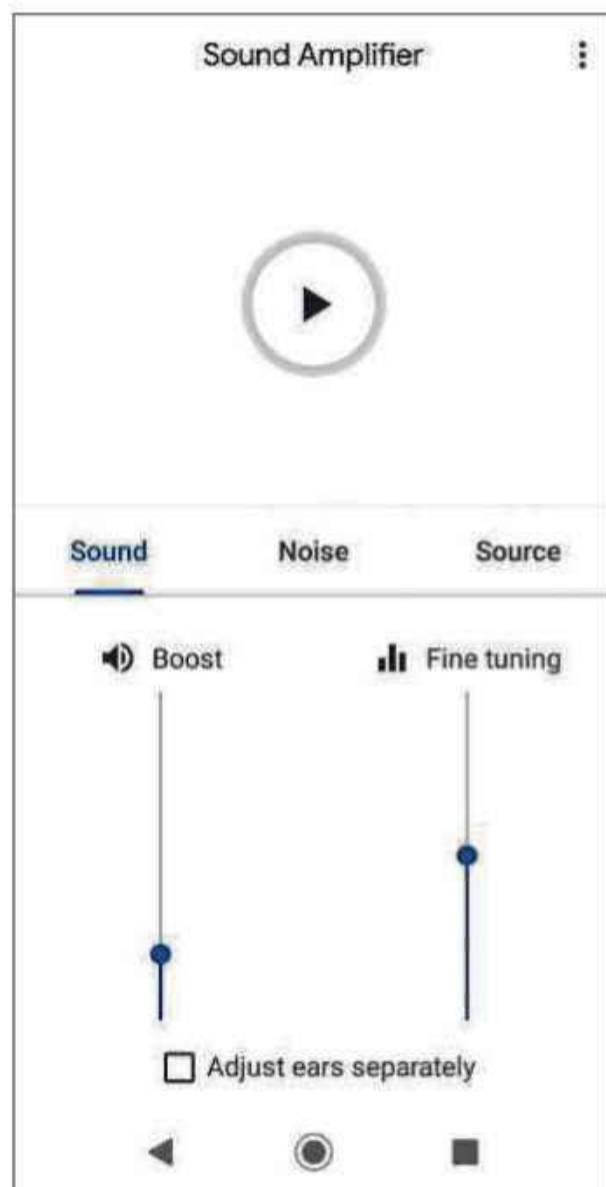
If the torch icon isn't visible in your Control Centre, enable it by opening Settings then tapping Control Centre. Tap 'Customise Controls', then tap the '+' sign beside Flashlight. Do the same with any other controls you want to add, and tap the '-' beside the icons in the Include section that you want to remove. Note that some, like volume and playback control, can't be removed.

ANDROID

Use your phone to improve your hearing



Google has updated its free Sound Amplifier for Android (www.snipca.com/35271, see screenshot below) so it



now works with Bluetooth headphones. Previously, it only worked with cabled headphones or earphones, but the 3.5mm jack sockets these require are becoming less common on recent phones.

This is more than just a response to changing design trends, though: it has a practical application in that hard of hearing users can now leave their phone

close to a radio or television while sitting a comfortable distance away, listening to the amplified output wirelessly.

And, for users without impaired hearing, leaving an old Android device in the nursery and wearing wireless earbuds in the next room is a great way to recycle an old phone without having to buy a baby monitor.

BEST APPS FOR...

World clocks

Clocks of Cities on Terra*

Free (69p to remove ads)

Android www.snipca.com/35280

Spin the globe to see in real time where it's daylight and where it's dark, then tap on one of the 1300+ cities on the planet to see what the local time is. It's up to you whether you roam the globe by spinning and tapping it, or search for specific cities but, when you've found the one you want you can set it as a favourite, along with any other you want to refer back to frequently, so it's always highlighted on the map and easy to find in the future.

Best For Exploring global light levels



World Clock

Free

iOS www.snipca.com/35278

Android www.snipca.com/35279

Instantly see what time it is in more than 5,000 locations worldwide, with sunrise and sunset times, phases of the moon and an easy time-zone converter that will come in handy for anyone planning international phone calls or online meetings. Aside from the time, it can also help with currencies, languages, flags and coordinates.

Best For International communications



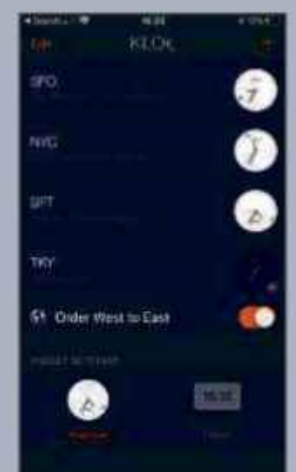
Klok

Free

iOS www.snipca.com/35281

Klok is a beautiful app that focuses on time conversion. You set the cities you want to focus on using the app itself, but when you later need to refer to the time, swipe across to the iOS **widget** screen, to which you can add the Klok app. Here, your selected cities are then displayed as either analogue or digital timepieces. Tap on any of these, then select a time on the hourly scale that appears below to see what the equivalent time would be at any of your other saved locations. It's simple, easy to use, and looks great.

Best For Time comparisons



*Contains in-app purchases

WINDOWS 7, 8.1 & 10

Quickly copy a file or folder path



There will be times when it would be handy to copy a lengthy

file or folder path to paste somewhere – for example, when you want to use it with a tool in Command Prompt. Save yourself the hassle of typing the folder location yourself, and instead use File Explorer's Copy Path option.

First, open File Explorer (press Windows+E) then select the relevant file or folder. Next, click 'Copy path' (see screenshot below) in the toolbar at the top, and the full path will be copied to your clipboard. You can then paste it into Command Prompt, or anywhere else, using Ctrl+V.

If you select multiple files before clicking 'Copy path', the paths for all of them will be copied, each on a separate line. If you want to copy the path of a file or folder outside of File Explorer (say, on your desktop), hold down Shift while right-clicking it, then select the 'Copy as path' option.



WINDOWS 10

Set the northern lights as your desktop background



Microsoft has just launched a new theme to transform your

Windows 10 desktop. The Night Skies theme comprises 20 high-resolution images, including mesmerising shots of the northern lights (aurora borealis) and the Milky Way.

To download the theme, go to www.snipca.com/35299, click Get, then follow the instructions to install it via the Microsoft Store. Once installed, right-click an empty portion of your desktop,



WINDOWS 7, 8.1 & 10

Make packed folders easier to view

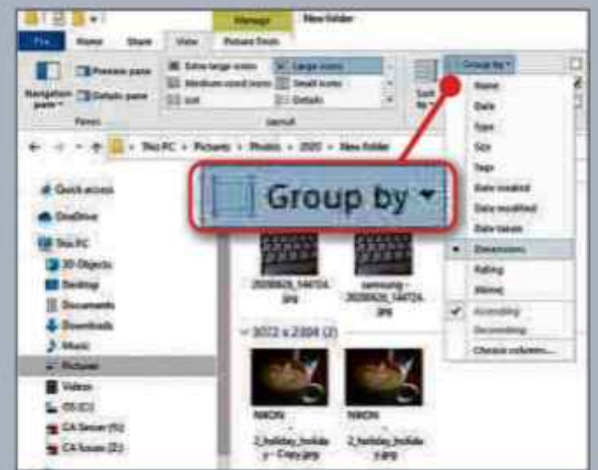


Folders containing multiple files can become difficult to

browse. Your Downloads folder, for example, is home to all those files you've downloaded from the web, and can become cluttered in no time (see page 18 for new software that helps you sort your downloads). It's a similar story with your photo library, which may have hundreds of images in each folder.

File Explorer helps you find what you're looking for by letting you group your files by a range of criteria. Open it (press the Windows key+E), navigate to the relevant folder, then select the View tab at the top. In the 'Current view' section of the toolbar, click 'Group by' and choose from the criteria listed. In Windows 7, you'll find the 'Group by' option in the View menu (press Alt+V to open this – see screenshot).

If you're viewing your Downloads folder, try selecting the Type option, which separates your files into formats



such as ZIP files, PDFs and Word documents. For your photo library, you could select the Dimensions option, which groups photos based on their size.

The grouping criteria available will depend on which columns you currently have displayed in your folder. If you want to group by something other than what's shown, select 'Choose columns...' at the bottom of the 'Group by' list, then select which columns to add. These will now appear when you next click 'Group by'.

select Personalise, then Themes in the options on the left-hand side. Scroll down to the 'Change theme' section on the right, then click the Cosmic Beauty theme. Your desktop will now cycle through the images. To adjust how often the images change, scroll up, click Background (see screenshot below left), then choose from the options in the 'Change picture every' box.

WINDOWS 7, 8.1 & 10

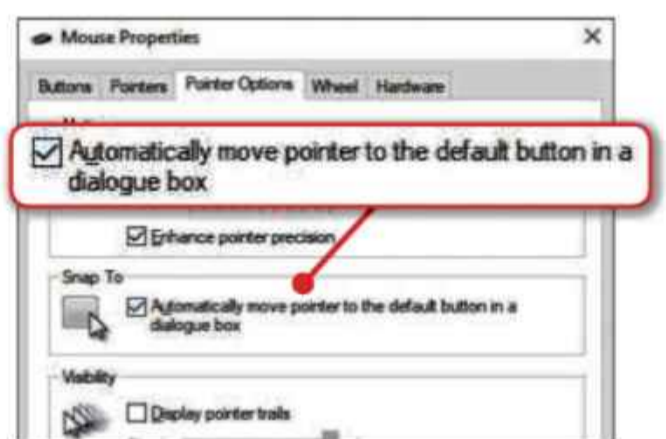
Deal with prompts more quickly



Sometimes even the smallest tweaks can make Windows much

easier to use, and the Snap To feature is a prime example. When enabled, it automatically moves your cursor over the default button when a box appears in Windows, such as the confirmation box when you try to delete a file.

To use it, open the Mouse Properties window, open Settings (press Windows+I), then go to Devices, followed by Mouse. From here, click 'Additional mouse options' (in Windows 7, open this window by clicking Start, Control Panel,



then Mouse). Select the Pointer Options tab, then tick the 'Automatically move pointer to the default button in a dialogue box' option in the Snap To section. Click OK to save your changes.

To test the Snap To feature, try right-clicking a file on your desktop, then selecting Delete. As usual, Windows will show a warning box, asking you to confirm you want to delete the file. You'll notice that your cursor automatically moves to sit over the default button (in this case, Yes), meaning you can quickly confirm the deletion by clicking the left-mouse button.

For more tips on customising your cursor, see In The Club (page 48).

LIBREOFFICE WRITER

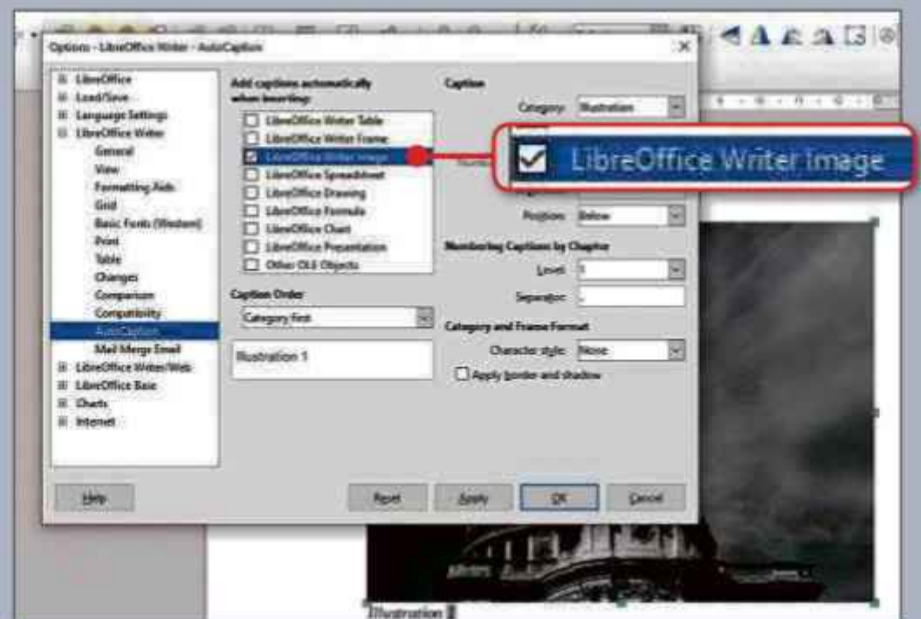
Add captions to your images



A picture might say a thousand words, but what's the harm in adding a few words anyway? With LibreOffice's AutoCaption tool, you can choose to automatically insert a caption alongside each image in your document. Go to Tools, Options, expand the LibreOffice Writer section, then select AutoCaption. On the right, choose what you want to add captions to. Because we want to add them when inserting images into documents, we'll tick LibreOffice Writer Image (see screenshot).

You can now format the caption style using the Category and Numbering boxes. We chose Illustration and 'Arabic (1 2 3)' respectively, meaning our captions will be formatted as 'Illustration 1', 'Illustration 2' and so on. You can further customise things using the boxes below, including whether to insert the caption above or below each image. Keep an eye on the window directly below the Caption Order box as this previews how your captions will look. When you've finished setting the format, click OK.

Now try adding an image to your Writer document (click



Insert, then 'Image...'). The image will appear with the addition of the new caption. To add additional text to the caption, click it once, then start typing.

Note that AutoCaption only adds caption text to images as you insert them – any existing images in your document will remain unchanged.

MICROSOFT WORD & LIBREOFFICE WRITER

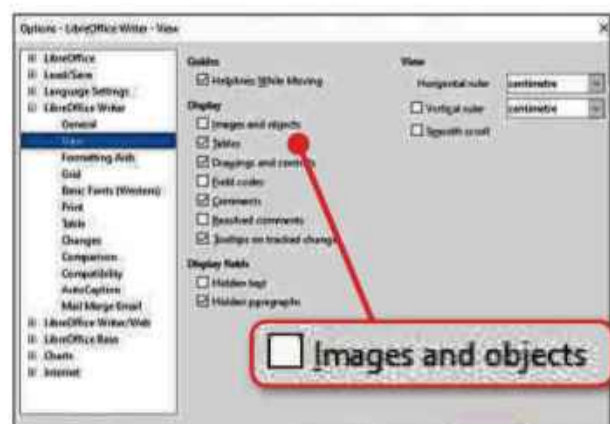
Stop images slowing work on your document



If you have a document with multiple images (or even just a single high-resolution image), it may prevent you from scrolling quickly and generally slow Word tools down. You can remedy this by temporarily hiding all images using placeholders.

In Microsoft Word, click File, Options, then Advanced in the left-hand column. On the right, scroll down to the 'Show document content' section, tick the 'Show picture placeholders' option, then click OK. All images will now be replaced by empty, white boxes – each box will be the same size as the image it replaces, so you'll still be able to position the text around it properly.

LibreOffice Writer has a similar tool. Click the Tools menu, then select Options



(or press Alt+F12). Open the LibreOffice Writer section in the left-hand column, select View, untick the 'Images and objects' option (see screenshot below left) on the right then click OK. As with Word, all images will be replaced with white boxes of the same size, but Writer also displays the name of each image in the top-corner of the box.

To get your images back in Word and Writer, simply repeat the above steps.

MICROSOFT EXCEL Permanently round up or down cell values



In Excel, you can make cells containing numbers with lots of decimal places easier to view by restricting the number of decimal places shown (right-click the cells, select 'Format Cells...', Number, then adjust the 'Decimal places' setting accordingly). Although this changes how the numbers are displayed, the actual numbers remain unchanged and all decimal places will be used in any calculations involving those cells.

