WHAT'S GOOGLE HIDING FROM YOU?

Unblock search results it doesn't want you to see

ISSUE 330

For people who love the internet

Webuser

GREAT £2 VALUE

31 October 2013 • Best software • New websites • Expert tips

BUILD A BRILLIANT WEBSITE FASTER THAN EVER

Best new tools to create & improve your site

PLUS

Safest ways to keep your emails private
Set them to self-destruct!

HACK CHROME!
Do things Google won't let you

WHAT PERSONAL INFO ARE YOU ACCIDENTALLY SHARING?



Find out and plug the leaks p60



<Make more money from your site>
<Shoot up Google's rankings>
<Optimise it for phones, tablets & PCs>
<And many more tips inside...>

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BUSINESSES WORK BETTER WITH FIBRE BROADBAND

"In terms of value, it's paid for itself."

Andrew, Marum Consultancy
BT Infinity for business customer



BT Infinity for business

BT Infinity for business is helping small businesses like Andrew's all over the UK. Research shows that over 75% of businesses with fibre optic broadband say that it helps them to achieve their business priorities, from getting things done more quickly to improving customer service. And from just £30 a month, it makes clear business sense. Go online to find out more about how BT Infinity for business can work for you.

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BT Business

Based on The Fibre Difference research by CEBR and customer interviews from Jigsaw research survey of 929 small businesses, October 2013. Subject to availability. BT Infinity for business may require a BT line or similar and a fibre compatible router such as the BT Business Hub provided with Infinity. Not all lines in an Infinity-enabled area can support the service. £30 a month is based on BT Infinity for business Option 1 on a 24 month contract. Terms and conditions apply.

Sites for sore eyes

Last year, I noticed that more and more new websites were being described as "responsive". Naively, I assumed that responsive meant clickable links, playable videos and things that *responded* to actions, so I wondered what all the fuss was about. Now, of course, I know that responsive means making your site work smoothly on any device.

It's one of the main challenges facing web designers today, but with the right tools, you can easily create a site that looks as good on phones and tablets as it does on PCs. We explain how, along with a host of other web-design tricks, in this issue's cover feature on page 40. We've rounded up the latest tools for building a sensational site, whether you're starting from scratch, improving an existing homepage or just want to get responsive before 2014. Please let us know how you get on.



Robert Irvine
robert_irvine
@dennis.co.uk
#webuser

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WE LIKE...

BBM returns to Android and iOS

BlackBerry has relaunched its BlackBerry Messenger (BBM) app for Android and iOS, a month after its first attempt was foiled by technical problems.

Champions League clips come to Twitter

Sky is showing "near live" Champions League football clips for free on Twitter, via links on the @SkySports account.

WE DON'T LIKE...

Apple pulls HMV downloads app

HMV's new iOS app was pulled from the App Store after Apple objected to a feature that downloads music. A downloads-free version is now being developed.

IE11's Google glitch

Google websites and Microsoft's Outlook webmail are reportedly failing to work properly in the new Internet Explorer 11, which is bundled with Windows 8.1.

ISSUE 330 31 OCTOBER 2013 ON THE COVER



abc Average sales, Jan-Dec 2012, 28,495 copies per issue

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ESSENTIAL MASTERCLASS

Your top priority this fortnight

Internet Explorer 11 Release Preview for Windows 7 | bit.ly/ie11330

IE11 will be an integral part of Windows 8.1, but it's also now available for Windows 7. Here's what's new

The days of Internet Explorer's heyday seem long gone. In recent years, the browser has gained a reputation for being slow, incompatible with modern web standards and lacking the best features of other browsers.

But with IE11, Microsoft is determined to bounce back. According to the software giant, the IE11 Release Preview is 9 per cent faster than IE10, and a whopping 30 per cent faster than Firefox and Chrome.

