



FIND OUT WHEN YOUR
EMAILS ARE OPENED **p61**

BEST THING ABOUT
WINDOWS 8 REVEALED **p68**



ISSUE 345

For people who love the internet



Webuser

GREAT
£2
VALUE

21 May 2014

● Best software ● New websites ● Expert tips

EVERY NEW APP You'll Need This Summer

Your phone & tablet want them now!

page 42

PLUS

PASSWORDS HACKERS CAN NEVER STEAL

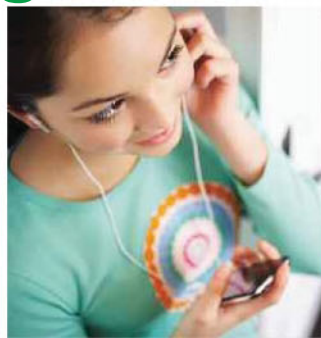
- 🔒 Automatically remember every one
- 🔒 Best free password manager

THE SECURITY MISTAKE EVERYONE MAKES (even you!)

And how to fix it in one click **p50**



With APC Back-UPS, your digital life goes on...



even when the power goes off

Preserve what's most important to you

Reliable power backup for 24/7 availability

Whether DVRing your favorite show, updating your Facebook status, or playing a live network game, you depend on your home electronics every day, all day. That's why APC™ by Schneider Electric™ has designed battery backup solutions that protect the constant availability and connectivity you expect... and depend on.

Peace-of-mind protection on two levels

When the power goes out, our popular Back-UPS™ units go to work. They instantly switch your home technologies to emergency power, allowing you to work through brief power outages or safely shut down your systems so you won't lose valuable files — such as digital photos and media libraries. They also feature surge outlets to guard your electronics and data from 'dirty' power and damaging power surges — even lightning. So you get two levels of protection in every APC Back-UPS unit!

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Our Back-UPS units protect your home office, digital living and home media applications, notebook computers, DVRs, and gaming application. And since we now offer energy-efficient models that reduce electricity costs through unique power-saving outlets, you can realize true energy savings regardless of the applications you're backing up. Throughout your home, the APC Back-UPS is the cost-saving insurance you need to stay up and running and reliably safeguarded from both unpredictable power and wasteful energy drains.



Keep your electronics up and your energy use down!

ES Series

The ever-popular ES models are priced affordably yet provide enough extended runtime to allow you to work through short and medium power outages. Some power-saving models have been designed to actively reduce energy costs.

The energy-efficient ES Series

The new ES boasts innovative power-saving outlets, which automatically shut off power to unused devices when your electronics are turned off or asleep, eliminating wasteful electricity drains.

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- 8 outlets
- 405 watts/700 VA
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- Telephone/network protection



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- 8 outlets
- 330 watts/550 VA
- Up to 55 minutes runtime
- Telephone/network protection



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APC
by Schneider Electric

Tap into summer today!

Summer seems like more of a concept than a season these days. Once, it meant ice cream, Pimm's and sunbathing in the park, but this year it's more likely to be hot soup, cold rain and watching England crash out of the World Cup on penalties. Still, we wanted a unifying theme for this issue's big phone and tablet apps round-up (page 42) and summer seemed like an appealing, if optimistic, choice. From weather forecasts and navigation tools to battery boosters and pub finders, hopefully we've got it all covered, whether you're going away this

summer or staying at home.

Also in this issue, on page 50, we address one of the most common holiday boo-boos: forgetting to log out of a website on a public computer, so anyone can access your account. Luckily, you don't even need an app to fix the problem.

Robert Irvine
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[@dennis.co.uk](#)
[#webuser](#)



5 THINGS YOU'LL LEARN THIS ISSUE

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webometer

like dislike

WE LIKE...

↑ **4G Moto G released**

Motorola has released a 4G-capable version of its budget handset, priced £149.99, and is planning an even cheaper smartphone.

↑ **Free streaming on Xbox Live**

Rumours suggest that apps including Sky Go and Netflix may soon be available to Xbox users without a Gold subscription to Xbox Live.

WE DON'T LIKE...

↓ **Stones ticket scam**

A new Facebook scam claims to offer free tickets to see the Rolling Stones live on their sold-out world tour when you "share this site".

↓ **Netflix cost increases**

New Netflix customers will now need to pay £6.99 a month to use the service, while existing customers will continue to pay £5.99 for at least two years.

NETFLIX

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Average sales, Jan-Dec 2013,
29,408 copies per issue



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 Go to www.webuser.co.uk/newsletter



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Get them for your phone & tablet today!

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from anywhere p50



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Clean up your
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FIX

facebook
ANN 😞 **YANCES**



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www.twitter.com/webusermagazine

HARDWARE**20 Group Test**

Laptops that cost less than £500

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- Synology DS414j NAS Drive
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ISSN 1473-7094

**Practical Webuser**

14 pages of workshops, tips,
projects and problem solving

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Buy and install an SSD

Generate strong passwords
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Restore your
Registry using
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Keep track of your
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ESSENTIAL MASTERCLASS

Your top priority this fortnight

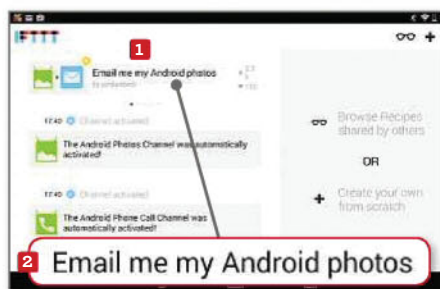
IFTTT for Android | bit.ly/ifttt345

IFTTT (If This Then That) lets you chain together popular services, apps and accounts. It's now available for Android devices. Here's how it works

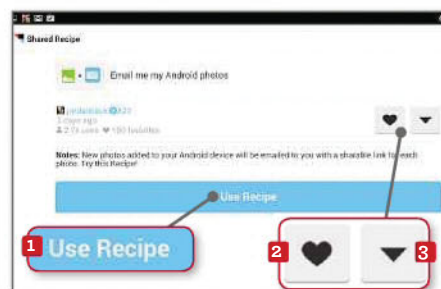
IFTTT uses 'recipes' to connect actions to triggers. That sounds complicated, but it really isn't. Think of each recipe as an instruction that performs an action when a specific event occurs, such as "if I post something on Facebook, then tweet it" or "if it's going to rain tomorrow, then send a message to my

Gmail". The possibilities are almost limitless and you can use ready-made recipes or construct your own. Once it's set up, IFTTT handles everything automatically.

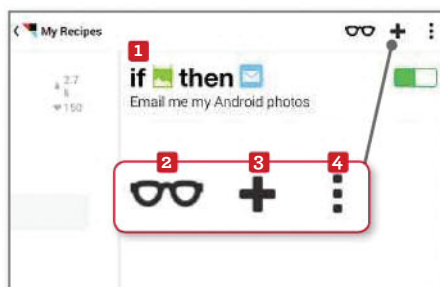
The service has been available for a while on the web and as an iOS app, but it's now available for Android, too.



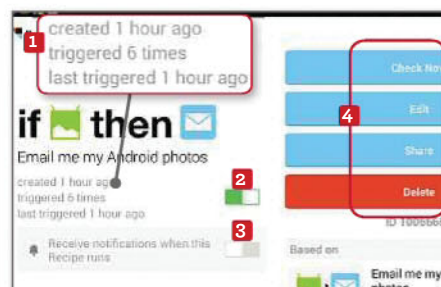
1 Create a free IFTTT account. All activity is shown on the main screen. **1** Some popular recipes are already listed, such as 'Email me my Android photos', **2** which responds when you download or take photos on your Android device, then emails them to you with a shareable link. Tap the recipe to use it.



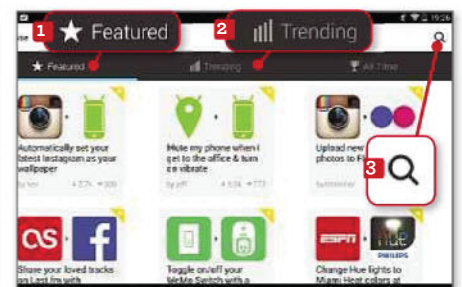
2 On the next screen, tap Use Recipe to activate it. **1** You can also make it a favourite **2** or configure the recipe by tapping the down arrow **3** and changing the subject heading of the email or the body text. Once activated, the recipe will be live and photos will be sent to your default email account.



3 Tap the Recipe button to show any active recipes. **1** The glasses button **2** lets you browse a selection of ready-made recipes sorted into categories - Collections, Featured, Trending and All Time. The plus symbol **3** lets you create a recipe from the scratch, and the three-dots button **4** opens the menu.



4 Tap a recipe to open it. You can see when it was created, the number of times it has been triggered and the last time it ran. **1** You can turn it off **2** and choose whether to receive notifications when it runs. **3** You can also check, edit, share or delete the recipe. **4**



5 To find new recipes to add, tap the glasses button. The Featured **1** and Trending **2** sections are well worth browsing. Tap a recipe to find out more and activate it. If you want to find recipes specifically designed to work with your phone or tablet, tap the magnifying glass **3** and search for 'Android'.

MY PROFILE

Select this to link channels such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to your IFTTT profile

SETTINGS

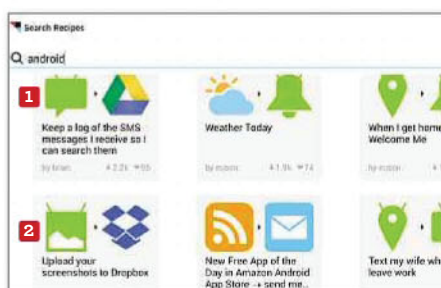
Set the sync options (whether the app should use mobile data or just Wi-Fi), invite friends and sign out of IFTTT

TOGGLE

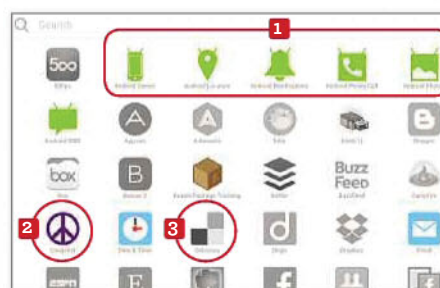
You can turn recipes on and off from the sidebar. When disabled, they will be greyed out

POPULARITY

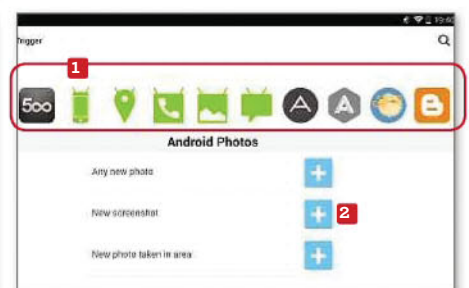
You can see how popular a recipe is here – how many people are using it and how many have marked it as a favourite



6 There are already lots of great Android recipes. You can keep a log of all of your text messages in Google Drive, **1** for example, or upload any screenshots you take to Dropbox. **2** With the latter, you'll need to activate the Dropbox channel. Use the recipe, tap Continue and enter your Dropbox details.



7 To browse available channels, tap the three dots and select Channels. The Android channels are enabled by default. **1** Channels that are activated are shown in colour, **2** and currently inactive channels are grey. **3** Tap a channel to activate, edit or deactivate it. Once activated, you can use it in your recipes.



8 Creating a recipe from scratch is easy. Tap the plus sign in the top-right corner, then tap the blue plus sign to add a trigger. Select a service at the top **1** and pick one of the options. **2** Next, tap the red plus sign and select a service and an available action. Decide if you want to receive notifications, then tap Finish.

NEED TO KNOW

Top news stories and how they affect you

ISPs to send 'educational alerts' to illegal downloaders

What happened?

Plans for ISPs to send letters to customers who download content illegally have been watered down, according to the BBC (bit.ly/bbcpiracy345).

Under the 2010 Digital Economy Act (bit.ly/digital345), the Government asked ISPs to set up a system to identify persistent pirates and send them letters warning them to stop illegally downloading copyrighted material. Four years on, the interested parties are still discussing how the system will work. A deal has not yet been reached, but the most recent documents seen by the BBC suggest the letters will be "educational" rather than "accusatory". They will simply remind customers that piracy is illegal and warn them against it, rather than threatening them with fines or cutting off their internet access, as had previously been suggested.

Under the new deal, a maximum of four letters will be sent, but the recipient can simply ignore them and carry on downloading copyrighted material, because no further action will be taken. The deal also

ditches plans to set up a database of suspected pirates, which copyright holders could have used to take legal action. Neither the database nor the provisions to use the information to sue are included in the updated plans.

Reports from industry insiders suggest the changes follow pressure from ISPs that don't want to accuse their own customers of breaking the law and be forced to hand over their data.

If a deal is reached between the government, ISPs and copyright holders, the 'educational' letters will start being sent out in 2015. The system is expected to cost more than £3 million to set up, and around £300,000 to run annually. As much as 75 per cent of this



cost will be paid by rights holders, such as film and music companies.

How will it affect you?

If you've been downloading copyrighted material illegally, or someone that uses your computer has, you may receive a letter next year, but that's about the extent of the penalties customers will face. Your data won't be gathered and handed to music labels' lawyers, and your internet connection won't be turned off by your broadband provider.

Of course, that doesn't mean pirates are safe to do as they please in the UK. Copyright holders can still take their own action against illegal downloaders, and courts can compel ISPs to hand over data if there's enough evidence of piracy. Additionally, professional pirate hunters are approaching UK waters: Rightscorp (www.rightscorp.com) has worked with ISPs and rights holders in the US to obtain cash settlements from accused pirates, and has recently come to the UK to see if the same could work here.

What do we think?

It seems like a toothless, pointless system and it's hard to see exactly who these letters are meant to target.

Persistent pirates are already well aware that they're breaking the law when they download the latest episode of *Game of Thrones*, and they really don't need their ISP to tell them.

The only people this plan could help are those who share a connection. For example, if your child is downloading illegally and you get a letter, it could help open up a conversation with your youngster about what's acceptable.

However, if your child is already doing as they please online, there's a more important discussion about safety and avoiding inappropriate content that should probably take precedence.

With so many excellent legal alternatives to piracy, such as the streaming services Netflix and Spotify, there's really no excuse to continue downloading copyrighted content illegally, and we certainly don't approve of copyright infringement.

However, rather than shell out £3 million on a system to send ineffective letters, music and film organisations would do better to invest in improved digital distribution systems. The best defence against piracy is to make films and music as easy to get legally as they are to pirate, and for a reasonable price.



Microsoft patches XP after IE flaw

What happened?

Microsoft backtracked on its plans to end support for Windows XP after a flaw was discovered in Internet Explorer (reported in the last issue of *Web User*, bit.ly/webuser344).

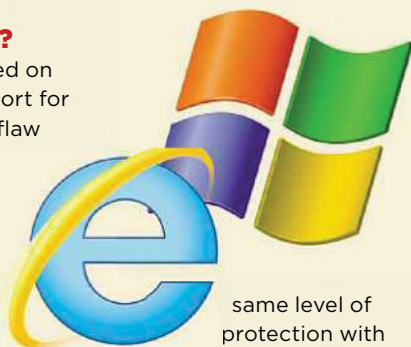
The company released a patch for the old operating system, despite insisting only three weeks earlier that it had stopped all support for XP.

Microsoft has been trying to make people ditch the 13-year-old OS and upgrade to newer versions of Windows, and it set an 8 April deadline for its final patches for XP. However, when a flaw was uncovered in all versions of Internet Explorer, including older ones that work on XP, Microsoft decided to issue an XP patch, despite the attacks being targeted against more recent versions of IE and Windows.

Microsoft's head of Trustworthy Computing, Adrienne Hall, suggested that the patch had been issued in response to media coverage, saying "concerns were, frankly, overblown," and "coincided with the end of support for Windows XP". She also stressed that the update was an exception, and warned users not to expect further patches.

How will it affect you?

If you still use Windows XP, you'll be protected from this specific flaw in Internet Explorer, but that doesn't mean you're safe. Microsoft may issue more one-off patches for XP if it deems the threat is large enough, but you still won't get the



same level of protection with XP as with a more modern operating system. That doesn't mean you're forced to update to Windows 8; you can upgrade to Windows 7 or try the XP-like Linux distro, Zorin (zorin-os.com).

We strongly advise abandoning XP, but if you're determined to stick with it, then you should at least switch to a different browser. Most attacks come via browsers, so it's important to use one that's kept up to date. Both Firefox and Chrome have regularly updated versions that still work on XP.

What do we think?

We're not surprised Microsoft patched this flaw, and we expect the company will continue to issue occasional patches. It would be irresponsible to leave so many users at risk, including governments and corporations that have shelled out millions of pounds to extend support, and especially when patches are being issued for the same flaw in different versions of IE. Although it's perfectly fair for Microsoft to want to stop supporting a 13-year-old piece of software, if it really wants to push upgrades, it should try a carrot as well as a stick: with a free or discounted upgrade, more people would make the switch.

Tesco plans more budget gadgets

What happened?

Tesco is planning a follow-up to its successful, low-cost Hudl tablet and to launch its own budget smartphone. The retailer has said the updated tablet will be available from September. The handset is likely to keep the Hudl name, and Tesco's CEO Philip Clarke boldly promised it would have specifications to compete with the Samsung Galaxy S5 smartphone, but at a more "aggressive" price.

How will it affect you?

Prices of smartphones and tablets have been falling recently, and customers will be glad to get a device with decent specs without expensive bells and whistles they'll never use. Tesco also lets customers use their Clubcard

vouchers to buy the Hudl, making it even more affordable to people who don't have hundreds of pounds to spend on gadgets.



What do we think?

We need to wait and see what the new smartphone and updated tablet are actually like, but the original Hudl received positive reviews and Tesco didn't overwhelm it with own-brand apps, aside from a shopping tool and its Blinkbox streaming video service. These budget devices make it easier and cheaper to get online; so as long as the gadgets remain good quality, we're all for them.

Change to disc-ripping law delayed

What happened?

Government plans to legalise the private copying of digital content, such as ripping CDs you own, have run aground.

A discussion of the change in a House of Lords select committee was delayed, after music-rights holders said it would cost them as much as £53 million annually. This has led some copyright experts to predict that a levy will be imposed on CDs and DVDs to make up the deficit.

How will it affect you?

If you've been ripping songs and movies to a hard drive, don't panic: the police won't be coming to arrest you. This law makes little sense, but if



entertainment lobby groups get their way, we could see prices of CDs, DVDs and other content go up to make up for the fact we have multiple copies of a song or movie.

What do we think?

Such a levy would be utter nonsense: everyone already copies tracks from CDs to their digital collection, and some software does it automatically when you load the disc, so music labels aren't losing a single penny. If they want consumers to side with them rather than the pirates, record labels and the film industry need to stop punishing those who already pay to listen and watch.

WHAT'S NEW ONLINE

10 brilliant things to do on the web this fortnight

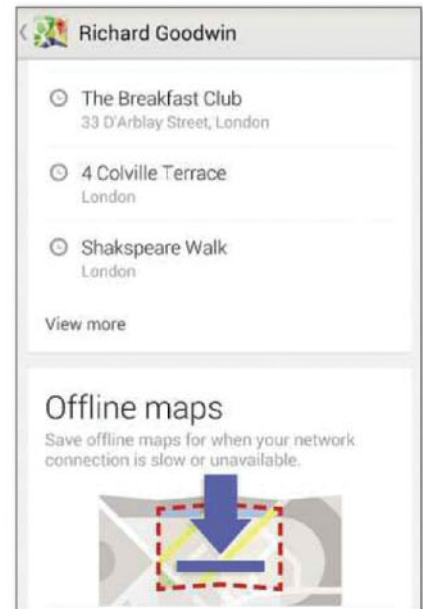
Save Google Maps to use offline on your mobile device

Google has updated its Maps app for Android and iOS to make it easier to save maps offline to use on your phone and tablet. Now, all you need to do is tap 'Save map to use

offline' in a location info's sheet and name it. You'll be able to find it again by tapping the profile icon next to the top-right search box and scrolling down.

You can also see more information when you use turn-by-turn navigation when connected to the web. The app now shows distance, arrival time and alternative routes. There are new search filters, too, which let you browse restaurants, bars and hotels by opening hours, rating, price and more, similar to the way Yelp works (www.yelp.co.uk/yelpmobile).

Read about the changes in Google's Lat-Long blog (bit.ly/gmaps345) and click either link below to get the app. bit.ly/apple345; bit.ly/android345



Play 'through the keyhole' in Street View

bit.ly/keyhole345

The latest 'guess where you are' Street View game provides a glimpse through a keyhole with four possible options for its location. For example, is this screengrab showing you the British Museum, the Louvre, the Reichstag Building or the National Assembly For Wales building?



Watch old World Cup matches 'live'

bbc.co.uk/worldcup

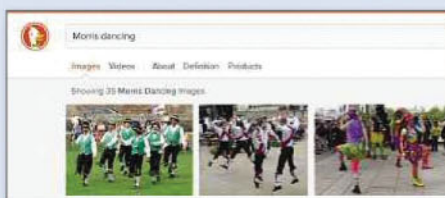
As part of its build-up to the World Cup, the BBC is showing five classic matches from past tournaments online as though they were being broadcast live, starting with the 1966 final between England and West Germany. Each video will be accompanied by text commentary.



Search for images and videos in DuckDuckGo

next.duckduckgo.com

DuckDuckGo, the browser that doesn't track your browsing, has a new beta site which adds elements you'll be familiar with on Google, including video and image search. Read about the changes in this posting on the DuckDuckGo forum: bit.ly/duck345.



Make free video group calls on Skype

bit.ly/skype345

Skype has made video group-calling free on its Windows Desktop, Mac and Xbox One versions. Previously, one of the people in the call needed to have a Skype Premium account.



Shop on Amazon through Twitter

www.amazon.co.uk/AmazonBasket

You can now add items to your Amazon basket, simply by replying to a tweet from a company containing a link to one of its products sold on Amazon. Just include the hashtag **#AmazonBasket**, and that product will be saved, ready for you to buy later. Click the above link first to connect your Amazon account to Twitter. Amazon explains how it works in this video: bit.ly/basket345.

#AmazonBasket

Crop and rotate images in Google Docs

bit.ly/docs345

Google now lets you crop, rotate and add borders to images in Google Docs and Slides. Click the link above to follow Google's instructions.

Government videos and tweets go online

bit.ly/docs345

Videos and tweets from Government departments are now in the National Archives. You can search videos (from 2006) and tweets (from 2008), covering events such as the 2012 Olympics and the Queen's Diamond Jubilee.



5 TO FOLLOW ON TWITTER

@McAfee_Labs

Security news and trends, plus updates on the latest flaws

@BritishPathe

Links to vintage newsreel clips recorded between 1896 and 1976

@WhichConvo

Converse with Paddy Sheen from *Which?* about all your consumer problems.

@GeorgeRRMartin_

Witty comments on the *Game of Thrones* series from the man who wrote the books

@eFestivals

News on who's playing where at this summer's music festivals

Watch Earth from space live

bit.ly/space345

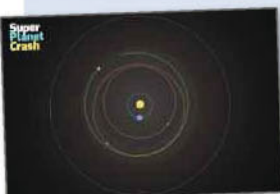
You can get an astronaut's-eye view of Earth by watching NASA's stunning live stream from the International Space Station. The footage switches between four HD cameras every few minutes. You can also hear the radio transmissions between Earth and the astronauts on board.



Build your own solar system

www.stefanom.org/spc

Super Planet Crash is a brilliant new game that challenges you to build a planetary system that will survive for at least 500 years. You have to place objects such as Ice Giants and Dwarf Stars in the system, judging the gravitational pull of each so they don't fly out of orbit. It's a great game of trial and error, though a PhD in astrophysics would come in handy.



FIRST LOOK ZTE Open C

bit.ly/zte345

Anounced on Mozilla's blog on 8 May, the ZTE Open C is the first Firefox OS device to be commercially available in the UK, although it's currently only being sold on eBay. Aimed at first-time smartphone users, the handset costs a staggeringly low £69.99, but if you're expecting something revolutionary, you'll be disappointed.

The price is unarguably remarkable, but the Open C's lacklustre performance and build quality are symptomatic of its entry-level price and hardware. Equipped with a mere 512MB of RAM alongside a 1.2GHz dual-core processor, it will struggle to do many of the things you expect from a smartphone, and the chunky, 1cm-thick body and cheap plastic casing are inescapable reminders of its bargain-basement price.

Many of the phone's vital specifications, including its 4GB of internal storage, represent significant improvements compared to its predecessor, which was primarily aimed at developers building apps for Mozilla's new platform and wasn't even sold in the UK.

However, the Open C just doesn't compare to brilliant Android devices



such as Motorola's Moto G and the Alcatel OneTouch Idol S (winners of our Gold and Bronze awards in Issue 343's smartphones Group Test, bit.ly/webuser343). While the Open C leaves a lot to be desired, the Motorola and Alcatel phones are strong all-rounders, available for less than £100, and provide excellent screens with little compromise as a result of their very low price. Quite simply, another £30 will buy you a much more capable handset.

Unfortunately, the most interesting thing about the Open C is its operating system, but we may have to wait a while longer until we see a Firefox OS phone (or tablet) that can make an impact in such a competitive Android market.

BEST NEW WEBSITES

We review this fortnight's best new and relaunched websites

Webuser SITE OF THE FORTNIGHT

GARDENING

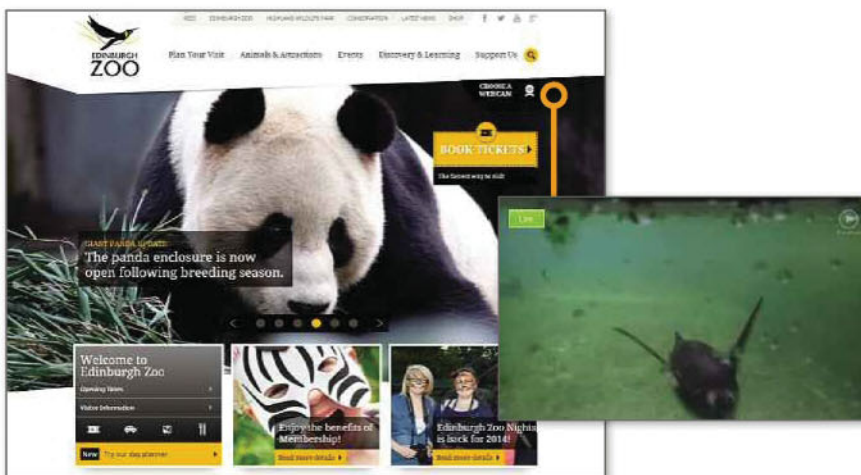
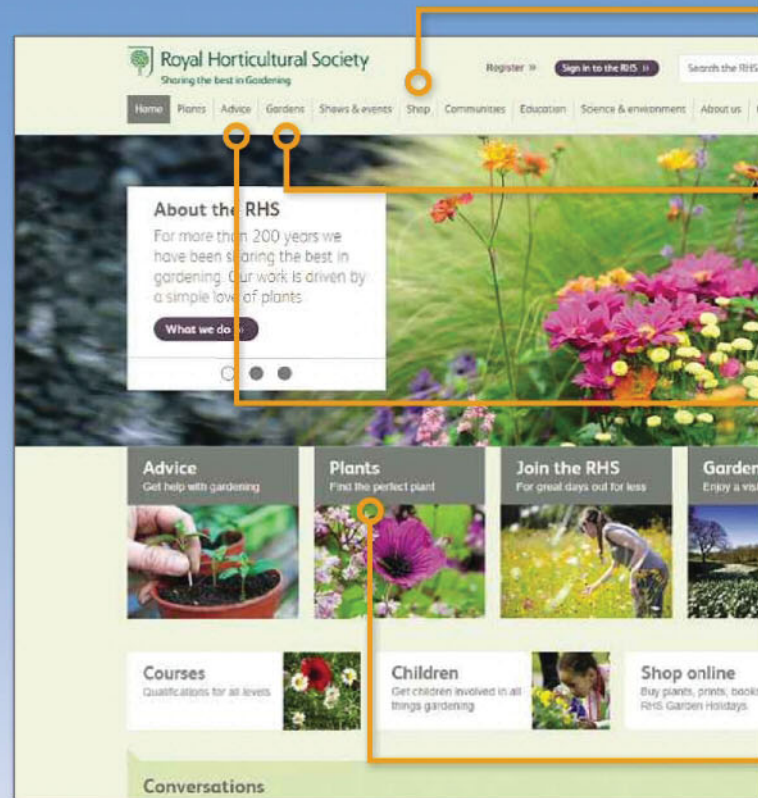
RELAUNCH

Royal Horticultural Society

www.rhs.org.uk

The Royal Horticultural Society (RHS) has spruced up its website in time for summer, with a fresh, modern design that's spacious and visually engaging. Popular sections such as Advice, Plants and Gardens are now more prominent on the homepage, along with the essential list of 'jobs to do' in your garden this month. The smooth drop-down menus make it easy to access sub-sections and info about RHS events and membership, and the new layout allows for larger photos and embedded videos, and comments from users on the homepage, which increases the community feel. Though images were slow to load on our phone, there were some broken links and the fortnightly podcasts could be more clearly flagged, but overall it's a blooming marvellous effort.

Our rating



WILDLIFE

Edinburgh Zoo

www.edinburghzoo.org.uk

Animal lovers will adore Edinburgh Zoo's relaunched site, which uses huge, high-quality photos to promote its star attractions including pandas, penguins and meerkats. The smarter, simpler design displays perfectly on any screen and provides speedy access to visitor information and online ticket-booking. Highlights include the fact-packed animal glossary; details of events such as Edinburgh Zoo Nights; and behind-the-scenes videos. Our favourite feature remains the webcams, which take you inside Tian Tian the giant panda's enclosure and underwater with the penguins. It all adds up to a fantastic showcase for a fascinating place.

Our rating

RELAUNCH



TECHNOLOGY

3D Printshow

3dprintshow.com

Even if you're not attending London's 3D Printshow in September, it's worth visiting the website for insider info about 3D printing. The Look section has photos of 3D creations, including jewellery, art and dinosaurs, while Watch features videos of 3D-printing experts. There's also an interesting blog that provides news and articles from the industry, including reviews of the latest hardware and interviews with designers. The site is easy to navigate, if rather shouty in tone, and if you decide to go to the show, you can now buy tickets online, priced from £20.