However, you can also round up/down all cells *permanently*. This means the numbers contained in all cells will be changed to match the rounded value. To do this, click File, Options, Advanced, then scroll to the 'When calculating this workbook' section and tick the 'Set precision as displayed' option. Excel will

warn you that by doing this, your spreadsheet will 'permanently lose accuracy' (a consequence of rounding the numbers). If you're happy with this, click OK twice to return to your spreadsheet. Note that this setting only applies to the spreadsheet you're currently working on, so you'll need to repeat this process on any spreadsheet individually.

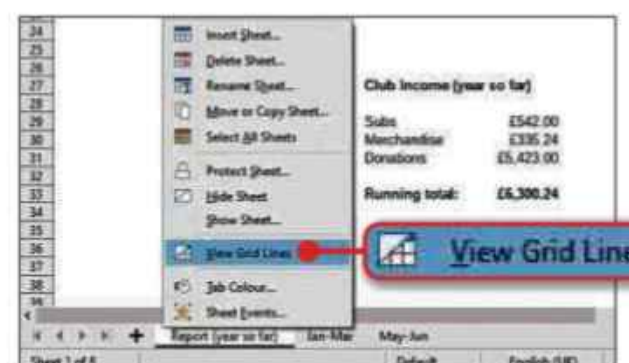
MICROSOFT EXCEL & LIBREOFFICE CALC

Remove gridlines from a sheet



If you've got a large spreadsheet comprising multiple individual sheets (shown as tabs along the bottom), you may want to hide gridlines on one or more, such as on a summary-style sheet. In Excel, you can do this by selecting the relevant sheet, then clicking the View menu and unticking the Gridlines option in the Show section of the toolbar.

In Calc, right-click the relevant sheet tab at the bottom, then click View Grid Lines (see screenshot below).



In The Club



Run a club or society? Here's how your tech can make it easier

Use your mouse as a laser pointer in presentations

Whether you're using a projector at a club event or sharing your PC screen as part of an online presentation, you'll want your audience to see what you're referring to on your screen. If you rely on the standard Windows mouse pointer to do this, your viewers will probably struggle to see it (especially if they're watching on a small screen). Here, we'll show you how to make things much clearer by using your mouse as a laser pointer.

Tweak your mouse properties

The simplest way to make your cursor more visible is to adjust its settings in Windows. Open the Settings app (press Windows+I), then go to Devices and click Mouse in the list on the left. Now click the 'Adjust mouse & cursor size' link (this will be on the right-hand side or at the bottom, depending on the size of your Settings window). The first option lets you increase the size of your cursor – simply drag the 'Change pointer size' slider to the right to make it bigger. To make the cursor even more prominent, try changing its colour using the four options below the slider.

However, a large cursor can be distracting. For more subtle changes, click the 'Additional mouse settings' link, then 'Additional mouse options' (again, at



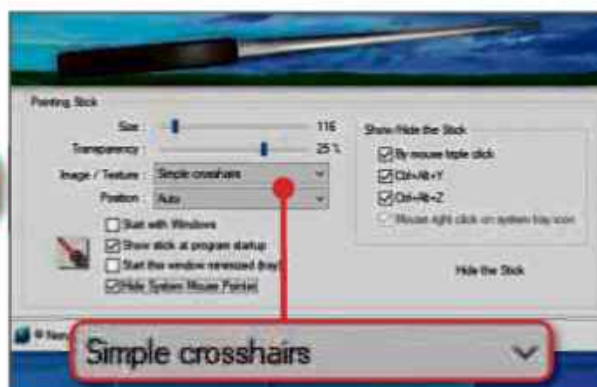
With PointerFocus, you can animate your pointer whenever you click a mouse button

the side or the bottom of the Settings window). The 'Mouse Properties' window will now open. Select the Pointer Options tab and you can increase the visibility of your cursor by adding a trail effect when it moves (select 'Display pointer trails', then adjust the slider to change the length of the trail).

We also recommend ticking the 'Show location of pointer...' option at the bottom of this window (see screenshot below left). Once you've done this, you can press Ctrl at any time to display an animated circle around your cursor, briefly highlighting whatever it's pointing at.

Turn cursor into crosshairs

While Windows' tools are useful, you'll have more options available by installing additional software. As its name suggests, PointerStick (www.snipca.com/35255) adds a stick to your cursor. You can change the size and transparency of the stick in the settings, as well as choose from a range of styles (including wands, arrows and crosshairs, see screenshot



PointerStick lets you turn your cursor into a range of styles, including a crosshair

below left).

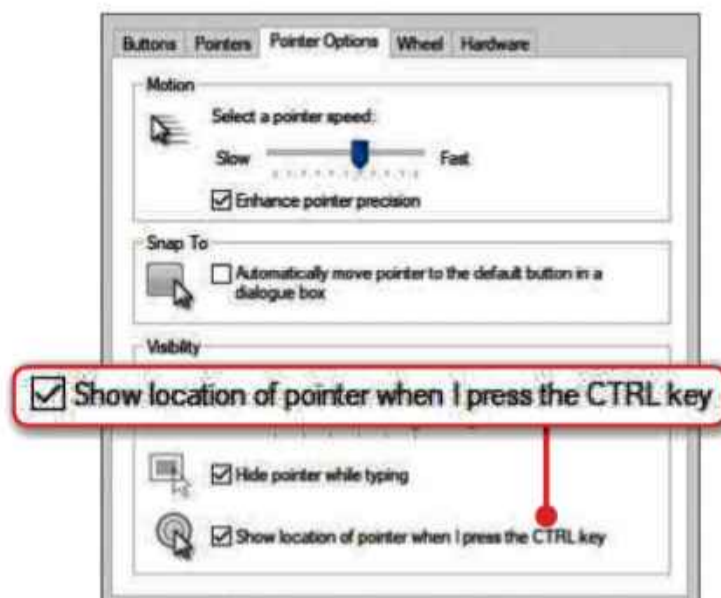
By default, the Windows cursor displays alongside whichever stick you use, but you can choose to hide it by ticking Hide System Mouse Pointer in the settings. Other options include setting a shortcut to show/hide the stick (triple-clicking the left mouse button or pressing Ctrl+Alt+Y to show or Ctrl+Alt+Z to hide).

Highlight when you click

If you're willing to spend a small amount, consider PointerFocus (£10 from www.snipca.com/35256). By default, this adds a yellow circle around your cursor, but it also offers plenty of options. Click the cog icon within the circular PointerFocus menu to reveal these. If you want to highlight when you click your mouse button, select the Highlight Cursor tab, then tick 'Show Click animation' (see screenshot above). Just below this setting, you can choose to show a different colour for left- and right-mouse clicks. Also in this tab, you'll find options to adjust the size and colour of the circle around your cursor.

PointerFocus also displays which keys you're pressing in a bar along the bottom of the screen. This might be useful if you're providing complex instructions on how to use a program, for example, but for most presentations you'll want to turn it off (press F9 to switch this on or off).

If you want to give PointerFocus a try, there's a free trial, which has all the features of the paid-for version, but a small window appears every five minutes, nagging you to upgrade.



Turn on this setting to display an animated circle around your cursor using the Ctrl key

What's All the Fuss About...

Doomscrolling

There's good news and bad news. Actually, just bad news...

What is it?

A cheery new term that describes endlessly swiping your phone looking for bad news on the internet. It appears to be one of many new phrases spawned by the coronavirus pandemic. People just can't help reading depressing news – rising death tolls, imminent economic hardship, restrictions to personal freedom – even though they realise it makes them feel more miserable. It's subtly different to its sister in sorrow 'doomsurfing'.

Ah, so what does *that* mean?

That's a more general term for searching the web for gloomy news, regardless of the device. But any word that uses 'surfing' to describe the internet feels a bit 1990s to us, so we think 'doomscrolling' has a stronger chance of catching on. It certainly sounds more dramatic.

Indeed it does. Who came up with it?

Nobody really knows, though it may have made its first appearance in this tweet from 2018 (www.snipca.com/35282). But it has certainly become more common in the past few months with the world enduring a collective lockdown, and now gets over 170,000 results when you search for it on Google. It's included in Dictionary.com's list of 'New Words We Created Because of Coronavirus' (www.snipca.com/35284). One journalist, Karen Ho from the US website Quartz, has helped to popularise the term by sending reminders on Twitter late at night urging her followers to stop doomscrolling and



If you can't sleep, check Twitter for messages telling you to go to sleep



get some sleep (for an example, see the message below left – posted at 3.53am, and visit www.snipca.com/35283).

Wait. She goes on Twitter in the middle of the night to tell people not to go on Twitter in the middle of the night?

Yep.

Er, right, OK. So how serious is doomscrolling?

Some mental-health experts think it's a severe threat to wellbeing, and not just because it leads to sleepless nights. They want social-media sites to stop using algorithms that ceaselessly recommend news stories to people. They warn that events as disruptive as global pandemics make people look for simple answers that just don't exist. In doing so, doomscrollers seem to deliberately torment themselves to discover what's the worst that could happen, and therefore exaggerate the dangers.

Hasn't this always happened on social media?

To some degree, yes. But until lockdown people balanced the bad news with more

frivolous stuff online, such as what celebrities are eating and wearing, and who they're sleeping with (this week, at least). While this can cause anxiety, as people contrast their humdrum existence with the lavish lifestyles of the rich and famous, it's mostly harmless voyeurism. It can actually be more damaging to obsess over what your friends are doing online. That can lead to FOMO.

Not another stupid term. What does that stand for?

Fear of missing out. Scrolling through photos of your friends at exciting events – parties, festivals, concerts, days out – can make you feel you're excluded from a social group. It's an unpleasant feeling, but probably not as devastating as being 'zumped'.

Oh, come on. You're just making up these words now!

No. It means being dumped by your partner on Zoom. It happened a lot during lockdown, apparently, when all of the world's unhappy partners were banned from seeing each other. Still, at least it's marginally more dignified than being dumped by text message.

What You Must Change ON YOUR EMAIL

We all use email every day, but are you making the most of its full potential? **Nik Rawlinson** reveals the hidden email settings you must change to make your inbox more powerful, more secure and easier to manage



If you're anything like us, you'll check your email several times a day. But while refreshing the inbox and sending messages has become second

nature for most of us, it's easy to forget that even basic email software has a wealth of additional features waiting to be discovered. These can help you get more done in less time, make it easier to find a specific message, and provide more security.

In this feature we're going to cover three of the most popular email services: Google's online Gmail (www.gmail.com), as well as the PC-based email clients Thunderbird (www.thunderbird.net) and Outlook (www.snipca.com/35219).

Don't confuse Outlook with the Outlook.com email service. The latter is web-based, and the free version can't match the features offered by the Outlook

email client installed on your PC, which we'll be focusing on here.

If you use a different email service to the three covered here, don't worry. Email has been around since 1971, when engineer Ray Tomlinson sent 'QWERTYUIOP' from one computer to the PC sitting beside. Over the years all email tools have developed to work in a very similar fashion. So the tips we give you here will be applicable beyond just these three tools.

We show you how to organise a cluttered inbox, master powerful send and receive tools, download and back up your email, and switch between email clients.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Quickly locate and delete emails with large attachments
- Reduce junk email by turning off automatic image downloads
- Give yourself a second chance to correct errors in sent emails
- Make sure your emails get delivered when sending large attachments

REVAMP YOUR INBOX

Label, categorise or tag your emails

Filters, labels and rules are like helping hands for your email. You can use these useful little tools to archive emails into folders, flag up important messages, and keep your inbox organised. Best of all, once you've set them up they do their work quietly in the background.

To get started in Gmail, either click '+ Create new label' in the sidebar (if this isn't visible, scroll to the bottom and click More to reveal it). Alternatively, right-click a message, hover over 'Label as', then click 'Create new'.

You'll notice a second box on the 'New label' window called 'Nest label under' (see screenshot above right). Tick this to file your new label within an existing label group, similar to creating sub-folders inside main folders in Windows. So, if you created a 'holidays' label, you could subsequently create nested labels such as 'cornwall', 'france', 'greece' and so on. You could then click the 'holidays' label to see *all* of your correspondence for *every* destination you've ever visited, or focus on those related to your Greek odyssey, for example, by using the 'greece' label.

Once you've created a label, it appears in the sidebar's Categories section (again, click More if this isn't shown). Click a label, and Gmail will only show the emails that have that label.

Thunderbird uses tags rather than labels, but they work in a similar way. Press Alt+T to open the Tools menu, then click Options. Click Display, followed by Tags to reveal the five default tags, then select one and press Edit or Delete, as appropriate, to make changes. To add your own tags, click 'New...'. When you want to apply a tag to a message, right-click the email in your inbox, or open it and right-click anywhere in the message area, hover over Tag in the menu then in the pane that opens click the tag you

Change this setting in Thunderbird to search for emails that match all the selected tags



Gmail lets you create 'nested' labels to better organise your inbox

want to apply.

Things are a little more complicated in Outlook. Gmail accounts (in their default configuration at least) and many other IMAP-based email services are incompatible with Outlook's POP3-based categories feature. This is a shame, because we'd usually recommend IMAP over POP3 because it makes it easier to access your email on different devices. This means you can only use Outlook's categories tool if you're using an Outlook.com email address, or your mail is hosted on a Microsoft Exchange server, or you're using an older-style POP3 account.

If the email account you use in Outlook falls into any of these criteria (to find out click File, Account Settings, 'Account Settings...', then look in the Type column for your account), right-clicking a message in your inbox reveals a Categorize menu. Hover over this to open it, then click the category you want to assign to the message. Clicking 'All Categories' at the bottom of the list lets you edit and add your own categories to the list of defaults.

If you use a Gmail address in Outlook, there is a way to use categories – you simply need to enable POP3 support on your Gmail account. To do this, open your Gmail account in a browser, click the cog icon (top right), followed by 'Show all settings', then 'Forwarding and POP/IMAP'. Click the button beside

'Enable POP for all mail', then click the link beside 'Configuration instructions' for the settings you need to tweak to make Outlook pick up your messages using POP3.

Sort your emails

You can now use the labels, tags and categories you've just set up to manage your messages.

In Outlook, typing a category name into the search box shows only those emails assigned to that category.

In Thunderbird, click the Tags button above the inbox and all of the emails that have never been tagged will no longer be displayed. Next, click the tag you want in the list that appears on the line below this button. You can click multiple tag buttons to display matches from more than one category. By default, an email only needs to match *one* of the selected tags to be displayed, but if you want to show messages that appear in *all* tags while excluding those that only appear in *some* tags (for example, to show a message that's been tagged with both 'holidays' and 'greece', but not any that have only one or the other), click the dropdown menu to the left of the category buttons and change the option from 'Any of' to 'All of' (see screenshot below left).

In Gmail, as we mentioned above, you'll find your labels in the sidebar. If they are not shown, click More at the bottom of the list, then scroll down to the Categories section. Clicking a category filters out any email that hasn't been filed within it.

You'll also notice that when you click a category it appears in the search box at the top of the screen (such as 'category:holiday'). You can include more categories here by extending this so it reads 'category:holiday AND category:greece', for example. This would list only those

emails to which *both* labels have been applied. Using 'category:holiday OR category:greece' would instead list emails to which *either* label has been applied.

Delete bulky messages

Emails themselves don't take up much storage space, but attachments can quickly fill up your inbox and your hard drive. Thankfully, identifying the worst space wasters and deleting them is easy – particularly in Gmail.