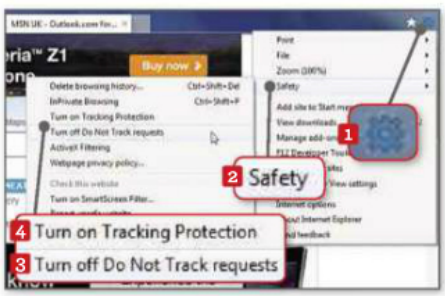
Microsoft also says that IE11 includes additional performance tuning to ensure real-world websites download and display as quickly as possible.

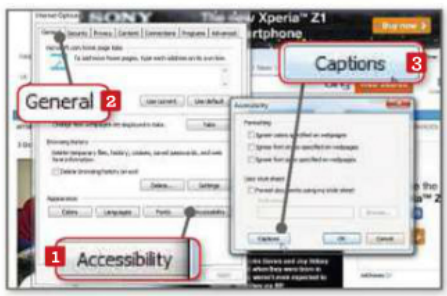


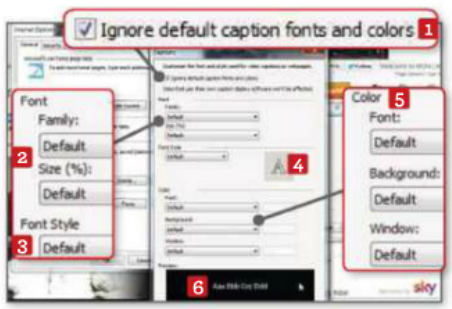


1 After you've installed IE11, you'll see a window giving you the option to use the recommended security, privacy and compatibility settings. 1 Selecting this gives the browser permission to send some web URLs to Microsoft for checking. It also downloads compatibility lists to make sure sites display properly.

2 If you'd rather IE11 didn't do this, choose not to use the recommended settings. 1 If you're undecided, you can skip the question for the time being. 2 IE11 can also send Do Not Track requests to prevent advertisers and websites from snooping on your online activities. Activate the option here. 3







3 To change your Do Not Track preferences, click the cog icon 1 and go to Safety, 2 then Do Not Track. 3 When turning the feature on or off, you will need to restart the browser. Turning on Tracking Protection 4 means that only websites contained in a Tracking Protection list can request your data.