Our rating

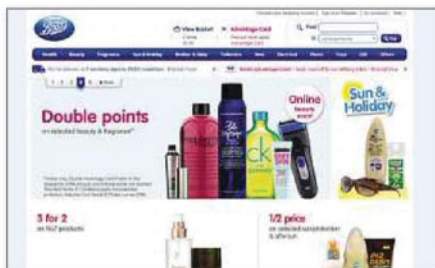
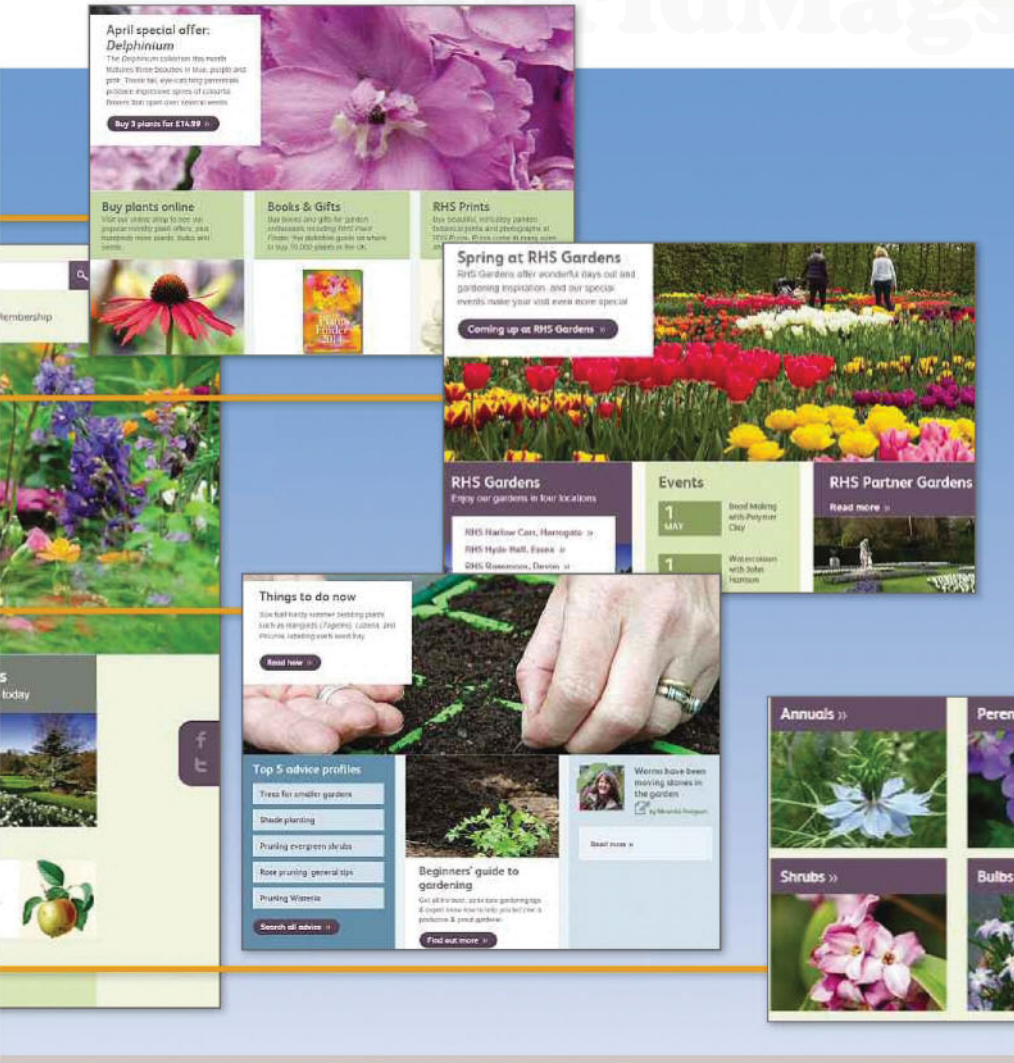
RELAUNCH



RATINGS GUIDE

- 5** Superb. Impossible to fault in terms of design, content and features. Bookmark it now!
- 4** Very good. Combines a smart design with appealing content. Definitely worth a visit
- 3** Good. Lacks some functionality. Have a look if the subject interests you

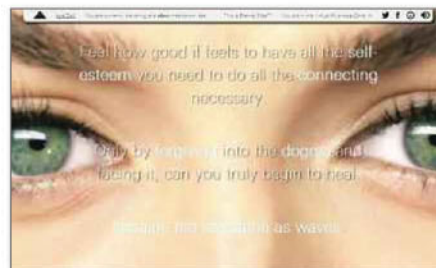
Web User looks at hundreds of websites, but only those we award three stars or higher appear in Best New Websites



SHOPPING **NEW** **Boots International** www.international.boots.com

Brits living, working and taking long holidays abroad can now order health-and-beauty home comforts from Boots online. The international version of the store delivers to 19 EU countries within seven days for a flat rate of £9.99, with all prices handily provided in sterling. The site looks almost identical to the UK one, though some sections are sparser, and sells a similar range of products. The main exception is the pharmacy prescription service, which Boots isn't permitted to offer overseas. Still, it's sure to prove useful for ex-pats who only trust Boots-own products.

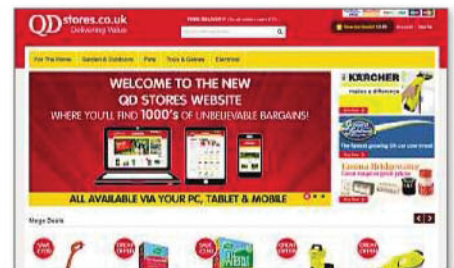
Our rating ★★★★★



RELAXATION **NEW** **Eternal Bliss** relaxinfinity.com

Red Bull isn't usually associated with a calm state of mind, but its Eternal Bliss site is described as "the most relaxing experience on the internet". It's a guided meditation exercise that combines soothing music and hypnotic imagery, such as blinking eyes and waves lapping on the shore, with scrolling instructions for achieving the promised bliss. You can choose how long your session lasts, from one minute to 'infinity', and click to change words you don't like. It's New Age fluff really, but nicely done: "Shift out of the river and into the understanding". Well, quite.

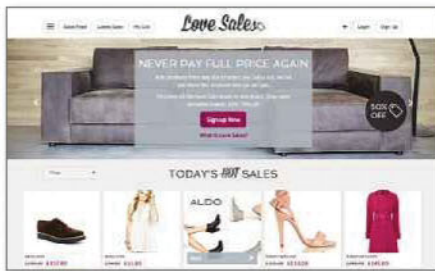
Our rating ★★★★★



SHOPPING **RELAUNCH** **QD Stores** www.qdstores.co.uk

The discount homeware store previously only sold a limited range of products online, but it has significantly expanded its stock to take its bargains beyond the East of England to the whole country. It's a clean, colourful site that works well on mobile devices and organises thousands of items into just five main categories, including Garden & Outdoors and Electrical. Product details are fairly basic but helpfully include stock information and a good-sized photo. Best of all, prices are low across the board, although you need to spend £75 to qualify for free delivery.

Our rating ★★★★★



SHOPPING

Love Sales

www.lovesales.com

Formerly called Stuffster, this splendid shopping site ensures you'll never pay full price again by bringing together the best deals from your favourite shops in one place. Select your favourite brands to create a sales feed of the latest discounts, then use the browser bookmarklet to set up price-drop alerts for products you spot online. The new Pinterest-style layout makes browsing your feed a breeze, and lets you filter items by gender, price and keyword. Alternatively, you can explore all current sales and see the site's pick of the bargains. It's the perfect bookmark for shopaholics on a budget.

Our rating



RELAUNCH



UTILITIES

Be An Energy Shopper

www.goenergyshopping.co.uk

Energy regulator Ofgem has launched this site to celebrate its success in making gas and electricity bills "simpler, clearer and fairer". It provides essential advice about shopping around for a cheaper energy deal and explains what's changed, from the scrapping of expensive 'dead' tariffs to personalised savings info in your bills. This good news is reflected by the site's bold, colourful design, which at times seems a little patronising, but also presents the content in a concise, easy-to-understand manner, with links to useful resources, answers to frequently asked questions and even a jargon buster.

Our rating



NEW



TECHNOLOGY

Devolo Wi-Fi Clinic

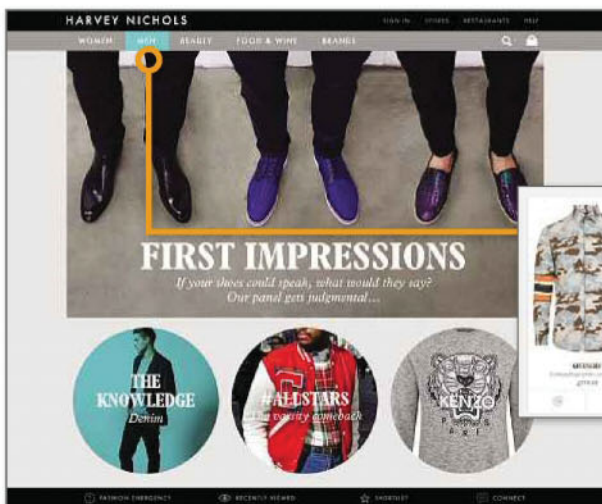
www.wifi-clinic.co.uk

If you're suffering from weak Wi-Fi or impenetrable blackspots, head to Devolo's Wi-Fi Clinic for a diagnosis and a cure. The design concept plays with medical imagery and includes sections called 'Wi-Fi check-up', 'First aid' and 'Pharmacy'. True, much of the advice is simply to buy a Devolo dLAN 500 Wi-Fi kit, but there are also useful tips for boosting your range, an explanation of how dLAN technology works and even a *Wi-Fi Health* magazine. However, it's the ingenious presentation that's most likely to persuade you that Devolo's prescription "will make your Wi-Fi life worth living again".

Our rating



NEW



SHOPPING

Harvey Nichols

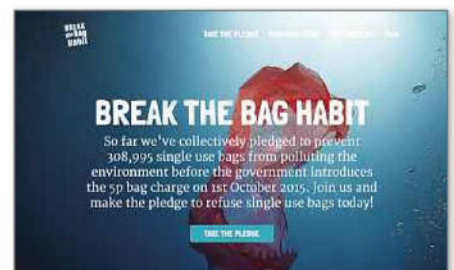
www.harveynichols.com

We wouldn't dream of paying £300 for a shirt, but we like Harvey Nichols' swish if not especially luxurious makeover. As well as improved navigation through colour-coded categories and tidier menus, the site makes it easy to browse clothes by size, colour, brand and style, and the larger product photos look fantastic. An Outfit option suggests other items to "complete the look" and there's a 'Click-to-try' service that lets you buy clothes online and then try them in-store with the help of a "style advisor". Unlike similar sites, the magazine-style elements such as fashion tips don't get in the way, so you can just shop until your wallet says stop!

Our rating



RELAUNCH



ENVIRONMENT

Break the Bag Habit

www.breakthebaghabit.org.uk

This simple but effective site has been launched by a coalition of environmental charities, including Surfers Against Sewage and Keep Britain Tidy. Its aim is to stop single-use bags littering the country by encouraging us to refuse plastic carrier bags in shops and pledge our support to the campaign online. Although it consists of just a single page, Break the Bag Habit strengthens its message with superb photos of bags portrayed as jellyfish and other deadly sea creatures, which you can share on Twitter. There are also news stories and statistics about bag pollution and shocking photo evidence.

Our rating



NEW



LANGUAGE

Busuuwww.busuu.com

With 40 million users, Busuu claims to be the world's largest language-learning community. You can master one of 12 foreign tongues, including Chinese, Polish and Arabic, through the site's "snack-based" courses, which now consist of shorter units that are quicker to complete. The colourful redesign uses clearer icons for tailoring your learning experience to your needs and connecting with native speakers to hone your skills. Some features, such as grammar exercises, are still only available with Busuu's Premium membership, which costs £12.99 per month or £59.99 per year, but you still get plenty for free, including updated apps for Android and iOS.

Our rating

RELAUNCH

★★★★★

ALSO NEW

OpenTablewww.opentable.co.uk

The excellent restaurant-booking site Toptable has changed its name to that of its parent company.

The Travel Lotterythetravellottery.co.uk

At this new monthly draw site, you can win up to £5,000 for a £2 stake, with 50p going to charity.

Recycle Your Headphonesrecycleyourheadphones.com

Trade in your old or broken cans and get up to 45 per cent off a new pair from CYW by Urbanz.

Just Writewww.tyjustwrite.com

Sign up with this creative-writing community to download a free mini book to get you started.

Barratts Shoeswww.barratts.co.uk

The redesigned footwear store sells more brands and features "must-have shoes" on its homepage.

**KATE'S WEB CALENDAR**

Kate Russell's top websites and apps for the next 14 days

WATCH THE HEINEKEN CUP RUGBY FINALwww.ercrugby.com

European Club Rugby enjoys one of the highlights of the season on 24 May with the 19th Heineken Cup Final at the Millennium Stadium in Cardiff. This year, reigning champs Toulon will battle it out with my local team Saracens, so I'll be rooting for them to bring home the cup. Head to the official website for a full report on every stage of the knockout series so far, including photos, interviews and tournament statistics. You'll find team and club information, along with a video link showing all the highlights and behind-the-scenes action from the tunnel.

FOLLOW A CHEESE ROLL DOWN A HILLwww.cheese-rolling.co.uk

If you like to see grown men and women tumbling down a very steep hill in pursuit of a 9lb Double Gloucester cheese wheel, 26 May is the day for you. The Cooper's Hill Cheese Roll harks back at least to the 15th Century and the cheesy quarry can reach speeds of up to 70mph, posing a genuine risk of injury to both competitors and spectators. Like the event, the website is decidedly old fashioned, with an in-your-face green Comic Sans MS text, but it contains loads of information, photos and videos of crazy people chasing a cheese down a hill, and that kind of content is just priceless.

**DIVE INTO WORLD OCEANS DAY 2014**worldoceansday.org

World Oceans Day on 5 June asks us all to ponder the conservation issues surrounding this most vital of our ecological resources. A few events happening around the UK are listed on the official site, but if you can't get to any of them, there's plenty to enjoy online. One of my favourite ocean webcams is on the Monterey Bay Aquarium website (www.montereybayaquarium.org). The live cams run from 3pm to 3am GMT, with reruns screened during the downtime. There's also a well-stocked podcast library to help you better understand the complexities of life beneath the ocean waves. ○

Kate presents Webscape for BBC Click and blogs at workingthecloud.biz

KEEP YOUR PC SAFE

Expert tips, latest threats and jargon-free info

SECURITY Q&A

Your questions answered by security specialists.
This issue's expert: Danvers Baillieu, Chief Operating Officer of Hide My Ass! (www.hidemypass.com)



Q Are VPN companies legally obliged to hand over user data to the government if requested?

Stuart Dunlop, via email

A The answer depends on where the VPN provider is based. In some countries, the police can demand pretty much whatever they want, but the UK has strict rules governing how the authorities can obtain data from communication businesses (including VPN providers). The UK police and some other authorities have the power to issue notices under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA) for communications data, but in other cases, such as a request from a foreign government, there has to be a court process, so a judge gets involved. Of course, if the data has already been erased, it cannot be handed over.

Q Can I use Hide My Ass on my phone and tablet?

Jason Berger, Twitter

A Yes, you can. We launched our iOS app last year (bit.ly/hma345) to make it even easier to set up Hide My Ass Pro VPN on your iPhone or iPad. Our Android app has been developed with the help

of our Beta community on Google Plus and was launched on 19 May.



Q Do VPNs also protect against hackers stealing your data?

Colin Chapman, via email

A A VPN encrypts the internet connection you use, so it plays a vital role in protecting the data you send and receive. The Head of Europol's cybercrime centre, Troels Oerting, recently stated, "Everything you send through the Wi-Fi is potentially at risk". Using a VPN protects you from hackers stealing your data, identity, passwords and ultimately money.

Q Will a VPN slow down my browsing?

Caroline Gilbert, via email

A No, using a VPN shouldn't significantly slow your browsing. We continually invest in our VPN network to ensure our users get the best possible connection by providing access to one of the largest global VPN networks in the world, with more servers in more countries than anyone else.

Email us your security questions at webuser@dennis.co.uk

DECODED | Security jargon explained

Sefnit

Sefnit is a family of malware that can allow backdoor access to your PC, download further threats and use your web connection to defraud advertisers by generating rogue ad clicks. It's been around since 2011, but recently returned to the headlines when Microsoft blamed it for a threefold increase in worldwide malware infections (bit.ly/sefnit345). Some versions of Sefnit can be used to hijack Bing, Google and Yahoo search results. It's usually downloaded by other malware, bundled with other software and spread through peer-to-peer file-sharing networks.



SECURITY ALERT!

Ransomware hits Android

Malware that demands a ransom fee to unlock your Android device has been discovered by security researchers. The virus, called Koler, accuses you of viewing banned pornography and breaking copyright laws, and asks you to pay \$300 to avoid the associated sentences. Koler is less sophisticated than similar PC ransomware and does not have the permissions to affect your device in the ways it claims.

bit.ly/koler345

Bitly logins compromised

The link-shortening website Bitly posted an urgent security update warning all its users to change their login details. The firm was not clear about what might have caused the security breach but advised users to "change your API key and OAuth token, reset your password, and reconnect your Facebook and Twitter accounts". Bitly stated that it had no reason to believe any accounts had been accessed without permission.

bit.ly/bitly345

PATCH TUESDAY: May

Microsoft put an end to speculation that there might be further security updates for Windows XP, when none appeared among the 13 May bulletins. The update was the largest so far of 2014, with eight patches included, two of which were given Microsoft's highest threat rating of 'critical'.

Four of the fixes affected Windows 8.1 and it had initially been thought that only systems with the Windows 8.1 Update would receive the security patches. However, Microsoft extended the deadline to upgrade until 10 June, meaning all Windows 8.1 users could apply the patches. The bulletins included updates for Microsoft Office and Internet Explorer (see our story in Need to Know, page 9).

bit.ly/patch345

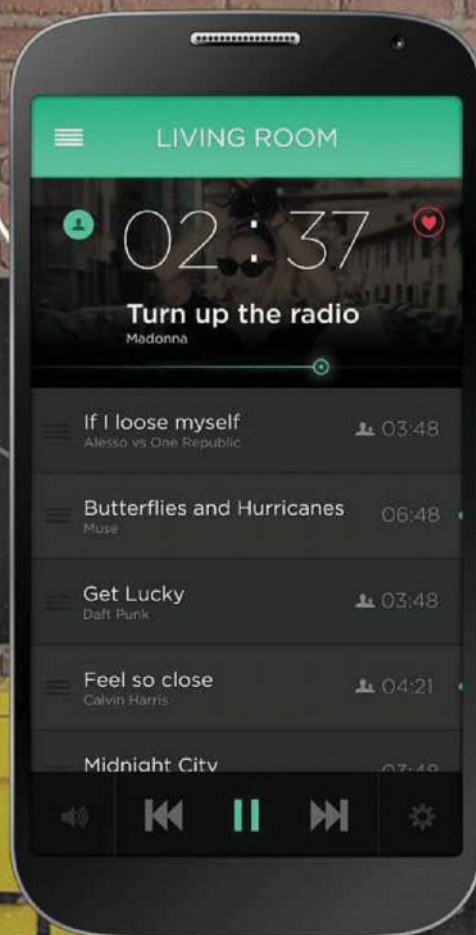




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..SPECIFICATIONS

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(AP / Hotspot mode supported)

Music Formats

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Music Streaming Services

To Be Confirmed
(Pending licensing)

ROCKI App versions

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(HTML5 for Windows Phone, PC & Mac)

Included

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RCA Audio Cable, USB Charging Cable,
USB Charger

Connectors

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SCAN ME

BUILD A BETTER SITE

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WEB DESIGN & HOSTING Q&A

Your questions answered by professional experts.

This issue: Dr Andy Williams, SEO Expert and author (ezSEONews.com)



Q Are Google's rankings for search results based only on a site's meta tags?

Matt McCallion, Facebook

A Google might check meta tags to spot spammers and penalise them, but it doesn't use them at all to influence rankings. There are hundreds of factors involved in how Google ranks a site, including what's on the page, how often it is shared, what other sites link to it and the authority of the site or author. Because Google doesn't want rankings manipulated by webmasters, it is constantly adding to and refining its algorithm to make it harder to rig the system.

Q I have a WordPress website that automatically receives content from Twitter and gets over 1,000 hits per week, yet it has a Page

Rank (PR) of zero. My other site has a PR of 3 but gets hardly any hits. Shouldn't the popular site have the better PR?

Count Zero, Web User Forums

A PR is not a measure of a site's popularity or its volume of website traffic, nor is it influenced by these factors. The PR of a web page is created and influenced by the pages that link to it. All pages have some PR, and when they link to another page, they are effectively transferring some of their PR "power" to that page. If page A has a PR 4, and links to page B, it is very possible that page B will end up with a PR 3, because of the power of that link. The higher the PR of a page, the more power it passes on and the more it will raise the PR of pages it links to. Be aware that Google does not want you to know the PR of your pages, so tools that claim to measure PR can be wrong or out of date.

<TOP TIPS>

Webmaster tips on Google+

Google+ isn't the most popular social network but it's one of the best places to go for information about Google's tools and services. You can access a host of useful stuff for webmasters by subscribing to Google's recently launched Webmaster channel at google.com/+googlewebmasters, which contains a handy stream of web-building information, including Matt Cutts' useful Q&A videos.

Stand out with a new font

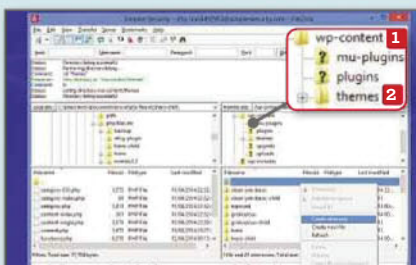
You can give your site a distinct look by using a different font. Font Squirrel (www.fontsquirrel.com) hosts a collection of fonts you can download and use, in a range of styles. All the fonts are free to use, even on money-making sites, but it's worth checking the exact terms for each one, because some carry restrictions.

Deal of the fortnight

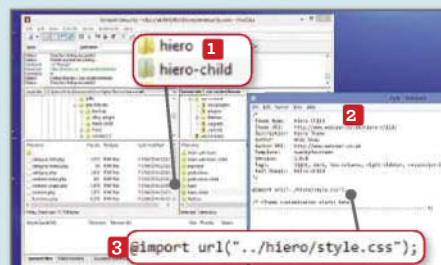
Hosting UK (www.hostinguk.net) is offering 20 per cent off its web-hosting packages for new customers. Use the promo code **HELLO** at the checkout. Prices start from £2.95 per month.

MINI WORKSHOP | Retain WordPress template changes by making a child theme

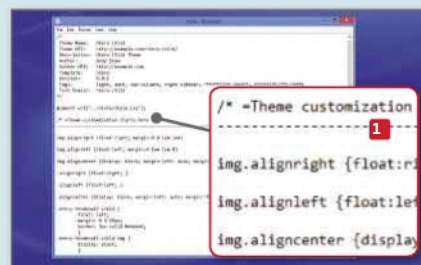
WordPress: www.wordpress.org | 10 mins | WordPress.org website



1 Using themes in WordPress is a great way to get started, but any changes you make can be lost if the theme is updated by its author. Saving your changes in a child theme avoids this problem. Use your FTP software to access your site and create a new folder in wp-content/themes. **1**



2 Give the folder the same name as the parent theme with '-child' on the end. **1** Copy the text in the first grey box from bit.ly/child345, paste it to a text editor and save it as style.css. Make any changes you like to the information at the top **2** and change the '@import' line so that it points to the parent theme. **3**



3 This instructs the child theme to load the CSS code from the parent. Put any changes you want to make below the dotted line **1** and they'll over-ride the parent theme. However, you won't lose them if the parent theme updates. Upload this file to the child folder using FTP.



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GROUP TEST

We test and compare the latest products



Laptops

Andy Shaw tests five sub-£500 laptops running Windows 8

The booming tablet market has caused sales of desktop PCs to plummet, but it seems that Windows laptops remain as popular as ever.

In this Group Test, we've looked at five Windows 8 laptops that cost £500 or less, to see how they compare for performance, ease of use and value for money.

HOW WE TESTED

We put all the laptops through their paces using our Windows benchmark suite, which gives an overall score based on a series of actions including office tasks, image editing and video encoding. We also ran a demo of 3D game Dirt Showdown, and timed how long it took for the battery to drain completely from a full charge.

WEB USER AWARDS

Webuser
GOLD
AWARD

The best product/service in its category

Webuser
SILVER
AWARD

Good, but just misses out on top billing

Webuser
BRONZE
AWARD

Pretty good, but with some shortcomings

ASUS X552CL | £429.99

www.ebuyer.com

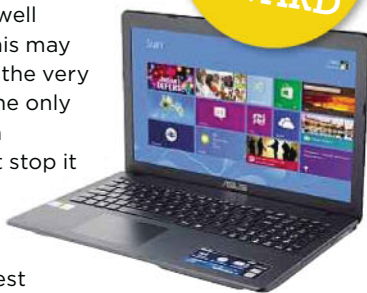
FEATURES ★★★★★ PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
EASE OF USE ★★★★★ VALUE FOR MONEY ★★★★★

Webuser
GOLD
AWARD

The Asus X552CL came in well under our £500 budget. This may be because it doesn't have the very latest components and is the only laptop in this test without a touchscreen, but this didn't stop it from scoring highly in our tests.

Its overall score of 45 in our Windows benchmark test put it significantly ahead of the other laptops in this group. It also did well in our 3D gaming test, getting a frame rate of 32.4fps (frames per second), which is nearly twice the frame rate of the second-place Lenovo IdeaPad Flex 15D. However, its battery life was disappointing, and lasted just three hours and two minutes, which made it the worst performing battery of all the laptops we tested.

If you usually have access to a power supply, or don't mind having to frequently charge your laptop, the battery life is really the only thing wrong with the Asus X552CL and is more than made up for by its fantastic performance and low price.



VERDICT

★★★★★

The performance of the Asus X552CL in our Windows and gaming tests far exceeded what we would expect from a laptop of this price. Only its battery life stopped it from getting top marks, so if you want a laptop to travel around with, you should choose a different model.

ACER ASPIRE V5572P TOUCH

£499.99 | www.staples.co.uk

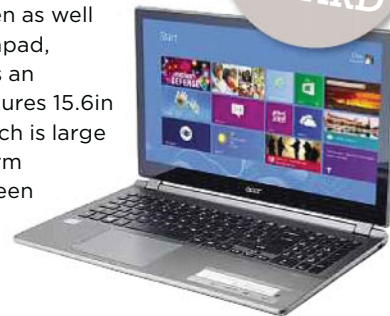
FEATURES ★★★★★ PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
EASE OF USE ★★★★★ VALUE FOR MONEY ★★★☆☆

Webuser
SILVER
AWARD

If you want a touchscreen as well as a keyboard and touchpad, Acer's Aspire V5-572P is an excellent choice. It measures 15.6in across the diagonal, which is large enough to let you perform gestures and tap on-screen buttons with ease, and although the screen quality isn't brilliant, it's certainly adequate for a touchscreen on a laptop of this price.

The laptop is only 23mm thick when closed and weighs just 2.2kg, so it's very portable. In our battery test, it lasted the longest of all the laptops in this group, and kept going for seven hours and 52 minutes.

It performed well in our Windows benchmark tests, coming second behind our Gold Award-winner with an overall score of 34, and was joint second in the 3D games test, although the Asus X552CL's performance was well ahead of this laptop's 17.6fps.



VERDICT

★★★★★

With a great battery and a slim case, this is an ideal laptop for carrying around with you. It isn't as fast as the Asus X552CL, particularly with games, but it has a large touchscreen and is a solid second-place option if you need a good battery life.



ASUS VIVOBOOK X550CA | £429.99

www.pcworld.co.uk

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

Webuser
BRONZE
AWARD

The Asus VivoBook X550CA folds to a very slim 22mm when shut, though at 2.6kg, it's the heaviest of all the laptops reviewed here.

Its best performance was in our Windows benchmark test, where it came third with a score of 32. It fell to fourth place in the 3D games test, with a frame rate of 15.5fps, but this is only just behind the faster Acer and Lenovo models. However, it's a long way behind Asus's similarly priced X552CL. The battery only lasted for four hours and 18 minutes in our tests, which isn't very impressive but still beats the X552CL to fourth place.

Its 15.6in touchscreen is fine for a PC of this price, but its contrast and black levels aren't particularly good. All in all, it's an adequate laptop for most jobs, but the other award winners outclass it overall.

VERDICT

★★★★★

Third place out of five is about right for this laptop, which is average in almost every respect. Its battery life and weight mean it's not ideal for carrying around, but it's an affordable option for a stay-at-home touchscreen laptop.



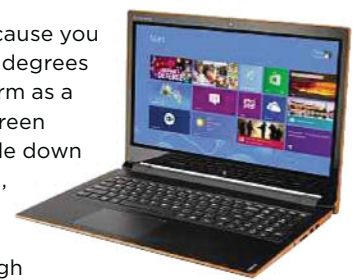
LENOVO IDEAPAD FLEX 15D

£499.95 | www.johnlewis.com

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

Lenovo's Flex is so named because you can bend back its screen 300 degrees and make the keyboard perform as a sort of stand, making touchscreen access easier. Flipping it upside down like this disables the keyboard, so you don't need to worry about random key presses if you sit it on your knee, although we found using it like this made the screen a bit wobbly.

The Flex came joint second in our 3D gaming test with a frame rate of 17.6fps, though the cheaper Gold Award-winning Asus X552CL performed significantly better. However, its Windows performance tied for last place with the other Lenovo laptop, achieving an overall score of 31. Battery life was good, lasting seven hours and 13 minutes, though solid battery performances from the Acer and the other Lenovo device pushed it into third place.



VERDICT

★★★★★

If you want to use your laptop mainly via the touchscreen, the Flex's superior 300-degree hinge might win you over. However, the Award-winning laptops in this test showed better performance in most other respects.