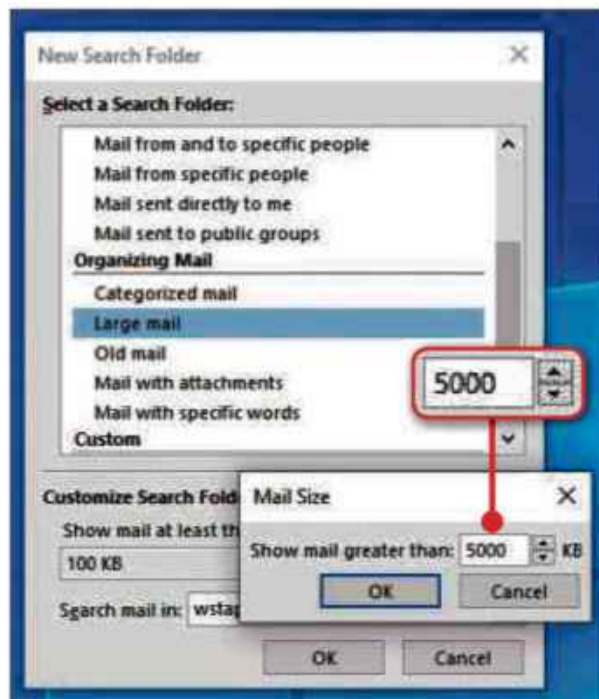
Click the search box above your message list and type **size:** followed by the minimum size of email you want to search for. If you want to identify all messages of 1GB or more, type **size:1gb** or for emails half the size, type **size:500mb**. You can then tick the boxes next to those in the results you want to remove, then click the bin on the toolbar to delete them.

To use this feature in Thunderbird, press Ctrl+Shift+F to open the find box, and select 'Size (kB)' in the menu in the top box, followed by 'is', then either 'is greater than' or 'is less than' in the second menu. Finally, type the relevant size in the third box. Click 'Search' to preview the results in the bottom pane, then select the ones you want to remove and click Delete.

In Outlook, you need to create what's known as a Search Folder by first pressing Ctrl+Shift+P, then selecting 'Large mail' from the options. This reveals a size box. Enter the minimum size an email must be to qualify, then click OK (we've selected 5000KB, which is 5MB – see screenshot above right). The results are displayed in a new folder at the bottom of the relevant inbox in the Outlook sidebar.

Save advanced searches

Outlook also lets you create search folders based on more exact criteria. Click



In Outlook, you can set up Search Folders to identify emails with large attachments

'Create a custom Search Folder' at the bottom of the list (instead of 'Large mail'), to define much more precise parameters for your search. Click 'Choose', then give your Search Folder a name and click the 'Criteria...' button. Next, click through the tabbed interface, filling in the relevant search parameters. The more you enter, the more precise your search will be. In our screenshot below we've opted to display all emails marked as read that are classified as low importance and have an attachment larger than 1000KB.

You can save a set of search criteria for future use. To do this, instead of typing directly into the search box, click the down arrow to the right of the box to open up the advanced search form, then fill the fields it contains to specify your criteria. Click 'Search' and Gmail will display a preview of the results. If they meet your needs, click the down arrow again, and this time click 'Create filter', then decide what you want to do with the messages in the list and any new ones

that also match the criteria.

If you simply want to apply a label so you can return to the same results with a single click in the sidebar, tick the box beside 'Apply the label' and choose the label you want to use. Alternatively, you can delete them, forward them, mark them as important and more.

Switch between inbox views

When your email links a series of messages in 'conversation' view, it groups emails that have the same subject line into a single thread, making it easy to scroll through them. However, this can make it hard to locate and forward a specific email within a long thread, for example.

You can switch between standard and conversation views in Gmail by clicking the cog at the top of the window and ticking/unticking the box beside 'Conversation view' at the bottom of the pane.

In Outlook, switch to your message list, click View on the ribbon toolbar, then tick the box beside 'Show as Conversations'.

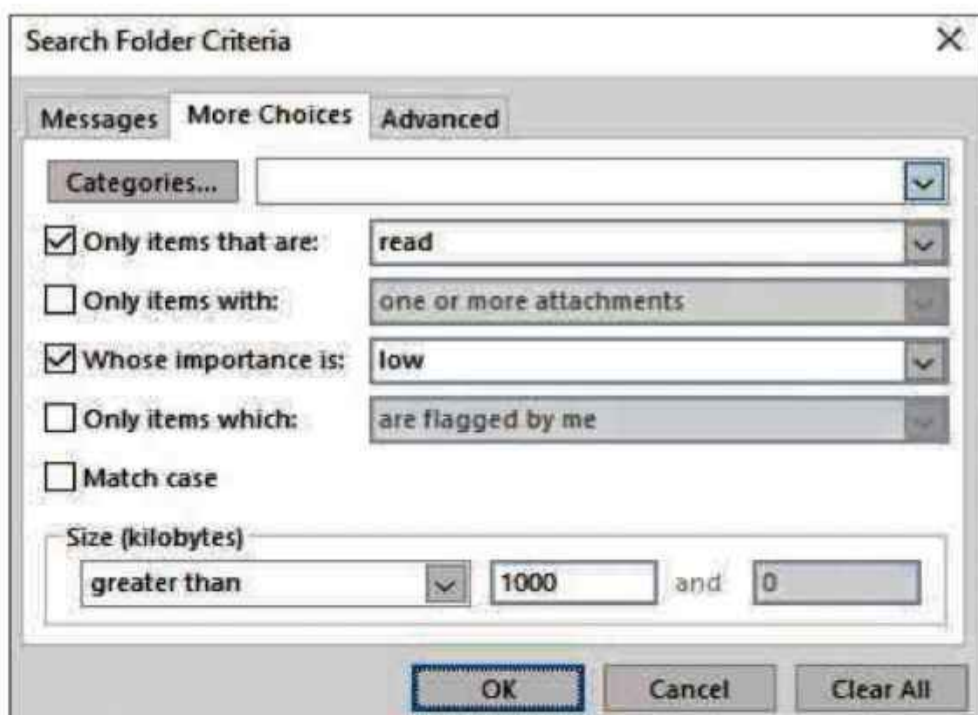
Thunderbird doesn't come with a conversation view, but you can add the option by installing the Thunderbird Conversations **add-on**. Press Alt+T to open the Tools menu then click Add-ons. This takes you to a list of recommended add-ons, which (at the time of writing), included Thunderbird Conversations. The list is often updated but if the Conversations add-on is included when you try to install it, click its name, followed by 'Add to Thunderbird'.

If it's no longer on the recommended list, you can find it by clicking Extensions in the sidebar, then typing **thunderbird conversations** in the search box, clicking the Thunderbird Conversations link, then 'Add to Thunderbird' (see screenshot below). Click 'Add' twice in the box that appears at the top of the window. The extension warns you that it will make changes, so click the button to allow this and you'll be returned to your inbox. Now press Alt+V to open the View menu, hover over the 'Sort by' sub-menu, then select Threaded.



Add conversation view to Thunderbird with the Thunderbird Conversations add-on

Outlook's Search Folder tool lets you display only emails that meet a set criteria



MANAGE YOUR EMAILS BETTER

Control your email notifications

You need to set a balance between receiving messages in a timely manner and not being constantly disturbed by alerts. Both Outlook and Thunderbird let you specify how often they check for new emails.

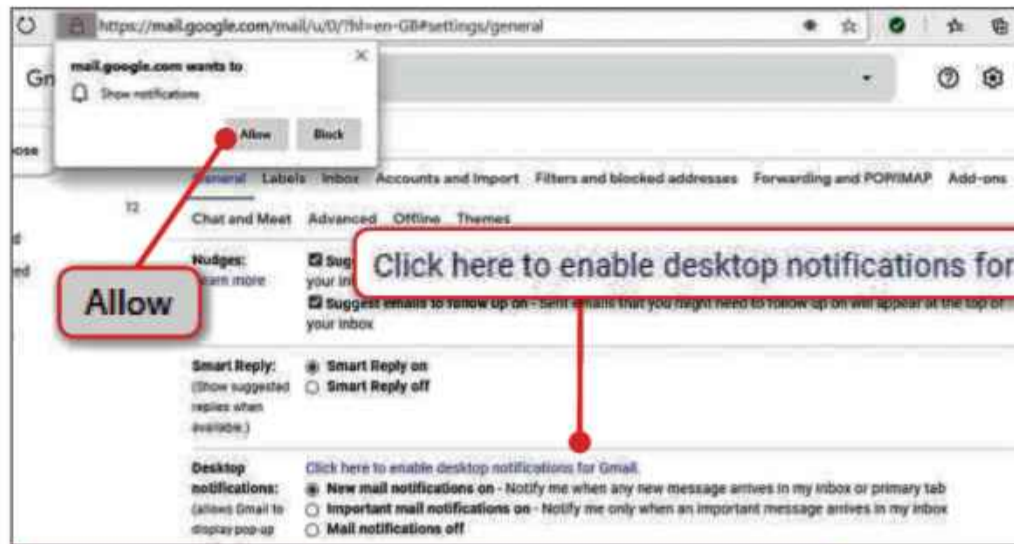
In Outlook, do this by clicking 'Send/Receive' on the ribbon toolbar, followed by 'Send/Receive Groups'. Select 'Define Send/Receive Groups' in the menu, then change the number of minutes beside 'Schedule an automatic send/receive every'. You can also untick the box to the left of this line and instead press F9 every time you want to check for new emails. To change how Outlook notifies you of new messages, click File followed by Options, then click Mail in the sidebar of the box that appears. Scroll down to 'Message arrival' and tick/untick the boxes beside the various notification options, including playing a sound, temporarily changing your cursor and displaying an icon.

In Thunderbird, press Alt+T to open the Tools menu, then click Account Settings. Click 'Server Settings' in the sidebar of the box that appears, and change the number of minutes beside 'Check for new messages every', or untick the box to the left of this to turn off automatic updates. After doing this you can press Shift+F5 every time you want to check for new emails. To manage notifications, open Options in the Tools menu and click General in the sidebar, then tick/untick the boxes beside 'Show an alert', 'Show a tray icon' and 'Play a sound'.

As Gmail works through a browser, it constantly displays an updated view of your inbox. However, you can still control how it notifies you when it receives a new message. Click the cog icon, followed by 'See all settings', then scroll down to 'Desktop notifications'. Click 'Important mail notifications on' or 'New mail notifications on', then click the 'Click here to enable desktop notifications for Gmail' link. An alert pops up from the address bar prompting you to Allow or Block notifications - click Allow (see screenshot at the top of the page).

Protect yourself against email spammers

Previewing emails as they arrive is a quick and easy way to prioritise messages in your inbox, allowing you to delete junk before focusing on what matters. Beware,



Gmail requires your permission to display new message notifications

Don't download pictures automatically in standard HTML email messages



Turning off automatic image downloading helps guard against spam

however. Depending on how your email is set up, if you preview a spam email any images in it may be downloaded from the spammer's server, which flags up your email account as active and genuine (and therefore a target for more spam). To prevent this, we recommend turning off automatic image downloads before using your email's preview option.

In Outlook, automatic image downloads are disabled by default. Make sure of this by clicking File followed by Options, then clicking Trust Center in the sidebar. Click 'Trust Center Settings...' and make sure the box beside 'Don't download pictures automatically...' is ticked (see screenshot above). You can then enable the preview pane by closing the settings window and returning to the main Outlook window, switching to the View tab and choosing one of the options from the dropdown menu that opens when you click the Reading Pane button.

In Thunderbird, press Alt+T to open the Tools menu, then click Options. Click 'Privacy' in the sidebar and make sure the box beside 'Allow remote content in messages' is unticked. Now close the Options window and use F8 to show/hide the preview pane.

In Gmail, click the cog icon followed by 'See all Settings', then click the button beside 'Ask before displaying external images' on the General tab. Now switch to the Inbox tab and tick the box beside

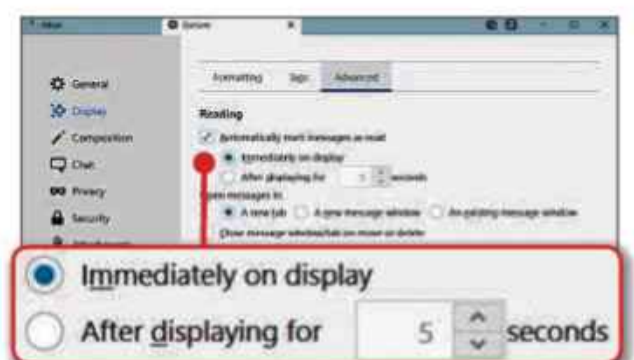
'Enable reading pane'. Save your changes and return to your inbox, then use the 'Toggle split pane mode' button above your message list to show/hide the preview pane.

Choose when to mark new emails as read

Specifying what constitutes an unread or read email when using a preview pane can save you a lot of time when working through a crammed inbox. Often you only need a brief glance at an email to know it's of no interest, in which case it can be marked as read.

To do this in Outlook, click File followed by Options, then click Mail in the sidebar. Scroll down to 'Outlook panes' and click 'Reading Pane...', then tick the box beside 'Mark items as read when viewed in the Reading Pane'. By default, the message needs to be displayed for at least five seconds before it's marked as read, but you can change this duration in the box below.

In Thunderbird press Alt+T and click Options, then switch to Display in the sidebar and click the Advanced tab. Tick the box beside 'Automatically mark messages as read' and use the 'Immediately on display' or 'After displaying for' options on the lines below to set how long it takes to change the message status (see screenshot below).



Emails can be marked as read as soon as they are opened in Thunderbird's preview pane

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JUST SO YOU KNOW...

We have a limited number of **Windows 10 Pro** codes for this offer, but we should have enough to satisfy the high demand we anticipate from readers.

In Gmail, the option to mark messages as read automatically is hidden unless you've enabled the preview pane by following the instructions above. Once you've done so, return to the Settings window and click the General tab, then scroll down to Preview Pane. Here, you'll find the option to 'Mark a conversation as read' with the delay set to three seconds. To change this, select an alternative duration in the dropdown menu.

In all three services, you can quickly mark emails as read or unread using keyboard shortcuts – see these (and more shortcuts) on page 57.

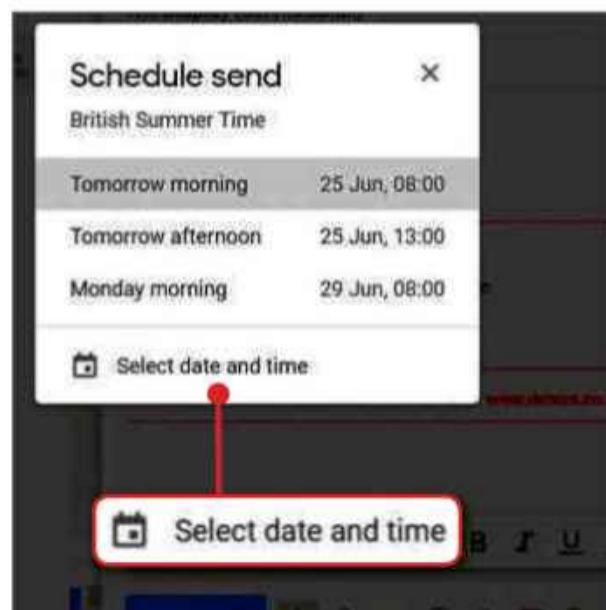
Delay and schedule the sending of emails

How often have you clicked Send, only to realise you've spelt the recipient's name wrong at the start of your email? Delaying your email's dispatch for a few seconds gives you enough time to open it again and get it right.