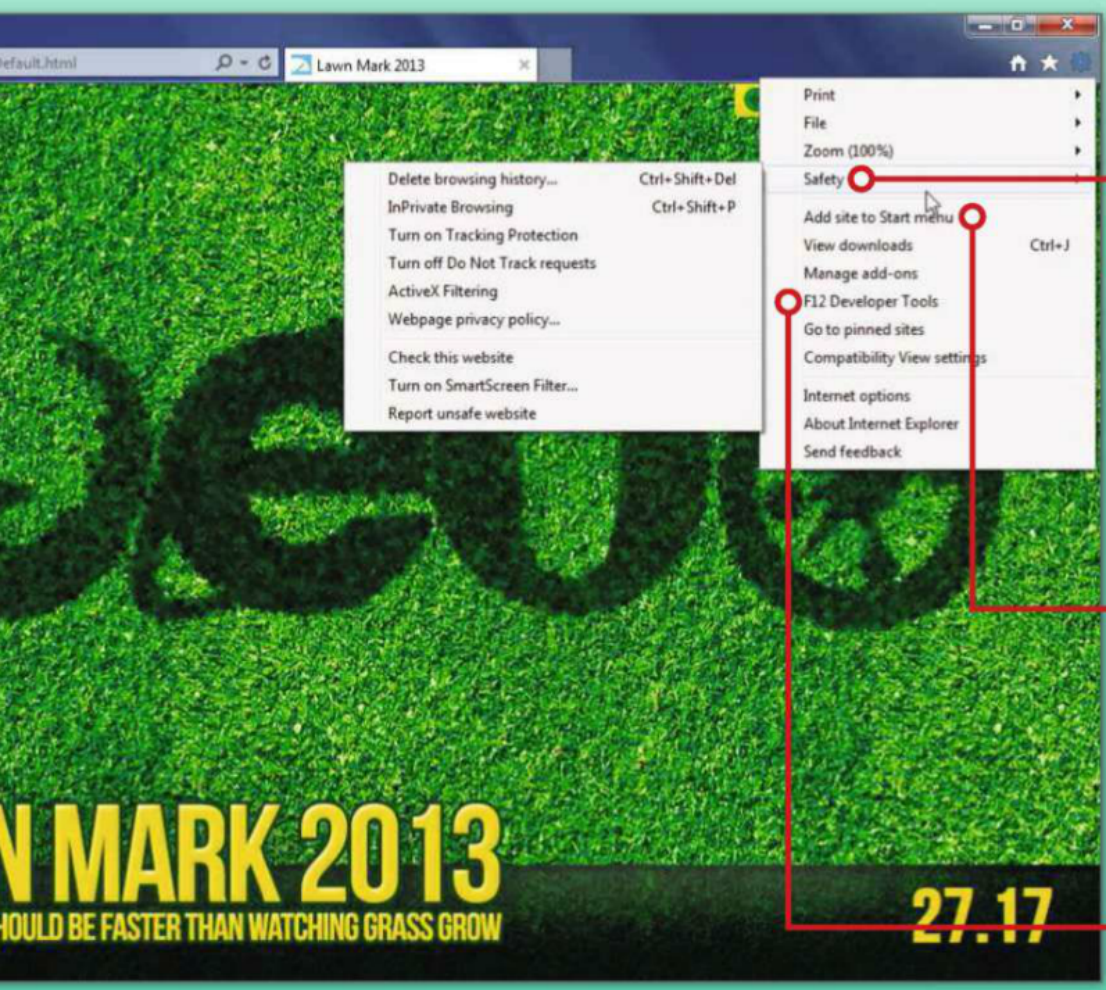
4 IE11 has user controls for Closed Captioning. When you're watching a video with captions, you can choose exactly how they look, overriding even the default style of the video source. Click the cog and open Internet Options. Click Accessibility 1 under the General tab 2 and click Captions. 3

5 You can set IE11 to ignore default caption fonts and colours, 1 and set the font family, size 2 and style. 3 The box 4 shows how this will look. You can also change the colours. 5 The Preview window 6 shows how captions will appear. Make a change and the results will update instantly.

Get more practical advice at forum.webuser.co.uk

ADDRESS BAR

As in IE10, the new browser has a combined address and search box. Bing is the default search engine



SAFETY

The Safety menu lets you manage Do Not Track and turn on the SmartScreen filter, which blocks phishing websites

ADD SITE TO START MENU

Add your favourite websites directly to the Start menu and launch them from there

F12 DEVELOPER TOOLS

The new developer tools can be accessed by pressing F12 or going through the menu



6 IE11 comes with a suite of developer tools. Unless you're a web developer, you may never use them, but it's worth a look. Press F12 to open the window. The tools are on the left 1 and include a Console, Debugger and Emulation mode. 2 This last one lets you see what a site would look like in a different browser. 3



7 The biggest changes in the new browser relate to performance. You can see for yourself how much faster IE11 is at ie.microsoft.com/testdrive. This site offers a selection of demos designed to show off the browser. The LiteBrite test benchmarks IE11 by building browser logos from coloured lights. 1



8 Other demos worth a look include a modern version of a game from Windows 95 called Hover, 1 HTML5 speed tester PirateMarrrk 2 and GlacierWorks, 3 which uses the WebGL standard (new to IE11) to journey to Everest. Some demos, like Netflix House of Cards 4 only work on Windows 8.1.