LENOVO IDEAPAD YOGA 2 11 | £499

www.very.co.uk

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

Lenovo's IdeaPad Yoga 2 11 is a very different proposition to the other laptops in this test. It has a significantly smaller screen, at just 11.6in, and weighs just 1.4kg. It also has a 360-degree hinge, so the screen can flip round and be held like a thick (17mm) tablet.

However, this reduced size and increased flexibility has come at the price of performance. We could only run our 3D gaming test after turning off all the graphical bells and whistles, and it still only managed 21.3fps with all the detail settings down. It also came joint last in the Windows performance tests, though its ability to keep up with Lenovo's other laptop in this test deserves credit.

As you'd hope with a device clearly designed to be so portable, the battery life is good. It came a close second to the Acer laptop, lasting for seven hours and 36 minutes.

VERDICT

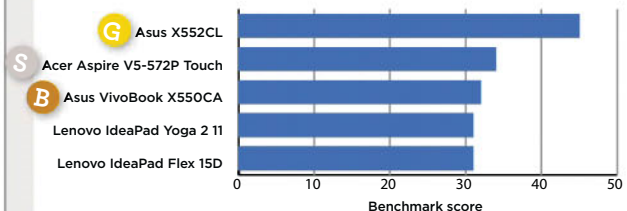
★★★★★

If you want both a laptop and a tablet, this hybrid device could be ideal. However, what you gain from its two-in-one form factor, you lose in Windows and gaming performance, though its battery should keep you going all day.

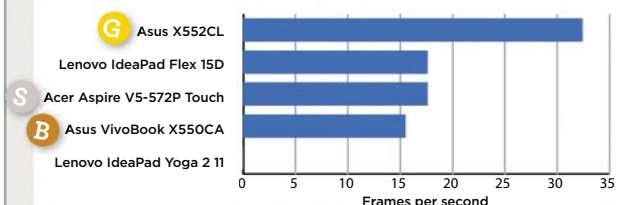


TEST-RESULTS CHARTS

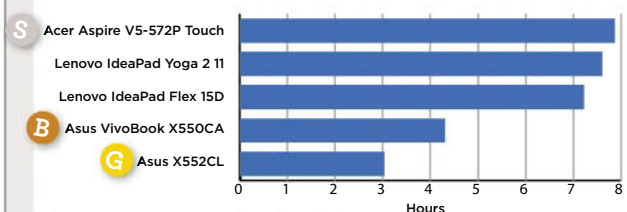
Overall Windows performance



3D Performance



Battery life





COMPANY	Asus	Acer	Asus	Lenovo	Lenovo
MODEL	X552CL	Aspire V5-572P Touch	VivoBook X550CA	IdeaPad Flex 15D	IdeaPad Yoga 2 11
PRICE	£429.99	£499.99	£429.99	£499.95	£499
WEBSITE	www.asus.com	www.acer.co.uk	www.asus.com	www.lenovo.co.uk	www.lenovo.co.uk
BUY FROM	www.ebuyer.com	www.staples.co.uk	www.pcwORLD.co.uk	www.johnlewis.com	www.very.co.uk
PROCESSOR	Intel Core i5-3337U 1.8GHz dual-core	Intel Core i3-3227U 1.9GHz dual-core	Intel Core i3-3217U 1.8GHz dual-core	AMD Radeon HD 8400	Intel Pentium N3520 2.2GHz quad-core
MEMORY	6GB	4GB	4GB	8GB	4GB
SCREEN SIZE	15.6in widescreen LCD	15.6in widescreen LCD touchscreen	15.6in widescreen LCD touchscreen	15.6in widescreen LCD touchscreen	11.6in widescreen IPS touchscreen
RESOLUTION	1,366 x 768 pixels	1,366 x 768 pixels	1,366 x 768 pixels	1,366 x 768 pixels	1,366 x 768 pixels
GRAPHICS ADAPTER	Nvidia GeForce GT 710M	Intel HD Graphics 4000	Intel HD Graphics 4000	AMD Radeon HD 8400	Intel HD Graphics
GRAPHICS OUTPUT	HDMI, VGA	HDMI, VGA (via adapter)	HDMI, VGA	HDMI	Mini HDMI
GRAPHICS MEMORY	1,024MB dedicated	128MB shared	128MB shared	256MB shared	128MB shared
SOUND	Realtek HD Audio	Realtek HD Audio	Realtek HD Audio	Realtek HD Audio	Realtek HD Audio
POINTING DEVICE	Touchpad	Touchpad, touchscreen	Touchpad, touchscreen	Touchpad, touchscreen	Touchpad, touchscreen
HARD DRIVE	750GB	750GB	750GB	1TB	500GB
OPTICAL DRIVE	DVD+/-RW +/-DL	None	DVD+/-RW +/-DL	None	None
USB PORTS	3	3	3	3	2
NETWORKING	1 x 10/100/1,000 Ethernet, 802.11n	1 x 10/100/1,000 Ethernet, 802.11n	1 x 10/100/1,000 Ethernet, 802.11n	1 x 10/100 Ethernet, 802.11n	802.11n
BLUETOOTH	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
MEMORY-CARD READER	SDXC	SDXC	SDXC	SDXC, MMC	SDXC, MMC
OTHER PORTS	Headphone, microphone	Headphone, microphone	Headphone, microphone	Headphone, microphone	Headphone, microphone
OPERATING SYSTEM	Windows 8	Windows 8	Windows 8	Windows 8.1	Windows 8 Pro
RESTORE OPTION	Restore partition	Restore partition	Restore partition	Restore partition	Restore partition
DIMENSIONS	348 x 241 x 31mm	381 x 255 x 23mm	380 x 266 x 22mm	380 x 272 x 22mm	298 x 206 x 17mm
WEIGHT	2.4kg	2.2kg	2.6kg	2.3kg	1.4kg
WARRANTY	One-year return-to-base	One-year return-to-base	One-year return-to-base	Two-year return-to-base	Two-year return-to-base

OUR VERDICT

All the award-winning laptops in this test have both good and bad points. We gave the Gold Award to the Asus X552CL, which was one of the cheapest laptops in the group, because it performed the best in both our software performance tests. Its Achilles' heel is its limited battery life, which means it's not great for long journeys.

For a better battery, go for the Silver Award-winning Acer Aspire V5-572P Touch. This doesn't offer the same performance speeds as the Gold-winning Asus, but it's much better for carrying around. It also has a touchscreen.

We gave the Bronze Award to the Asus VivoBook X550CA. If you definitely want a touchscreen but your budget doesn't stretch to £500, this is a good alternative, though its relatively short battery life means you can't stray too far from a power socket.



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PRODUCT TEST

We test the latest hardware and software

Synology DS414j NAS drive

Upgrade to this advanced four-bay NAS drive to get loads of storage and an amazing set of tools. **Andy Shaw** investigates

We've looked at plenty of one- and two-bay NAS (network attached storage) drives in previous issues of *Web User*, but if you're serious about fully backing up all your data, or you have a lot of large files such as movies that you want to store, then you may be ready to step up to a four-drive

system. These don't come cheap – you could buy another PC for the combined price of the chassis and the full complement of drives, but you don't have to fill all its bays to start off with, and you might already have some compatible drives available that can get you started.

Synology doesn't sell the DS414j with drives included, though some retailers will pre-install them. However, it's easy to install your own drives, which have to be 3.5in or 2.5in with SATA connections.

Opening the NAS requires you to undo four thumbscrews on the rear of the casing. Inside are trays designed to house your drives. Slide one out, screw your hard drive into the tray, then slide it back in. Now you can connect it to your network via Ethernet and plug it into a power socket.

Typing a special web address will allow the PCs on your network to find the NAS; provide a shortcut you can drop onto your Desktop for quick access (though it also appeared in our network devices in Windows); and let you create a secure account to easily get access to the NAS from any browser.

The scope of Synology's software is what lifts this device above and beyond cheaper rivals. When you connect to the NAS with your browser, you access its operating system, which is a like a cut-down version of Windows and includes a



control panel where you can set up user accounts and network settings.

You can also install a selection of apps, including back-up tools (which include RAID options, so you can use the NAS drive's extensive capacity to guard against individual drives failing), Dropbox-like online storage, media-server software and an app to turn the DS414j into a web-based download station.

You can even set up your own web server and host a WordPress website.

Some of these tools are available on other similar devices, but the app-based approach of the DS414j means you only need to install the ones you want to use, which allows you to get the full range of tools you need with no unnecessary clutter, and should keep you going for the next few years.

PRODUCT INFO

SYNOLOGY DS414J

www.synology.com

Price: £258.76 (without drives)
(from www.ilgs.net)

SPECIFICATIONS

- Dual-core 1.2GHz CPU
- 4 x drive bays
- Compatible with 3.5in/2.5in SATA(III)/SATA(II) drives
- Maximum capacity 20TB (4 x 5TB drives)
- 1 x Gigabit Ethernet port
- 1 x USB 2, 1 x USB 3 ports
- 230 x 184 x 168mm
- 2.21kg
- Two-year warranty

FOR

- Four drive bays offer vast amounts of storage
- Sophisticated apps allow the NAS to perform lots of useful functions

AGAINST

- Expensive if all you need is a bit more storage

OUR VERDICT



A four-bay NAS drive might seem excessive and it doesn't come cheap. If you live in a house with multiple PCs, however, and you want complete back-ups of everything, it makes sense to choose a device that grows with you, and the DS414j certainly has

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

enough power and useful tools to make it an invaluable addition to any home network.



Prestigio MultiCenter Mini

Andy Shaw tests a stick-like mini-computer, which turns your TV into an Android device

Smart TVs may come with all the latest online tools built in, but many of us are missing out because we're still stuck with a 'dumb' old-fashioned telly. The Prestigio MultiCenter Mini aims to bring smart functions to your TV via an HDMI socket. This small device, only slightly bigger than a USB memory drive, is a mini computer that runs a version of Android you can control on the big screen.

Unlike Google's Chromecast, this doesn't have to accompany a tablet or phone, but runs its own version of Android and comes with a simple remote control. However, if you want to link it to another device, you can download Android or iOS apps to provide more options.

Whereas the Chromecast comes with a limited number of UK entertainment apps that have been specifically chosen to work well with it, the Multicenter Mini has none. But because it runs Android, it should do anything you can do on your phone or tablet. At least, that's the theory.

In practice, we were disappointed. Setting up the Prestigio is tortuous. Entering passwords and setting up user accounts with the on-screen keyboard and remote control is tedious work, especially compared to the simplicity of the Chromecast.

Once it's up and running, things improve. You get a typical Android screen on

The MultiCenter Mini plugs straight into an HDMI socket on your TV



your TV, with banks of apps to click and launch, including Google's Play Store. This can be used to download videos direct to the device, and it works well. The device also has a memory card slot, for storing apps and video. Streaming, however, is less successful. Videos we watched through YouTube were low resolution and didn't play smoothly. We thought the device's Android operating system might help us watch catch-up TV from the BBC and commercial channels, beating the Chromecast's small selection of built-in apps, but the BBC iPlayer defaults to the phone app, which is low resolution and has to download content in advance, while the ITV and Channel 4 players didn't work properly, which was very disappointing.

The mobile apps turn your

phone or tablet into a remote control, which improves on the supplied remote but is still far from perfect. You can set it to mouse, keyboard (handy for typing in usernames and passwords) or touch. The latter lets you swipe the screen, which gives better control over the many apps designed for touch. However, you can't scroll with the mouse or accurately click with the touch control, so we had to keep switching between swipe and mouse mode. The apps can also 'cast' photos, music and video from your device to the screen, which works well.

PRODUCT INFO

PRESTIGIO MULTICENTER MINI

www.prestigio.com

Price: £44

(from www.play.com)

SPECIFICATIONS

- ARM Cortex-A9 1.5GHz dual-core processor
- 1GB memory
- 4GB storage
- 802.11b/g/n Wi-Fi
- HDMI and USB 2 interfaces
- Android 4.2
- 90 x 34 x 16mm
- 35g

FOR

- Get Android on your TV
- Brings all Android apps to the big screen

AGAINST

- Many Android apps aren't configured to work well on a TV
- Doesn't work well with catch-up TV services

OUR VERDICT



Having a fully working version of Android 4.2 on your TV sounds like a dream come true, but the Prestigio doesn't live up to its promise.

The stock apps for phones and tablets are surprisingly frustrating to use on a big screen, and

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

while this isn't an expensive device, we'd rather get the Chromecast, which does fewer things better.

WEB USER'S BEST BUYS

Web User and its sister titles test over 2,500 products every year. Here's the pick of the bunch

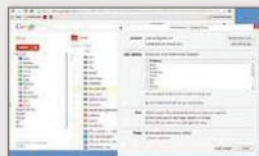
SOFTWARE & SERVICES

ONLINE STORAGE

Google Drive

From **free** from
drive.google.com

Date tested: April 2014



Google Drive offers an impressive range of tools. Its free service includes plenty of cloud storage and its recent price drop makes expanding this more affordable than ever.

KEY FEATURES

15GB of free storage ■ Web-based office software ■ Compatible with Windows XP, Vista, 7 and 8+ ■ Chrome browser add-on ■ Android and iOS apps ■ 100GB extra storage for £1.19 per month; 1TB for £5.97 per month; 10TB for £59.51 per month

PHOTO EDITING

Adobe Photoshop Elements 12

£54.71 from www.adobe.com/uk

Date tested: March 2014



With its tidy, uncluttered interface and pop-out trays, Adobe Photoshop Elements provides everything an amateur photographer could need and helps you quickly find the right editing tools.

KEY FEATURES

Compatible with Windows XP, Vista, 7, 8+, including 64-bit versions ■ Bundled photo organiser ■ Content-aware edits ■ Guided edits ■ People-beautifier tools ■ RAW support

VIDEO EDITING

Adobe Premiere Elements 12

£62.34 from www.ballicom.co.uk

Date tested: October 2013



Premiere Elements 12's superb interface makes its many features neat but accessible. It's great for both beginners and experts, with two editing modes and lots of guidance. You won't find better video-editing software for the price.

KEY FEATURES

Automatic editing ■ Image stabiliser ■ Export to multiple video formats ■ Upload to Facebook, YouTube and Vimeo ■ Surround-sound support ■ DVD and Blu-ray disc-burning ■ Unlimited timelines ■ Stop-motion capture

WEB FILTER

Norton Family

Free from www.symantec.com

Date tested: October 2013



This family-friendly software has all the most important filtering features and does an excellent job of blocking potentially harmful sites. Best of all, it's free to download and use.

KEY FEATURES

10-PC licence ■ Compatible with Windows XP/Vista/7/8, Mac OS X 10.7+ ■ Category filters ■ Customisable profiles ■ Whitelist/blacklist ■ Remote management ■ IM and social-network monitoring ■ Blocks chat, newsgroups and P2P ■ Email support

ONLINE BACK-UP

SquirrelSave

£61 a year from
www.squirrelsav.co.uk

Date tested: August 2013



With its unlimited storage, ability to handle back-ups from multiple PCs and retention of old versions of your files, SquirrelSave is an excellent choice for backing up loads of data. It's very easy to use and great value for money.

KEY FEATURES

Automatic back-up ■ Unlimited storage ■ Recover deleted files for up to 32 days ■ 256-bit AES encryption ■ Back up any combination of files and folders ■ UK-based ■ Copies of files kept forever ■ Back-up logging

WEB DESIGN

Serif WebPlus X6

£81.69 from www.serif.com

Date tested: August 2013



Serif WebPlus X6 is a winning combination of functionality, ease of use and value for money. Its tools, templates and flexibility make it an excellent choice for home users who want to create their own sites.

KEY FEATURES

30 templates ■ PayPal, Romancart, Mal's E-commerce payment systems ■ Social-media support ■ Allows hand-coded HTML ■ SEO tools ■ Widgets included ■ Graphics included ■ Overall site-structure view

HARDWARE

LAPTOP

Asus X552CL

£429.99 from www.ebuyer.com

Date tested: May 2014



This laptop's Windows and gaming performance far exceed what you'd usually get for its price. However, it's slightly let down by its battery life, so if you plan to travel around with it a lot, choose a different model.

KEY SPECS

1.8GHz Intel Core i5-3337U dual-core processor ■ 6GB memory ■ 15.6in (non-touch) LCD ■ 1,366 x 768 pixels resolution ■ 750GB hard drive ■ 10/100/1,000 Ethernet, 802.11n Wi-Fi ■ 348 x 241 x 31mm ■ 2.4kg ■ One-year return-to-base warranty

SMARTPHONE

Motorola Moto G

£99.99 (PAYG) from www.argos.co.uk

Date tested: April 2014



The excellent Moto G has set a new standard in affordable smartphones. Although it doesn't support 4G or NFC, and there's no microSD card slot to expand its storage, the phone's beautiful screen and good performance make it fantastic value for money.

KEY SPECS

1.2GHz quad-core processor ■ 8GB storage ■ 4.5in screen ■ 720 x 1,280 pixels resolution ■ 1GB memory ■ Android 4.4 (KitKat) ■ 5-megapixel and 1.3-megapixel cameras ■ 130 x 66 x 12mm ■ 143g ■ 3G/GPS/Bluetooth/802.11n Wi-Fi

BASE UNIT PC

Chillblast Fusion Quasar

£600 from www.chillblast.com

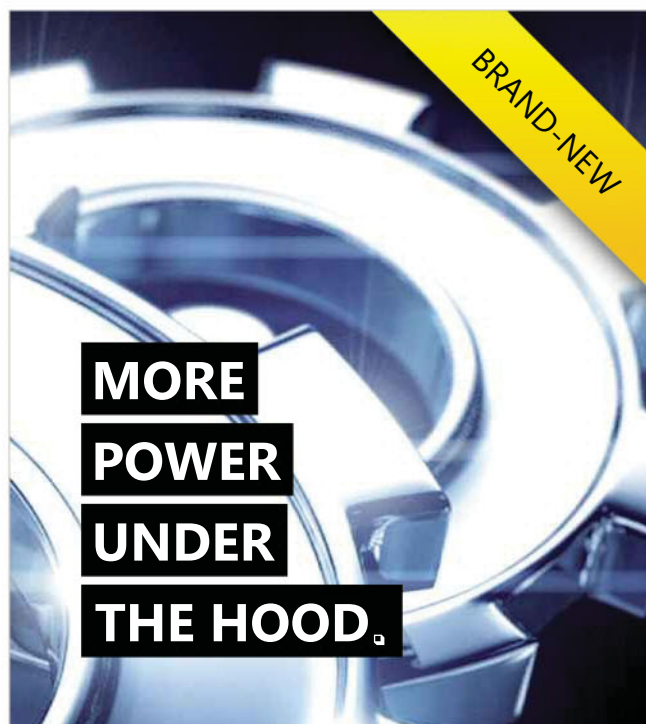
Date tested: March 2014



The Chillblast Fusion Quasar is a great all-round PC offering superb performance and plenty of room for future expansion. It's expensive compared to other base unit PCs, but comes with a five-year warranty and a high-performing SSHD hard drive.

KEY SPECS

3.4GHz Intel Core i5-4670K processor ■ 8GB DDR3 memory ■ Gigabyte GA-Z87-HD3 motherboard ■ 1TB hybrid HD/SSD hard drive ■ Windows 8.1 64-bit ■ 465 x 430 x 192mm ■ Five-year return-to-base warranty



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HARDWARE

NAS DRIVE

Western Digital My Cloud 2TB

£119.98 from www.dabs.com

Date tested: February 2014

This solid NAS drive, which comes with a 2TB drive pre-installed, is great value for money and is reasonably straightforward to set up. It lacks advanced features, such as RAID, but should prove ideal for most home users.



KEY SPECS

650MHz Marvell Armada XP processor ■ 256MB RAM ■ 2TB capacity ■ Android and iOS apps ■ One USB 3 port ■ One drive bay ■ External device support ■ UPnP/DLNA and iTunes media server functions ■ 170 x 139 x 49mm

ROUTER

BT Home Hub 5

£129 from www.shop.bt.com

Date tested: February 2014

With excellent overall performance and great features, the BT Home Hub 5 is one of the most capable 802.11ac routers around. Whatever you need to connect it to, now or in the future, it's up to the job.



KEY SPECS

Works with ADSL, Ethernet and fibre connections ■ Dual-band 2.4GHz and 5GHz ■ 802.11ac ■ 1,300Mbps theoretical maximum speed ■ 4 x Gigabit Ethernet ports ■ 1 x USB port ■ One-year return-to-base warranty ■ 236 x 116 x 31mm

BLUETOOTH SPEAKER

Cambridge Audio Minx Go

£99.95 from

www.richsersounds.com

Date tested: January 2014

The Minx Go has excellent battery life, is great value for money and is very easy to use. Although it doesn't have the extra features of other, more expensive speakers, its sound quality is excellent, producing powerful volume with no distortion.



KEY SPECS

Two speakers ■ 3.5mm stereo ■ Bluetooth (SBC) input ■ 3.5mm headphone input ■ 237 x 123 x 60mm ■ 1.1kg ■ One-year return-to-base warranty

MULTIFUNCTION PRINTER

Canon Pixma MX925

£120 from

www.ebuyer.com

Date tested: January 2014

Outstanding quality combined with good print speeds and impressive specifications make this an excellent inkjet device. It's not cheap but its five-cartridge system makes it economical to run.



KEY SPECS

9,600 x 2,400dpi print resolution ■ 2,400 x 4,800dpi scan resolution ■ 7.5cm colour screen ■ 250-sheet tray capacity ■ USB, 10/100 Ethernet and 802.11n Wi-Fi ■ 11.5 pages-per-minute mono print speed ■ 3.5 pages-per-minute colour print speed ■ 491 x 396 x 213mm ■ 11.7kg

BUDGET LAPTOP

Toshiba Satellite C50-A-156

£349.99 from www.argos.co.uk

Date tested: December 2013

This no-nonsense laptop has a standard keyboard and a matt screen, but its lack of external frills is more than made up for by its fast processor and graphics, large 1TB hard drive, DVDRW rewriter and USB 3.0 port.



KEY SPECS

Windows 8 ■ 2.5GHz Intel Core i3-3120M processor ■ 4GB memory ■ 15.6in standard (non-touch) screen ■ 1,366 x 768 pixels resolution ■ 1TB hard drive ■ 10/100 Ethernet, 802.11n Wi-Fi ■ 380 x 240 x 32mm ■ 2.3kg

E-READER

Amazon Kindle Paperwhite

£109 from www.amazon.co.uk

Date tested: December 2013

The updated Kindle Paperwhite is still the best ebook reader, with a superb, paper-like screen, a long battery life and the biggest selection of titles to download.



KEY SPECS

6in screen ■ 758 x 1,024 pixels resolution ■ Eight-week battery life ■ 802.11b/802.11g/802.11n Wi-Fi ■ Built-in light ■ 2GB internal memory for 1,100 books ■ 169mm x 117mm x 9.1mm ■ 206g ■ Supports AZW3, AZW, TXT, PDF, MOBI and PRC ebook formats.

HARDWARE

FULL-SIZE TABLET

Apple iPad Air

From **£399** from www.apple.com/uk

Date tested: December 2013

The iPad Air is Apple's best tablet so far. It's slim, light and beautiful to look at and use, with a better battery life than previous models. It also has a super-fast processor and an amazing touchscreen.



KEY SPECS

9.7in screen ■ 2,048 x 1,536 pixels resolution ■ 16-128GB internal storage ■ A7 dual-core processor ■ 5-megapixel and 1.2-megapixel cameras ■ Dual-band 802.11 a/b/g/n Wi-Fi ■ Bluetooth ■ 240 x 169.5 x 7.5mm ■ 469g

WI-FI EXTENDER

TP-Link TL-WA850RE

£27 from www.currys.co.uk

Date tested: October 2013

This Wi-Fi extender is easy to set up and use, with an informative display and a clean, sleek design. It managed to treble the speed of our wireless network, boosting a weak signal to every corner of our house. Best of all, it's very cheap, making it a superb choice all round.



KEY SPECS

Wi-Fi Protected Setup (WPS) ■ Fast Ethernet (10/100) ■ Single-band 802.11b/g/n Wi-Fi ■ WEP, WPA/WPA2 security ■ 110 x 75 x 66mm

SMART TV

LG 42LA690V

£649 from www.coopeselectricalshop.co.uk

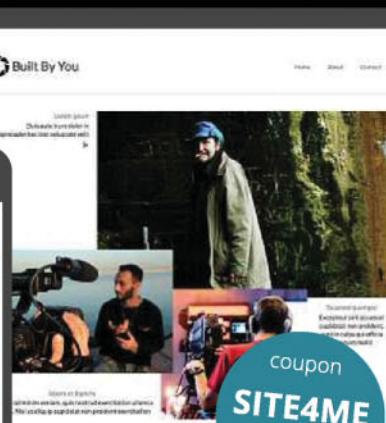
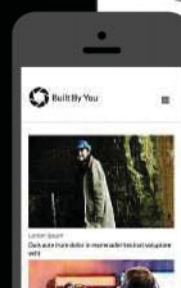
Date tested: November 2013



Although the LG 42LA690V doesn't have ITV catch-up, it offers a good selection of subscription-based alternatives. The TV is easy to set up and picture quality is excellent.

KEY SPECS

42in screen ■ 1,920 x 1,080 pixels resolution ■ 3D support ■ 2 x 12W speakers ■ 3 x HDMI ports ■ 1 x SCART (RGB) socket ■ 3 x USB ports ■ Ethernet ■ Freeview HD and DVB-S2 tuners ■ Eight-day EPG



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BROWSER

Firefox 29

getfirefox.com

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

File size: 42.2MB

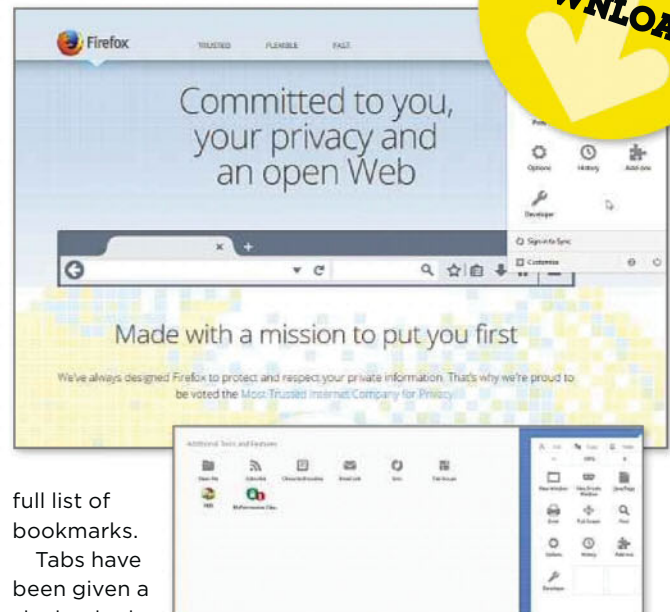
When Mozilla updates its browser from one version to the next, the changes are usually fairly minimal. However, that's not the case with Firefox 29, which provides a whole new look and several new features.

The most notable change in the revamped interface (codenamed Australis) is the loss of the orange Firefox button, which was introduced back in version 4.0.

Replacing it is a new menu button on the right-hand side, which gives you access to all the browser options, including History, Add-ons and Private mode, in one place. You can sign into the improved sync function here,

and customise the menu by dragging additional tools, features and add-ons onto the window and reordering them how you like. You can also toggle the title bar on and off, and show and hide toolbars.

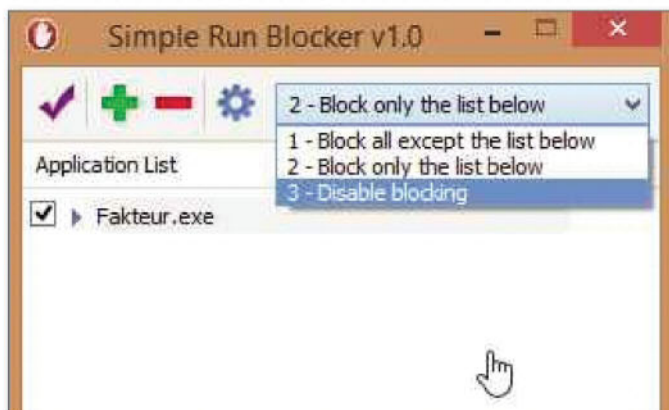
The enhanced sync feature is now account-based, which makes it easier to sync your history, saved passwords, bookmarks, open tabs and form data across your computers and mobile Android devices. It's also much simpler to manage your bookmarks. Click the star icon to bookmark pages, organise them into folders and remove them. Click the bookmarks icon to view your



full list of bookmarks.

Tabs have been given a sleeker look, with rounded corners, and there's greater emphasis placed on the currently selected one, with other tabs fading slightly into the background so they're less distracting.

Some users have complained that Firefox's new design looks too much like Chrome, and moves things around unnecessarily, but it shouldn't take you long to get used to.



SYSTEM TOOL

Simple Run Blocker

www.sordum.org

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

File size: 336KB

Simple Run Blocker lets you prevent certain programs from running, so you can, for example, use it to prevent your children from using BitTorrent. It's very easy to use – just launch the software and drag the executable file of any programs you want to block to Simple Run Blocker's window. You can remove applications from the list and disable blocking at any time. The software can also be set to only run pre-approved programs and block everything else, which is useful if you want a stricter way to manage access.

GAME

Mimicry Man

bit.ly/mimicry345

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

File size: 11.3MB

The aim of this game is to obtain the Solar Sword by working your way up through the ranks and acquiring new items. To do this, you have to entice heroes – or prey – to your treasure chest with the promise of something they want. If you succeed, they'll leave you a new item to help you get your hands on that sword. If you get stuck, there's a cheat sheet on the website.