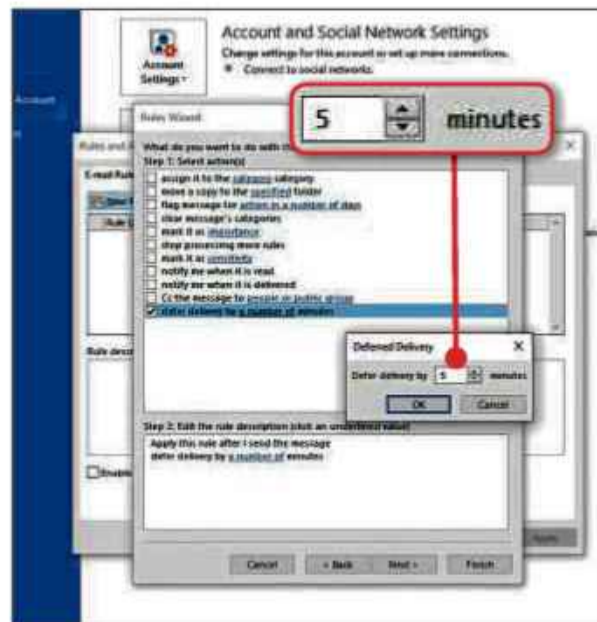
To disable instant sending in Gmail, open its settings and, on the General tab, specify how many seconds grace you need by selecting a duration in the dropdown menu beside Undo Send.

You can also choose precisely when you want the email to be sent (useful if you're emailing late at night and want it to arrive in the recipient's inbox at a more civilised time). Rather than clicking the blue Send button, click the down arrow on the right-hand side and click 'Schedule send'. Next, click one of the three suggested send times, or click 'Select date and time' and set the precise delivery time and date yourself (see screenshot below).

Thunderbird doesn't have a dedicated delay-sending tool, but you can achieve a similar result by pressing Ctrl+Shift+Enter rather than clicking Send. This stores it in the Outbox, from which you can send it



Gmail's 'Schedule send' feature lets you specify when an email is dispatched



You can set up a rule to delay sending email in Outlook by a certain number of minutes

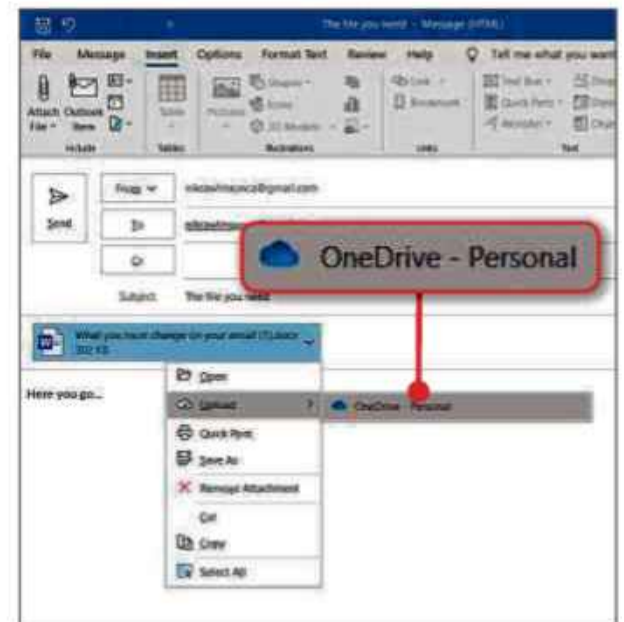
by clicking Send Unsent Messages in the File menu.

If you want to schedule an email for a specific time, use the Send Later add-on. Press Alt+T, click Options, then click 'Extensions & themes' at the bottom of the sidebar, followed by Extensions (top left). Type **send later** in the search box and, beside Send Later in the list of results, click 'Add to Thunderbird'. Click 'Add', then 'Restart now' in the boxes that drop down from the top of the window. Now, when you press Ctrl+Shift+Enter to send an email, you'll see a list of options to set a specific time and date for sending.

In Outlook, you can set up delayed delivery as the default option, but it takes a little more work. Click 'File', followed by 'Manage Rules & Alerts'. Next, click 'New Rule' followed by 'Apply rule on messages I send'. Click 'Next' twice, then Yes, to confirm that you want to apply the rule to every message you send. Click in the box beside 'defer delivery by a number of minutes', then click 'a number of' in the box below.

By default, your messages will be delayed by one minute, but you can increase this up to two hours by typing into the box that appears (we opted for five minutes – see screenshot above). Click 'OK', then Next twice and type **delay sending** into the 'Specify a name for this rule' box and tick the box beside 'Create this rule on all accounts'. Make sure the box beside 'Turn on this rule' is ticked, then click Finish.

If you just want to delay the delivery of a single message by sending it at a specific time, click Options on the toolbar within the email window, followed by Delay Delivery, then specify the time and date you require in the boxes beside 'Do not deliver before'.



In Outlook, you can send large files using OneDrive instead of attaching them

Send large attachments

Many services won't send emails over a certain size (Gmail, for example, won't let you send or receive emails over 25MB), so linking to large attachments online, rather than attaching them, will give your emails a better chance of reaching their intended destination.

In Gmail, rather than clicking the compose window's paperclip icon to attach a file, click the 'Insert files using Drive' icon (a large triangle). Click 'Upload' on the box that appears, followed by 'Select files from your device'. Choose the file you want to share, followed by Upload, and Gmail will add a download link within your message.

Unsurprisingly, Outlook works best with Microsoft's OneDrive, the online storage service built into Windows, but you need to be running Outlook 2016 or later. Click 'Insert' on the toolbar when writing your email, followed by Attach File. Select the file in the usual way and it will be attached at the top of the message. To move it from the email to OneDrive, click the down arrow on the right-hand side of the attachment, hover over Upload and click the OneDrive option (see screenshot above). A link to your file will now appear in the email.

You can set Thunderbird to automatically upload files over a certain size to the free WeTransfer storage service. Press Alt+T and click Options, then click Attachments in the sidebar, followed by the Outgoing tab. Click the 'Add WeTransfer' button, then close the Options window. When you're next writing an email, click the Attach button and select your file in the usual way. If it's larger than 5MB, Thunderbird will display a warning. Click 'Link' and your attachment will be uploaded to WeTransfer, with a download link added to your email.

DOWNLOAD, BACK UP & RESTORE YOUR EMAILS

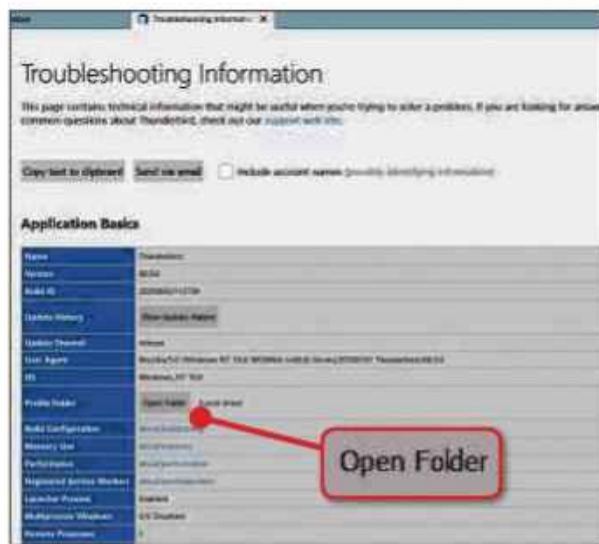
Download and back up your emails

Most people leave their email on their internet service provider's server. However, if your account is hacked or your or your email provider (whether that's your ISP or another provider) suffers a data breach, your emails could be lost forever. We therefore recommend making regular backups.

If you're using Outlook or Thunderbird, you can set them to download all of your messages from the server so you can manage them on your PC or external drive. In Outlook, click File followed by Account Settings, then Account Settings again. If you've set up several accounts, select the one you want to download all your messages from, then click 'Change...'. What happens next depends on which email service you're using, but you'll see an option to either 'Keep mail offline for' or 'Download email for the past'. Drag the slider below the option on your account to the far right, then click Next, followed by Done.

To back up your Outlook data, click File followed by 'Open & Export', then click 'Import/Export'. Select 'Export to a file' in the Import and Export Wizard and click Next. Select 'Outlook Data File (.pst)', click Next, then select the folder you want to export. By default, Outlook selects Inbox here, but if you want to export everything, including drafts, sent email, calendar and contacts, click the email address on the line above this.

If you have several accounts set up in Outlook, make sure you're backing up the right one. Make sure 'Include subfolders' is ticked then click Next. Outlook will show you where it's about to save the backup in the 'Save exported file as' field, but you can change this by clicking 'Browse...' and navigating to a different folder. Click 'Finish' and (optionally) set a password that will be



Thunderbird saves your data in a Profile Folder, which you can find and back up using the Troubleshooting Information page

applied to the exported file to stop anyone gaining unauthorised access. Click 'OK' to save the backup file.

In Thunderbird, press Alt+T, then click Account Settings, followed by 'Synchronisation & Storage'. In the 'Disk space' panel, make sure the 'Synchronise all messages locally regardless of age' option is selected, then click OK. Thunderbird will now download everything from your email server.

To back up your local data file, press Alt+H to open the Help menu and click Troubleshooting Information, then click the Open Folder button to the right of Profile Folder (see screenshot above). Quit Thunderbird to close all its open files, then copy the entire contents of the profile folder to a safe location to back it up.

In Gmail, you can make a backup by downloading an archive of your data (using Google's Takeout service). Log into your Google Account at <https://takeout.google.com> and decide what you want to download. If you only want your emails, click 'Deselect all', then scroll down to Mail and tick the box beside 'All of the messages and attachments in your Gmail account in MBOX format' (see screenshot below). Scroll to the bottom of

the page and click Next. Here, you can decide whether you want to carry out a one-off download or a schedule by selecting either 'Export once' or 'Export every 2 months for 1 year'. Click 'Create' and Google will email you when the archive is ready to be downloaded. To retrieve it, click the 'Download your files' button in the message you receive.

Restore lost emails

If the worst happens and you lose your emails (all or some) in Outlook or Thunderbird, you can restore them from the backups you created above.

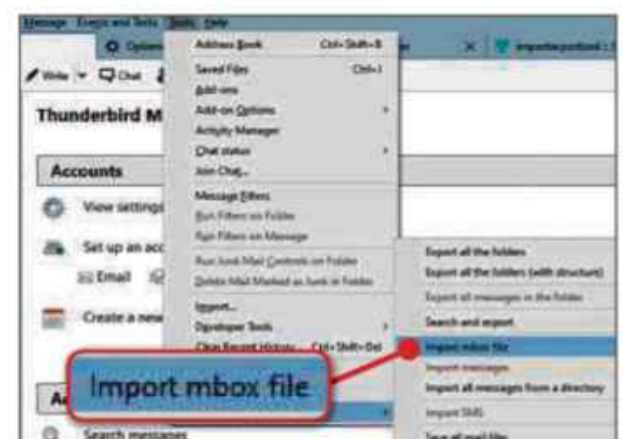
In Outlook, click File followed by 'Open & Export', then 'Import/Export'. Leave 'Import from another program or file' selected and click Next, then select 'Outlook Data File (.pst)' and click Next again. Browse to the location of the backup file to select it, then click Next followed by Finish to import your data.

In Thunderbird, you need to restore the profile you saved. Press Alt+H to open the Help menu, then click Troubleshooting Information. Click the Open Folder button to the right of Profile Folder and, when this folder opens in File Explorer, quit Thunderbird. Copy the contents of your backed-up Profile folder to this location, then restart Thunderbird.

Although you can't import MBOX files downloaded using Google's Takeout service back into Gmail, you can import them into Thunderbird. Open Thunderbird, press Alt+T, select Options then click 'Extensions & Themes' (bottom-left). Type **ImportExportTools** into the search box, then add the ImportExportTools NG add-on. Restart Thunderbird, then press Alt+T, select the new ImportExportTools NG entry, then 'Import mbox file' (see screenshot below). When prompted, select the MBOX file you downloaded from Gmail.



Using Google's Takeout service, you can download all your Gmail in MBOX format



Use an add-on to import an MBOX archive downloaded from Gmail into Thunderbird

SWITCH TO A NEW EMAIL SERVICE

If your current email program no longer suits your needs, or you simply want to move messages from one email client to another, switching isn't difficult, but you do have to go through a few steps.

You can't drag your messages from one email program to another, but you can use Gmail as a go-between (moving your messages to Gmail, then from Gmail to your new email program - or just sticking with Gmail, if that's what you want to do). Start by signing up for a new Gmail account at www.snipca.com/35236.

Next, open your current email program (the one you want to switch *from*) and add the Gmail account to it. The process for doing this varies between programs, but is relatively simple thanks to Gmail providing the necessary server settings to your email client - you just need to enter your Gmail address and password.

If you're switching from Outlook, for example, add the Gmail account by clicking File, then Account Settings twice. This opens the Account Settings box with the Email tab already selected. Click 'New...', then enter your Gmail account address and click Connect. Click Next on the following screen, enter your password then click 'Sign in'.




To add the Gmail account to Thunderbird, press Alt+T, click Account Settings, then click the Account Actions button at the bottom of the sidebar. Click 'Add mail account', then enter your



When adding a Gmail account to Thunderbird (or Outlook), you simply need to enter your email and password

15 shortcuts to speed up your email


Although keyboard shortcuts are enabled by default in Outlook and Thunderbird, you need to turn them on in Gmail. Click the cog icon (top right), followed by 'See all settings', then scroll down to 'Keyboard shortcuts' on the General tab. Click the circular button beside 'Keyboard shortcuts on', followed by Save Changes at the bottom of the page.

	Gmail 	Outlook 	Thunderbird 
Compose	n/a	Ctrl+Shift+M	Ctrl+N
Add cc	Ctrl+Shift+C	n/a	n/a
Add bcc	Ctrl+Shift+B	n/a	n/a
Attach file	n/a	Alt+N, A or F	Ctrl+Shift+A
Insert link	Ctrl+K	Ctrl+K	Ctrl+K
Numbered list	Ctrl+Shift+7	n/a	n/a
Bulleted list	Ctrl+Shift+8	Ctrl+Shift+L	n/a
Mark as quote	Ctrl+Shift+9	n/a	Ctrl+Shift+O (paste as quotation)
Send	Ctrl+Enter	Alt+S	Ctrl+Enter
Delete email	hash symbol	Del	Del
Reply to email	R	Alt+H, R then P	Ctrl+R
Forward an email	F	Alt+H, F then W	Ctrl+L
Mark as read	Shift+I	Ctrl+Q	M (toggles with unread)
Mark as unread	Shift+U	Ctrl+U	M (toggles with read)
Mark as spam	I	Shift+F10 then J	J

name, email address and password (see screenshot below). Click Continue and, when Thunderbird has retrieved the necessary settings, click Done.

Now, in your old email, open your inbox. Click any email, select them all by pressing Ctrl+A, then drag them to the inbox on your newly created Gmail account. Repeat this process for any other folders you want to copy across (such as your Drafts and Sent folder), in each case dragging the existing emails into the

corresponding folder within the Gmail account. Wait for your emails to finish copying across (this may take a while).

Next, open your new email service and add your email account to it. Because you need to copy your emails from your temporary Gmail account, you'll need to add that too (in the same way you did with your old email). Finally, reverse the copying process so that you move all emails from Gmail back to your normal email account. 