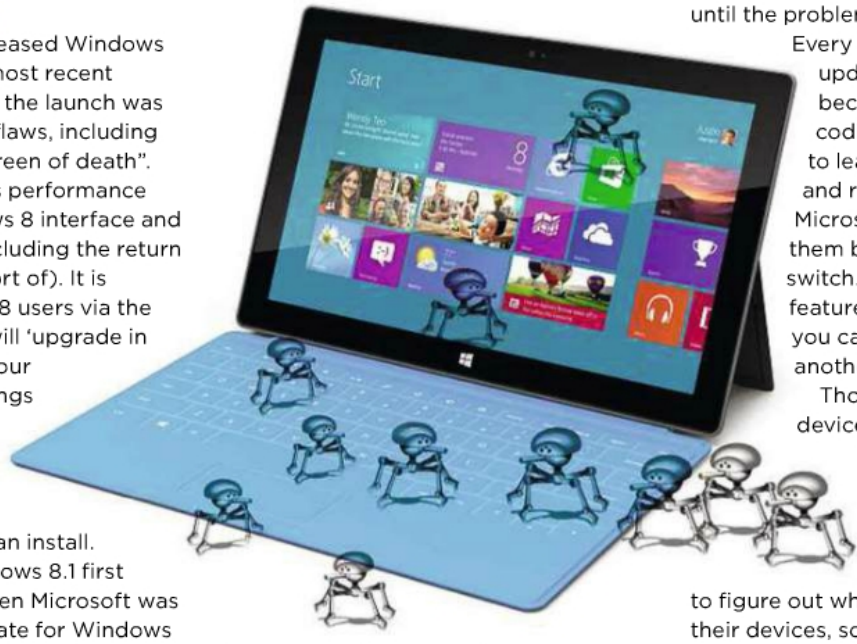
Get more tips in our newsletter at www.webuser.co.uk/newsletter

Windows 8.1 release beset by bugs and upgrade problems

What happened?

Microsoft officially released Windows 8.1, the update to its most recent operating system, but the launch was marred by reports of flaws, including the infamous "blue screen of death".

Windows 8.1 applies performance tweaks to the Windows 8 interface and adds new features, including the return of the Start button (sort of). It is available to Windows 8 users via the Windows Store, and will 'upgrade in place', which means your existing files and settings won't be affected. However, if you've been using the Windows 8.1 Preview, you'll have to do a clean install.



The release of Windows 8.1 first suffered problems when Microsoft was forced to pull the update for Windows RT (the mobile version), which supports apps but not a full Desktop, after users reported it was "bricking" their devices (rendering them unusable), by showing error messages or simply defaulting to a plain blue screen. Microsoft said it was investigating the situation, and has released a recovery image to get affected tablets working on Windows RT again. You can download it from bit.ly/recovery330.

Some users on standard Windows 8 also experienced problems when they updated to 8.1, reporting that SkyDrive files disappeared from their PCs. While the files were still available in the cloud, they weren't syncing with their computers as they had previously. However, this problem could be fixed by going into the SkyDrive folder and adjusting the 'sync to PC' settings.



Additionally, driver problems prevented some people from upgrading, with Windows asking them to uninstall affected software, but then not giving them the means to do so.

Other users reported problems with connecting to networks, of text becoming "fuzzy" and difficult to read, and the Start Screen going missing, as well as slower performance. The problems appeared to affect some users, but not everyone who upgraded.

Meanwhile, Microsoft said Windows won't see another major update until 2015. It's unclear how that fits into departing CEO Steve Ballmer's promise of a rapid release cycle, but it could mean a series of smaller updates over the next two years, rather than larger and more problem-prone releases such as Windows 8.1.

How will it affect you?

If you haven't already upgraded to Windows 8.1, it might be worth waiting until the problems have been resolved.

Every major operating-system update has a few bugs because of the amount of coding involved, so it's wiser to leave other users to find and report the bugs, and give Microsoft the chance to fix them before you make the switch. None of the new features are so compelling that you can't live without them for another week.