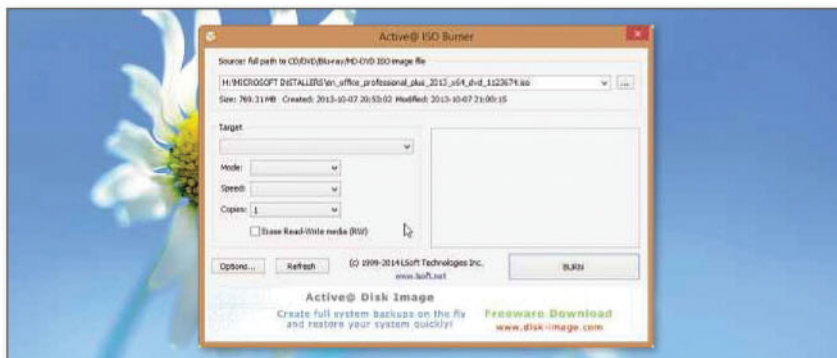
ANTI-MALWARE TOOL

SX Antivirus Kit

bit.ly/sxav345

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+ **File size:** 14.4MB

This kit lets you use 11 security tools to check for threats manually. Programs include VirusTotalScanner and StreamArmor, which detects files containing alternate data streams (ADS) because they can be used to conceal malware. It's not for novices, but more experienced PC users will find it handy.



DISC-AUTHORING SOFTWARE

Active@ ISO Burner 3

[Isoft.net/iso_burner.aspx](http://isoft.net/iso_burner.aspx)

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+ **File size:** 2.8MB

Operating systems and many larger programs you download from the web come in ISO format, ready for writing to disc. Active@ ISO Burner can burn these image files to CD, DVD or Blu-ray, and provides software to control the writing method. The latest version has a redesigned and improved interface, and is faster and more reliable than previous edition.

COMPETITION

CyberLink Director Suite 2

Available to buy now priced £257.97, Director Suite 2 includes four award-winning applications - PowerDirector 12, ColorDirector 2, AudioDirector 4 and PhotoDirector 5 - working together to provide a complete video - and photo-editing package. You can convert videos and photos into 3D-animated slideshows and use sophisticated colour-grading tools. To enter, email your address to webusercomp@dennis.co.uk with 'director' in the subject line. For more info visit www.cyberlink.com.



NEW WINDOWS 8 APPS

Bing Wikipedia Browser

bit.ly/bingwiki345

Min requirements: Windows 8+

File size: 444KB

This new app lets you browse Wikipedia in a special interface, using enhanced search and content recommendations. You can view all the images on a page along with a table of contents, and save it as a favourite.



Tile LiveScore

bit.ly/livescore345

Min requirements: Windows 8+

File size: 310KB

One for football fans everywhere, Tile LiveScore lets you keep up to date with all the matches being played across the major European leagues, including the Premier League, Serie A, Liga, Bundesliga, Europa League, and Champions League.



Chef@Home

bit.ly/chefhome345

Min requirements: Windows 8+

File size: 4.37MB

Chef@Home introduces curry lovers to the delights of Pakistani food. The selection of recipes is sorted into categories including Beef, Chicken, Mutton, Vegetable, Rice, Desserts, Drinks, Salad and Soup.



SECURITY TOOL

Comodo Internet Security 7

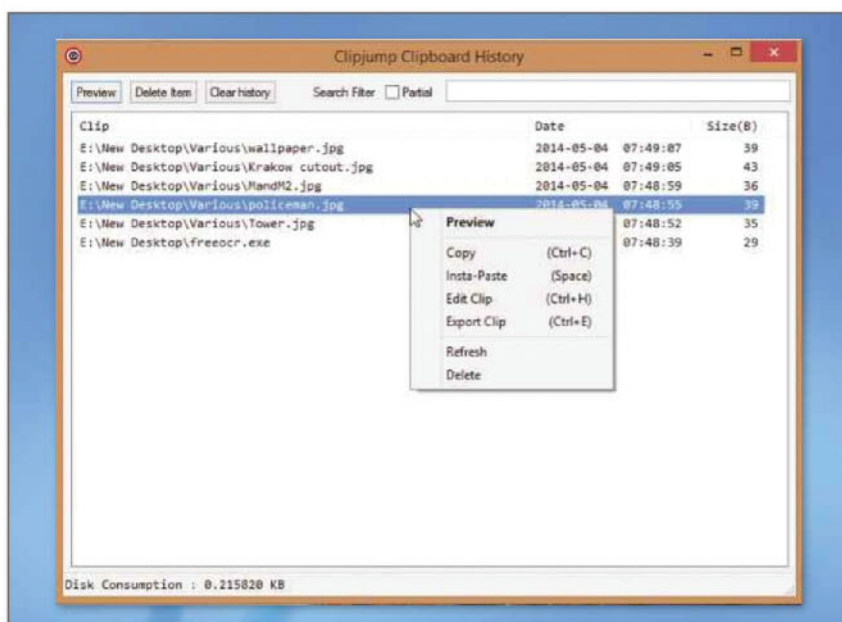
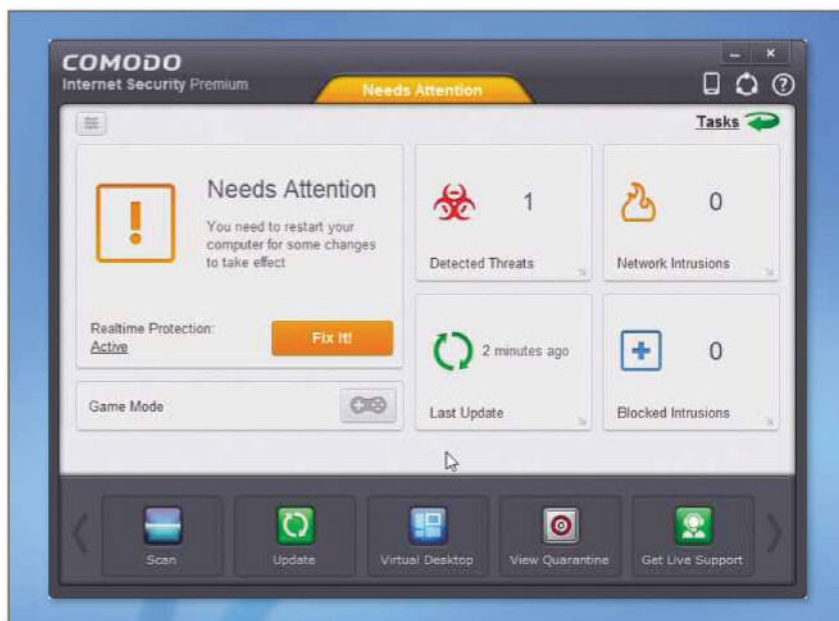
bit.ly/comodo345

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

File size: 220MB

You need more than a simple anti-virus program to stay properly safe on the internet, and Comodo Internet Security fills that requirement. It offers a powerful selection of tools including anti-virus, anti-malware, anti-spyware, anti-rootkit, bot protection, Defense+ (which protects system files and stops malware from running), sandboxing and a memory firewall. The latest version adds website filtering, to block malicious sites, and Viruscope, which monitors running programs so you can identify and stop unwanted behaviour.

Sandboxed software runs much faster in the new version, too.



CLIPBOARD MANAGER

Clipjump 11

clipjump.sourceforge.net

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

File size: 527KB

The Windows clipboard function is rather basic, and only lets you copy and paste one item at a time. Clipjump provides multiple clipboards and also offers a range of powerful features, such as the ability to view clipboard contents and search, preview, delete or copy items. It can save your clipboard for reloading later and there's an incognito mode for when you don't want your copied items to be stored. You can also customise the software in various ways and use plug-ins to add further features. The latest version adds an organiser for channels (grouped clips) and you can now edit images when pasting.

START MENU

Anvi OneStart

www.anvisoft.com

Min requirements: Windows 8+

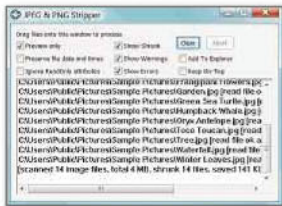
File size: 7.2MB

Microsoft is planning to reintroduce the Start menu in a future version of Windows 8+, but until it does, there are plenty of other options. Anvi OneStart is slightly different because as well as offering the standard (and highly configurable) Windows 7-style Start button and menu, it can also be set to display your Start screen in a new window. Just right-click the new Start button added by the program, launch Settings and select 'Windows 8 mode' in the menu. You can choose a size for the menu display - Small, Medium, Big, Maximized or Full Screen - or have the window show only the Apps screen.





READER RECOMMENDS



Every time you upload a photo to the web, you could be risking your privacy by revealing where and when the shot was taken. JPEG & PNG Stripper (bit.ly/jpeg345) is a useful free program that prevents this from happening. It strips the EXIF data from images without affecting the quality of the file. You can add it to Windows Explorer for easy access.

Jason Stark, via email



PDF TOOL PDF Eraser

www.pdferaser.net

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+
File size: 27.8MB

There may be times when you want to share a PDF file with someone, but you don't want them to view everything it contains (such as sensitive company information). PDF Eraser lets you delete text, images and logos from PDFs, remove individual pages and add your own text or images to the file.

GAME

Kitty 7 - Sky Crashers

www.origamihero.com

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+
File size: 14.4MB

In this game, your island has suddenly been relocated to the sky, and it's up to the hero, a short-tempered cat called Darling, to find a way of bringing it down to Earth again. It's a fun platform game that provides plenty of enemies to defeat, characters to talk to and puzzles to solve.



UPDATED | New tweaks and fixes for your favourite programs



ANTI-MALWARE TOOL

Spybot - Search & Destroy 2.3

www.safer-networking.org

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+
File size: 44.2MB

The latest version of the anti-malware program adds a notifications feature that alerts you to completed scans remotely, so you don't need to wait by your PC for it to finish. Scans are faster and the interface is easier to use.



OFFICE SUITE

Apache OpenOffice 4.1

www.openoffice.org

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+
File size: 127MB

Support for visually impaired users has been improved in this update of the popular free office suite. You can also now annotate and comment on blocks of text, and there are new tools for editing text fields and cropping graphics.

PRIVACY TOOL

PrivaZer 2.18

privazer.com

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+
File size: 12.9MB

PrivaZer is a PC and privacy sweeper designed to protect your privacy by removing all traces of your activities, online

and off. Version 2.18 has a more polished user interface, and improves scheduled clean-ups and cleaning of Chrome and Firefox data.

DISK MONITOR

CrystalDiskInfo 6.1.12

crystalmark.info

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+
File size: 2.6MB

This program monitors your hard drive's health, displaying its SMART (Self-Monitoring, Analysis and Reporting Technology) status, current temperature and details such as the number of hours the disk has been active for. The new version fixes crashing bugs and updates the language file.

• Make sure you select Custom install to prevent the program making unwanted changes.



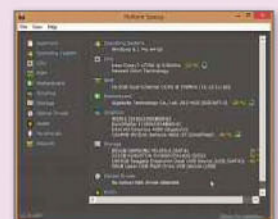
SYSTEM INFO TOOL

Speccy 1.26

www.piriform.com/speccy

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8+
File size: 4.7MB

This update to Piriform's system-information tool makes Speccy more compatible with Windows 8. There are some bug fixes and minor tweaks to the interface, along with improved SMART data analysis.



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BEST FREE APPS

This fortnight's top FREE smartphone and tablet apps

TOOLS

Google Docs

bit.ly/googledocs345

Min requirements: Android 4, iOS 6

File size: 19.3MB



Following Microsoft's free Office for Mobile app, a standalone version of Google Docs is now available for Android and iOS, having previously only been accessible from within the Google Drive app. With Google Sheets also out now, and presentations tool Slides on the way, we'll soon have

purpose-built apps for quickly creating or editing any kind of Google file on the move.

Although the Docs app still backs up documents to Google Drive as you type, you can now work on files offline, too. Google Docs also lets you share and collaborate with other people, giving you control over whether they can edit or merely comment on a document.



QR codes

Google Docs



Spotify



MUSIC

Spotify

bit.ly/darktheme345

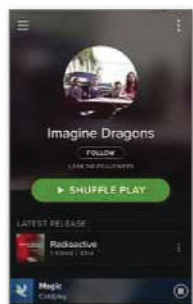
Min requirements:

Varies with device

File size: Varies with device

We covered the release of Spotify's new dark theme for all Desktop and iOS users in What's New Online in issue 343 (bit.ly/webuser343) and

the update is now available on Android. New features include the highly anticipated Your Music option, which lets you save and organise your favourite songs. You're also promised smarter playlists to suit your mood and faster, more accurate search results.



FINANCE

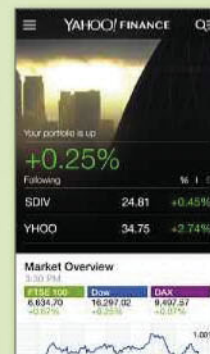
Yahoo Finance

bit.ly/finance345

Min requirements: iOS 6

File size: 19.3MB

The iOS version of Yahoo Finance has been given a facelift to bring it up to date with the latest version of Apple's mobile operating system. With transparent backgrounds and lightweight fonts, you can now track stocks, currencies and commodities in style. The app also lets you sign in to sync your portfolios across devices, and offers video news about the companies you follow.



Yahoo Finance



GRE/SAT Vocab Lock - Android



LEARNING

GRE/SAT Vocab Lock - Android

bit.ly/vocab345

Min

requirements:

Android 3.3

File size: 1.1MB

With many users apparently unlocking their phone more than 150 times a day, this app turns that chore into a constructive exercise. Each time you unlock, you're asked to match up a word with its synonym, and offered an optional definition, which should help to expand your vocabulary. The free version of the app provides 20 words a day.



TOOLS

Snaply

www.snaply.co.uk

Min requirements:

Android 4.0

File size: 3.7MB

Snaply works with Freegle (www.ilovefreegle.org) - described as the UK's largest 'freecycling' platform - to help you find second-hand bargains in your area. The app, which has been out for a few months on iOS, is now available in a beta version on Android. Claiming to let you sell or give something away in "10 seconds flat", Snaply might appeal more than the car boot sale that you keep putting off!



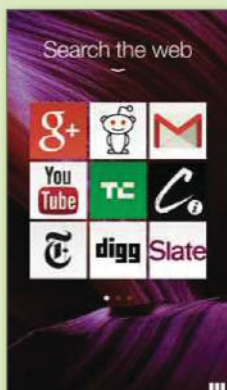
Snaply



BROWSERS

Opera Coastbit.ly/operacoast345**Min requirements:** iOS 6**File size:** 22.7MB

Following its successful launch on iPad last year, this innovative browser has now been released on iPhone. Opera Coast challenges your expectations of surfing the web by providing a minimalist interface that shuns the clutter of Chrome, Firefox and Safari and can be operated almost entirely using gestures. No tabs, address bars or navigation icons here, just two 'conveniently placed' buttons.



LEARNING

Life Skillsbit.ly/lifeskills345**Min requirements:** Android 2.2, iOS 7**File size:** 253k

Life Skills is an initiative created by Barclays to help people aged 11 to 19 learn employment disciplines they might not be taught at school. Focusing on three areas – work, people and money – users can find helpful information about everything from CV writing and interview skills to communication, self-awareness and budgeting.



QR codes

Opera Coast**Life Skills**

TOOLS

Tonidobit.ly/tonido345**Min requirements:**

Windows Phone 8

File size: 1MB

Tonido lets you use your Windows Phone to remotely access files and folders that are stored on your computer. Already available on Android and iOS, Tonido must be installed on your PC or Mac before you can take advantage of its multitude of features on your Windows Phone, which include video and music streaming. The service also lets you share content with other people via direct link or email.



CAMERA

Google Camerabit.ly/camera345**Min requirements:**

Varies with device

File size: 15MB

Previously only available on Nexus devices, Google Camera is now free for all phones and tablets that run Android 4.4 KitKat. The app offers creative picture modes including Photo Sphere, which captures immersive 360-degree views; Lens Blur, for shallow depth-of-field shots; and Panorama. It also uses a 100-per cent viewfinder to get the very highest resolution from your camera's sensor.

**Tonido****Google Camera**

5 NEW APPS WORTH PAYING FOR

PHOTOGRAPHY

Growbit.ly/grow345**Min requirements:** iOS 7**File size:** 3.4MB **Price:** £1.49

Have you ever wanted to see how much something changes in a year? Well, with Grow you can. By capturing the same subject again and again, Grow stitches your photos together to create an entertaining slideshow video of all those real but imperceptible changes over time.

TOOLS

Today Calendar Probit.ly/today345**Min requirements:** Android 4.0.3**File size:** 3.1MB **Price:** 69p

Today Calendar Pro is a well-designed

alternative to the stock calendar installed on your Android. Its All-In-One view combines the month and agenda views of your pre-existing app to let you easily manage everything from one screen.

TOOLS

Pinnacle Studiobit.ly/pinnacle345**Min requirements:** iOS 7**File size:** 63.1MB **Price:** £1.49 (usual price: £6.99)

This new version of Pinnacle Studio gives you Desktop video-editing capabilities on your iPhone. Arrange clips on the storyboard, add transitions and then a soundtrack before sharing your final piece on YouTube or Facebook at 1080p resolution.

GENERAL

Slydebit.ly/slyde345**Min requirements:** Android 4.0**File size:** 1.9MB **Price:** 59p

Instead of long-pressing the home button on your Android device to switch between recent apps, Slyde's floating bubble gives you fast access to five of your favourite apps.

LEARNING

Solar Walkbit.ly/solarwalk345**Min requirements:** Android 4**File size:** 299MB **Price:** £1.73

Solar Walk lets you explore our solar system using impressive 3D models. Educational videos can also be acquired via in-app purchases.

BEST NEW ADD-ONS

This fortnight's 10 most useful tools for your browser

CHROME



Project Naptha

projectnaptha.com

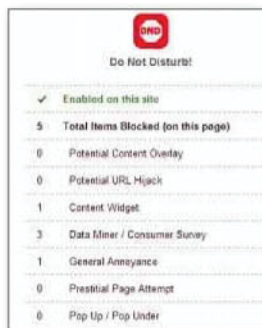
This incredible add-on lets you copy and paste words that appear in online images. Just highlight the text in the picture as you would the text on a web page, then press

Ctrl+C to copy it. Right-click and you can erase selected words and even translate them into another language.

Do Not Disturb

bit.ly/disturb345

You can block almost everything that annoys you on the web by installing this add-on. It filters content overlays, widgets, surveys, pop-ups and other intrusive elements, to keep you focused on the page. Do Not Disturb runs automatically on all websites, but you can choose to disable it on certain sites.



Literally

bit.ly/literally345

If you get annoyed by the misuse of the word 'literally', you'll love this add-on. It replaces 'literally' with the more accurate 'figuratively' on

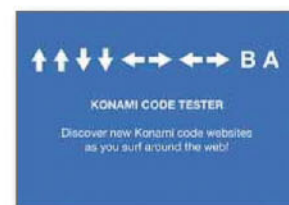
all web pages, although this also includes correct uses of the word. Still, if you're a grammar pedant, it could figuratively save your life.

Konami Code Test Discover

bit.ly/konami345

Unlock hidden 'Easter Eggs' on the web using this extension, which automatically triggers the Konami code (up, up, down, down, left, right, left, right, B, A) on all sites that use it to conceal surprises.

Once installed, you can test it at www.vogue.co.uk and www.buzzfeed.com/uk.



FIREFOX



Sticky Notes

bit.ly/sticky345

This handy add-on lets you affix sticky notes to web pages to remind you of things you need to do there and highlight interesting content. Just

right-click a page or click the toolbar button and select Generate Sticky. You can tag your stickies with keywords to keep them organised.

Addon List Dumper

bit.ly/addon345

Click this add-on's toolbar button to open a panel displaying information about all your other add-ons, including the total number installed, which ones are disabled and an optional description. You can also check which version of Firefox you're using, and which operating system.

Tabwrangler

bit.ly/tabwrangler345

If you often end up with lots of idle tabs open, you can save memory by using this add-on to close them after a set time. Go into Tabwrangler's Options to specify how many minutes to wait before an inactive tab closes and set a warning a few minutes beforehand.

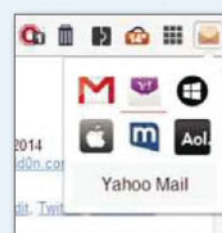
The Fox, Only Better

bit.ly/thefox345

This add-on makes Firefox's new Australis interface even more minimal. It auto-hides the address bar, search box and toolbars to give you more screen space, then displays them again when you move your mouse to the top of the window.



OPERA



Email Shortcuts

bit.ly/shortcuts345

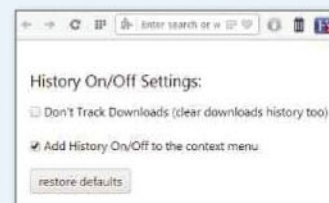
If you use more than one webmail service, this add-on gives you instant access to all your emails from your toolbar. It provides

shortcuts for Gmail, Yahoo Mail, Outlook.com (here incorrectly under its old name, Live Mail) and more, so you're never more than two quick clicks from your inbox.

History On/Off

bit.ly/history345

Most browsers have a private mode to stop details of sites you visit being stored, but this add-on makes things even easier. Click its toolbar button to disable history recording, then click it again to resume. You can also use it to clear your download history without deleting the actual files.



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Why Windows 8 is better than Windows 7

Issue after issue of *Web User* carries letters denigrating Windows 8/8.1. One correspondent stated that he was ready to smash the machine in frustration after spending five minutes on a friend's PC running Windows 8. One can only assume he viewed Windows 8 brainwashed by all the negative comments and was possibly determined he wasn't going to like it or give it a fair trial.

Alright, it's not perfect, but no operating system is. I decry the fact that Microsoft abandoned good features when they moved from Windows XP to Windows 7. The excellent Windows Mail, for one, was perfect and more than adequate for most users, but it was left out of Windows 7. However, one can't deny that

Windows 8/8.1 is faster, more stable and more secure. I've not seen one Blue Screen of Death since I installed it on the first day of release. It also opens very quickly and shuts down almost instantly.

I must admit I don't care for the 'Metro Apps'. Not because I don't have a touchscreen – they work well enough with a mouse and keyboard. I just prefer

Desktop programs and have uninstalled most of the 'App' versions.

I boot directly to the Desktop, which I have arranged just as I did in XP/7 with all frequently used icons pinned to the taskbar. All other programs can be launched from the far superior Start screen. This statement will no doubt generate an outcry from those who favour the Start button. But, let's be honest, the Start screen can be arranged exclusively to suit the individual, making all other programs quicker and easier to access than the rigid Start button did. I truly believe the Start screen to be one of the better new features in Windows.

N Knapp, North Yorkshire



Google Drive doesn't deserve Gold

There was an interesting Group Test in Issue 344 (bit.ly/webuser344) of online storage sites. The Gold Award was given to Google Drive/Docs, with Microsoft's OneDrive in fourth place.

I have to disagree, because I think Microsoft has improved its online service to make it simple to understand and quick to use. That was true of Google Drive, and some may feel it still is, but I encountered problems with it that made me switch to OneDrive.

One problem is that when I insert a picture into a document in Docs, then change my mind and try to delete it, I receive a message from Google saying I must install an app to edit pictures. That's new, and it really is a pain when you have to install an app just to delete an image. Another example was when I sent a Google document to someone

who is a long-time user of Google Docs. He mailed me to say Google was asking him to create a separate account for Docs, before he could see what I'd sent. We were

both left confused.

Most importantly, I no longer trust Google, not since it enrolled me in Google+ without me knowing how that happened. Also, its default sharing of your content between Google products makes it hard for me to understand what I'm making public.

Some may say that these adaptations by Google have delivered a better experience, but this is a matter of opinion – and I've just told you mine.

Jon98, Web User Forums

When 50GB of storage isn't enough

I'm not very happy with your limited review of online storage. There's nothing wrong with the cloud services you featured, but why miss an opportunity to include Flickr, BT Cloud and Shoebox? Flickr gives me 1TB of free photo storage with mildly intrusive adverts, while for \$50 (about £29.50) a year, you get it advert-free. Similarly, with the Canadian company Shoebox, you get unlimited space at reduced photo-file sizes for free, or you can upload unlimited full resolution photos for \$48 (£28.35) per year. BT Cloud offers BT Infinity users 50GB of free space, and extra storage can be bought at varying monthly costs.

flickr

Your reviewer Andy Shaw is clearly not a photographer, referring to "a mammoth free cloud-storage offering of 50GB" when discussing Mega. Modern DSLRs and good-quality compact cameras produce JPEGs of 5MB and above. So 50GB would last not long if you were to use the cloud for archiving, although it would probably more than enough if you only use it for temporary storage.

Eric Page, Alloa

Common sense is the best malware protection

The malware article in Issue 344 was interesting, although I have not had any of the threats you mentioned (he said, hopefully). I did get several emails from Nigerian scammers telling me they wanted to give me money. I also got two telling me I was owed a £7,000 refund from HMRC. I should be so lucky! I deleted these without opening them.

For some reason, at 68, I get a lot of emails from so-called Canadian or USA chemists offering me cheap Viagra. Some may even be genuine. But in the



unlikely event that I ever need some, I will go to my doctor and get it for free.

I do not use social media – there are too many scams and obtrusive people – and as for Bitcoin, you have to be barking. I run a virus check almost every day, along with a Malwarebytes Anti-Malware back-up. I also clear my history and other online traces every day, sometimes twice a day, along with unknown cookies, although that's sometimes a mistake. My Samsung smartphone only gets switched on for holidays and emergencies. Besides, no self-respecting mugger or drug dealer would want my old phone.

I am not saying you could not catch me out – that would be silly – but, like you said, I mostly only use software from well-known companies and am very careful about emails, even from the people I know.

Martin Fletcher, via email

Beware of new Amazon phishing scam

As a follow-up to your excellent feature about the worst malware ever in Issue 344, I recently received a scam email supposedly from Amazon that was so convincing that it almost fooled me into thinking it was genuine. The email had



the Subject line 'Expiration of your Amazon account' and appeared to be sent from 'Amazon.co.uk', although one giveaway sign was that were spaces after both the dots in the name. The message

said that "from time to time we update all users informations [sic]" and that if I didn't update my details, my account would be made inactive. I was instructed to "download the attached document and open it a secure browser" then follow the verification process to protect my account. Naturally, the requirement to download an attachment set alarm bells ringing, and confirmed that the email was a scam, but I thought I would share it with your readers, so they can watch out for similar messages.

Paul Tyrell, via email



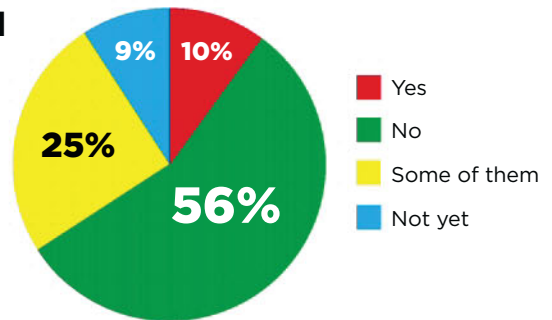
Your Vote Counts

ON WEBUSER.CO.UK THIS FORTNIGHT WE ASKED...

Did you change all your passwords after the Heartbleed scam?

NEXT FORTNIGHT...

Have you stopped using Internet Explorer following the security flaw? Vote online at www.webuser.co.uk



THIS FORTNIGHT'S CROSSWORD

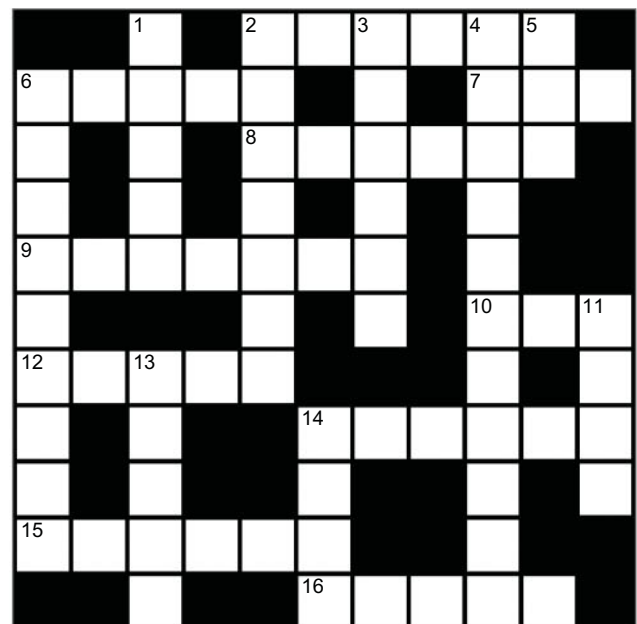
Clues marked with an asterisk are cryptic and refer to sites and software featured in this issue of *Web User*. All other clues are literal. Answers online at www.webuser.co.uk/crossword

ACROSS

2. Withstand (6)
6. Legume (5)
7. Casing for 6 across (3)
8. *Pilot heads off travel app (6)
9. *(With 16 across) Carelessly insert labels for relaxation site (7,5)
10. Farm animal (3)
12. Womanising movie character played by Michael Caine (1966) and Jude Law (2004) (5)
14. *Windows Phone app for accessing files also contains returning commotion (6)
15. 1996 film starring Mel Gibson and Rene Russo (6)
16. See 9 Across

DOWN

1. *Secret of French app that gives quick access to five other apps (5)
2. Act of retaliation (7)
3. *Snooze in crafty second-hand shopping tool (6)
4. *Questionable oppositions produced YouTube add-on (1,1,1,1,7)
5. Rocky hill (3)
6. *Lunatic prefers ad for document editor (1,1,1,6)



11. *First get rid of Windows photography app that shows incremental changes (4)
13. Old monetary unit of France, Switzerland and Belgium (5)
14. Mausoleum (4)

Crossword created using Crossword Compiler software, from WordWeb Software (www.wordwebsoftware.com).



What you say...



DO YOU AGREE WITH SKYPE REMOVING 'OFFENSIVE' EMOTICONS, SUCH AS A SMILEY FACE WITH THE MIDDLE FINGER?

Anything that could potentially be offensive to anyone should be banned. Probably best to ban the whole internet. That would be good.

Andrew Duerden

It's their train set and it is free, so they can do what they like.

Ian Phipps

So sad. Most people use them as fun. If someone gives you the finger, you could just block them.

Shawn Adams

It is the nanny culture we live in. People are easily offended.

Martin Walker

FIREFOX 29 (bit.ly/fox345) IS MOZILLA'S BIGGEST UPDATE SINCE FIREFOX 4. WILL YOU TRY IT?

I've used Sync (bit.ly/sync345) for ages, so the only real difference I can see is the tab design. It's good so far.