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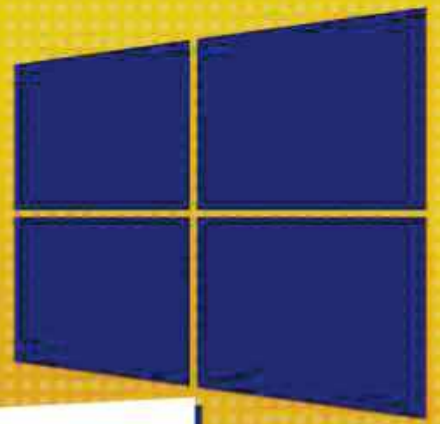
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Why you should upgrade to

Windows 10 Pro



Windows 10 Home isn't short on features, but the Pro edition adds exclusive tools to make your PC safer, easier to manage and more powerful. **Jonathan Parkyn** reveals the best Pro-only tools, and how you can upgrade for a fraction of Microsoft's full price

Microsoft has always released its operating systems in a wide range of editions, and Windows 10 is no exception. There are 12 distinct editions in total (including several aimed at school children and university students), but for most of us the only two worth considering are Home and Pro.

Most PCs are sold with the Home edition installed (see box on page 61 to find out which version you have and how to upgrade to Pro with a 66 per cent discount). Although perfectly capable, Home doesn't have certain powerful tools only found in Pro. While some of these are aimed at business users, there are plenty that anyone will find useful. Here, we talk you through some of the best.

Encrypt your files so hackers can't access them

If there's one Pro feature that's worth the upgrade cost on its own, it's BitLocker. Although the password you use to log into Windows offers some level of protection, it's relatively easy for a hacker to bypass and access your files. BitLocker encrypts all data on your hard drive, so your files will be safe even if your PC is stolen.

BitLocker is turned off by default. To switch it on, click Start, Settings, 'Update & Security', 'Device encryption', then click the 'Turn BitLocker on' button in the 'Operating system drive' section at the top.

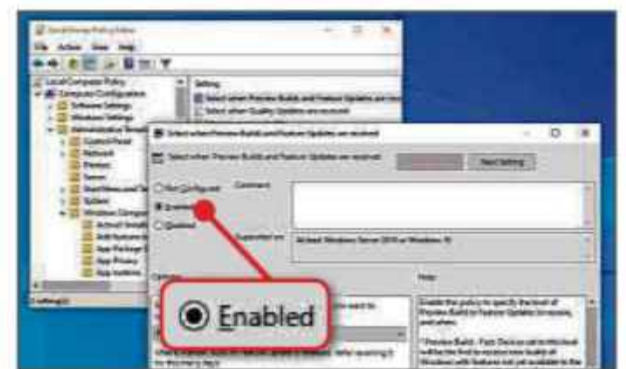
During the setup process, BitLocker will check whether your PC has a trusted

platform module (TPM) - a chip that works in tandem with BitLocker so you don't have to enter a password as soon as your PC turns on. Most modern PCs have a TPM, but if yours doesn't you can still use BitLocker (you'll need to follow the instructions at www.snipca.com/35230 and then enter your BitLocker password each time you turn your PC on). Make sure you save a copy of your BitLocker recovery key when prompted - you'll need this should you upgrade your PC or move your hard drive to a new computer.

You can also use 'BitLocker To Go' to encrypt external hard drives and USB sticks. To do this, click the 'Turn BitLocker on' option in the BitLocker To Go section, then follow the onscreen prompts. When you next connect your drive to your PC (even one that runs Windows 10 Home), you'll need to enter the password to access your files.

Defer Windows Updates for longer

Both Home and Pro let you postpone updates, but there are crucial differences. In Home, you can pause updates (both Feature and monthly Quality Updates) for up to 35 days, after which you'll need to install any queued updates before you can use the tool again. With Windows 10 Pro, you get more control by also being able to 'defer' updates. Unlike pausing, which just puts a temporary block on updates, this is a set-and-forget feature that lets you choose how long to wait between Microsoft releasing any update and your PC installing it. You can defer



You can defer Feature Updates by up to a year in Pro

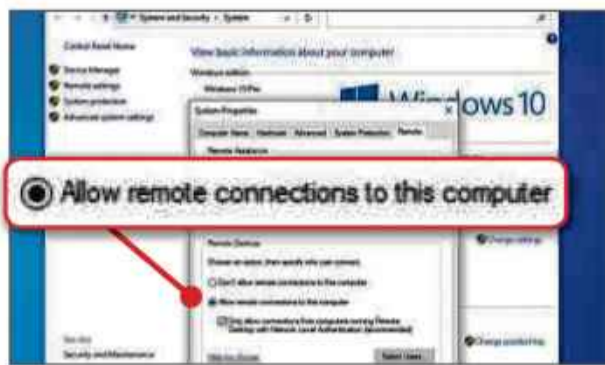
Feature Updates by up to a year, and monthly Quality Updates by 30 days.

To change these settings in Pro, you need to use the Group Policy Editor (see 'Control what other users can do' tip, page 61), so type **edit group policy**, then press Enter. In the left pane, go to Computer Configuration, Administrative Templates, Windows Components, Windows Update, then 'Windows Update for Business'.

To defer Feature Updates, double-click 'Select when Preview Builds and Feature Updates...', then select Enabled (see screenshot above), followed by the number of days you want to defer them. To defer Quality Updates, do the same with the 'Select when Quality Updates...' option.

Control your PC remotely

Ever wished you could control your desktop PC remotely from another device on your home network, such as your laptop, tablet or phone? Windows 10 comes with a handy built-in tool, Remote Desktop, for doing this. It lets you log into one PC from another, providing access to



Remote Desktop lets you control any Windows 10 Pro PC on your network from any device

that PC's files, programs and more, just as if you were physically sitting in front of it. Although you can start a Remote Desktop session using any Windows 10 edition, the PC you want to remotely control must be running Windows 10 Pro.

To use it, go to your Windows 10 Pro computer, open File Explorer (press Windows+E), right-click This PC on the left-hand side and select Properties. In the System window that opens, click 'Remote settings'. Next, in the Remote Desktop section, select the 'Allow remote connections to this computer' option (see screenshot above), tick the box next to 'Only allow connections from computers running Remote Desktop with Network Level Authentication', then click OK.

On your other PC, click Start, type **remote desktop** then select Remote Desktop Connection from the results. Under Computer, enter the name of your Windows 10 Pro PC (you'll find this listed in the System window you opened earlier) then click Connect. You'll then be prompted to enter the username and password for the PC (the one you use to log into it). You can then save these details, so you don't have to enter them each time.

To use Remote Desktop to control your Pro PC from your phone or tablet, download the app (Android www.snipca.com/35193; iOS www.snipca.com/35194) to your device, open it and tap the '+' (plus) button to add a new PC, then follow the procedure described above to connect to your PC.

Test software safely in a sandbox

In May 2019, Microsoft introduced a brilliant new feature called Windows Sandbox, which is only available in the Pro edition of Windows 10.

It uses **virtual PC** technology to create a 'PC within a PC', letting you run programs and open files safely without the risk of infecting your main PC. It's an essential tool we use when testing downloaded programs. By effectively

Upgrade to Pro for just £39.99

If you're not sure which version of Windows you're running, click Start, type **activation**, then press Enter. In the window that opens, check your edition at the top (it will say Windows 10 Home or Windows 10 Professional).

If you have the Home edition and want to upgrade, click the 'Go to the Microsoft Store' link at the bottom of the window. When the Microsoft Store opens, you'll see Microsoft wants to charge you a whopping £119.99 to upgrade to Pro. There's some good news, though. We've negotiated an

exclusive discount for *Computeractive* readers, letting you upgrade for just £39.99 (that's £80 cheaper than Microsoft wants you to pay). To buy it, visit our Software Store (www.snipca.com/35225) and click the red Buy Now button.

Once you've made your purchase we'll email you a **product key**. Return to the Activation options in Settings (as explained above) and click 'Change product key'. Now enter your new Windows 10 Pro key and follow the remaining steps to complete your upgrade.

quarantining the download it ensures that junk and malware never make it anywhere near our hard drive.

Windows Sandbox isn't enabled by default, so click Start, type **turn windows features** and select 'Turn Windows features on or off'. Scroll down, tick the box next to Windows Sandbox, click OK and restart your PC when prompted. Now you can launch Windows Sandbox by clicking Start, typing **sandbox** and pressing Enter. Next, run the program you want to test.

Create a virtual operating system

Windows Sandbox (see above) lets you run programs in a virtual Windows 10 PC, but when you close the program the virtual PC is also deleted. Another Pro-only tool, Hyper-V, lets you create permanent virtual PCs that you can return to whenever you want. For example, you could create a virtual PC to run Windows 7 or you might want to use it to test registry or GPE tweaks (see final tip).

Hyper-V isn't enabled by default in the Pro edition. So, follow the instructions above to access the 'Turn Windows features on or off' tool, then tick the box next to Hyper-V, click OK and restart. Click Start, type **hyper**, select Hyper-V Manager, then click New followed by Virtual Machine to start setting up a new virtual PC.

Limit your PC to a single program

The Pro edition comes with a feature called 'Kiosk mode' that lets you create a user account that's allowed to use only one specific program. In general, the feature is intended for computers used for providing public information, whether that's a digital sign or interactive display, such as a booking system in a library. However, it's also handy if you want a dedicated PC that guests can use only for email, for example, ensuring they can't access your personal files, run other programs or accidentally change your settings.

To set up Kiosk mode, click Start, Settings, Accounts, 'Family & other users', then click 'Assigned access', followed by 'Get started'. You'll now be prompted to select the user account you want to run Kiosk mode with, and the one app you want that account to use (such as Mail, see screenshot below left). From now on, simply log in using the account you chose whenever you want to run Kiosk mode.

Control what other users can do

Home lets you tweak lots of settings, but it won't let you control what other users of your PC can do. With Windows 10 Pro, you get access to the Group Policy Editor (GPE) - a powerful tool that lets you turn on or off almost any Windows setting. You could, for example, use it to prevent specific users from accessing the Settings app or even force all users to have the same desktop background. However, unless you know what you're doing, it's best not to play around with settings on your main PC. Instead, install a virtual copy of Windows (the Pro edition includes its own virtual PC tool, as we explained earlier), and explore the GPE from there instead. **ca**



Restrict your PC to a single program using Kiosk mode

Recover old versions of your documents and spreadsheets

Saved and closed a document, only to regret it moments later? Want to revert to an old version of a spreadsheet? **Will Stapley** reveals the steps you need to take *today* to recover your old versions *tomorrow*



Create automatic backups in Microsoft Office

The best way to access old versions of documents and spreadsheets is to use a process called versioning. This lets you browse all previous versions of a file, then revert to one if needed. Although Microsoft 365 (previously called Office 365) has a versioning tool (which we'll talk more about later), Office 2013, 2016 and 2019 don't. With these, you're limited to using Office's automatic backup feature, which only lets you revert to a single previous version of a file.

To use it in Word, go to File, Options, then select Advanced. On the right, scroll to the Save section, then tick 'Always create backup copy' (see screenshot below) and click OK. Whenever you save Word documents from now on, the previous version will be saved as 'Backup of doc.wbk' (where 'doc' is your file's original name). Don't worry about the '.wbk' file extension - double-click it and the previous version of your document



Set up Word's automatic backup feature to recover the previous version of a document

will open in Word.

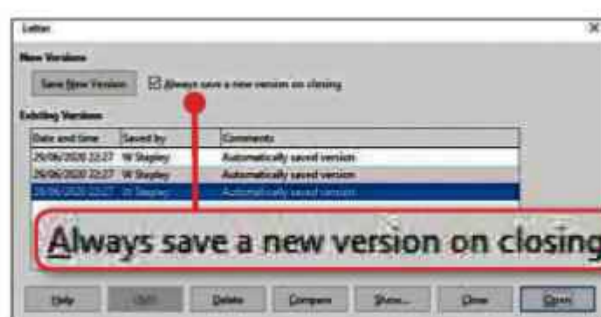
To enable this in Excel, open your spreadsheet, then press F12 to open the Save box. Click Tools at the bottom, select General Options, then tick 'Always create backup'. Be aware that, unlike Word, you need to do this for every spreadsheet you want to save a backup for.

Note that Word and Excel will only save one backup per document, so when you save version 3 of a document, for example, version 2 will replace version 1 as the backup file. When you save version 4, version 3 will replace version 2 - and so on.

Use backup and versioning tools in LibreOffice

LibreOffice has a similar backup feature. To use it, open Writer, then press Alt+F12 to open the Options window. Select the 'Load/Save' category on the left, followed by General, then tick 'Always create a backup copy' and click OK. Unlike in Microsoft Office, this setting applies to *all* your LibreOffice files.

However, recovering the previous version isn't quite so easy. Staying in the



LibreOffice lets you recover multiple versions of your documents

Options window, locate your backup folder in the LibreOffice category, click Paths, then double-click Backups. In the window that opens, click the address bar, copy (press Ctrl+C) the folder path, then open a File Explorer window. Paste (Ctrl+V) this into the address bar and press Enter. Select the backup you need (this will have the same filename as your original, but with a '.bak' extension), then press F2 and change the file extension to match the original file. If you can't see the file extension, click the View menu in File Explorer, then tick 'File name extensions' in the toolbar.

LibreOffice also has a versioning tool, which (unlike Microsoft Office) lets you save *unlimited* old versions of your documents. However, you need to enable it for each file individually and it only works with LibreOffice's default file formats ('.odt' for documents, '.ods' for spreadsheets).

With your file open in LibreOffice, click File, 'Versions...', then tick the 'Always save a new version on closing' option at the top (see screenshot below left). From this point, each time you save and close your file, the previous version will be saved and added to the list in this window. Select the one you want, then choose from the options at the bottom, including the ability to compare it with the current version or open it as a new document.

Turn on File History in Windows

When you right-click a document in File Explorer, then select Properties, you'll see

a tab that's labelled Previous Versions. However, unless you've taken the appropriate steps beforehand, this will just display a 'There are no previous versions available' message.

The Previous Versions tool attempts to recover old versions of files using two methods. One is by scanning **system restore points** on your PC. In practice, however, this rarely works as it requires you to have created a restore point *after* you saved the version you want to revert to, but *before* you saved the current version. And in our experience, even if you've done this it doesn't always find old versions.

The second method is far more reliable, but it does require you to use Windows' File History backup tool. To set this up, go to Settings (press Windows+I), 'Update & Security', Backup, then click 'Select a drive' on the right-hand side. Next, insert a USB stick or external hard drive. This needs to be big enough to store backups of all your documents. While you don't need to have the storage device attached to your PC all the time, your backups will only get created when it is connected. If you have a network drive, such as a **NAS**, you can choose to save your backups there instead.

File History backs up all your personal folders by default. However, if you only want to use it to store old versions of your documents, you can remove them all (click each one, then select Remove), then simply add the folder storing your documents by clicking 'Add a folder' under 'Backup these folders'. Click 'Back up now' to start the first backup process.

With File History running, you'll now



With File History turned on, you'll be able to quickly access old versions of your documents

See old versions of Google Docs and Sheets

If you're willing to move to an online office suite, you'll enjoy easier and more extensive access to previous versions of your documents.

In Google Docs (www.google.com/docs), for example, go to File, 'Version history', then 'See version history' within any document. All edits to your document will be listed down the right-hand side of the screen, including who they were created



by, the time of the edit and precisely what edits were made. Select the version you want, then click 'Restore this version' (top left) to go back to it.

Alternatively, you can save a version as a separate document by clicking the three vertical dots next to that version, then 'Make a copy' (see screenshot). And if you want to make your versions easier to recognise, select 'Name this version'.

be able to access previous versions of all your files. Select the Previous Versions tab from the Properties window of any file (as explained above) to see all versions, then click the one you want followed by Open to view it in Word or whichever program you created it in. Alternatively, click the small down arrow next to Open and select 'Open in File History' (see screenshot below left) to open a preview window that lets you browse all versions.