Those with a Windows RT device – such as one of Microsoft's own Surface tablets – should definitely hold off.

Users have reported spending hours trying to figure out what's gone wrong with their devices, so save yourself the hassle and wait for the fixes.

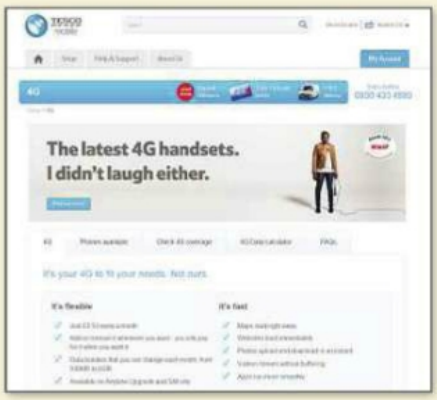
What do we think?

We think Windows 8.1 is a solid improvement on Windows 8, and will be worth the download once the bugs have been smoothed out. However, Microsoft should have tested the update more thoroughly before releasing it, not after. This echoes similar complaints about the launch of Windows 8, which had problems that should have been ironed out before its release. The fact that Windows 8.1 – the fix to those flaws – has bugs of its own makes us feel that Windows users are getting a pretty rough deal.

Microsoft is supposed to be one of the pre-eminent software-engineering firms on the planet. It needs to find a way to release software without angering its customers. We concede that some code flaws are unavoidable and happen to every software company – just look at the recent problems with iOS 7 – but bad upgrade experiences need to be the exception, not the norm.

On a more positive note, we'll have a Weekend Project about upgrading to Windows 8.1 smoothly in our next issue.

Tesco and EE cut the cost of 4G



gives you 50GB of data (up from 20GB).

EE also announced the first 4G pay-as-you-go plans, which range from £3 a month for 100MB of data to £30 for 10GB.

What happened?

Tesco Mobile (www.tescomobile.com) launched its first 4G packages, undercutting other mobile operators' prices and making high-speed mobile broadband more affordable.

Tesco uses O2 to deliver its 4G network. If you're already on a Tesco contract, you can add 500MB of 4G data for £2.50 a month, while the cheapest new 4G tariff is £20 a month for 500MB and a Nokia Lumia 925 handset. Tesco is also offering SIM-only contracts, starting from £10 a month for 500MB of data.

EE (ee.co.uk), meanwhile, changed its contracts again, but to offer more data rather than lower overall costs. Its cheapest plan now offers 500MB for £19 a month (not including a handset); for £5 more a month, you'll get 2GB of data. While some plans cost less than half what EE charged when it unveiled its 4G prices last year, the mobile operator also reintroduced its £75-per-month plan – the most expensive contract in the country – which now gives you 50GB of data (up from 20GB).

How will it affect you?

The shift in 4G prices suggests it was wise to wait for faster speeds, because early adopters will have paid much more for much less than someone signing up now. These new prices are starting to make 4G more appealing for someone buying a new handset, but keep in mind that faster download speeds mean you'll get through data much more quickly, making the tight data caps – especially on the cheaper contracts – a continuing concern.

What do we think?

Last year, we predicted the arrival of 4G competition for EE would help drive down prices, and so it (finally) has. That's good news for us, because paying £75 for 20GB of data was ridiculous. It also means more customers for 4G providers, which will lead to an increased variety in packages. This can only be a good thing. We'd now like to see more generous data caps and we hope one of the big operators will take the lead, because if one offers a better deal, the rest will be forced to follow suit.

Argos unveils £100 MyTablet for teens

What happened?

Argos followed Tesco by releasing an own-brand tablet, the cheap and cheerful MyTablet (bit.ly/argos330). The £100 Android device is £19 less expensive than Tesco's Hudl, but has a lower-resolution display, half the built-in storage at 8GB, and a battery life of only five hours. It comes pre-loaded with apps and games designed to appeal to teenagers, and is available in pink and silver.