Steve Ellis

I've downloaded it, having not used Firefox for ages. It seems very speedy.

Gill Hodson

I use Pale Moon (www.palemoon.org) - the thinned-down version of Firefox.

Ian John Nee

I'll stick with Opera. All browsers copy Opera anyway!

Roger Whitcombe

No, it's too much like Chrome for my liking. And I'm happy with Chrome.

Iain Lewis

I upgraded, but went back to Firefox 28 because too much didn't work, even after installing Classic Theme Restorer (bit.ly/theme345).

Rich Grove

Yes, I will give the new version a go. Mozilla timed it right in light of IE's latest security flaw!

Chris Cole

I won't change for the sake of it. I use Chrome because it's stable.

MartinD56

DO YOU LIKE TWITTER'S NEW PROFILE PAGE (bit.ly/profile345)?

It looks too much like Facebook for my liking. It's a bit messy, but I'm sure I'll get used to it within a few days

Caroline Sharman

I've seen it for the first time today. Like all changes, you'll soon get used to it!

Jason Cooper

I've had it for a couple of weeks now. Am I the only one who actually likes it? I wish my Facebook timeline looked the same as my profile page.

Derek Murray

Yes, I like it. It inspired me to change my pictures, at any rate.

Neil Williams

WAS MICROSOFT RIGHT TO FIX THE INTERNET EXPLORER BUG IN XP?

Microsoft needs to let XP die. It said it would no longer support it, so it should stick to its guns and stop backtracking!

Simon Mellor

Yes, because it was close to the end of the support period and was a goodwill gesture. After this, though, XP users will be unsupported in the same way that Windows 98 users have been for the past few years.

Chris Armstrong

I think they had to fix it due the nature of the businesses still using XP.

Anthony Ridley

Let it die. Apple doesn't keep its old operating systems limping along.

Ethel Ethel

Yes, Microsoft was right to fix it. Some people only use their PC to browse the internet. Microsoft should support every version or give XP owners a free upgrade.

Shaun Hastings

YOUR ONLINE RIGHTS



Edward Munn answers all your consumer questions

Should I switch to a 'quad-play' bundle?

Virgin Media recently announced the introduction of the UK's first 'quad-play' packages, combining internet, TV and home phone services with a SIM-only mobile phone contract (bit.ly/virginbundle345).

Available to new customers from the end of the month, the Big Kahuna deal will cost £45 a month and offer a whopping 152Mbps broadband connection with HD Tivo TV and BT Sports. For just £5 extra, it includes a SIM-only mobile contract with unlimited minutes, unlimited texts and 250MB of data.

The Big Bang Bundle is £30 a month, with internet speeds limited to 100Mbps (that's still pretty fast!), no HD channels or BT Sport, and the same SIM-only mobile contract for a further £5 a month.

On paper, these deals look great and Virgin claims that families taking up these offers "can save over £300 a year versus the nearest comparable services from Sky and the next best value SIM from any mobile operator". However, it's worth remembering that after including monthly line rental of £15.99, the cost of the packages rises to £65.99 and £50.99 respectively.

If you're not bothered about having such incredibly fast internet speeds or extensive TV services, there are cheaper deals available. For example, BT charges just under £36 (including line rental) for a package that offers 38Mbps broadband, a TV Entertainment subscription and free weekend calls to landlines. This, combined with Three's £6.99 SIM-only deal, will save you more than £100 over 18 months compared to the Big Bang bundle.

However, the Three contract offers only 200 minutes of free calls, so you may decide that it's worth paying extra to get a less limited service all round.

SEND YOUR EMAILS TO webuser@dennis.co.uk



Modular phones

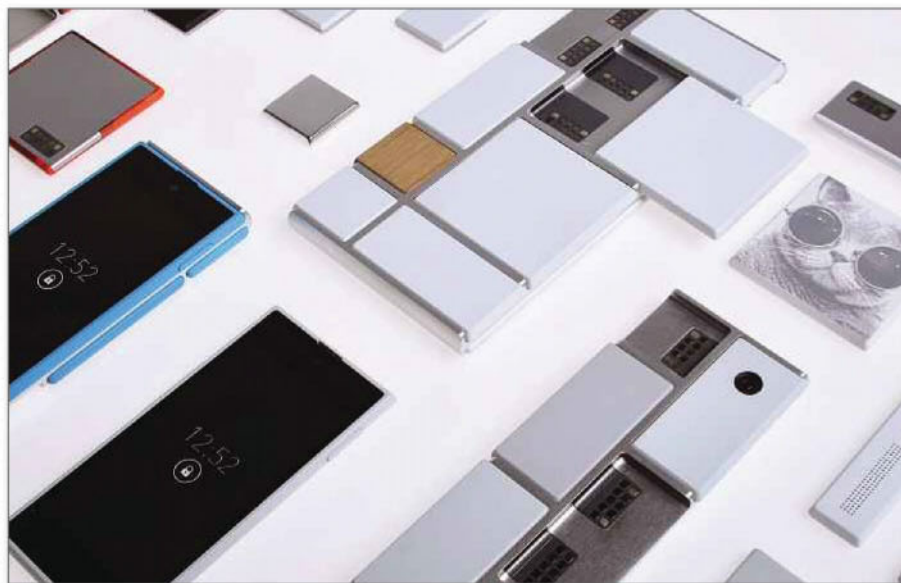
If you can't decide which new handset to buy, why not build your own? **David Crookes** explains the concept behind modular phones

Q WHAT IS IT?

A A modular phone breaks down the various components of a handset into separate chunks. These chunks are called modules and can comprise anything from a screen, camera and battery pack to a keyboard, microphone and speakers. Instead of going into a shop and buying a complete, one-size-fits-all phone, as designed by the manufacturer, you'll be able to use a Lego-style, DIY approach and select only the modules you want.

Q WHO IS BEHIND IT?

A Google is working on the most high-profile modular handsets, and hopes to apply the open-source model of its mobile OS, Android, to hardware. The idea, labelled Project Ara (projectara.com), came about following the firm's acquisition of mobile company Motorola Mobility. Google has since sold Motorola to Lenovo, but it retained the team working on Project Ara. A designer



named Dave Hakken, who has developed a similar project called Phonebloks (phonebloks.com), is a consultant.

Q HOW DOES IT WORK?

A At the core of Google's modular phone is something called an endoskeleton. This is the main component of the handset and is essential to Project Ara because it serves as the glue that binds everything together. The idea is that interchangeable modules can be slotted into the endoskeleton. Certain modules are essential, such as a screen and a battery, but which of the other components you choose will be entirely up to you. The endoskeleton will come with some parts, but you will be free to swap them with others.

Q WHY WOULD I WANT ONE?

A According to the latest statistics from Ipsos Mori Tech Tracker (bit.ly/ipsos345), 59 per cent of people in the UK own a smartphone, yet we don't always use them to their full capabilities. The modular phone generates a different kind of smartphone market that is controlled to a much greater extent by customers. Allowing modules to be swapped in and out means you can

replace damaged components rather than buying an entirely new handset. Upgrades are more tailored to your wants, needs and budget. If you can't afford the best screen to begin with, you can get the cheaper one now and buy a new module when you have the money.



Q HOW DO MODULES STAY IN PLACE?

A The modular phone will use electro-permanent magnets to hold everything firmly together. When a module is removed, the electro-permanent magnets will be deactivated and when one is added, they will be activated. This cuts out the need for connectors and prevents wear and tear. It



also means that if you drop the handset, it won't break apart and cause modules to scatter in all directions or disappear down a grid.

Q WILL GOOGLE MAKE THE MODULES?

A No. Google is keen to give third-party manufacturers the opportunity to make their own modules for the phone. Currently, component makers have to convince phone manufacturers to include their cameras, processors, speakers and so on in handsets. With open-source modular phones, lots of different companies could make a camera, for example, and sell it direct to customers. Knowing other firms are vying for consumer cash should make them more competitive, not only on price but specs and, by opening up competition, it's hoped that innovation will flourish at a faster rate.

Q WHICH COMPANIES ARE INVOLVED?

A There have been no announcements yet, but it's worth noting that Google is keen to involve smaller companies as well large ones. It could well be that a tiny firm comes up with a winning idea for a module that bigger companies haven't even considered. Just as anyone can make an Android app, so anyone will be able to produce and sell a module if they have the means.

Q SO THERE'LL BE PLENTY OF CHOICE?

A Yes, in principle. Low take-up of the modular phone would kill it dead, but the idea that you can pick the modules you want means choice is key. You can choose the modules that most appeal to you, combining your choice of camera, battery size, screen and so on. There will even be different sized handsets that accommodate a varying number of modules.

Q WHAT WILL IT LOOK LIKE?

A Design is an important factor. Although the manufacturers will make and sell the working components,



MORE MODULAR MARVELS

Project Ara has inspired several other manufacturers to develop bespoke gadgets. Here are some of the most interesting ideas

Wearable tech

www.toshiba.co.uk

Although it's still only at the design stage, Toshiba's Senior VP and Technology Executive Shardul Kazi have said Ara's modules could be used in wearable devices such as smartwatches.

Eco-Mobius phone

www.zteuk.co.uk

At this year's Consumer Electronics Show (CES), ZTE unveiled its own

plans to develop a modular smartphone which it called the Eco-Mobius. It allows for camera, battery, display, RAM and processor modules.

Cubist designs

www.xiaomi.com

The founder and CEO of Xiaomi, Lei Jun, posted an image of the company's own modular phone. It was later retracted. But it does appear the firm is pushing ahead with its own Cubist-style version and it has Android's former Vice-President, Hugo Barra, on board.



Google will produce the module shells into which they slot, each one created by a cutting-edge 3D printer. These will be made available from an online store in the same way that you can buy apps from Google Play. Each shell will carry a design that fits in with the overall aesthetic of your phone so that, when all the modules are put together it feels like a seamless whole rather than lots of random components. Don't expect an ultra-thin handset just yet, though.

Q HOW WILL THE PARTS WORK TOGETHER?

A Android will be reconfigured in a future version so that it recognises all the different modules that are plugged in. It will understand the different specs of each part and recognise their limits. The project team says much work is going into this aspect because, without an effective operating system, the whole idea would rapidly fall apart.

Q WILL IT ELIMINATE UPGRADING?

A Yes and no. It will certainly cut out the need for gadget lovers to replace an entire handset every year or two. For example, if a better camera



becomes available, then all you have to do is buy the required module and swap it with the existing one. Hey presto – instant upgrade at a fraction of the cost. The unwanted module could then be sold or even used in another phone, regardless of its size. As well as being cost-effective and offering a fun approach to buying a phone, it's far more environmentally-friendly than the current way the mobile phone industry operates.

Q HOW MUCH WILL IT COST?

A Google wants to sell an entry-level phone for as little as \$50 (£29.70). This will be a bare-bones "grey phone" that contains a processor, Wi-Fi chip and a screen to get you started. We'd expect more expensive entry points to be introduced as time goes on, but we can't begin to guess the prices for components at this stage.

Q WHEN WILL IT BE AVAILABLE?

A Indications point towards a release as early as January 2015, but whether that will be in the UK is unclear (and, dare we say it, unlikely). Google plans to sell to developing nations first.



EVERY NEW APP You'll Need This Summer

Put the 'mobile' back into your mobile device and head outdoors. **Wayne Williams** picks 42 brilliant apps for making the most of your phone and tablet when you're away from home

Smartphones and tablets are supposed to be mobile devices, but the truth is that many of us use them most when we're at home, sat in front of the telly or tucked up in bed. But now that the weather's getting warmer and many of us are starting to plan our holidays, it's the ideal time to fill up our phones and tablets with apps that help us make the most of the great outdoors.

There are tools that can help with everything from navigation and weather to travel and food, as well as apps for optimising your device, such as Wi-Fi finders and battery boosters.

In this feature, we round up our favourite new apps for Android and iOS, and even throw in some useful tools for Windows Phone and BlackBerry too.

WEATHER & TIME



Sunnycomb

sunnycomb.com

Min requirements: Android 4, iOS 6

File size: 5MB

Price: Free

This gorgeous weather app is now available on both Android and iOS, bringing you an up-to-date forecast no matter where you are. Sunnycomb



presents its info as a honeycomb of user-submitted images of the sky, and lets you view weather reports from around the world. There's also an interesting 'mood diary'

feature that predicts how conditions will make you feel, based on the types of weather you're most sensitive to.

Rain Alarm

www.rain-alarm.com

Min requirements: Android 2.3, iOS 7 or Windows Phone 7.5

File size: 4.3MB (Android), 7.7MB (iOS)

Price: Free

Rain Alarm warns you about incoming bad weather so you'll know what to expect before you head out and get soaked.

It's available as a website, Chrome

extension and a Windows 8.1 app, as well as for all the major mobile platforms. Rain Alarm notifies you of any approaching rain or snow using push notifications, and you can also



view animated radar images of the weather front on a world map. There's also an OSM (OpenStreetMap) version of the app, which is designed for older Android devices.

Sun Shield

bit.ly/sunshield345

Min requirements: Android 2.3, iOS 4.3

File size: 3.6MB (Android), 5.3MB (Android)

Price: Free (Android), £1.49 (iOS),

We all know that it's important to slap on some sun cream before heading out on hot, sunny days, but knowing what factor you need isn't always obvious. Sun Shield warns you of the strength of the sun's UV rays at your current location and recommends the SPF (sun-protection factor) level you should use. It provides an hourly index and lets you determine your skin type for more accurate advice.



BBC Weather

bit.ly/bbcandroid345

bit.ly/bbcios345

Min requirements: Android 2.2, iOS 5

File size:

5.6MB (Android), 13.3MB (iOS)

Price: Free
The BBC's weather forecasts are usually pretty accurate and the app, which is available for phones and



tablets, lets you keep an eye on the broadcaster's latest predictions. It tells you what the weather will be like where you are, including the high and low temperatures, pollution and pollen levels, humidity, visibility and wind speed. There's also a five-day forecast and options to view UK weather on an hour-by-hour basis, with three-hourly forecasts for overseas locations. A recent update improved the forecast layout in landscape mode for tablets, and added sunrise and sunset times.

AccuWeather

www.accuweather.com/en/downloads

Min requirements: Android 2.2, iOS 5, Windows Phone 7.5 or BlackBerry

File size: 7.2MB (Android)

Price: Free



There are AccuWeather apps available for all the major mobile platforms, bringing you a host of useful weather features and accurate data. You'll be able to see when extreme weather is forecast for your location, view minute-by-minute forecasts, and get a handy summary so you can prepare for the day ahead. The app is free, but funded by advertising. You can pay £1.99 to remove the ads on iOS, or buy the ad-free Platinum version on Android for £1.18.



Dark Sky

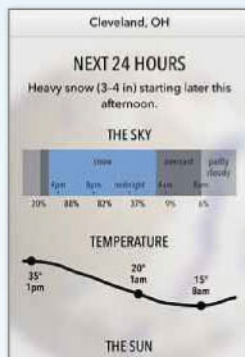
darkskyapp.com

Min requirements: iOS 7

File size: 4MB

Price: £2.49

Described as a new kind of weather app, Dark Sky delivers incredibly precise forecasts for your current location, providing minute-by-minute predictions for the next hour. Usefully, it



sends alerts just before it starts raining so you'll know whether to put on a coat or stay indoors for a while longer. It also provides detailed forecasts for the next day and week. Dark Sky works in the US, UK and Ireland, but unfortunately the developer has said there may never be an Android app.

Time.is

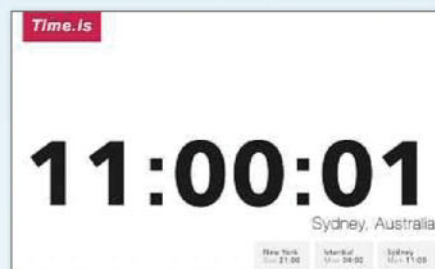
time.is/apps/ipad

Min requirements: iOS 6 (iPad only)

File size: 1.6MB

Price: £1.49

If you need to know the exact time for anywhere in the world, the fascinating Time.is can help. This iPad app displays the current time (it's synchronised to the atomic clock), and how far ahead or



behind you are when compared to other places. You can store up to 20 locations out of a possible seven million. It lets you convert between time zones, and automatically takes into account variations such as daylight saving. It will also show sunrise and sunset times and day length, and offers a calendar and a dark/light mode.

NAVIGATION



Citymapper

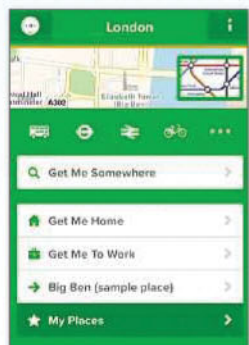
citymapper.com

Min requirements: Android 2.4 or iOS 6

File size: 4.2MB (Android), 11MB (iOS)

Price: Free

Citymapper currently only covers four cities (London, Paris, Berlin and New York) but it's a must-have app for those destinations, guiding you around each city and providing real-time data for all



modes of transport. It tells you how long it will take to get to a place on foot, or by bike, car, train or bus. It also shows you how many calories you'll burn, the cost of the journey, and even what the weather will be like when you get to your destination.

Navfree

www.navmii.com

Min requirements: Android 2.3, iOS 4.3

File size: 33MB (Android), 546MB (iOS)

Price: Free

The recently updated Navfree provides

voice-guided navigation for more than 30 countries, including turn-by-turn directions, spoken and on-screen instructions, and maps you can store on your device. It also has a walking mode. Although the main app is free, you can buy extra content such as live traffic updates, speed camera maps and celebrity voices including Stephen Fry and Homer Simpson.



OsmAnd Maps & Navigation

bit.ly/osmAnd345

Min requirements: Android 2.1

File size: 22MB

Price: Free

You probably already have Google Maps on your Android device, but OsmAnd Maps offers a greater degree of detail and uses free OpenStreetMap (OSM) data. You can view maps online and off (so you won't incur roaming charges when you're abroad), and it will guide you to your destination and highlight

points of interest around you. The paid-for version costs £5.99 and has lots more features and no adverts.

Smart Compass

bit.ly/smartcompass345

Min requirements: Android 2.2

File size: 1.3MB

Price: Free

Smart Compass helps you ensure you never get lost again by adding a compass to your Android phone. You can view it in landscape or portrait mode, and with the camera turned on or off. Having the camera on helps you orientate yourself wherever you happen to be. To fire up the sensors the app uses, you just need to move your phone around to begin. Like any compass, Smart Compass can be affected by nearby magnetic fields so bear that in mind if it seems to be playing up.



DEVICE TOOLS



Virgin Media SmartCall

bit.ly/virgin345

Min requirements: Android 2.3, iOS 5

File size: 4MB

Price: Free

If you're a Virgin Media phone customer, you can use the company's SmartCall

app to make free mobile calls using the unused minutes you get with your monthly landline plan. The calls are made over Wi-Fi, so it doesn't matter which mobile network you're on, and because you can use them abroad, you won't need to worry about hefty

roaming charges. Each Virgin Media account holder can use the SmartCall app on up to two devices, so someone else in your home can enjoy unlimited free calls too. To use the app, simply register your phone(s) and enter the four-digit security code. You'll be

smarttalk), which also lets you use your spare minutes from home while you're away.

Battery Doctor

bit.ly/battery345

Min requirements: iOS 4.3 or Android 2.1

File size: 3.9MB

Price: Free
Most modern mobiles suffer from the same problem - limited battery life.

There are lots of apps that promise to boost your juice, of which our favourite is Battery Doctor. This fantastic free app works by identifying which apps, services and features on your device are draining your juice, and lets you turn them all off in one go. It also tells you how much battery time you've gained by applying



warned before you reach your free-calls limit and disconnected when you do. BT customers can install the similar SmartTalk (www.bt.com/

its optimisation tricks, and offers a choice of power-saving modes that you can activate at different times of the day.

See our Mini Workshop below to find out how to use Battery Doctor.

Onavo Extend

www.onavo.com

Min requirements: Android 4, iOS 6

File size:

2.2MB

(Android),
iOS (10MB)

Price: Free

It's easy to use far more data than you intend to when browsing the web, by sending and receiving photos, music and videos, and downloading apps, over a 3G or 4G connection. Onavo Extend lets you get more out of your existing data plan by routing your internet use through its servers and compressing the data. It also produces a handy report that itemises your mobile internet usage, so you can see how much data you've saved.



Free Zone - Free WiFi Scanner

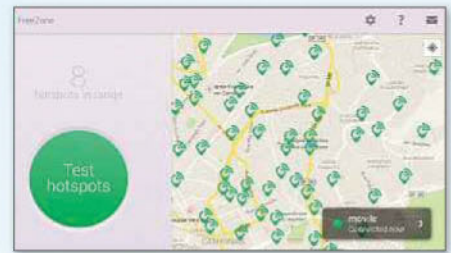
www.movile.com/en

Min requirements: Android 2.3, iOS 5.1

File size: 10MB (Android), 1.8MB (iOS)

Price: Free

Cellular roaming fees can be exorbitant when you're out of the country, so it's



best to use Wi-Fi where possible. Free Zone helps you track down free wireless access points and plots them on a map. It has more than five million Wi-Fi hotspots in its database and automatically alerts you when you come into range of one you can connect to.

eWallet

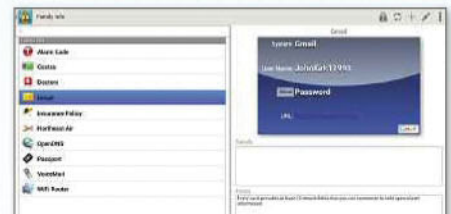
www.iliumsoft.com/ewallet

Min requirements: Android (varies with device), iOS 4.3 or BlackBerry

File size: Varies with device

Price: £6.99

If you lose your mobile phone while out and about, there's a real danger that your personal information will fall into the wrong hands. The expensive but reliable app eWallet protects your passwords, account information, credit card details, PINs and more. It uses strong 256-bit encryption, and offers a password generator to help you create unguessable, secure passwords.

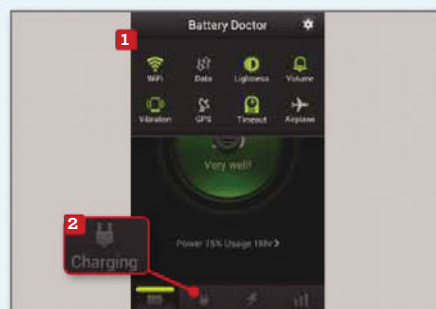


MINI WORKSHOP | Boost your battery life with Battery Doctor

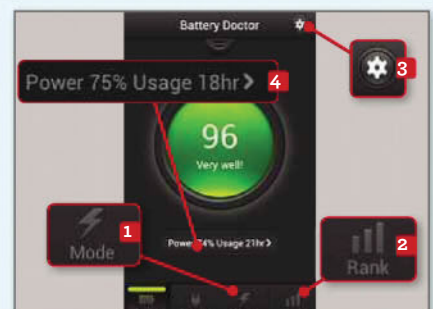


1 Battery Doctor displays your remaining battery and usage time.

1 Tap this option to see how this is affected by various actions, such as talking via 3G or playing music. Tap the Save Juice button **2** to make Battery Doctor scan your phone's current settings, give you a score and let you optimise your settings to improve it.



2 The pull-down tab **1** lets you save power by turning off various features, such as Wi-Fi, Vibration, GPS and mobile data transfer. It also lets you change the brightness, volume, screensaver time-out and other settings. The Charging button **2** tells you how long it will take to fully charge your device, and lets you view a monthly charging report.



3 The Mode button **1** lets you switch between power-saving presets (you can schedule them for set times), while Rank **2** shows the top 10 most power-hungry apps. Tap the cog icon to customise other power-saving settings. **3** Your power rating and remaining battery and usage time will change accordingly. **4**

LOCAL INFORMATION

**World Around Me Lite**

worldaroundmeapp.com

Min requirements: Android 2.3, iOS 5

File size: 19MB (Android), 10MB (iOS)

Price: Free



World Around Me (WAM for short) is a new, location-based augmented-reality app that shows you places of interest in your current vicinity as you travel around. You can use it to find hotels, restaurants, cafes and bars, banks and cash machines, petrol stations, public transport, shops and more, either by speaking or typing a search term. Labels for matching results are then overlaid on your camera view. Once you've located what you're looking for, WAM also gives you directions to it, and shows you customer reviews and ratings, where appropriate. The app works in more than 130 countries and an ad-free version is available for 99p.

Viator

m.viator.com/mobileapps

Min requirements: Android 2.2, iOS 6

File size: 2.9MB (Android), 24.6MB (iOS)

Price: Free

Viator lets you find and book things to do in places across the world, from your phone or tablet. You can view top-rated tours, activities and attractions and browse more than 500,000 reviews



and photos submitted by fellow travellers. You can also watch videos to sample tours and attractions before you book, to get a taste of what to expect. Viator even offers exclusive experiences that aren't available anywhere else.

Zomato

www.zomato.com/uk

Min

requirements:

iOS, Android,

Windows

Phone or

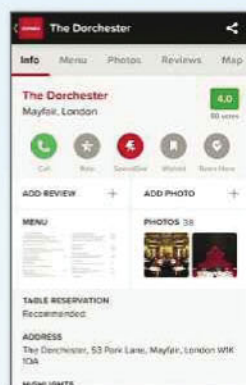
BlackBerry

File size: Varies

with device

Price: Free

It can be hard to find a good, inexpensive place to eat in a strange city, but Zomato points you in the right direction. It lists more than 227,100 restaurants, cafes and pubs, and gives you instant recommendations based on your location and the type of food you're looking for. Details provided include an address and map, phone number, opening times, average cost for two people, a menu, photos, and user reviews. It's an essential app for foodies and hungry travellers.

**Hotel Tonight**

www.hoteltonight.com

Min requirements: Android 2.2, iOS 7

File size: 11MB (Android), 23MB (iOS)

Price: Free

If you're in a new city with nowhere to stay, Hotel Tonight will help you find a (very) last minute room, often at a cheaper price than you might otherwise expect to pay. You can arrange stays of up to five days (depending on availability) and book from 9am to 2am. If you run into problems with a booking, Hotel Tonight offers live 24/7 customer support. It covers a decent selection of locations around the world, with the most recent version offering more hotels in the UK. More cities and countries will be added soon.

**Findery**

findery.com

Min requirements: iOS 7

File size: 21MB

Price: Free

Every place has a tale to tell and the new 'social-local discovery app' Findery

aims to reveal those stories to the world. It encourages you to tag notes and photos on a map for other users. The map covers the globe, so you will usually be able to find notes nearby (or within driving distance, at least). A feature called 'bumping' runs in the background and alerts you when you're in the vicinity of a tagged location. An Android version is currently in development.

**UK Travel Guide With Me**

guidewithme.com

Min requirements: Android 2.3, iOS 5

File size: 208MB (Android), 186MB (iOS)

Price: Free



If you're planning to holiday at home this year, this offline travel guide will help you make the most of the UK. It recommends Wikivoyage (en.wikivoyage.org) articles based on your current location, which include 'get-around guides', phrase lists (if you want a taste of the local lingo), warnings on how to stay safe and healthy, restaurant and hotel recommendations, details of average costs and much more. Although UK Travel Guide With Me is a large download, the fact you don't need a connection to use it means it won't slow you down.

CAMRA's Good Beer Guide

www.camra.org.uk/gbgmobile

Min requirements: Android (varies with device), iOS 5

File size: Varies with device

Price: £4.99

Find a decent drink wherever you are in the country using the latest version of CAMRA's Good Beer Guide app. It covers more than 4,500 urban and rural pubs, providing details of beers, food,

accommodation, facilities for the disabled, transport links and more. Although the app is free to install, if you don't pay the annual subscription, it only offers limited functionality, finding you the nearest pub or brewery.

Altitude

bit.ly/altitude345

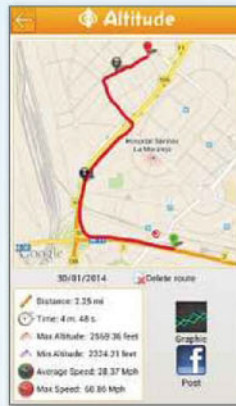
Min requirements: Android 2.2

File size: 1.4MB

Price: Free

Whether you like to climb, walk or run up hills and mountains, this powerful app serves as a detailed and accurate altimeter. As well as telling you how high you are, it shows your current, average

and maximum speed; direction of movement and physical address; and the maximum and minimum height of your route. You can view graphs of the height and speed of all your journeys, and save and share your routes. Note that for the app to work properly, you must be outdoors to receive a GPS signal.



TRAVEL & TRANSPORT

My Destination Travel Guides

www.mydestination.com

Min requirements: iOS 6 (iPad only)

File size: 49.6MB

Price: Free (offers in-app purchases)

Instead of lugging around a heavy travel book when you go somewhere new, take My Destination with you. This excellent new iPad app offers more than 100 travel guides for popular places including London, Paris, New York, Prague, Athens, Barcelona and the Bahamas. Each guide includes tips and insights, a trip planner and interactive maps. You can view the guides online for free, or purchase premium versions to view offline from £2.49 each. My Destination Travel Guides will be available for iPhone and Android soon. See our Mini Workshop on the right to find out how to use the app.



AA Travel Companion

bit.ly/aaapp345

Min requirements: Android 2.1, iOS 4.3

File size: 2.1MB (Android), 9.6MB (iOS)

Price: Free

Whenever you travel, there are lots of things to do before you go and to take with you on your trip. The AA Travel Companion provides a place to store all your important information, including insurance, passport details, contact info

for your credit card company, flight details and more. The app also includes a handy currency converter, gives you the weather forecast for your current location and provides details of local facilities.



TransPennine Express

bit.ly/tpexpress345

Min requirements: Android 2.1, iOS 6.1, BlackBerry or Windows Phone 7.5

File size: 3.3MB

Price: Free

Despite its name, the TransPennine Express app lets you look up and book any UK train, not just those running in the north of England. As well as checking train times and booking tickets for up to eight people, you can use the app for last-minute journeys, buying tickets up to 10 minutes before departure. The app will also remember previous journeys and searches, to save you time in future.