By default, File History saves all versions of all files forever. However, if your backup drive is running low on storage space you might want to tweak this. Click 'See advanced settings' in the File History settings window, then 'Advanced settings' on the left of the window that appears and use the 'Keep saved versions' box to select a period of time you want to retain these.

Use online storage to create versioning for your files

Another way to set up versioning is to sync your Office and LibreOffice files with online storage.

First, you need to make sure that your online storage service is set to sync the folders containing your documents. Microsoft's OneDrive, which is built into Windows 10, backs up your Documents folder (and its sub-folders) by default. If you use Google Drive, however, you'll need to first install its 'Backup & Sync' tool (www.snipca.com/35285). Once you've done that, open the program, go to Preferences, select your computer in the list on the left, then click Choose Folder and select your documents folder.

To view old versions of files in OneDrive, log in at www.onedrive.com, locate the file you want to recover an old




Google Drive keeps old file versions for 30 days, but you can opt to store specific versions indefinitely

version of, then select 'Version history' (if you have Microsoft 365, you'll be able to access old versions of your online documents here too). A preview of the current version will then be displayed, along with a list of older versions down the left-hand side.

At least that's the theory. When we tried it, OneDrive consistently refused to show any previous versions, and a quick search online suggested we're not the only ones struggling to make this work.

If you have the same problem, try Google Drive instead, which works flawlessly. Log into your account (or create a new one) at www.google.com/drive. Assuming you've already set up the 'Backup & Sync' tool mentioned earlier, click your PC in the Computers section on the left, then navigate to your document's folder. Right-click the document, then select 'Manage versions' to see all available versions.

Like OneDrive, Google Drive only keeps versions for 30 days. However, if there's a particular version you want to retain permanently, click the three vertical dots next to it, then tick 'Keep forever' (see screenshot above). 

Problems Solved

Our experts solve all your tech problems

PROBLEM OF THE FORTNIGHT

Can I resize the Windows Clipboard history?

Q I am fairly new to Windows 10, but I cannot seem to get the Windows Clipboard to function properly. I copy text to the Clipboard, no bother, but when viewing the history window I find I cannot enlarge it. This means I cannot read the contents, so it's hard to read and paste my clippings elsewhere. Any help would be appreciated!

Christine Skett

A For the benefit of other readers, Windows 10's overhauled Clipboard has a history function that can be summoned by pressing the Windows key+V. This pops up a little window at the bottom right of your screen that allows you to scroll through the last few copied items, or previously pinned items.

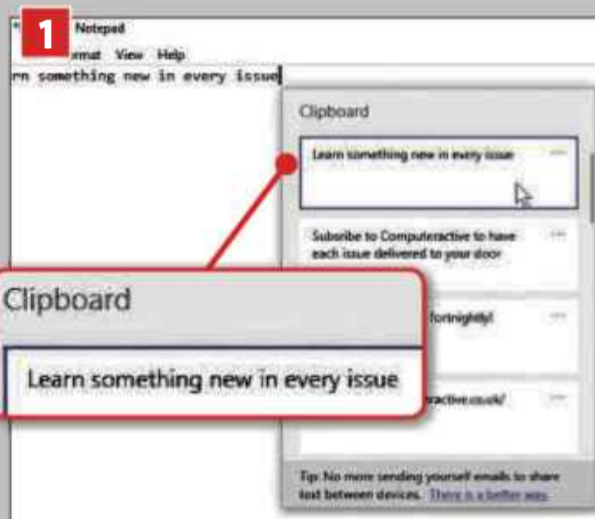
However, neither the position of this history window nor its size can be adjusted. Microsoft might eventually get around to fixing these dual annoyances but, given that it took the firm over two decades to even introduce a Clipboard-history feature, we wouldn't hold our breath.

So, if it's just that you find the current window too small, there's not a lot you can do about it, other than adjusting the size of your system font. But if your system font was too small then you wouldn't be able to read a whole lot in Windows, either – so that can't be the problem.

Instead, there's a bug that can sometimes see this history window reduced to a very small size. It usually happens when you're using two or more displays and one has been disconnected (or reconnected) – though Windows 10 is such a big beast that bugs like this can manifest themselves in all manner of circumstances.



In the Notepad app, select 'Pin'

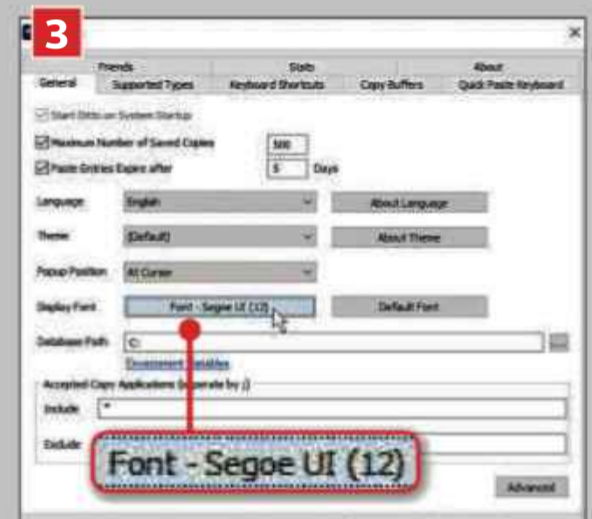


Copy and paste some text to the Clipboard

We think this is what's actually at the heart of your problem. The fix is pretty easy, if a little obscure. First, press Control (Ctrl)+C to copy something to the Clipboard (see screenshot 1). Next, launch the Notepad app that's part of Windows 10. Then, press Windows key+V to open the history window and, to the right of the item you've just copied, click the menu icon (three dots) and then click Pin 2. Now return to Notepad and press Ctrl+V to paste.

The next time you use the history panel, it should be back to its normal, fixed-but-readable size.

We could leave our answer there but we feel that we could do you a service by suggesting that, instead of relying on Clipboard, you instead check out the



Select a default font with the Ditto app

Ditto app – it's a free download from the Microsoft Store: www.snipca.com/35125. This has many more features than the Windows 10 Clipboard, not least of which is the ability to resize its history panel without having to worry about altering your preferred system font.

Once Ditto is installed and running, just right-click its icon in the notification area, at the far right of the taskbar at the bottom of your screen, then choose Options. Then, in the box that appears, click to select the General tab and then, next to Display Font 3, click the current font and then use the Font box to choose whatever font you like. Finally, use the Size column to set how big you'd like it to be.

Why are CDs resetting my PC?

Q Something's changed on my system and I can no longer read CDs. When accessing one, the system resets. It then wants to boot from the disc. Eventually, I get a message saying the system failed to load. I choose the 'Restart normally' option, but then it tries to access the CD again. I suspect that something has been changed or corrupted in the registry. Can you help?

Ellis Boardman

A Actually, we think this might be down to your PC's power-supply unit (PSU). This will be designed and rated to supply a maximum amount of power, specified in Watts (w). The fact that your PC is resetting when the CD drive spins suggests that the extra power required for the mechanical activity is causing the PSU to trip, or malfunction.

As well, your PC is also configured to boot (start) from an inserted disc. This is entirely normal, and is an option that can be switched on or off in the BIOS. It's

generally best to leave it on, just in case you ever need to boot from a CD (or DVD). However, the net result is that while a disc remains in the drive this cycle will continue. This is because your initial attempt to access the CD trips the PSU, resetting your PC – and your PC then attempts to boot from the CD.

The question is, why is the PSU tripping now? Have you added new or changed existing hardware since you bought the machine? A replacement graphics card, for example, will likely consume more power than the computer's manufacturer planned – meaning the PSU could now be running at the limit of its ability. Even attaching a USB-powered device such as an external hard drive will draw a little extra power. As such, clicking to access a CD could trip the power demand over the edge, as the drive kicks into action.

You'll either need to remove or disconnect any new devices, or look to fit a more-capable PSU. A basic desktop PSU



This Aerocool Integrator supplies 600w of power

might deliver 200-300w, for example – but the collected components might now demand more. Replacing a PC PSU is usually easy, though do check measurements and specific connection requirements before buying. The pictured Aerocool Integrator model (above), for example, supplies 600w and offers a plethora of common outputs for broad compatibility. It costs around £50 from Amazon (www.snipca.com/34896).

Can I get Microsoft Office for free?

Q On my old Windows 7 computer I had Microsoft Word 2010, as part of Office 2010. Windows 7 is no longer supported, so I bought a Windows 10 computer. This came without Word. Since I still have my Windows 7 product key and my Office 2010 product key, can I download Word to my Windows 10 computer for free?

Philip George

A You don't need your Windows 7 product key to install either Word 2010, or the full Office 2010 suite. You just need the Office 2010 product key, which you have. If you have the original installation disc for your copy of Office, then you're good to go: just insert the disc into your Windows 10 computer and follow the instructions.

If your new PC doesn't have an optical (DVD) drive, or you've otherwise lost your Office installation



You can download Office 2010 from Microsoft's website

disc, then you can download Office 2010 from the Microsoft page at www.snipca.com/35089 (see screenshot). You just need to enter your product key and click Verify. However, there is a small elephant in the room, which is that support for Office 2010 ends in October this year. So, while you'll be able to download and install Word 2010 (or the full suite) on

your new Windows 10 computer, in just a few months from now Microsoft will wash its hands of the package.

That won't mean Office (or Word) will suddenly stop working, but it will become progressively riskier to use because, officially at least, Microsoft will no longer fix newly discovered flaws.

How do I add more USB ports?

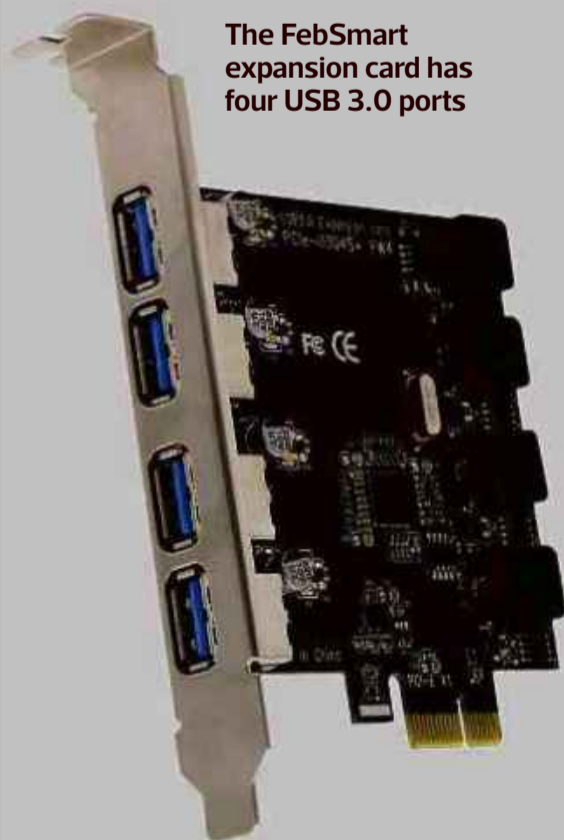
Q I recently bought a Dell Inspiron 3671 desktop PC. I'm happy with it but I could do with more than the four USB ports it has. I've contacted Dell but it doesn't sell extra ports. I'm no expert, and I have no idea what I need. Could you tell me how to add four extra ports, or even more?

Tony Steel

A Your PC has a handful of spare PCI Express (PCIe) slots on its motherboard, so you can use one (or more) of these to fit an expansion card that has extra ports.

This involves opening up your PC and slotting in your chosen card, and that's pretty much that. Honestly, it's an easy job.

There's no shortage of choice. At around £19, the pictured FebSmart (www.snipca.com/35118) card is a budget option that will add four USB 3.0 ports. If you fancy spending a bit more, £27 will buy you a SupaGeek card (www.snipca.com/35119) that has four USB 3.0 ports and one of the new reversible USB 3.1 Type-C (USB-C) connectors.



The FebSmart expansion card has four USB 3.0 ports

Why do my Windows 10 apps close after I open them?

Q When my wife's Windows 10 laptop updated to version 1903, back in February, both the Photos and Mail apps stopped working. They still appear in the program list but when they are opened they immediately close again. Clicking a JPEG photo results in an error message that says the app didn't start. I have since updated the computer to version 1909 but it's not solved the problem.

Any idea what's causing this, and what we can do next?

David Fletcher

A We've encountered this problem a few times and, while we can't be sure what causes it, the underlying problem seems to be that the Windows 10 app files get corrupted. The quickest way to fix it is to delete the apps and then reinstall them.

Mail (along with Calendar, for they come as a pair) can be uninstalled via the Apps page in Settings, accessed by clicking the Settings cog on the Start menu.

However, Photos cannot be removed in this way. For that reason, it's more efficient to remove both via the Windows PowerShell tool.

First, press Windows key+X to open the Quick Link menu and click 'Windows PowerShell (Admin)'. Next, type the following two commands, pressing Enter each time (see screenshots below).

1: `get-appxpackage *Microsoft.Windows.Photos* | remove-appxpackage`
2: `get-appxpackage *microsoft.windowscommunicationsapps* | remove-appxpackage`

The straight line near the end of the command is the 'pipe' symbol, which on many PC keyboards can be typed by holding down the Alt Gr key and then tapping the key to the left of the number 1 key, near the top left.

However, if you struggle, you can copy both commands from the Pastebin page we created, at www.snipca.com/35210.

Finally, just visit the Microsoft Store to reinstall the apps. You'll find Photos at www.snipca.com/35123, while Mail and Calendar are at www.snipca.com/35124.

```
Administrator: Windows PowerShell

Windows PowerShell
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Try the new cross-platform PowerShell https://aka.ms/pscore6

PS C:\WINDOWS\system32> get-appxpackage *Microsoft.Windows.Photos* | remove-appxpackage
```

```
Administrator: Windows PowerShell

Windows PowerShell
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Try the new cross-platform PowerShell https://aka.ms/pscore6

PS C:\WINDOWS\system32> get-appxpackage *microsoft.windowscommunicationsapps* | remove-appxpackage
```

Reinstall Microsoft's Photos and Mail and Calendar apps by pasting the appropriate commands

Q: Is the BBC iPlayer being ageist?

A: Issue 561, page 61 – find it on our 2019 Back Issue CD

Buy it from www.snipca.com/33711



How can I scan via my Chromebook?

Q A few months ago my daughter finally talked me out of continuing to use my ancient Acer laptop, which still runs Windows XP.

She bought me a Chromebook, which I've used with some success, although I'm still struggling to work out how to do everything I'm used to doing on Windows.

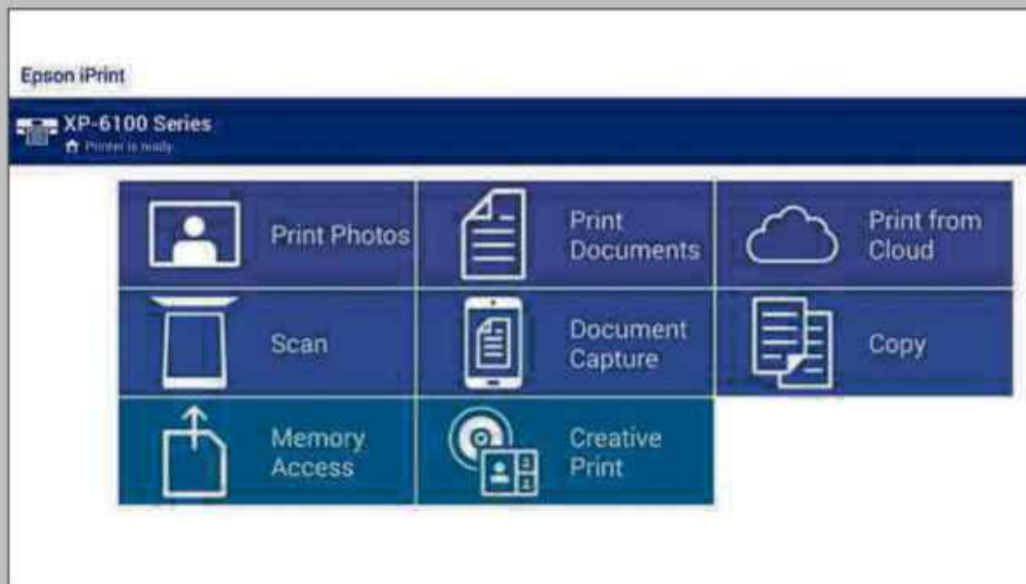
As a case in point, my old HP printer recently gave up the ghost and I decided to replace it with an Epson EcoTank ET-2710.