How will it affect you?

The budget tablet market has opened up in the past few months – with MyTablet, the Hudl and the Nook HD providing decent quality devices for bargain prices. It's worth reading the reviews and having a go on the tablets yourself before buying, however, to see what their limitations are.

What do we think?

If you want a tablet but can't afford an iPad, we think this new crop of low-cost devices is worth a look. You won't be able to perform some of the more powerful tasks, such as video editing, but if you're looking for an easy way to get online, use apps and perform other web basics, these tablets are good value. See page 24 for our review of the Tesco Hudl.

Ebook stores pull self-published titles

What happened?

Kobo (www.kobobooks.com) and WHSmith (www.whsmith.co.uk) pulled self-published books from their ebook stores' virtual shelves after it was revealed that some contained stories depicting rape, bestiality and other offensive content. Normally, such books would not be sold, WHSmith said, but it failed to adequately filter the large volume of self-published content available through its site.

How will it affect you?

If you don't like being confronted with hardcore material when you're browsing for books, or you share your e-reader with your family, you may be shocked that these titles were so readily available. Although Kobo and WHSmith have now blocked the ebooks, Amazon says it will do this on a case-by-case basis, only removing material when it's reported, which means you may still come across it on your Kindle.

What do we think?

We're not fans of censorship, but if someone wants to read this kind of content, we feel it should be tucked away in a designated shop or behind an age filter, and not easily discovered on the shelves of a mainstream digital bookshop. It's hard to believe no-one in charge of these ebook stores thought this might happen with self-published titles.

WHAT'S NEW ONLINE

10 brilliant things to do on the web this fortnight

Create and export playlists of BBC music



The BBC's clever new Playlister tool lets you add tracks you hear on the BBC's radio websites to personal playlists, so you don't forget them. Just press the orange 'add' button when you hear a track you want to save, or look through the Recently Played and Most Popular selections on the Playlister homepage.

You can access your playlists on PCs, phones and tablets, though you won't be able to play any track in full because the BBC doesn't own the rights. To do that, you'll need to export the music to Spotify, YouTube (if you have a channel) or Deezer.



Currently in a 'trial beta', Playlister is due to officially launch later this year, when it will also be added to the iPlayer Radio app. Also look out for a forthcoming section containing recommendations from the BBC's presenters, and the option to add tracks from TV programmes. For more information on the service, watch the BBC video at bit.ly/play330 or send a tweet to @BBCPlaylister.

www.bbc.co.uk/music/playlister

Automatically add your photos to Flickr

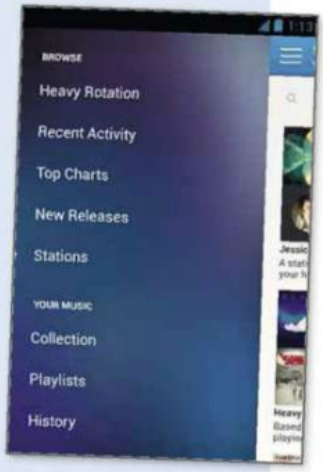
bit.ly/flickr330

Flickr's updated iOS app now automatically uploads your photos from your iPhone or iPad's Camera Roll. The photos are set as 'private' until you share them. Tap the More option in the bottom-right of the app to turn on the feature.

Listen to Rdio's stations for free

www.rdio.com

Rdio has made its personalised radio stations free within its iOS (bit.ly/rdioios330) and Android apps (bit.ly/android330). Previously, you only had a 14-day free trial. However, you'll still need to pay to listen to on-demand music.



Add multiple directions to Google Maps

www.google.co.uk/maps

You can now get directions for multiple destinations in the new Google Maps, which lets you add stops along driving, walking and biking routes. To use it, click the blue Directions icon, add a start and end point, then click the '+' sign.