TravAlarm

www.travalarm.com

Min requirements: Android 3

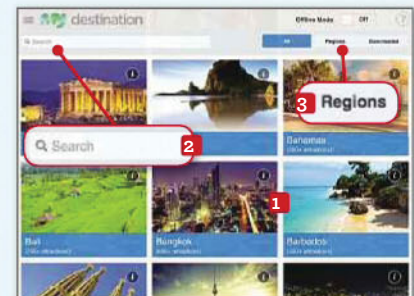
File size: 22MB

Price: Free

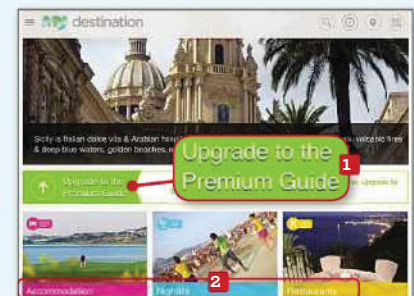
TravAlarm is a smart alarm clock and

MINI WORKSHOP

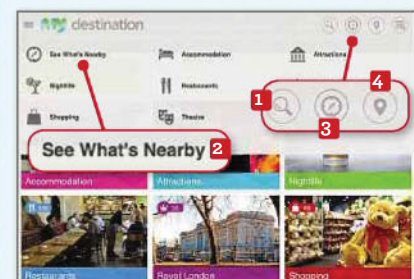
Use My Destination to plan your perfect holiday



1 My Destination offers travel guides for many major holiday locations. You can browse places by scrolling the grid of thumbnail images **1** or search for a location by name. **2** You can also filter the choices by region, **3** such as Africa, Asia, Europe, Central America and the Middle East.



2 Select a guide and you'll be asked if you want to access the free online version, or download the full premium guide to use offline (this is handy if you can't guarantee internet access while you're away). You can upgrade at any time. **1** Content is sorted into categories such as Accommodation, Nightlife and Restaurants. **2**



3 Use the magnifying glass **1** to search for places of interest. You'll be able to view information, photos and maybe videos of a location, and see it on a map. The What's Nearby, **2** Interactive Map **3** and Trip Planner features **4** are only available in the paid-for premium guide, which costs from £2.49.

BEST APPS FOR YOUR HOLIDAY SNAPS

Adobe Revel

bit.ly/adobe345

This new cloud-sharing app for Android and iOS lets you share photos and videos privately. You can create albums and use Adobe's editing tools and filters.



Picsart Photo Studio

picsart.com

PicsArt is an amazing free mobile photo editor. It turns even your worst shots into interesting ones, and is packed with effects, masks, text tools, frames and more.

Spider-man

bit.ly/spider345

Convince your friends you bumped into the web-slinger using this fun Android app from Sony Mobile. You'll need to install Sony's AR Effect app to use it.



MixBit

mixbit.com

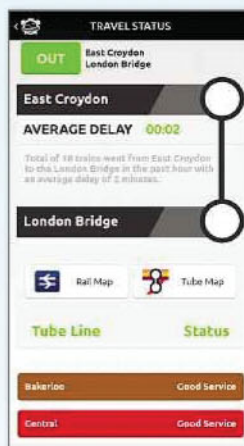
Capture holiday memories as short videos rather than stills using this app from the founders of YouTube. It records clips of up to 16 seconds and stitches them together. It's available for Android and iOS.

Touchnote Postcards

www.touchnote.com/mobile

Turn your best holiday photos into personalised postcards and send them directly from your device using Touchnote's app for Android and iOS. The 6 x 4in cards cost £1.49 to create and delivery is free worldwide.

radio app that monitors travel networks for possible disruptions. Tell it where you need to be and when and, ingeniously, it will wake you up earlier if it detects any problems that might delay your journey, giving you extra time to find an alternative route. During your journey, it will continue to monitor networks and calculate your arrival time, and alert you when you're close to your destination.



Skyscanner

www.skyscanner.net/mobile.html

Min requirements: Android 2.3, iOS 6, Windows Phone 7.5, Blackberry

File size: Varies with device

Price: Free Probably the best app for finding cheap flights,

Skyscanner has a new feature for storing and viewing your

previous searches. You can filter search results by price, cabin class, airline and take-off and landing times, and switch to chart view to see the lowest prices across a whole week or a month.



HEALTH & FITNESS



Zombies, Run!

www.zombiesrungame.com

Min requirements: Android or iOS 7

File size: 37MB (Android), 539MB (iOS)

Price: £2.99 (offers in-app upgrades)

This fitness app turns a real-world jog into a journey through the zombie apocalypse. Episodic stories unfold in-between tracks from your playlist as you run, and there are a choice of modes



available, including Story, Airdrop (run to and from a point in the real world), Supply, Interval Training, Race and Radio. Items you collect along the way can be used to build and strengthen your base. The app can be used outdoors or on a treadmill. To get the most from it, you'll need to buy mission passes in-app.

RockMyRun

www.rockmyrun.com

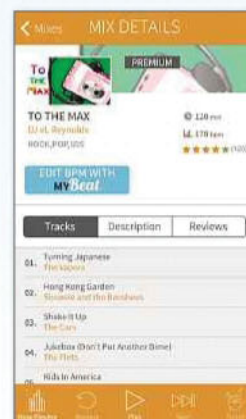
Min requirements: iOS 6 or Android 4

File size: 23MB (Android), 30MB (iOS)

Price: Free (offers in-app upgrades)

If you like to exercise to music, RockMyRun is the perfect app to take with you on runs and walks. It offers a large collection of mixes from various DJs, covering a wide range of genres

- everything from rock and pop to 80s, 90s and 'oldies'. Mixes can be streamed over 3G and 4G, or downloaded to your device via Wi-Fi. Free users can only access shorter tracks of less than 45 minutes, while the Premium version (£2.99 a month) lets you listen to all mixes, download tracks in MP3 format, and speed up or slow down the music to match your running speed.



Fitbit

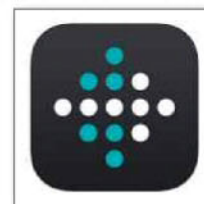
www.fitbit.com/uk

Min requirements: iPhone 5s

File size: 13MB

Price: Free

Although Fitbit is best known for its wearable activity trackers, its new free app doesn't require any additional hardware and uses the iPhone 5s's ability to track steps to find out how have you've jogged, walked or run. You can set daily goals for steps taken, distance travelled, calories burned and more; compete with friends to see who is the most active; and explore your historic progress.



First Aid by British Red Crossbit.ly/firstaid345**Min requirements:** Android

2.3, iOS 6, Blackberry

File size: 37MB**Price:** Free

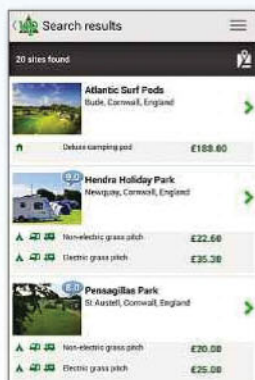
Don't let accidents and medical emergencies ruin your holiday. Install this



brilliant app for step-by-step advice about how to deal with allergies, burns, choking and much more. The app features videos and games to improve and test your First Aid knowledge, there are no ads and you don't need an internet connection. We can't recommend it highly enough.

OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES**Pitchup**www.pitchup.com/mobile**Min requirements:** Android 3, iOS 5**File size:** 9.8MB (Android) 3.8MB (iOS)**Price:** Free

Find and book campsites and holiday parks while you're on the move using this excellent free app from the Pitchup website. You can search near your device's location; filter the results by price, distance and duration; and view full descriptions of each campsite, including facilities, nearby attractions, photos and user reviews. You can now book your pitch more easily from a small screen, and get text-message confirmation. The app covers more than 800 campsites and parks in the UK, Ireland, Spain, France and Italy, with more added all the time.



Find out if that bright speck in the sky is a star or a planet with this amazing app, which is packed with astronomical tools and charts. It has an observation log and a mode that turns your screen red without affecting your night vision. Best of all, because "astronomy is often best when far from civilisation", the app is (almost) completely self-contained and doesn't need an internet connection to view much of its data.

**Knots 3D App**knots3d.com/knots-3d-app**Min requirements:** Android 2.2, iOS 5.1**File size:** 46MB (Android), 52MB (iOS)**Price:** 75p

From boating and fishing to camping and climbing, knowing how to tie a knot is an invaluable skill when you're out and about. This app demonstrates how to tie (and untie) 94 knot types, from Albright Special to Yosemite Bowline, using 3D views that rotate through 360 degrees and let you zoom in for greater detail. The knots are organised into categories and you can browse them offline.

What you say...

We asked *Web User* readers about the apps they find most useful on holiday. Here's what you told us

With Waze (www.waze.com), you can update traffic reports as you go, add new roads to the app's maps and tell it about roads that have closed or changed their layout.

Darren Phillips

I use TripAdvisor (www.tripadvisor.co.uk/apps), to decide where to go.

Hesperus Crescent

In the UK, I find Bus Scout useful (www.tmuapps.eu/bus_scout.html).

Craig Harper

Picsart (picsart.com) for touching up holiday snaps on the go to make your friends even more jealous!

Stephen Perry

TripAdvisor, UK Transport (www.uktransportapp.com), Citymapper, BBC Weather and National Rail (bit.ly/national345)

Emmy UpTo-NoGood

You should leave your phone at home – you're on holiday, after all!

Simon Cauldwell

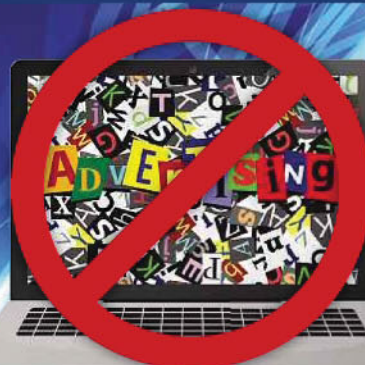
I use the Yelp app (www.yelp.co.uk/yelpmobile) to find good places to eat nearby.

Sharon Beasley

Pocket (getpocket.com) for viewing articles offline.

*Jack Gold***NEXT ISSUE****ON SALE WEDNESDAY 4 JUNE 2014****BLOCK ALL ONLINE ADS**

Stop annoying and intrusive adverts spoiling your enjoyment of the web

**PLUS...****LOCK EVERYTHING**

Password-protect your files, folders and programs

FREE VPN TOOLS

Best services for browsing the web anonymously

BACK UP ANDROID

Transfer files from your phone or tablet to your PC

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LOG OUT OF SERVICES FROM ANYWHERE

If you forgot to sign out of an account before leaving home, work or a public PC, don't panic. **Robert Irvine** explains how to log out of 10 popular services from any device



EMAIL

Nobody likes the idea of other people reading their email, whether it's a family member, a work colleague or the government, but it's very easy to forget to sign out of your account once you've checked your messages. Fortunately, Gmail lets you log out remotely or at least find out if someone has accessed your account.

In Gmail, scroll to the foot of the page and click the tiny Details link below 'Last account activity' in the bottom-right corner. This tells you if your account is open in another location and displays a list of recent activity, including the access type (such as browser or mobile) and IP address. Click 'Sign out all other sessions' to log out everywhere but your current location. Your Gmail address is now used across all Google services, so clicking this button will also sign you out of Search, Drive, Google+ and more.

Activity on this account

This feature provides information about the last activity on this mail account, and any concurrent activity. [Learn more](#)

This account does not seem to be open in any other location. However, there may be sessions that have not been signed out.

[Sign out all other sessions](#)

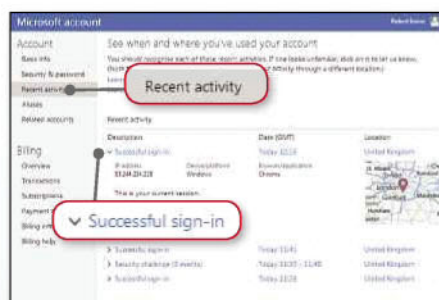
Recent activity:

Access Type [?] (Browser, mobile, POP3, etc.)	Location (IP address) [?]	Date/Time (Displayed in your time zone)
Browser (Chrome) Show details	* United Kingdom (83.244.234.228)	12:13 (0 minutes ago)



OUTLOOK

Outlook.com doesn't let you log out remotely, but you can still check your account for unauthorised activity. Click your name in the top-right corner, choose 'Account settings' and then 'Recent activity'. Verify your account if prompted and Outlook.com will show you how, when and where your account was last accessed. If you spot something suspicious, click 'This wasn't me' and follow the instructions to change your password.



YAHOO MAIL

As with Outlook.com, Yahoo Mail doesn't let you log out remotely, but it does store your login history. Click the cog icon in the top-right corner, choose 'Account info' and click 'View your recent sign-in activity'. Annoyingly, this only displays the date and time your username and password were used to sign into your account, and doesn't record activity that occurred after you were already logged in. But if something seems amiss, you should change your password.

YAHOO! UK & IRELAND

Recent Login Activity

Your most recent activity includes any times that you signed in. [Learn More](#)

Date/Time (Europe/London)	Access Type
Today 12:55	Browser
Apr 22, 2014 12:55	Browser



FACEBOOK

Other than email, Facebook is the service that's accessed on the widest variety of devices, including home and work computers, tablets and phones, and public PCs in hotels, airports and libraries. If you suddenly realise you're still logged in on a device that's several miles away, you can protect your privacy by logging out remotely. On the Facebook website, click the down arrow in the top-right corner, choose Settings and select Security in the left-hand column. Click the Where You're Logged In option for a list of devices and locations, and the times and dates they were last accessed. Click 'End activity' next to an entry to sign out of that session, or choose End All Activity to sign out everywhere.

Current session	End All Activity
Location: Tower Hamlets, TW9, GB (Approximate)	
Device Type: Chrome on Windows 7	
If you notice any unfamiliar devices or locations, click 'End Activity' to end the session.	
Desktop (1) ▾	
Last accessed: Today at 07:28	End activity
Location: Camden, CMD, GB (Approximate)	
Device Type: Chrome on Windows 7	
Mobile Browser (1) ▾	
Last accessed: 26 April at 08:45	End activity
Location: Camden, CMD, GB (Approximate)	
Device Type: Chrome on Android 4	
Facebook for Android (2) ▾	

To log out of the Facebook mobile app, tap the menu icon in the top-left corner, tap Account Settings and select Security. Choose Active Sessions, then tap the 'X' next to an entry to end the session. Note that Facebook isn't always accurate at identifying your precise location - it placed our phone 20 miles away in Swanley, Kent!

Facebook also offers a useful feature called 'Login notifications', which alerts you by email, text message or push notification if your account is accessed



changing your password will log them out. PayPal is even more cautious, signing you out after 15 minutes of inactivity.



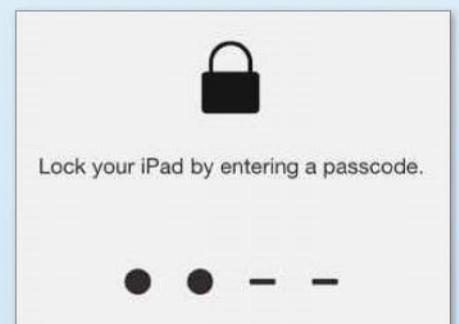
ANDROID & iOS

If your Android phone or tablet has been lost or stolen, merely logging out of your Google account may not be enough to put your mind at ease. A much better idea is to lock your device remotely, so that nobody will be able to access it except you (assuming you can get it back). Go to Android Device Manager (bit.ly/device345) and select your phone or tablet to locate it on a map. Click the Lock button and enter a password to lock your screen, along with an optional recovery message (such as where to return the device to).



If you're really worried about privacy, you can click Erase to wipe all photos, apps, settings and other data from your device. Once this is done, you'll no longer be able to use Android Device Manager to locate it. If your phone or tablet is currently offline, it will be erased as soon as it goes online again.

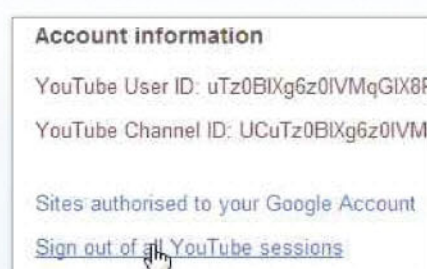
A similar service called Find My iPhone (bit.ly/find345) is available for Apple devices through iCloud. It lets you locate, lock and erase your iPhone, iPad or Mac remotely, provided it's connected to the internet.



on an unfamiliar device. You can activate this on the Security page and check which devices the site regards as familiar by clicking 'Trusted browsers'. It's especially useful if you often use Facebook away from home.

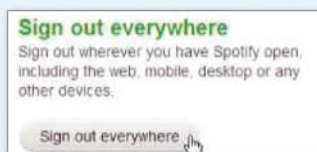


To kick them out, click the cog icon in the top-right corner, select 'YouTube settings' and click the Advanced link below your name and email address. Click 'Sign out of all YouTube sessions' to stop anyone else using your account.



SPOTIFY

Last month, Spotify finally gave in to user demand and added an option to log out of your account remotely. This means you no longer need to worry about people nosing through your playlists and interrupting the music you're listening to with songs of their own. Previously, you



had to ask Spotify to log out other people out of your account, either by contacting the company via email or posting a request on the 'Someone else using your account?' thread on its forums. (bit.ly/spotify345). Now, you can just go to your account page (www.spotify.com/account) and, on the Overview tab, click the 'Sign out everywhere' button to end all sessions instantly.



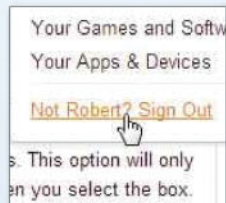
YOUTUBE

If you've noticed strange recommendations appearing in your What To Watch feed on YouTube, someone could be viewing videos while logged into your account.



AMAZON

You'd think Amazon would offer an easy way to log out remotely, to prevent strangers from filling their boots at your expense. Sadly, other than providing a 'Not [your name]? Sign Out' option for honest folk, it doesn't do a great deal to help. The 'About Signing In and Signing Out' page (bit.ly/amazon345) says the only way to log out when you don't have physical access to the browser is to reset your password. "This will cancel all existing sign-ins that you have, even if some of them have the Keep me Signed in feature enabled". Amazon will also prompt you for your password every two weeks, even if you remain logged in.



EBAY

Although eBay doesn't provide an option to 'sign out everywhere', it helps protect your account by logging you out automatically every 24 hours, even if you've selected 'Stay signed in'. If you suspect someone else is using your account without your permission,

Are browser add-ons worth paying for?

Some extensions from the Chrome store are no longer free. **Robert Irvine** looks at why they've started charging, what users think and the best free alternatives

Media Hint
bit.ly/MediaHint345
\$3.95 (£2.34) per month;
\$39.50 (£23.40) per year

What's it charging for?

When we first recommended VPN tool Media Hint, back in Issue 306 (bit.ly/webuser306), the add-on worked quietly in the background, disguising your IP address so you could access US-only streaming services such as Hulu (www.hulu.com) for free. But as of the beginning of April, you need to sign up and subscribe to Media Hint to access location-restricted content in Chrome, after a seven-day free trial. The price also includes "personalised service and support", and use with other apps and devices (coming soon). The Firefox add-on is currently still free.

What they say

In a post on its Facebook page (www.facebook.com/MediaHintApp), Media Hint said: "To help us provide your

personalised service and support, we now require all users to sign in. By paying for our premium service, you help the Media Hint mission to provide open internet worldwide!". Asked why it couldn't just offer an ad-supported package like Spotify does, Media Hint replied that "Google doesn't support ads in the extension, so we can't".



What users say

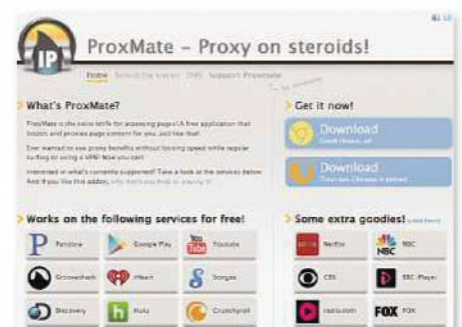
Formerly a five-star-rated extension on the Chrome Web Store, Media Hint rapidly dropped to two stars after it started charging. "I enjoyed it as a free service, but it's simply not worth the amount they're asking for" said one user. According to another, it's "not worth paying for at all since it doesn't actually work for all sites".

What we say

As a VPN service, Media Hint presumably needs to cover its costs somehow, but it could have waited until its mobile apps were ready before making us pay for what is at the moment just a browser add-on. Springing the subscription charge on its Chrome users will just make them switch to another tool – or simply use the Firefox add-on instead.

Free alternative

Like Media Hint, ProxMate (proxmate



.dave.cx) fakes your location so you appear to be somewhere else and can access services blocked in the UK. It's available for Chrome and Firefox.

SPOI Options
(formerly YouTube Options) spoi.com/options
\$1.99 (£1.18) per month

What's it charging for?

Now rated one out of five by Chrome users, the add-on formerly known as YouTube Options was once one of the most popular video tools for the browser. It offers a host of useful features for customising YouTube's layout, increasing video size and resolution, hiding ads and using your keyboard and mouse to control playback and volume. But Smart People On Ice (SPOI) has now decided to start charging for the extension so it can "make the world a better place" by donating half its proceeds to charity.

What they say

"Options is an ever-evolving product and half of the subscription fee goes





toward sustaining the level of effort needed to develop quality software. The other half of the subscription fee is donated to causes we believe in. Until you purchase a subscription license, Options' functionality will be disabled."

What users say

Good causes be blown, say former YouTube Options users, whose comments range from "Used to be good, until they forced me to pay for it" to "Don't give us that talk of making the world better. Shove it". And those are just the printable ones!

What we say

Philanthropic intentions aside, SPOI could surely have found a better way to get funding than by introducing a non-refundable monthly subscription, with no free trial and not even a peek at the add-on until you pay up. Many former fans of the extension say they'd happily have paid a one-off fee, but now Smart People On Ice is on the skids.

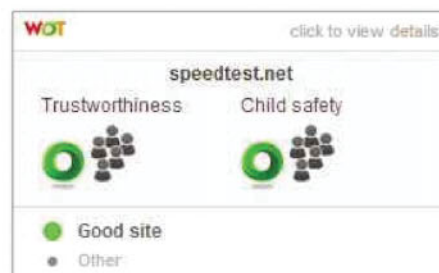
Free alternative

There are several good free extensions for customising YouTube, of which our favourite is Magic Actions for YouTube (bit.ly/magic345). This has many of the same features and more than a million satisfied users.

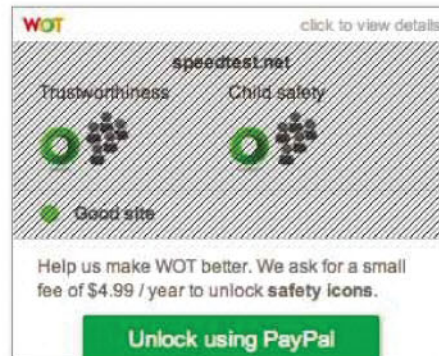


What's it charging for?

Although the WOT (Web of Trust) safe-browsing add-on is still free for all browsers, it recently tested a 'freemium' model for Chrome. This meant that WOT users with an activity score of less than 500 (the more websites you rate and comment on, the higher your score) had to pay to see the safety icons on search results that indicate whether a site is trustworthy and child-friendly. The test was quietly introduced to 5,000 existing WOT members. The service remained free for all new users and those with high activity scores.



How WOT usually looks



How WOT looked on the freemium trial

What they say

In its initial 'WOT freemium' post (bit.ly/wot345), WOT said: "We have reached a point in WOT development where we will start testing a few monetisation models with users who haven't contributed to WOT by rating/commenting websites". Two weeks later, it backtracked, saying: "As of now, we have stopped the freemium experiment. Thank you all for participating".

What users say

Needless to say, reaction from long-term WOT users wasn't positive. "I can't

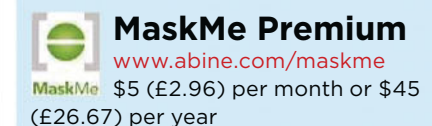
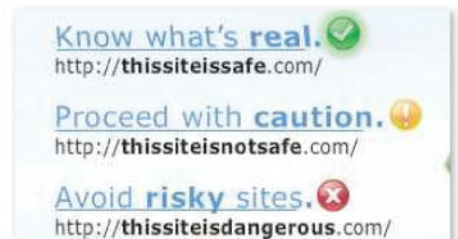
believe after all my years of using this add on, I am now being asked to pay for it", said one, while another added: "This is insulting and a turn in the exact opposite direction of what made the extension so useful".

What we say

We've always been big fans of WOT and we understand its logic in making non-contributing users pay. But by suddenly introducing a charge, it was bound to annoy its loyal community, and asking for voluntary donations would have worked better. Still, we're pleased WOT responded to feedback and abandoned the 'experiment' - at least for now.

Free alternative

The 'limited' free version of SiteAdvisor (www.siteadvisor.com) works in a similar way to WOT, although you need to pay \$19.95 (£11.83) for SiteAdvisor Live for the full set of features.



What's it charging for?

MaskMe conceals your email address and passwords from spammers and hackers when you fill in online forms. Its basic version is free, but for extra protection, you can upgrade to MaskMe Premium, which also masks your phone number and credit card details using disposable data. The price includes



MaskMe's Android and iOS apps, so you can stay safe on your phone and tablet.

What they say

"Every time you sign up for a site or shop, MaskMe will be by your side. It ensures you never miss important communication, but also puts you in control so you can stop spammers, telemarketers and hackers in one click."

What users say

MaskMe Premium is popular among both Chrome and Firefox users (it's coming to Safari and Internet Explorer soon): "I liked the free add-on so much that I upgraded. It works great - I've already reduced spam and kept my info private when making online purchases".

What we say

We think MaskMe has taken the right approach to charging for add-ons by giving users its most important features for free, and making its premium tools optional. We also like that it works across browsers and mobile devices, and the customer support is said to be top-notch if you experience problems.



Free alternative

You can also protect your login details and other confidential data using LastPass (lastpass.com), which similarly offers both free and paid-for versions, add-ons for Chrome and Firefox (as well as Internet Explorer and Safari), and apps for Android and iOS. See our Workshop on page 58 to find out how to use LastPass.



Block Sender for Gmail

www.blocksenderapp.com
\$4.99 (£2.94) per month or \$29 (£17.07) per year.

What's it charging for?

This add-on lets you block (rather than just filter or report) people who are bothering you with unwanted Gmail messages, and optionally send them a

'this email address doesn't exist' message. You can block five senders for free every month, but to banish more



review the extension on the Chrome Web Store and promote it on Facebook and Twitter.

What they say

"Say goodbye to unwanted newsletters, individuals, and other uninvited email senders. Works for email addresses, domains, subject lines and even keywords."

What users say

The consensus seems to be that this is a great tool, but you don't get enough blocks for free. "I don't know if it was

you'll need to pay a monthly or annual subscription. Three extra free blocks are available if you

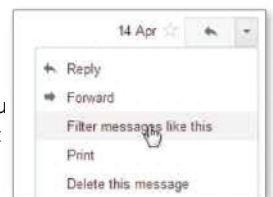
helpful or not because the trial ended so fast", writes one user.

What we say

It really isn't that hard to filter unwanted senders in Gmail, so we're not convinced the add-on is worth nearly three quid a month. However, we like that it offers a free (if limited) trial so you can decide for yourself and gives you the chance to earn extra blocks.

Free alternative

Gmail's built-in filters can be set up to automatically delete mail from specific people and domains, or ones containing certain keywords. Click the menu in the top-right icon of an unwanted message, choose 'Filter messages like this' and specify your criteria. You can either select 'Skip the Inbox' or 'Delete it'.



CHROME ADD-ONS THAT CONTAIN ADS

Earlier this year, several popular Chrome extensions were bought by adware companies who loaded them with ads that disrupted browsing and posed a potential security risk. Google has already removed many of these add-ons and has promised to tackle the problem with a new policy that requires extensions to have "a single purpose that is narrow and easy to understand" (bit.ly/policy345). This comes into force next month, but at the time of writing there were still many adware-infected add-ons in the Chrome Web Store. You can protect yourself against them using Extension Defender (extensiondefender.com), which scans your extensions for malware and warns you before you install risky ones. Here are five popular Chrome add-ons that are now known to contain adware, according to Extension Defender.

Bookmark Sentry (140,212 users)

Although it boasts of a '100% Clean' award from 2013, this extension for detecting broken links in your bookmarks now harbours adware, according to Extension Defender.

Smooth Gestures (471,308 users)

This extension lets you browse the web using mouse gestures. You can turn off ads by making a one-time

donation, but many users have already ditched it in disgust.

Hover Zoom (995,963 users)

The popular extension for enlarging online images is now classified as spyware, although you can turn off the option to send "anonymous usage statistics" in its options.



Avoid adware by unticking the box to 'Enable anonymous usage statistics'

Awesome New Tab Page (292,133 users)

We were big fans of this colourful add-on for customising your New Tab page but, as one user says, it's now "gone too far with the intrusive ads".

FastestFox for Chrome (1,104,450 users)

Unlike the excellent Firefox add-on for speeding up your browsing, FastestFox for Chrome is now blighted with ads that pop up when you visit shopping sites.

FIX



ANN☹NOYANCES

Are you driven to distraction by irritations in your Facebook news feed? **Edward Munn** shows you how to take control of the social network and filter out the rubbish

Hide friends from your news feed

We've probably all thought about 'unfriending' someone on Facebook following a particularly tedious status update, or indeed a string of them. Fortunately, you can hide content from your news feed without having to delete or block anybody, unless you want to. When something annoying appears on your homepage, hover your cursor over the person's (or page's) name and a pop-up window will appear. Simply click Following to 'unfollow' that person. This will stop any posts from them appearing in your news feed, and it can be easily reversed by visiting the person's profile and clicking the Follow button on their cover photo. Perhaps the best thing about the feature is that nobody ever needs to discover that you ousted them.