Unfortunately, after it arrived I realised that it didn't have a screen, so I couldn't manually join it to my wireless network. Eventually, I discovered that I could dust off my Windows XP PC, run Epson's setup program and have it connect via USB. Then I could magically configure the printer for my network.

With this done, I managed to access the printer from my Chromebook, and it works well. Unfortunately, however, I can't work out how to scan.

Any pointers?

David McNamara



Use the Epson iPrint app to scan documents from your phone and save them on your computer, or in Google Drive

A Unfortunately, Chrome OS doesn't support scanners, but there may be some ways around it. Many printers now let you scan and save documents directly to Google Drive, making it easy to access the documents from a Chromebook. Other printers let you scan to a USB drive, which you can then simply plug into your Chromebook. With some HP printers you can save a scan through its website. However, none of these options will work with your ET-2710.

If your Chromebook supports Android

apps, you might try installing Epson iPrint (www.snipca.com/35112) and seeing if it will discover your printer.

However, when we tried this with a Chromebook and a couple of Epson printers, the app didn't detect either of them, and wouldn't work when we typed their IP addresses. The app usually works perfectly on standard Android or iOS devices, though.

If you have either of these, you could use iPrint to scan documents from the phone, and save them in a local folder or to your Google Drive.

How can I stop this URL appearing in Chrome?

Q I recently went to open BBC iPlayer in Chrome. I typed 'iPlayer' and absent-mindedly hit Enter, and before I knew it I had ended up at some awful spammy site that wanted me to install a dubious Chrome extension.

Retracing my steps I realised I'd accidentally accepted the search suggestion of 'iplayer.co.uk', which is not the official URL of the iPlayer.

The problem is that Chrome remembered what I typed and it now always appears above the correct iPlayer address (www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer) in my browser bar.

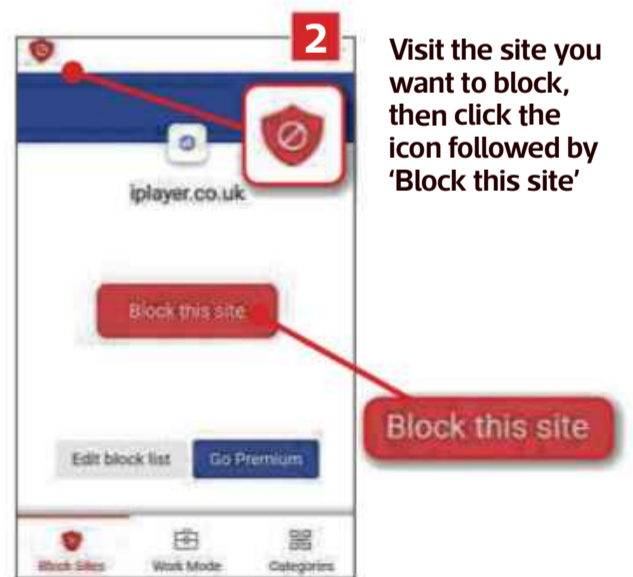
You can highlight and delete the suggestion, but it always reappears. Is there a way I can strike it off forever?

Jenny Franklin

A You can remove it permanently by starting to type **iPlayer**, then using the arrows on your keyboard to select the 'iplayer.co.uk' suggestion, and finally hitting Shift+Del – or clicking the X at the far right of your browser bar (see screenshot **1**).

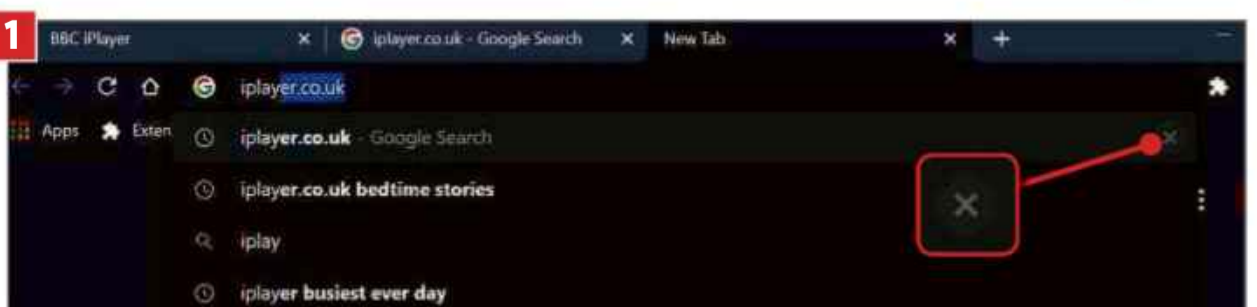
This should stop the annoyance, but if you find yourself repeating your original mistake, try blocking the URL. There are many ways to do this, but a simple one is to install the Block Site extension for Chrome (www.snipca.com/35114).

You can add URLs you don't want, and if you accidentally try to visit them you'll see a reminder that they're blocked. Once you've installed it, visit the site you want



Visit the site you want to block, then click the icon followed by 'Block this site'

to block, then click the extension's icon (a no-entry sign in a red shield), followed by the red 'Block this site' button **2**.



Click the X to remove a URL suggestion when typing in Chrome's browser bar

Problems Solved

Can I free up RAM?

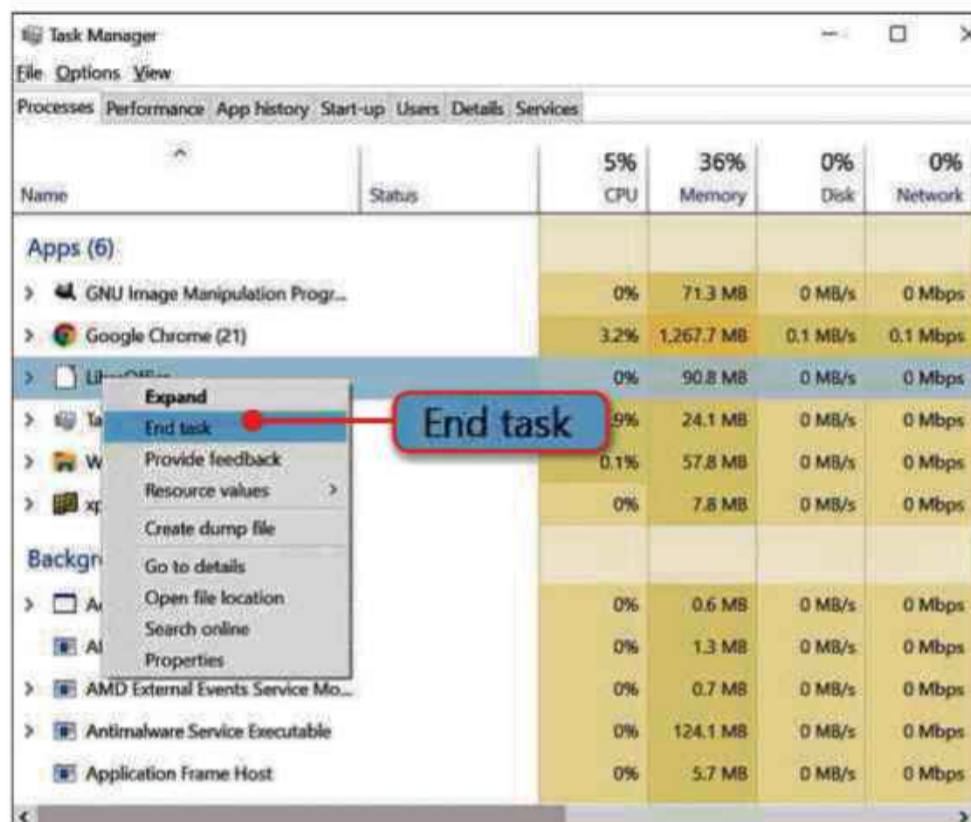
Q Task Manager shows that my Windows 10 laptop's 8GB RAM operates at 50 per cent capacity, even when I'm not using the computer. The main culprits seem to be background stuff such as Windows Defender and Server Host processes, though it doesn't seem to affect the operation of the computer.

Can I regain some of the RAM capacity? Is it necessary for all these background apps to be running all the time?

Brian Moulton

A It's entirely normal for a PC to be making use of RAM, even if you're not doing anything. The 64bit edition of Windows 10 requires a minimum of 2GB of memory, so it could use that amount even with nothing else installed – that's 25 per cent of your RAM right there. And remember, that's the minimum Windows 10 demands.

In Task Manager (summoned with Control+Shift+Escape), you can kill any process by right-clicking and choosing



You can switch off processes that use a lot of RAM by selecting 'End task', but don't do this without careful consideration

'End task' (see screenshot above). This would free up the associated RAM. However, doing this willy-nilly would be supremely daft: Windows doesn't generally keep services running in the background unless they're needed. So, you should use this trick only on stuff you know is definitely not required.

But, frankly, there's not really a problem here. You said that this doesn't affect your PC's performance, and nor will it until the RAM use hits 100 per cent. At that point, things would indeed slow down a bit because the PC would have to use the hard drive as temporary memory.

How do we keep our Zoom singalongs in sync?

Q I've been using the Zoom videoconferencing service to manage a music group, so we can all sing together virtually. As we all have slightly different time lags, it's impossible to keep everyone in sync. We've taken to muting everyone apart from the host. This means participants hear only us, as hosts, and are otherwise singing alone. Is there a way around this with a different program or service? We want to feel as though we are together, as a choir.

Bill Kemp

A Zoom and other videoconferencing systems have proved invaluable during lockdown. However, they can't fix the fundamental physics of what's going on, which is lots of people communicating at varying distances, and through varying internet connections.

In theory, it would be possible to build a system that all but eliminated lag by employing 'end-to-end' fibre-



In perfect harmony maybe, but singalongs still can't overcome the online time lag

optic connections between everyone – but that's not the real world. No doubt some or even many of your choristers have fibre connections, but their data streams still have to negotiate the internet before coming together. Every node between them and you has its own lag.

Perhaps one day, the whole world will

be perfectly connected end-to-end via fibre cables. However, even then it'd still take a few milliseconds for data signals to travel around the world – because we don't know how to go faster than the speed of light. In short, communications lag is built into the fabric of the universe as we know it.



WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN...

9th- and 10th-generation processors?

Q After weeks of deliberating I was just about to purchase a new laptop from Dell. As I went to buy my chosen model, I saw a button for a 'new' model for £100 more. The only thing I could tell that had changed was the processor. The model I had decided on was described as having a '9th-generation' Core i7 9750H, while the new model apparently had a '10th-generation' Intel Core, with the model number 10750H. I understand that the latter is just a newer processor, but is it worth the extra £100? I suppose it must be better, or why else would Dell sell two otherwise identical laptops?

Kevin MacIntosh

A The differences are both considerable and generally unimportant. That sounds like a contradiction, and it is – but it's one that's pretty easy to explain.

On a technical level there are very many differences between last year's '9th-generation' Intel Core processors, and the ones being released now – the 10th generation of this particular product range.

For example, looking at the two

Product	Intel Core™ i7-9750H Processor	Intel Core™ i7-10750H Processor
Product Collection	9th Generation Intel Core™ U3 Processors	10th Generation Intel Core™ U3 Processors
Virtual Segment	Mobile	Mobile
Processor Number	i7-9750H	i7-10750H
Status	Launched	Launched
Launch Date	Q3'19	Q3'20
Core Graph	14nm	14nm
Use Case(s)		PC, Server/Cloud
Recommended Customer Price	\$355.00	\$359.00

particular processors you mentioned, the 10th-gen model has a maximum 'turbo' frequency of 5GHz compared to the 9th-gen's 4.5GHz top end (see screenshots above right). That's an improvement of about 11 per cent. The newer model also supports faster memory than its predecessor so, if your particular laptop also includes the faster memory, that's another small performance boost. There are many more such differences, which you can peruse at the Intel ARK (Automated Relational Knowledge) website. We've set up a side-by-side comparison for you, at www.snipca.com/35073.

So why do we say the differences are

Performance Specifications	Intel Core™ i7-9750H Processor	Intel Core™ i7-10750H Processor
# of Cores	6	6
# of Threads	12	12
Processor Base Frequency	2.60 GHz	2.60 GHz
Max Turbo Frequency	4.50 GHz	5.00 GHz
Cache	12 MB Intel® Smart Cache	12 MB Intel® Smart Cache
Bus Speed	8 Gb/s	8 Gb/s
TDP	45 W	45 W
Configurable TDP-down	4.50 GHz	5.00 GHz
Intel® Thermal Velocity Boost Frequency		4.80 GHz
Intel® Turbo Boost Max Technology 3.0 Frequency		4.80 GHz

Comparing recent generations of processors shows small performance benefits

generally unimportant? Because they're generational improvements. On a daily basis, average users are unlikely to notice the difference from one generation to the next. The performance benefits are typically marginal and, besides, a PC is made of so more components than just the processor.

All else being equal, then, a PC with a 10th-generation processor will perform a little better than a model with last year's chip. Whether that small boost is worth an extra £100 is up to you!

Want to know the difference between technical terms? Email noproblem@computeractive.co.uk

How do I open my old Microsoft Works manuscript?

Q Some 20-odd years ago I wrote an account of my experiences flying in the RAF, but never got around to publishing it. I still have the manuscript but it was written in Microsoft Works on my old Windows XP computer, neither of which I retained. Microsoft Word on my current Windows 10 PC will not open this file. What can I do?

Peter Brown

A The last version of Microsoft Office to support Works files was the 2010 edition. So, if you have Word 2013 or later, it's not possible to use this to open a WPS (.wps) file – which is the specific format generated by

the Works word processor.

Fortunately, there are online-converter tools that'll do the job quickly, easily and for free. The most popular is Zamzar, at www.zamzar.com. To begin, click the Add Files button, then navigate to your WPS file, click to select it and then click

Open. Now click the Convert To button and then choose docx (see screenshot). Finally, click Convert Now, wait a few moments, and then click the big blue Download button.



Select 'docx' in Zamzar to convert an old Microsoft Works file to Microsoft Word

Next Issue

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Weds
15 July

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- How do I install Windows on a new PC?
- Why do my downloads fail? ...And many more

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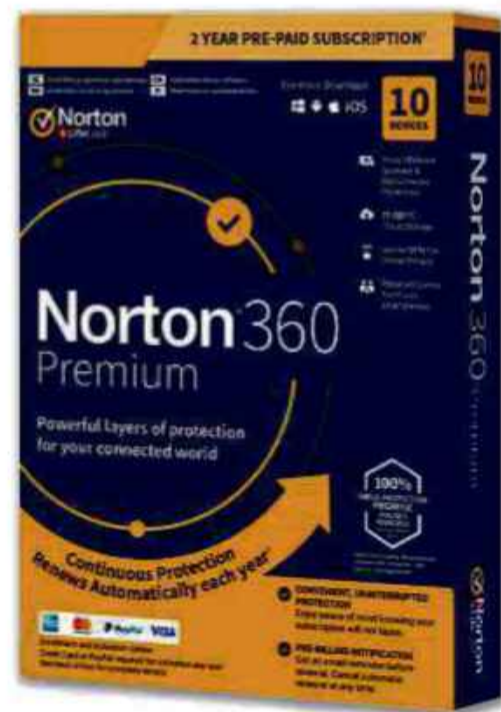
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Why is my device 'not ready'?