Block ads and Facebook suggestions

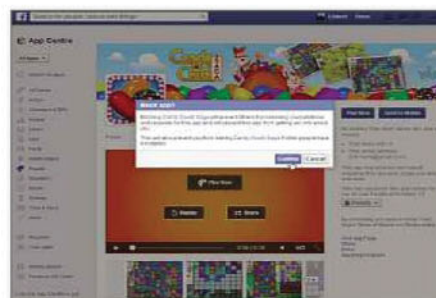
Early adopters of Facebook may remember a time when the social network had little or no advertising. Sadly, this is no longer the case, but with Adblock Plus (adblockplus.org), you can wave goodbye to the targeted ads and suggested posts that plague



your browsing experience. The add-on is now available for Firefox, Chrome, Internet Explorer, Opera and Safari, as well as Android, and can be set up to block native Facebook annoyances including the trending sidebar, recommended pages and suggested friends. After installing the extension, go to bit.ly/adblock345 and choose one of the three available Facebook filters.

Stop annoying game invitations

Everybody has been invited to play games on Facebook, whether it's Candy Crush Saga, Farmville or Texas HoldEm Poker. If you want to put an end to these maddening notifications, you have a couple of options. First, go to Settings and click Blocking. If there's a repeat offender who invites you to play games,



enter their name next to 'Block app invites' and press Enter. You can do the same with events if you keep getting invited to parties you don't want to attend. Alternatively, click your game invitation notification and, on the game's page, block all future invitations via the Block option in the right-hand sidebar.

Turn off auto-playing videos

Facebook's Auto-Play Videos feature is distracting and confusing at the best of times, but thankfully it can be turned off quite easily. Go to Settings, Videos and turn Auto-Play Videos to Off. If you use Facebook on an iOS device, you need to go to Settings and Facebook, then tap Settings again. Here, you can select the option to 'Auto-play on Wi-Fi only'. There is a similar option in Facebook's settings on Android devices. Unfortunately, if you are using Wi-Fi, this means you still have to put up with silent videos in your news feed on both platforms for now.



Improve the quality of your news feed

If, after using Adblock Plus and unfollowing a number of friends, you're still not happy with the content in your news feed, you can help Facebook further improve it by clicking the arrow in the top-right corner of any post and selecting 'I don't want to see this'. Click 'Why don't you want to see this?' to tell Facebook that you consider the content spam or that you just find it annoying or boring. If you really want to fine-tune your news feed, you can use the FB Purity (www.fbpurity.com) add-on to filter the content according to a multitude of criteria. You can hide anything, from videos to 'liked' statuses, but beware that FB Purity's wealth of useful options means this might not be such a quick fix!



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- STEP 4** Enter your **Apple ID password** to confirm



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



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How to avoid the next Heartbleed

LastPass: lastpass.com | 20 mins |   

Following the discovery of the Heartbleed bug, it has never been more important to change your passwords often and to avoid using the same password on multiple sites.

Our favourite tool for the job is LastPass. It makes generating and remembering strong, unique passwords much easier. The software lets you manage all your passwords from one place, where they are securely encrypted and protected by an 'umbrella' password.

The Identities feature lets you keep your work and home

websites separate, and you can securely store 'profiles' for entering information into forms, to make online checkouts fast and safe.

In this Workshop, we show you how to get the most out of the free version of LastPass. A Premium version is available for \$12 (around £7.10) a year and includes full mobile support.



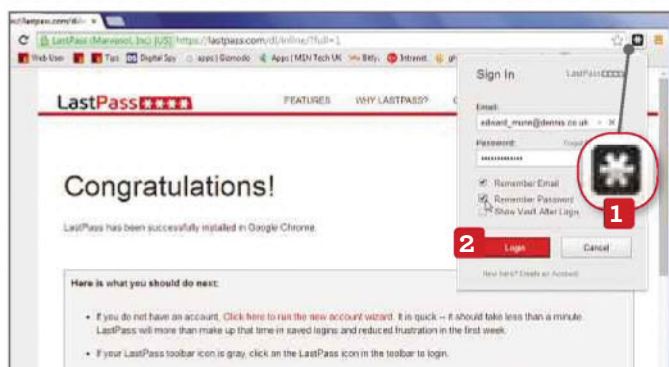
1 Download and install LastPass (lastpass.com). When prompted, select the browsers you want to use in conjunction with it. **1** If you don't already have an account, follow the set-up wizard and choose a strong protect-all password that you can easily remember.



2 After confirming your password, a screen appears asking for access to insecure data on your computer. Select 'Yes, let me choose which items I want imported into LastPass' and click Next. If LastPass finds insecure items on your PC, tick the Import box **1** and click Next **2** to import them to LastPass.



3 LastPass encrypts the data it imports to protect you from identity theft. Once it's done this, you'll be asked if the program can 'Remove insecure data from your computer?' **1** Select 'Yes, remove all items that were imported to LastPass'. **2** Click Next, **3** then Done.



4 Click the button to install the LastPass Chrome extension, then click Add to complete the process. When asked if you want to create an account, select No Thanks. Click the grey LastPass (asterisk) button in Chrome **1** to enter your details and log into the service. **2**



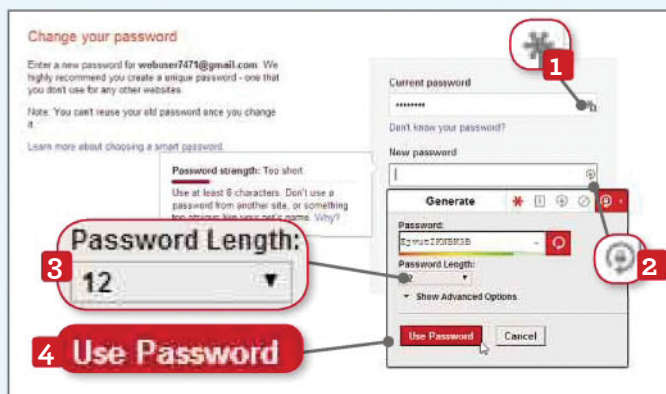
EXPERT TIP

EDWARD MUNN says

Use the Security Check feature in your My LastPass Vault to make the program analyse your data and give you a security score between 1 and 100. If you score badly, this handy feature will tell you how to make your passwords more secure. It also checks your vault for any sites known to be vulnerable to the Heartbleed bug, so you can easily change your passwords on affected sites.



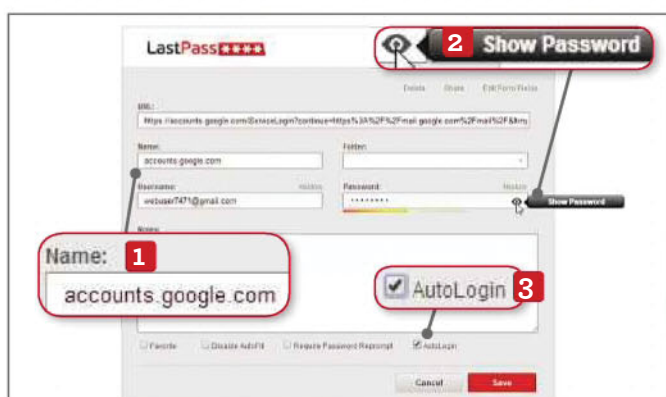
5 Visit any website you've not yet saved to LastPass and log in. A blue toolbar reading 'Should LastPass remember this password?' appears. **1** Click Save Site **2** and a new page will be launched. Check that the site's details are correct, give it a recognisable name and click Save.



6 When you change your password on a site, LastPass can generate a secure new one. Click the asterisk icon **1** to fill the 'Current password' field. Click the padlock **2** in the 'New password' field to generate a password of your chosen length. **3** Click Use Password **4** to finish.



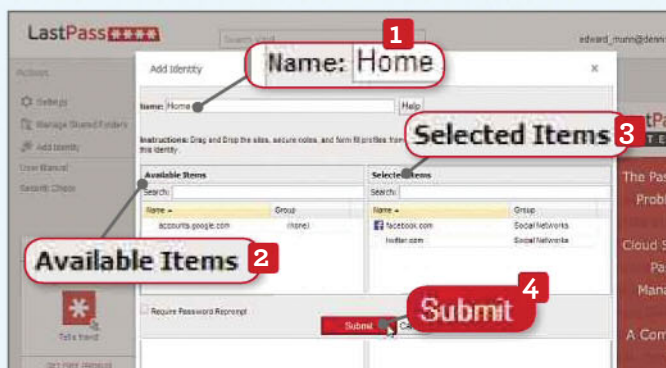
7 In Chrome, click the LastPass button, **1** then Sites, **2** to quickly navigate to your saved websites. This should provide one-click logins to any site, even when you are logged out. Unfortunately, we found the feature a bit hit-and-miss and you may still need to click Log In for some sites.



8 To manage your saved passwords, click the LastPass button and select My LastPass Vault. You can sort your sites by folder or share them with friends and family who also use LastPass. Click the Edit pencil to change an entry's name, **1** reveal a password **2** or set up AutoLogin. **3**



9 LastPass can be used to set up Form Fill Profiles so that you can quickly insert your home or work details into a shopping checkout or online form. Click Form Fill Profiles **1** and 'Setup a new Form Fill Profile'. **2** Give the profile a name and complete the appropriate details on each tab.



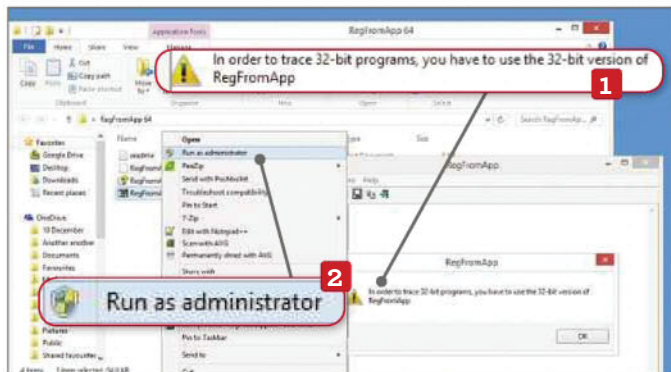
10 Use Identities to group your websites into separate profiles. Click 'Create an Identity', name it **1** and drag sites from Available Items **2** to Selected Items. **3** Click Submit. **4** From the Chrome button, click 'Tools and Identities (All)' to choose one or more identities.

Return your Registry to its original state

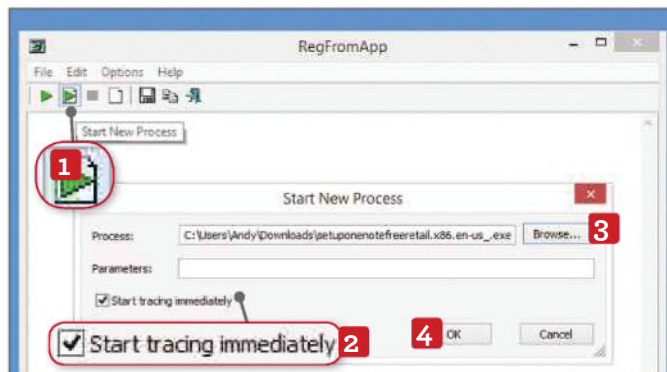
When you install software, changes are made to your Registry. RegFromApp keeps an eye on what changes are

made by the program, so you can revert to your Registry's original settings, should you decide to uninstall the software.

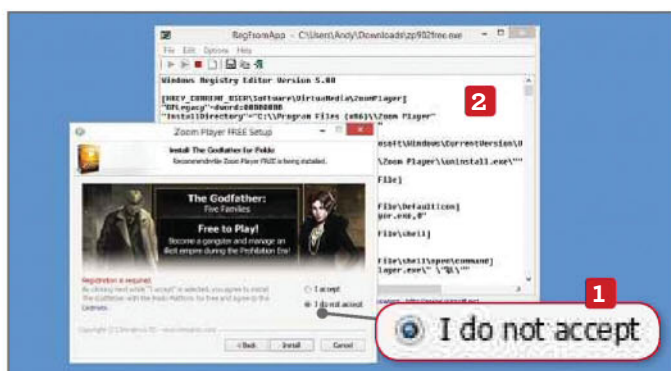
🕒 **RegFromApp:** www.nirsoft.net | 🕒 **10 mins** | 🖥️ **XP, Vista, 7, 8+**



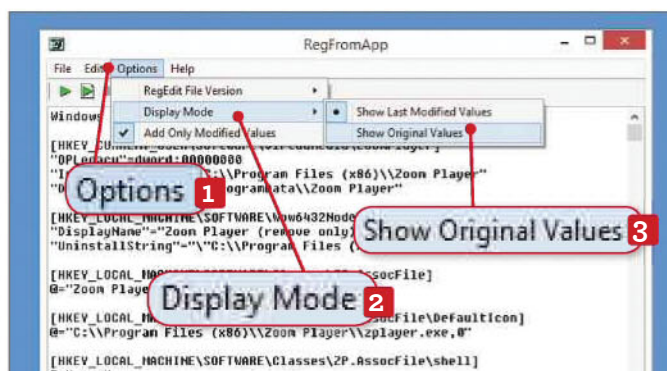
1 If you install a 32-bit app, you may need to run the 32-bit version of RegFromApp, even if you're on a 64-bit PC. Download both and you'll be told if you're using the wrong version. **1** Run it as an administrator by finding its executable file, right-clicking it and choosing 'Run as administrator'. **2**



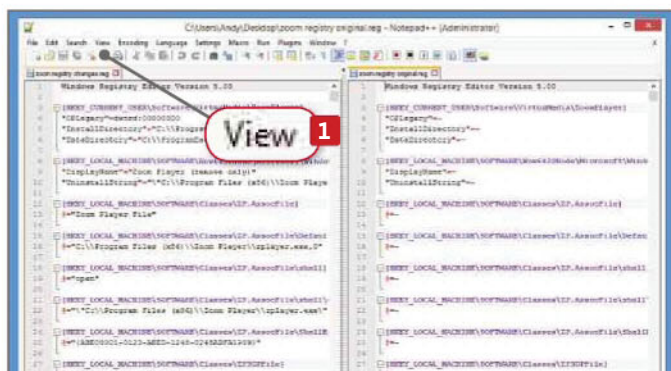
2 On start up, RegFromApp asks you to choose a process to inspect. These are processes that are already running, so click Cancel. Click the Start New Process button **1** and tick the 'Start tracing immediately' box. **2** Click Browse **3** to find your new software's installation file, then click OK. **4**



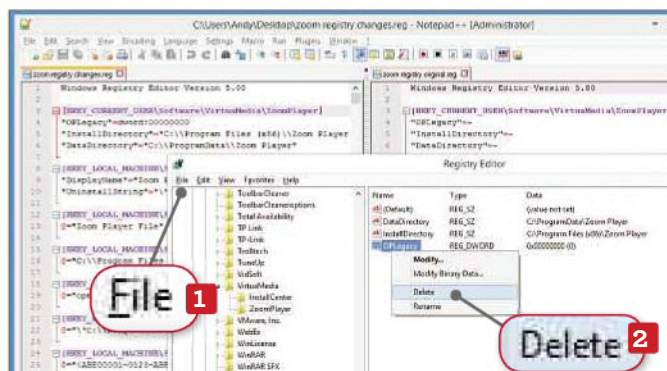
3 The software's installation tool appears. Run through it as normal, making sure you opt out of any additional software that you don't want to install. **1** As the software installs, the RegFromApp screen will start to fill up with all the Registry changes that the software is making. **2**



4 When installation is complete, RegFromApp displays all the Registry settings that have changed. Click the Save button to save it as a REG file. Click Options, **1** choose Display Mode **2** and switch to Show Original Values **3** to see the original Registry settings. Save this under a different name.



5 You can open both Registry files in a text editor to compare them. Notepad will work, but we'd recommend Notepad++ (notepad-plus-plus.org). Open the two files in separate tabs, open the View menu **1** and choose Move/Clone Current Document, then 'Move to Other View'.



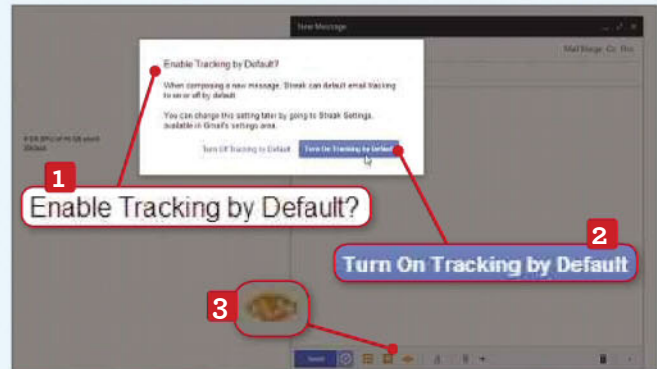
6 After uninstalling software, press Windows+R and type regedit to launch the Registry Editor. Click File **1** and 'Save a Copy As' to make a back-up. Most changes made by the installation should have reverted back automatically, but you can check on any that haven't and remove them manually. **2**

Find out when your emails are read

Streak for Gmail is a free business tool that includes helpful features for home users, such as the ability to track emails directly from

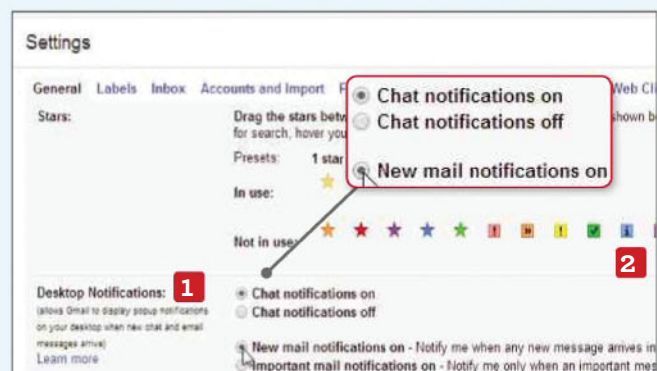
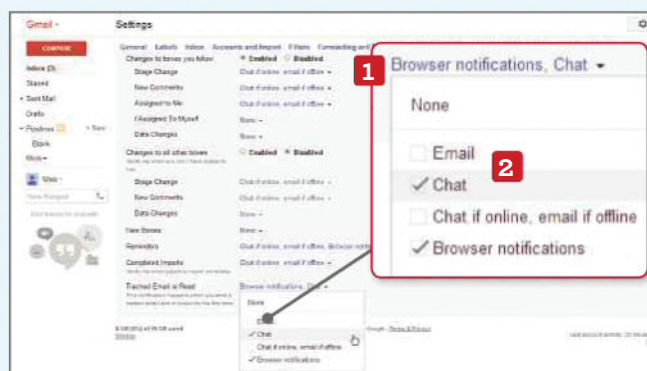
your inbox. The add-on notifies you when your emails are read, and shows other details such as how many times they have been opened and where from.

🔗 **Streak for Gmail:** www.streak.com | ⌚ 15 mins | 🔄



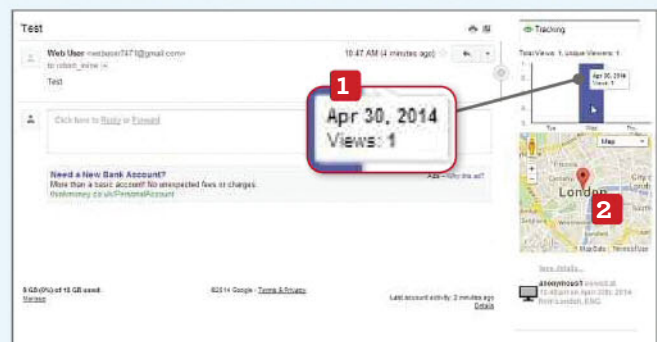
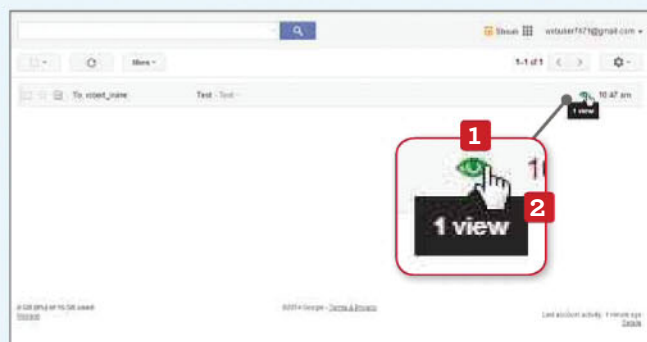
1 Go to www.streak.com and click the button to install. **1** When prompted, click Add, 'Continue with Streak' and Accept to complete the installation and grant permissions. In the How Can Streak Help You? window, choose any option, then Skip and Later. Your Gmail inbox will now load.

2 Click Compose to write a new email. A window with the message 'Enable Tracking by Default?' **1** appears. Choose 'Turn On Tracking by Default'. **2** In the New Message window, the eye symbol **3** will glow orange if tracking is enabled on that message.



3 Minimise the Streak Help and New Message windows, then click the Cog icon, Settings, then Streak Settings. You can disable the option to 'Track Emails by Default' at any time. Scroll down and click 'Browser notifications' **1** to choose the type you want to receive. **2**

4 Click General settings and scroll down to Desktop Notifications. **1** 'Chat notifications on' and 'New mail notifications on' **2** should be selected if you want to receive either type of notification when your emails are read. Scroll to the bottom of the page and click 'Save changes'.



5 Reopen the New Message window and send a test email. Click Sent Mail and you will see a grey eye icon. This icon turns green **1** once your email has been read. Hover your cursor over the icon to see how many times the email has been viewed. **2**

6 Open the email and you will see a Tracking sidebar with information including the reader, total views and unique views. Click 'more details' to see a chart of its views over time **1** along with the recipient's location. **2**

Your top tips

Our pick of the best advice from our readers. To get help or offer it to others, visit forum.webuser.co.uk



SOFTWARE

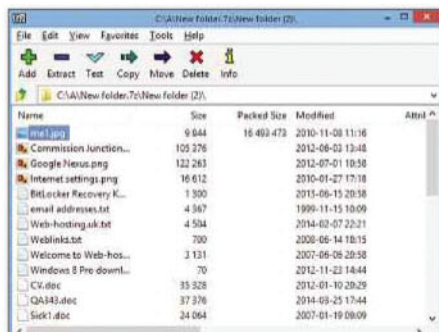
Shrink your files

If you right-click a file or folder and click 'Send to', you'll see the option 'Compressed (zipped) folder'. This is an easy way to shrink your files and free up hard-drive space. It also lets you fit more files onto a USB memory stick.

However, an even more space-saving way to compress files is to use 7-zip (7-zip.org), which lets you compress and store files as 7Z compressed archives. According to the tool's author, these are 30 to 70 per cent smaller than the compressed files made by Windows.

In my experience, the savings depend on the types of files being compressed, but I have always found 7Z archives much smaller than Windows'. For example, 30MB of files compressed to a 20MB Zip file using Windows 'Send to', but just 15MB using 7-Zip. That's a useful saving if you need to email big files.

Dave Nolan, via email



7-zip saves more space than the Windows compression tool

BROWSERS

Better Firefox privacy

Did you know that when you click a link on a web page, the site you end up on is told which website you've come from? This doesn't bother me, but I know some people don't like others monitoring everything they do on the internet and tracking their activities. To stop a website knowing where you came from, you need to change a setting in Firefox.

Type `about:config` into the address box. Type `sendRefererHeader` into the search box and double-click 'network.http.sendRefererHeader'. Replace the '2' with a '0' and click OK. Apparently, one or two sites might not work with this setting, but you can easily reset it back

TOP TIP

MAPS

Get a faster Google Maps

If you want to speed up Google Maps, you can do so by using its Lite mode, which uses less processing power because it doesn't load any 3D imagery. Google should automatically select this mode if you are using an out-of-date browser or operating system, in which case you will see 'Lite mode' displayed in the bottom right-hand corner next to the copyright information. If your computer is new but you still want to use Lite mode, you



Use Google Maps Lite mode to get the fastest possible experience

can do so by visiting bit.ly/liteon345. You can return to the default mode at any time by entering bit.ly/liteoff345.

Philip Reed, via email

£25 winner

to '2' if you need to access one.

Neil Walford, via email

BROWSERS

Show extension buttons in Chrome

Although it's very easy to hide the button of an extension in Chrome by right-clicking it and selecting 'Hide button', it's not immediately apparent how to get it back. I discovered this the hard way when it took me about ten minutes to retrieve the button for Pocket (www.getpocket.com).

Right-clicking the same area that it disappeared from won't work; you need to click the menu button, then Settings, Extensions. Any extensions with buttons currently disabled will have an option labelled 'Show button' – who would have guessed?!

Craig Diamond, via email



Click 'Show button' to get back hidden Chrome extension buttons

HARDWARE

Improve your Chromecast stream

Following the excellent feature on the Google Chromecast in issue 343 (bit.ly/webuser343), I would like to draw attention to one important omission. A fair number of people have home cinema systems connected to their TVs

via an AV receiver. If you are one of these people, you should connect your Chromecast to an HDMI port on the receiver (if you have a spare one) because the video and sound quality will be much improved.

Roger Thomas, via email

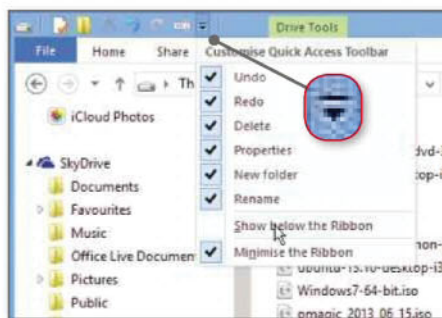


Plug the Chromecast directly into your AV receiver for better video and audio quality

WINDOWS 8

Customise File Explorer

File Explorer in Windows 8 is a bit different to previous versions and the controls have been modelled on the latest version of Microsoft Office. There is a ribbon bar with all the functions, but at the very top is a Quick Access Toolbar with one or more icons. You can add your favourite functions to it so you don't have to use the ribbon, right-click



Customise the Quick Access Toolbar and add your favourite buttons

files and so on.

Click the little down arrow. A menu appears with six different functions that you can put into the toolbar. Tick each one to add its icon. You can even add an Undo button, which is handy when you accidentally delete a file, because clicking the toolbar button instantly restores it. Add the buttons in the order you want them to appear on the toolbar.

F Johnson, via email

BROWSERS

Switch between Explorer and the web

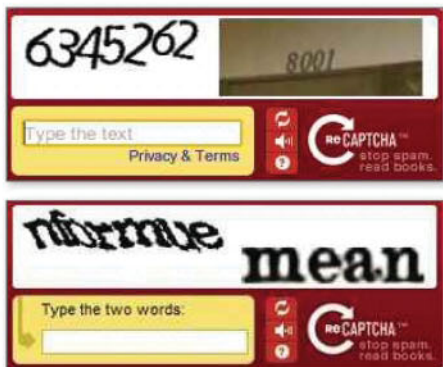
Suppose you have an Explorer window open and you are browsing the hard drive. If you want to switch to browsing the web, there is no need to open a web browser window. Just click the address box in Explorer and type the URL. This works the other way around, too, so if you are browsing the web and want to look at the hard drive, just click the address box and type C:\ or C:\Users to see the drive's contents.

Bob Tate, via email

SECURITY

Faster reCAPTCHA codes

Some sites use Google's reCAPTCHA service to differentiate between legitimate users and spammers' robots. It is worth noting that if you are presented with the numeral-based version of reCAPTCHA, you only need to enter the computer-generated digits that appear



reCAPTCHA isn't case sensitive and you don't have to type everything you see

on a plain background (top picture) in order to prove you are human. Similarly, with the letter-based version, you only need to enter the more distorted word (bottom picture). The security system is not case-sensitive, so don't worry if some of the letters are capitals.

Pitbulls, Web User Forums

WINDOWS 8

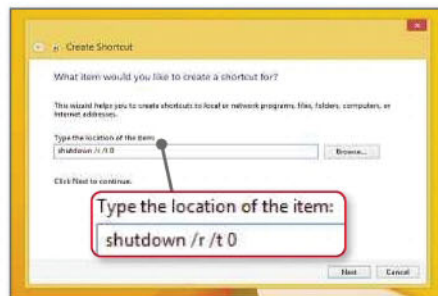
Use shortcuts to shut down your PC

Although Windows 8.1 mostly solved the clunky shutdown process of Windows 8 by including a Power Options button on the Start page, it's still an extra step from the Desktop. To resolve this, you can create a customised shutdown shortcut on your Desktop.

Right-click the Desktop and click New, then Shortcut. For a Shutdown shortcut, enter `shutdown /s /t 0` or for Restart, `shutdown /r /t 0`. Note that the number after 't' can be altered to delay the process by any given number of seconds. Finally, choose a name for your shortcut and click finish.

If you want a one-click option on your Start menu to shut down your PC, right-click the shortcut you've just made and click 'Pin to Start Menu'.

Ed Wright, via email



Set up shortcuts on the Desktop or Start menu for faster shutdowns

MUSIC

Choose what to sync to your iPod

After buying songs in iTunes, I used to select my iPod, then click Summary and Sync in the hope that it would transfer my new music to the device. It does, but it also seems to sync thousands of other tracks that don't need syncing at all, which takes forever.

If you have this problem, click iPod in iTunes when it appears in the top menu, then select Summary. In Options, tick 'Manually manage music and videos', if it isn't already ticked. You'll get a warning about having to eject the iPod manually, but go ahead.

Now click Done. Find the track or album you want to add, then click and drag it to the top-right of the window

and a panel will appear. Hover the dragged content over your device name and release the left button. Your iPod will update, and you can click iPod in the top menu and perform a quick search for the new music.

Another way to do this is to stay within the iPod window and click 'On This iPod'. You then click Add To under the Done button, which opens the same panel to which you can click and drag your music.

Spiraleye, Web User Forums

WINDOWS 8

Keep using Microsoft Money

Following the advice you gave Nigel Lamacraft on page 67 of issue 343 (bit.ly/webuser343) regarding alternatives to Microsoft Money when upgrading from Windows XP, I would like to point out that he should be able to carry on using the application. Following its discontinuation in 2009, Microsoft released a final downloadable version of Money in 2010 called Money Plus Sunset Deluxe (bit.ly/moneyplus345). Although it lacks online features and support, and is already a few years old, it installs the most up-to-date version of Microsoft Money on a new machine for free. I set up Money Plus Sunset Deluxe in Windows 7 and successfully transferred all my old accounts, and I'm confident that it will work in Windows 8.1 too.

Download the software and install it on the new PC. On the old XP machine, open Money and export all accounts onto a USB stick in Quicken format (QIF). On the new PC, run Money Plus and import the QIF files by clicking File and then Convert Quicken File.