Q When typing the `dir d:\ /s |clip` command in Step 2 of Workshop 2 in Issue 581 (page 40), I'm told my device is not ready. I've tried many solutions I found online, but none has helped. If one of your experts has a good solution, then they're a world-beater!

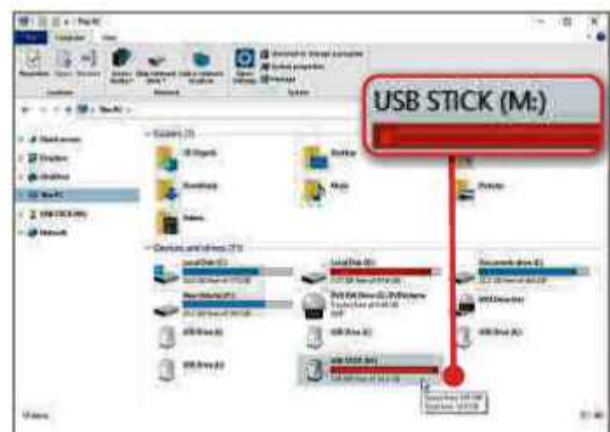
Johnnie Walker

A You've tried lots of complicated stuff so this might be a case of Occam's razor, meaning the correct solution is the simplest one.

This error means the drive letter is recognised but the associated device isn't responding. Your PC's optical drive, assuming it has one, will almost certainly be drive D. As such, issuing the command exactly as printed would result in this error because, without a disc in the drive, the optical drive is indeed 'not ready'.

We did say to change the 'd:' bit of the command to the relevant drive letter but perhaps you overlooked that? So, for example, if your USB stick's drive letter is actually F: then the correct command would be `dir f:\ /s |clip`.

To figure out the correct drive letter for your USB stick, press Windows key+E to launch File Explorer. Next, in the left pane, click This PC. Now look in the right-hand part of the window to see all the drives. In our screenshot below, we have a USB stick that Windows 10 has labelled as 'M:', so the Command Prompt instruction would be `dir m:\ /s |clip`.



A quick check in File Explorer reveals that our USB stick's drive letter is M

Why can't I see Edge's Firefox option?

Q In Issue 580's 'Why You Must Switch to Microsoft Edge' Cover Feature, on page 56, you published an 'Import browser data' screenshot, showing Mozilla Firefox. However, Firefox isn't supported! So, the image you published cannot be correct. What's going on here?

Clive Bonner

A Edge really does support importing stuff from Firefox, as confirmed by Microsoft at www.snipca.com/35145.

We checked every Windows 10 PC in the *Computeractive* office and all featured the Firefox option on the 'Import from' menu. However, we then found that one of our personal PCs lacked the option. Then we found a second home PC with the same problem – and thus begun a significant period of head-scratching.

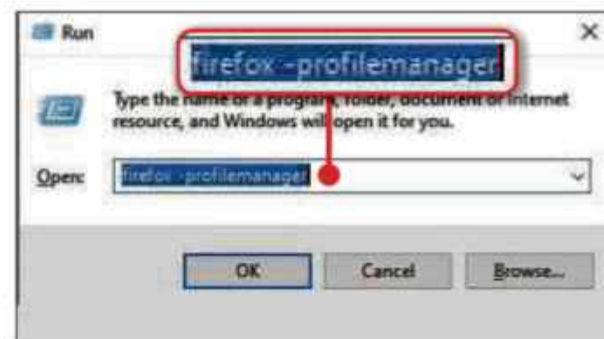
At first we felt this might be a bug in Edge. However, experimenting, we deleted and recreated the Firefox user profiles on our two affected PCs. That sorted the problem. Well, partly – as we'll explain.

We believe this is down to some form of corruption in Firefox profiles. Deleting an affected profile will 'fix' the problem, by creating a new, blank profile. However, you're left with nothing to import – which rather defeats the object!

The way around this is to create a new profile and then copy data from your old, corrupted profile to it. The latter part involves copying and pasting a bunch of files from your old profile folder into the new one, which is boring but necessary.

To begin, launch Firefox's little-known Profile Manager. To do this, press Windows key+R to open a Run box, then type `firefox -profilemanager` and press Enter (see screenshot above).

Next, click Create Profile followed by Next, type a name for your new profile and click Finish. You now need to do the aforesaid file-copying work.



To transfer files to your new profile, type `firefox -profilemanager` in the Run box

Follow Mozilla's guide to this at www.snipca.com/35148.

Next, return to Profile Manager. Click to select your old profile before clicking Delete, and confirm by clicking Delete Files. Finally, launch Edge and the option to import from Mozilla Firefox will appear!

How do I get PowerToys?

Q Will Stapley's strong recommendation for PowerToys 0.18 in Issue 581 made me want it. However, I found the provided [snipca link](http://www.snipca.com) was difficult to follow. Googling PowerToys provided some other websites, many of which demanded registration, personal details or subscription fees for the program. Eventually, I managed to download a file that's called 'PowerToys preview', but nothing happens when I open it. So what's the trick?





Tony Rix

A Whatever else you do, forget trying to install whatever it was that you ended up downloading – it sounds like a fake! The [snipca link](http://www.snipca.com) we published – www.snipca.com/34907 – is correct. It is the only place you should go to download PowerToys.

However, the site can indeed be difficult to decipher and navigate. So, here's exactly what you need to do. First, scroll down the page a bit until you find the small black Assets heading. Below that, click the first listed file to get the most recent edition of PowerToys. At the time of print, that file name was 'PowerToysSetup-0.18.2-x64.msi'.

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3		Sky: Superfast Talk and Line Rental	£27.00	18 months	59Mbps avg. speed	∞ unlimited	£324.00
4		Virgin Media: Big Bundle + Fibre Broadband + Weekend Calls	£29.99 (£59 after 12 months)	12 months	54Mbps avg. speed	∞ unlimited	£359.88

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Jargon **Buster**

1080p Of the common types of high-definition video, this is the best quality: 1920x1080 pixels.

32bit/64bit A measure of how much data a PC can process at once. Most older computers are 32bit, more modern ones are 64bit.

3G/4G/5G Technologies that deliver faster mobile broadband.

4K Video with a resolution of at least 3840x2160 pixels.

720p A common resolution of high-definition video: 1280x720 pixels.

802.11ac A standard for wireless networks that allows for much higher transfer speeds than **802.11n**.

802.11ax Wi-Fi standard with speeds up to 10 times faster than 802.11ac. Also called Wi-Fi 6.

Add-on A program that adds extra features to your browser.

Backhaul The process of sending data to a wired access point to reach the wider internet.

Bandwidth A measure of how much data can be transferred through a connection at one time.

Beta A version of software that's being tested.

Biometric Using measurable personal characteristics, such as fingerprints, for identification.

BIOS Basic Input-Output System. Software built into every PC that connects the vital components.

CAPTCHA Distorted text you have to type to prove you're a human.

Client A program that acts as an interface between PC and server.

Code Used to summarise the various programming languages used to create programs.

Cookie A small text file stored on your computer by a website.

Core Units on a processor that carry out program instructions.

DisplayPort A new socket for connecting monitors.

Driver A file that tells Windows how to work with an external device.

E-ink Electrophoretic ink. A special type of ink used to display content in electronic devices.

ECG Electrocardiogram. Tests your heart's rhythm and electrical activity using sensors attached to the skin.

EPUB A file format used by many popular ebook readers.

EXE A program file designed to run in Windows.

File path Shows the location of a file within Windows.

Frame rate The number of still images, or frames, shown per second to create a moving image.

FTP File Transfer Protocol. A system for transferring files between computers.

GHz Gigahertz. A measure of how many instructions a chip can process per second.

Graphics card A component in a computer that produces the image shown on the monitor.

HDMI High-definition media interface. A type of connection that transmits high-definition video and audio signals.

HDR High-dynamic range. A camera that takes more than one photo with different levels of colour and contrast. These images are then combined to create a better-quality image.

IMAP Internet Message Access Protocol. A method for email that lets the user manage messages stored on a remote server.

IP address Internet Protocol address. A unique set of numbers used to identify computers and websites on the internet.

JPEG Joint Photograph Experts Group. A common type of image file created by most digital cameras.

Kernel The central part of an operating system, controlling how hardware and software interact.

LCD Liquid-crystal display. The technology used to create almost all flatscreen monitors.

LED Light-emitting diode. An electronic device that emits light.

Lidar Light Detection and Ranging. A remote-sensing method that uses laser pulses to measure distances to Earth.

M.2 A standard specification for internal PC expansion cards and connectors.

MBOX File formats used to hold collections of emails.

Mesh Wi-Fi Wireless network solution that uses multiple, connected routers to stretch Wi-Fi further than a traditional router.

MicroSD card A small type of memory card.

NAS Network-attached storage. A hard drive attached to a network that can be shared with other PCs.

NTFS New Technology File System. A file system used by all recent versions of Windows.

OLED Organic light-emitting diode. A thin-film organic light-emitting diode used in computer displays and television screens.

Optical stabilisation A mechanism built into digital cameras that compensates for any shaking or vibrations that occur during shooting.

P3 A colour space that has a wider spectrum than sRGB.

PCIe Peripheral Component Interconnect Express. A faster version of PCI - a slot on the motherboard for expansion cards.

Plug-in A small program that adds extra features to software or to your web browser.

POP3 Post Office Protocol 3. A system for remotely accessing and retrieving email from an ISP.

Product key A unique serial number that must be typed in by the user before a program will launch for the first time.

RAM Random-access memory. The computer's working area, used for data storage while the PC is switched on.

Read speed How long it takes a hard drive to 'read' data, and respond to it.

SATA Serial ATA. An interface for connecting hard drives and optical discs to a computer.

SIM Subscriber Identity Module. The smart card used by all digital mobile phones.

Source code Program instructions written in a high-level language that are readable by people but not computers.

sRGB A standard RGB colour space for use on monitors, printers and the internet.

SSD Solid-state drive. Storage that, unlike a hard drive, uses no moving parts.

System restore point Collection of system files stored at a given time to which Windows can revert if a problem occurs.

Thread Smallest sequence of instructions that can be managed by your processor.

Timestamp The time which an event is recorded by a computer.

USB 3.0 An even faster version of the USB standard used to connect devices to a computer.

USB-C A new connector that's reversible, letting you plug it in upside down.

Virtual PC A Windows tool that enables you to run a second 'virtual' operating system on a PC, such as running XP in a Windows 7 computer to use older programs.

Widget A small program such as a calendar that runs on the Windows desktop.

Write speed How long it takes a hard drive to save data.

ZIP file A file that contains compressed documents or files.

Easy when you **Know How**



Plagued by a desktop messier than a mad professor's office, **Daniel Booth** finally gets around to...

Bookmarking his PC folders

When politicians and experts appear on the news from home, I'm just as interested in the state of their room as by what they're saying. Most appear in front of impeccably stacked bookshelves, though occasionally you get frazzled professors surrounded by piles of paper that look like they should be leaning precariously in Pisa.



As usual, Microsoft's enthusiasm had a lifespan of about 38 seconds, so Libraries was switched off in Windows 10

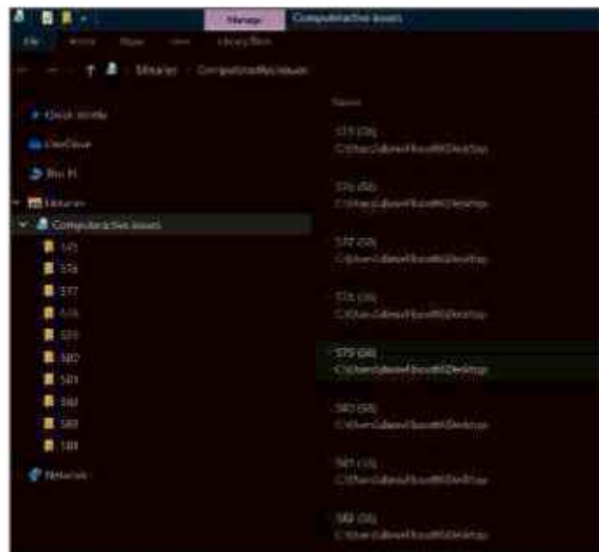


There's even a Twitter account now ([@ratemyskyperoom](https://twitter.com/ratemyskyperoom), www.snipca.com/35316), rating home offices out of 10. My favourite is this impression of a stationery cupboard having a nervous breakdown (www.snipca.com/35311, pictured below), where US political analyst Larry Sabato apparently finds enough room to work.

In comparison, my temporary home office is an uncluttered paradise, with just the latest issue's proofs keeping me



Good luck finding your copy of Computeractive, Larry...



company. The same can't be said for my PC's folders. I've been computing for three decades, but there are so many ways to bookmark folders that I've never felt confident I know the *best* way.

I vowed to sort out my folders when lockdown began, dumping them all on my PC's desktop. But nearly four months later that desktop is resembling a digital version of Mr Sabato's office. It's a mess.

I set aside an afternoon to go through all bookmark options one by one, hoping to pick a favourite that'll last me until either I or Windows depart this world. I started with the easiest option – right-clicking a folder then selecting 'Create shortcut'. But this just raises the question where to save that shortcut. I want a solution with the fewest clicks and the fewest scrolls to the fewest folders. Creating shortcuts feels like buying a shoebox in which to place another shoebox.

Then there are all the 'pinning' options, treating Windows like a digital corkboard. You can stick folders on your 'Quick access' menu by opening File Explorer (press Windows key+E), then dragging and dropping them into the 'Quick access' menu on the left (you can also right-click them and click 'Pin to Quick access'). The flaw is that you can't create subfolders, which is a problem when you need a fast-click index of over 200 folders of *Computeractive* back issues.

You can open folders via your taskbar

No messin' around – just a neat and orderly Windows Library

by first pinning File Explorer there, then dragging them to its icon. Right-clicking it reveals the folders, but there's not enough room for my huge collection.

Size is also a problem when adding new toolbars to your taskbar. Do this by right-clicking it, then selecting Toolbars followed by 'New toolbar'. Navigate to the folder you want, then click Select Folder. This is fine for a couple toolbars, but soon they start elbowing your icons (browser, programs and so on) off your taskbar.

Better is pinning your folders to the Start menu – just right-click a folder then select 'Pin to Start'. I prefer this because you can see your folders as easily identifiable icons, particularly if you right-click them, then click Resize and choose 'Medium'.

So, was that best for me? I thought so. But then a distant memory flickered, recalling when Microsoft raved about Windows Libraries. Introduced in Windows 7, it was hailed as a breakthrough in organisation – though as usual Microsoft's enthusiasm had a lifespan of about 38 seconds. Its developers live by the creed that 'new is best', so Libraries (old and therefore useless) was switched off by default in Windows 10. What a waste!

I opened File Explorer, right-clicked in the left-hand pane, and selected 'Show libraries'. Then I deleted its default libraries (Documents, Music etc), created a new one called 'Computeractive issues' and plonked my desktop folders there by right-clicking them and selecting 'Include in library', followed by 'Computeractive issues'.

The result is the screenshot above. That's the neatest my folders have looked in years. If any Twitter accounts want to rate it, surely it's a clear 10 out of 10?



Need help bookmarking your folders? Let us know: noproblem@computeractive.co.uk

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