Everything should import successfully to the new PC and you can carry on where you left off.

Roy Robertson, via Email



You can install Money Plus Sunset Deluxe in Windows 8

If you see words that look like they've been typed in a typewriter, follow the instructions and type them exactly as they appear, paying close attention to spaces and punctuation.

Readers' helpdesk

Our pick of the best solutions posted on our reader forums. Visit forum.webuser.co.uk – it's friendly and free!



HARDWARE

Which DVI connection do I need to use?

Q The cooling fan in my 8600GT graphics card was failing, so I bought a similar card to replace it. Both have two DVI sockets, but since the new card is made by a different manufacturer, I'm not sure which socket I should use for my DVI to VGA adapter plug? Could it damage something if I get it wrong?

Bedstor, Web User Forums

A Quite simply, you need to plug your adapter into a DVI-I socket, which will have four more holes than a DVI-D socket. These extra holes exist so that it can carry an analogue (VGA) signal as well as a digital one. You are right to be cautious, because plugging your adaptor into a DVI-D socket would mean the extra pins have nowhere to go and could become damaged.

It's entirely possible that both sockets on the card are DVI-I connections. If you can't see any obvious difference between them and they both have space for four extra pins, then you should be fine to use either one.

Helmut, Web User Forums and Dan Smith, via email



This graphics card has two DVI-I outputs

GENERAL PC

How do I fix the function buttons on my laptop?

Q After trying to use the volume and wireless keys on my laptop, I've realised that none of the function buttons are working. I tried a System Restore and got a pop-up saying that "no restore points have been created on your computer's system drive". Avast and Malwarebytes Anti-Malware both say that my computer is clean. Can anyone help please?

d_o_thomas, Web User Forums

SOFTWARE

How do I check the health of my USB memory drives?

Q I know Crystal Disk can be used to determine the status, temperature and overall health of hard drives and solid-state drives, but I wonder if there is any software that can do the same for USB memory drives?

Microkid, Web User Forums

A I'm afraid I don't know of any software, but you can run a manual check yourself as an administrator from Windows' Command Prompt.

To do this in Windows 7, click Start and type **cmd** into the search box. Right-click the program and select 'Run as administrator'. In Windows 8, go to the Start screen and start typing **command prompt** until the option appears in Search on the left. Right-click and choose 'Run as administrator'. Then, in the command prompt, enter **chkdsk f: /r** and press Return.



Windows' Command Prompt can be used to inspect a flash drive

The 'f:' part of the command may vary according to the drive letter that your USB device is assigned to. If you're unsure which port is which, press Windows+R, type **diskmgmt.msc** into the box and press Enter. Insert your flash drive into any port and you will see its drive letter appear on screen as the interface automatically refreshes.

Cantrel, Web User Forums

A Run the manufacturer's dedicated Function Key tool. In my laptop, it's located in the manufacturer's 'Tools and Utilities'. If that doesn't work, then reinstall the Function Key Driver which you will have to download from your laptop manufacturer.

Helmut, Web User Forums

SOFTWARE

How do I convert a video's aspect ratio in Handbrake?

Q I want to use HandBrake (handbrake.fr) to convert a video from an aspect ratio of 4:3 to 16:9, so I can watch it on my new smart TV. In



Select None under Anamorphic to make the Keep Aspect Ratio tick box appear.

HandBrake's guide, I read that "When 'Keep Aspect Ratio' is checked, Handbrake will link the height and width so that the picture is never distorted from its original aspect ratio". However, even after trawling the internet for answers, I cannot find this option so I can't untick it! Can anyone help?

George, Web User Forums

A The solution is simple when you know it. In order to make the aspect ratio option appear, go to Picture in Output Settings and set Anamorphic to None.

Ezyduzzit, Web User Forums

TELEVISION

Can I keep iPlayer shows for more than 30 days?

Q Is it possible to save downloaded programmes from BBC iPlayer to view at a later date, beyond the 30 days allowed? I've copied the MP4 file but when I try to play it, a screen appears saying "Windows Media Player cannot



play the file. The Player might not support the file type or might not support the codec that was used to compress the file." I have also tried opening the file in several other programs, but have had no success.

Jonthy, Web User Forums

A Yes, it is possible if you use Get iPlayer (bit.ly/getiplay345 - download the last file in the list, which is called 'get_iplayer_setup_latest.exe'). The download will create several directories and install various files. You must allow all of them for the program to work properly. The program itself is reasonably straightforward; the most important thing is to make sure you click the 'Refresh cache' button before you start looking for files.

Greysts, Web User Forums



Install Get iPlayer to keep BBC programmes for more than 30 days

BROWSERS

Should I stop using Internet Explorer?

Q With all the scary messages about Internet Explorer and Adobe Flash, should I stop using the browser in favour of Firefox or something Firefox-based, such as Palemoon?

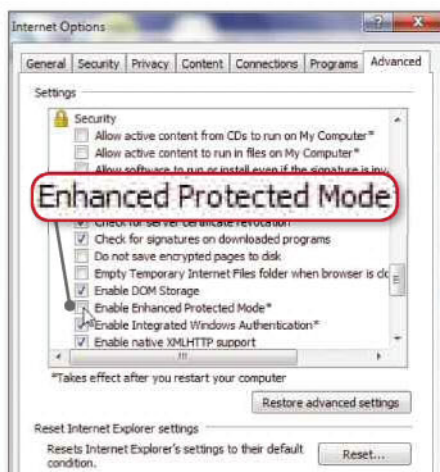
I use Avant, which is based on Internet Explorer. It's been my default browser for years and I would hate to stop using it.

Mal23, Web User Forums

A Lots of web pages still use Adobe Flash. As long as you keep it up to date, you should be fine to keep using it until the next exploit.

As for Internet Explorer, if you are using version 10 or higher, then you can tick the box to Enable Enhanced Protected Mode by clicking Tools, Internet Options, Advanced and then scrolling down to the Security section. You will need to reboot your computer for this to take effect.

Enhanced Protection Mode runs Internet Explorer in 64-bit mode, which is generally more stable and secure. Just be aware that if you visit a site that requires



Turn on Enhanced Protection Mode to make browsing with Internet Explorer safer

Java, then you will need to install the 64-bit version of that, too.

Cantriel, Web User Forums

SOFTWARE

Why is Word 2003 not loading properly?

Q Every time I open Word 2003, it opens as a horizontal strip across the top of the screen and I have to pull its lower edge down in order to start using it properly. I'm not sure what has caused this, because it seemed to happen spontaneously one morning and has opened in this way ever since. Can

anyone tell me how I might fix this?

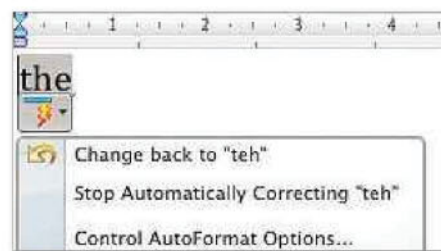
Another query I have with Word 2003 is that sometimes, when I highlight a word in order to copy it, a small blue rectangle accompanied by a lightning bolt appears. Can someone tell me what these icons are for, why they appear and how to get rid of them?

Chris, Web User Forums

A In Word 2003, there is a file called normal.dot which sometimes gets corrupted. Search for it, delete it, and Word will make a new one next time you open it. See if that works.

As to your second question, I think you might be referring to the AutoCorrect Options tool. This appears if you rest the mouse pointer near text that has been automatically corrected. If you don't like the correction, you can undo it, or turn AutoCorrect Options on or off by clicking the button and making a selection.

Greysts, Web User Forums



You can undo and turn off AutoCorrect

SOFTWARE

How do I make PDF files smaller?

A I have scanned three printed spreadsheets and a drawing into Adobe Acrobat 5, but when I try to attach them to an email, I get the message that the file size (12.9MB) is too large to send. Is there a way of shrinking the PDF size, or will I have to mess with my scanner settings to get the file size down? We need to send these files to a customer.

Rob1955, Web User Forums

A Assuming that the spreadsheets are in Excel format, why don't you just use the Save As command in Excel to save the files as PDF documents?

If you don't have access to the digital versions of the spreadsheets, you could try compressing the PDF files. 7zip (7-zip.org) is a good free compression program you could use.

If you frequently encounter this kind problem, it may be worth scanning at a lower resolution to keep the file size



Free services such as WeTransfer let you transfer up to 2GB at a time

down. Alternatively, you could use a free service such as WeTransfer (www.wetransfer.com) to send the files. You don't need to set up an account to use WeTransfer and it lets you send files of up to 2GB at a time.

It's not very straightforward reducing the file size of a PDF after scanning in Adobe Acrobat 5, but if you feel like trying it, there are some helpful pointers at bit.ly/pdfs345. The 'Optimize for Fast Web View' option might be your best bet.

Greysts, welshgasman, Web User Forums, Frank Thompson, via email

Ask the Experts

Web User answers all your technical questions.

Email us for help at webuser@dennis.co.uk



WINDOWS 8

New PC can't run old printer

Q I recently replaced an old PC running Windows XP with a new one running Windows 8. Everything is fine with the new PC except that my printer no longer works. I have an Epson DX4450, which is an old printer, but it worked perfectly well with my XP PC and still does if I reconnect it. The problem appears to be software-based, because the new PC is not communicating with the printer. I have tried uninstalling and reloading the printer and software from the original software disc, and loading the latest driver from the website, but nothing works.

N Parry, via email

A This printer should be fine with Windows 8, but it is best to ignore the original software that came with it because it won't be up to date. Instead, go to the Epson website and download the latest driver for it (bit.ly/epson345). The page detects which version of Windows you are running, but you should check that it has the correct one.

Just because the problem occurs with your new computer and not your



Select the printer in its Control Panel and check the status below

old one does not necessarily mean it's caused by software. It could be down to a USB lead or port, so try a different lead and socket. Not all USB sockets are the same: new PCs may have a mixture of USB 2 and 3 ports, and some provide power while others don't. Switching from one port to another might solve the problem.

Open 'Devices and Printers' in the Control Panel and make sure that the Epson device has a green tick to show it is the default printer. Right-click the printer and select Properties. Select the Hardware tab. The 'Device status' should say that the printer is working properly. The General tab should display the correct information for the make and model. If it doesn't, it could be the USB ports or lead that aren't working, so double-check those before you upgrade to a new printer.

When you visit the Chrome Web Store to install an extension, select the Details tab and read the description. It usually tells you what to expect, which isn't always obvious. Adding a dictionary, for example, does not make any visible change to Chrome. Double-click a word on a web page, however, and up pops a dictionary definition. You need to find out what triggers each extension.

YouTube SmartSearch, the extension you tried, does work but it is easy to miss the effect. Click the toolbar button and tick 'Auto scrolling', followed by Save. Go to www.youtube.com and enter a search word. Below the search box is a horizontal strip of video results. Arrows at each end let you scroll left or right, and hovering the mouse over a thumbnail plays the video. It's easy to assume this is part of the original page because the design fits so well, but if you turn off the extension, you'll see that search results are displayed in a different way.



Some Chrome extensions work so seamlessly, it's hard to tell what they do

EMAIL

Fix webmail access problems

Q The 'internet not working' message is displayed each time I connect to the Hotmail website, and it isn't fixed when I follow the instructions on screen. All other websites are working, such as Live Mail and Tiscali.

Ken Jones, via email

A Visiting hotmail.com, outlook.com and mail.live.com will all show the same Microsoft website. Have you tried all three URLs? It would be odd if any one of them didn't work, never mind all three.

The first thing you should try when

BROWSERS

Using Google extensions

Q I've been confused for some time regarding Chrome add-ons. Some icons appear at the end of the address bar, such as Webpage Screenshot, Google Cast and ScrewAds Plus, while others seem to work in the background – or do they?

I've just installed YouTube SmartSearch (bit.ly/youtubess342), which was featured in Issue 342 (bit.ly/webuser342). The icon is at the end of the address bar and it's enabled in Tools, Extensions. If I click the icon, its settings appear in a box, which I haven't changed. If I then use it to go to YouTube and type in a search, it doesn't look any different from a normal YouTube page. How do I

tell if it is working properly?

The three add-ons I mention in the first paragraph seem to work fine, but others in my extension list appear to do nothing, so I've disabled them. Some are like apps; some seem to be working in the background doing something, but I don't know what; and others don't appear to do anything at all.

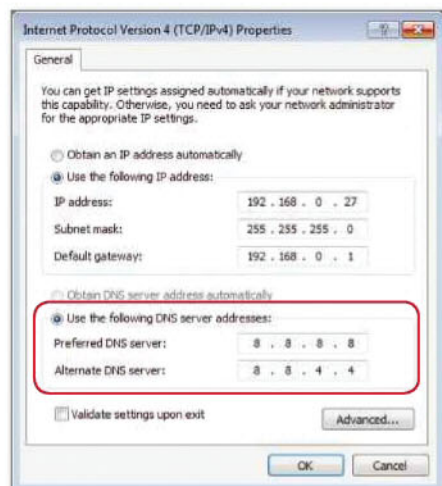
Mark Woolley, via email

A Chrome extensions can work in very different ways. Some add buttons to the right of the address box; some are only triggered by specific actions, events or websites; and some have an obvious effect – but others don't. This makes it impossible to give any general advice on how to use them.



you have a problem with a website is to use a different browser. If you are using Internet Explorer, for example, try Firefox or Chrome instead. Windows XP users should not use IE because Microsoft is no longer releasing patches to protect the old XP version.

To rule out a DNS problem, you could try switching to an alternative server. Open 'Network and Sharing Center' in the Control Panel and click the connection to the right of the active network. Click Properties, select Internet Protocol Version 4 and click Properties again. On the General tab, select 'Use the following DNS server addresses' and enter **8.8.8.8** for the first entry and **8.8.4.4** for the second. These are Google's public DNS servers and are an alternative to those provided by your ISP. Close all the windows, restart your computer and try accessing your email again.



If you're having website problems, try using a different server

TABLETS

Email obscured by unwanted ad

Q A small banner advert for a well-known holiday firm has appeared over the Folders button when I go into my webmail using the browser that came with my Android tablet. Clicking it takes me to their website. The banner prevents me from switching between webmail folders and I can't get rid of it.

I only recently bought the tablet after many years of using Windows PCs and I'm not yet up to speed with Android devices. It's running AVG AntiVirus Free, but this hasn't stopped the unwanted banner from appearing.

I have downloaded Firefox for Android and so far the banner hasn't popped up on webmail in that browser.

Nige Evans, via email

A Adverts can come from several sources and they are very common in free apps. They also appear on web pages and can even be built into a hardware device. From your description, it sounds like the ad is limited to the default browser on your tablet, which is usually Chrome. Open the browser and tap the menu button. Go to Content Settings in the Advanced section and make sure that 'Block pop-ups' is ticked.

It is possible to reset the browser by going to the all-apps screen and opening Settings. Open Apps or Application Settings, open Chrome and press 'Force stop'. Clear the cache and the data



Clear your browser of unwanted add-ons via options in its Application Settings

using the buttons, then uninstall updates. If it's a browser problem, this should solve it, but it may be an app running in the background that's displaying the advert.

You can reset the tablet by going to 'Backup and reset' in Settings. Make sure the option to back up your data is selected and that everything is backed up to your Google account. Use 'Factory data reset' to put the tablet

back as it was when you bought it. You'll be prompted to sign into a Google account when it restarts, and your settings and apps will be restored.

TABLETS

Run Linux on a tablet

Q I recently bought a cheap 7in tablet from Aldi, the Lifetab E7318, which runs Android 4.2. Although it seems Android is fine for smartphones, I think it leaves a lot to be desired on a tablet. I'd therefore like to know if there are any versions of Linux that run in an ARM environment and, if so, how to set up the tablet to be able to run Linux. I'd also like to save Jelly Bean so that Android can be reloaded if Linux doesn't work properly.

Paul Blackburn, via email

A Android is itself a version of Linux, but a highly customised one. If it is not to your liking, you could try a PC version of Linux. Many Android tablets can run Linux and your best bet is an app called Complete Linux Installer, which is available from the Google Play Store (bit.ly/tablin345). This lets you install Ubuntu, Debian, Fedora, ArchLinux, Kali Linux, and openSUSE on a tablet. We haven't tried it ourselves, but the app has had more than half a million downloads and has a high proportion of five-star ratings.

The app creates a virtual machine on which it installs Linux. This means



Ubuntu on a tablet is not quite ready for the general public, but it's coming

that it does not affect Android or your other Android apps. Any Linux software

can be installed, provided it has been created for ARM. However, this may be a problem because there aren't a lot of ARM Linux programs. It sounds like an interesting project for hobbyists, but it's unlikely to be a practical every-day alternative to Android. There is more information at the developer's website (linuxonandroid.org).

Another option is the Ubuntu and Android dual-boot tool (bit.ly/andubu345). It's intended for developers rather than the general public, but it may be worth investigating. It lets you install Ubuntu on a tablet and choose which operating system to launch when you switch it on. Ubuntu is actively being developed for tablets and phones, so it's a real mobile OS that will have apps created for it, too.

Web User's top tips

Our team of experts show how to use Windows 8's new Reinstall and Refresh tools



TOP TIPS FOR SOLVING WINDOWS 8 PROBLEMS

Problem-solving options

All versions of Windows provide options for solving serious PC problems. The simplest is System Restore, which puts settings back the way they were before your PC's problems started. This works in all versions of Windows.

The second, more drastic solution is to refresh Windows, which is a new option for Windows 8. The third solution is to reinstall Windows, which wipes the slate clean for a fresh start.

To use System Restore, open the Control Panel. Open System, click 'System protection', then System Restore. Choose any of the restore points listed and follow the prompts to return the PC to that state.

This will solve some problems,



Refreshing and reinstalling are two options for solving serious problems

but not all of them. Additional options in Windows 8 are accessed from the Charms bar (move your mouse to the right-hand edge of the screen or press Windows+C). Select Settings, 'Change PC settings', General.

In Windows 8.1, open the Charms bar, then click Settings, 'Change PC Settings', 'Update and recovery' and choose Recovery.

elsewhere (on a USB drive or online storage, for example), you can use the option to 'Remove everything and reinstall Windows'. There are two methods to remove files and clean the drive fully. 'Just remove my files' will fix most faults, but if you are recycling or selling your PC, then choose the option to 'Clean the drive fully'. This is also best if you want a more thorough reset of a troublesome computer.

As with refreshing, if you originally had Windows 8 but upgraded to 8.1, your PC will revert to 8 and you will need to upgrade it again. Unlike refreshing, reinstalling deletes everything, so you'll need to restore your documents, photos, music and videos from your back-up.



Have you backed up your files? Both these options wipe everything

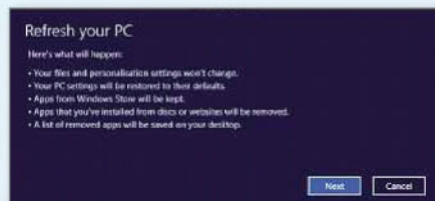
Refresh your PC

Refreshing your PC is a more powerful solution than reverting to a System Restore point, but less extreme than a full reinstallation. Files in your Documents, Pictures, Videos and Music folders are not affected, and software that came pre-installed on the PC will not be removed either. The Windows Store remembers the apps you downloaded and, after refreshing, automatically reinstalls them. What you will lose are all the other applications you downloaded from the internet or installed from a CD or DVD. A list of software removed during a refresh is afterwards placed on the Desktop. It will need to be manually reinstalled, but at least you can see a list of what's missing.

One problem with Refresh is that, if your original operating system was Windows 8 and you upgraded to 8.1, your PC will revert to Windows 8. You'll have to upgrade again via the Windows Store. Because the settings in programs are removed, as well as

the software itself, you may still lose some information. For example, if you use the Firefox browser, your bookmarks and cookies will be deleted. You should export them to a USB device before refreshing.

Refreshing Windows requires 20GB or more of free hard-drive space because the current Windows folder is renamed C:\Windows.old and a new copy of the operating system is installed to C:\Windows. Don't delete Windows.old until you know the PC is running properly.



Click 'Refresh your PC without affecting your files', click Next and you're done

Reinstall Windows

If you don't need to keep your photos, documents, music and other files, or you have an up-to-date back-up

If Windows won't start

What do you do if your PC won't launch Windows, and you can't access System Restore or the refresh and reinstall functions? In Windows 7, press and hold F8 just after switching on and select Repair Your Computer when the menu appears. Log on and you will be able to run System Restore from the menu. There is also a Startup Repair menu that finds and fixes some start-up problems.

If you can get to the Windows 8 login screen, click the power button, hold down Shift and click Restart. This displays a menu with Continue, Troubleshoot and 'Turn off your PC'. Select Troubleshoot for options to refresh or reset the PC, which are the same as the ones in the Windows settings. On some computers, pressing F9 just after switching on accesses this troubleshooting screen. 'Advanced options' displays a System Restore option, should you need one.



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WorldMags.net

21 May 2014 **69**



Weekend project

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

How to...

Buy and install an SSD

Is your PC slowing down? **Wayne Williams** tells you everything you need to know about giving it a speed boost with a solid-state drive

If your desktop PC or laptop is taking an age to boot or runs increasingly slowly, one of the most beneficial upgrades you can perform is to install a solid-state drive (SSD). These use flash memory – just like USB flash drives and photo memory cards – so they are significantly faster than mechanical hard drives. If you move Windows and your installed programs to an SSD, the OS will boot

up in seconds, rather than minutes, and your applications will launch almost immediately. You'll enjoy much quicker read and write speeds, too.

SSDs were expensive when they first appeared, but their prices are coming down rapidly, so it's worth taking advantage of the benefits they offer. Our guide will help you buy, install and configure one.



Shopping for an SSD

We're used to the whopping capacities of mechanical hard drives, which are often upwards of 1TB, and commonly available at a price that won't break the bank. When offering advice about how big a mechanical hard drive to buy, we usually suggest going with the largest-

capacity model you can afford. After all, you can never have too much storage space. However, SSDs are more expensive and come in much smaller capacities – from 32GB up to 512GB, so you're better off working out how much capacity you need and not going too far beyond. Also, SSDs aren't designed for

use as storage drives that have to be continually accessed to load and save regularly changing files, such as in your Documents folder. The ideal set-up is a moderate-sized SSD for your operating system and installed programs, and a second sizeable HDD (hard-disk drive) to hold all your data, including documents,



photos, videos, downloads, game saves and so on.

Depending on how you use your PC, you may get away with a 64GB SSD (which will cost around £40), but a better bet is a 128GB model (about £56) or a 256GB one (about £90), because the extra space could come in handy.

Ideally, you want to use no more than 50 per cent of the drive capacity at any one time, for running Windows and important programs. This is to ensure



Kingston has a broad range of drives and capacities, going up to 480GB



All SSDs are 2.5in drives that will fit into a laptop. Desktop PCs will need an adapter

possibly longer.

SanDisk (www.sandisk.com) offers a range of SSD drives to suit different needs and budgets. At the low end, there's the SanDisk ReadyCache (32GB) and SanDisk SSD (64GB and 128GB), while at the upper end there's the Ultra Plus (64, 128, and 256GB) which delivers 2x boot up speeds and 16x application load times, and the Extreme II (120, 240 and 480GB), which is described as being great for "graphically intense games and applications".

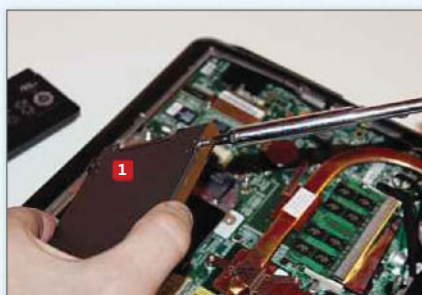
Kingston's SSDNow range (bit.ly/king345) comprises the V300 (60, 120, 240 and 480GB), which boasts read and write speeds of up to 450MB/s (around 10 times as fast as a 7200RPM mechanical hard drive), the KC380 (60GB and 120GB), for use in notebooks, netbooks and tablet PCs, and the energy-efficient KC300 (80, 120, 180, 240, and 480GB).

Benefits of SSDs

Aside from speed, solid-state drives have other benefits over traditional mechanical hard drives. Due to the lack of moving parts, they are significantly quieter – you get none of the clunking, whirring and occasional grinding or whistling we've come to expect from hard drives. If your PC frequently sounds like a jet engine taking off, the whisper-quiet operation of an SSD will come as a welcome benefit.

SSDs are also impressively resistant to shocks, knocks and vibrations, making them much more reliable in laptops – except when they near the end of their lives, when they become less stable.

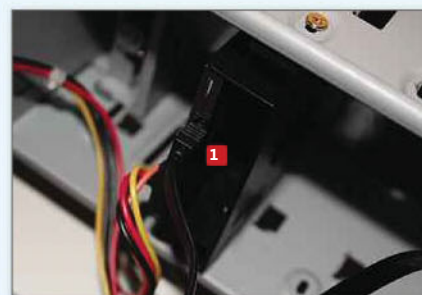
MINI WORKSHOP | Install an SSD



1 SSDs are 2.5in drives, which makes them perfect for installing in laptops (especially ones in need of a new lease of life). To install your new drive, shut down the laptop, pop out the battery and unscrew and remove the back of the case. Find and take out the existing hard drive. **1** Insert the SSD into the hard-drive enclosure, attach the power and SATA connectors and reassemble everything.



2 Installing an SSD in a desktop PC is slightly trickier, because you need to fit a 2.5in drive into a 3.5in drive bay. To solve this discrepancy, you'll need a 2.5in–3.5in adapter. Your SSD may come packaged with one, but if it doesn't, you can pick one up for around £7 from stores such as Maplin or Amazon. Insert the SSD into the adapter, and screw it in place. **1**



3 Switch off your PC at the wall and open its case. The process will vary depending on the design of your computer chassis, but you should be able to find a spare bay, slide in the drive and secure it with screws. **1** Once that's done, attach the power and SATA cables and you're ready to install an operating system, or clone an existing drive. See our other Mini Workshop on page 73 to find out how.

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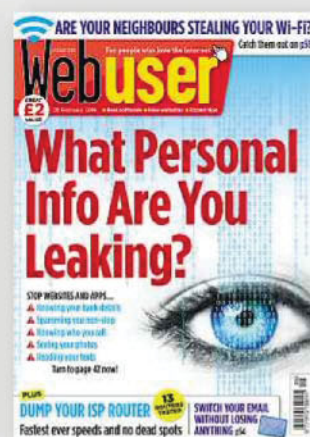
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Don't defrag your SSD

Daily PC use can eventually lead to a computer that's bloated and slow – sure signs that a little spring-cleaning is needed. One of the tricks we all use to try and speed up sluggish PCs is to defrag the drive. That is, reordering its contents so that the data is arranged into neat contiguous sections. However, an SSD should never be defragmented because moving data around the drive in this way can shorten its life span. The Windows disk defragmenter, and many third-party alternatives, will detect when you have an SSD installed and prevent you from defragging it. Some defragging tools offer special SSD optimisation modes, but they really aren't necessary, and you're unlikely to notice any benefits afterwards.

Hybrid SSHDs

The ideal set-up is to use an SSD for your operating system and installed programs, and a mechanical hard disk (or two) for your personal data. However, this often isn't possible with laptops because they usually only have one drive bay, so a solid-state hybrid drive (SSHD) can offer the perfect compromise. SSHDs are a combination of an SSD and an HDD, giving you the best of both worlds – top speeds with generous capacity in a single unit. Seagate's hybrid SSHD (bit.ly/sshd345) comes in a choice of thicknesses (7mm and 9.5mm) and



Seagate makes hybrid drives that combine mechanical disks with solid-state memory, offering the best of both worlds

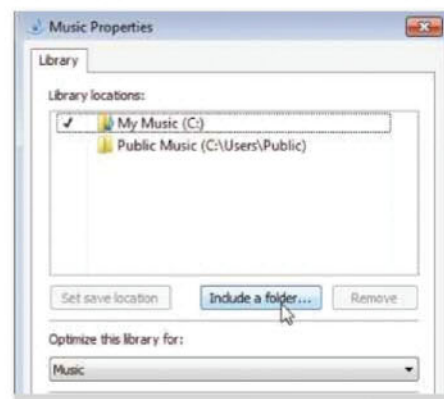
capacities (500GB, 750GB or 1TB). The largest version will set you back around £70-£80.

Redirect Windows folders

You can free up space and reduce unnecessary activity on your SSD by redirecting folders such as Documents, Pictures, Music and Videos to your secondary storage HDD.

In Windows 7, click Start and type **libraries** into the search box. Click the Libraries entry. Right-click a library, such as Music, and select Properties. Click the 'Include a folder' button. Browse to your mechanical drive, create a new folder and call it 'music'. Select it and click the 'Include folder' button. Select the existing Library location, click

Remove and then click OK. Repeat the process for your other libraries.



Relocate your libraries to your HDD to lengthen the life of your SSD

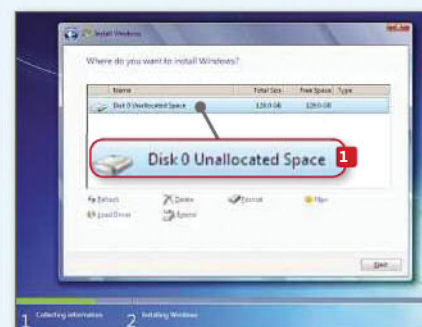
MINI WORKSHOP | Transfer Windows to your new SSD



1 Once you've got your SSD fitted, the next step is to install Windows on it. If your drive came with cloning software, you can use this to transfer your OS and any installed software from your old drive to the new one. If it didn't, you can use a third-party program such as EaseUS Todo Backup Free (bit.ly/todo345). Select Clone **1** in the left sidebar.



2 Choose either 'Disk clone' or 'Partition clone', depending on where Windows is stored. If you don't have a separate system partition, choose 'Disk'. Next, select the source (where the OS currently resides) **1** and the target drive (your new SSD). **2** Tick 'Optimise for SSD' **3** and click Next. **4** Review the suggested action, then click Proceed.



3 Alternatively, to avoid filling up the new SSD with junk files from the old drive, you can install Windows from scratch, then add your other programs and personal data afterwards. Insert your Windows disc, boot from it, and select the SSD when asked where you want to install the OS. **1** It will install very quickly.

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