Use the Digg Reader Chrome add-on

bit.ly/reader330

Digg's new Reader add-on for Chrome tells you when you've got unread items, and how many, and lets you add websites to Digg Reader with one click. There's also an updated Android app (bit.ly/diggapp330) with an 'unread' mode that only tells you what you haven't read across phones, tablets and the web.

Watch Vevo on Samsung smart TVs

bit.ly/vevo330

Music-video website Vevo has launched an app for Samsung smart TVs and Blu-ray players, which lets you watch 75,000 high-definition videos, programmes and live concerts. You can create playlists and sync them across all versions of Vevo.

The app will only appear on TVs and Blu-rays made in 2012 and 2013.

5 TO FOLLOW ON TWITTER

@moonfruit
Tweet Moonfruit's official account for help with your website

@bbccin
All the information on this year's Children In Need, which takes place on Friday 15 November

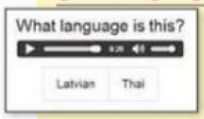
@animalmashups
Meet Frogopotamus, Rhinocodile and other photoshopped animals

@georgetakei
Quirky photos and opinions from the *Star Trek* actor who played Sulu

@eventparrot
Twitter's new "experiment" sends you Direct Messages containing breaking global news

Identify languages in online quiz

greatlanguagegame.com



Can you distinguish Estonian from Swahili? Or Bosnian from Vietnamese? Find out by playing The Great Language Game, which plays excerpts of native speakers from around the world. You only have three lives, so guess carefully.

Add Chrome shortcuts to Android

bit.ly/chromebeta330



The new beta version of Chrome for Android lets you quickly add website shortcuts to your device's home screen. Just tap 'Add to homescreen' from the toolbar menu when you visit a website you want to create a shortcut for.

See Google's new cultural artefacts



www.google.com/culturalinstitute

Google has added over 5,400 items to its Cultural Institute, which collects works from museums, galleries and archives around the world. For shortcuts to the most interesting new exhibits, including this rather unflattering wax portrait of Louis XIV, read Google's official blog at bit.ly/culture330.

Get free Yahoo Mail tools

mail.yahoo.com

Yahoo Mail celebrated its 16th birthday in October with a redesign, adding tools that you previously had to pay for. These include disposable email addresses, improved email filters, automatic email forwarding and an increase in storage to 1TB. Read Yahoo's blog for more info: bit.ly/yahoo330.



FIRST LOOK Kobo Aura

kobo.com/koboaura

How do you make a new e-reader stand out from the crowd? The new Kobo Aura doesn't lay claim to any revolutionary new ideas; it's just a beautifully designed device whose makers have focused on how and why you read ebooks.



The Aura's 6in, 1,014 x 758 resolution (212ppi) Pearl E Ink display and ComfortLight backlight make text look sharp and clear. It's the first e-reader with a screen that sits flush with the front panel, so you can comfortably swipe all the way across it from any angle. Kobo has added phone-style gestures such as pinch zoom and a swipe to adjust screen brightness, which make the Aura feel more user-friendly than its rivals.

A distinctive bevelled and contoured back makes the device a pleasure to hold, and its dinky size (114 x 8 x 150mm) and weight (174g) mean it won't wear out your arm on long train journeys. Books take less than a second to load, thanks to the fast 1GHz processor. Meanwhile, the 4GB internal memory is expandable by micro SD card, and battery life clocks in at a remarkable two months.

You get all the usual Kobo software including customisable library, notes, bookmarks, EPUB support and access to the extensive ebookstore (www.kobobooks.com), plus new features such as 'Beyond the Book,' which aggregates relevant web content.

At £119.99 the Aura is expensive for an e-reader (you can buy a Nook for under £50), but its well-thought-out design and amazing battery life make it easy to recommend. If you don't already have an e-reader, treat yourself to the Kobo Aura or put it on your Christmas list.

BEST NEW WEBSITES

We review this fortnight's best new and relaunched websites

Webuser SITE OF THE FORTNIGHT

HISTORY

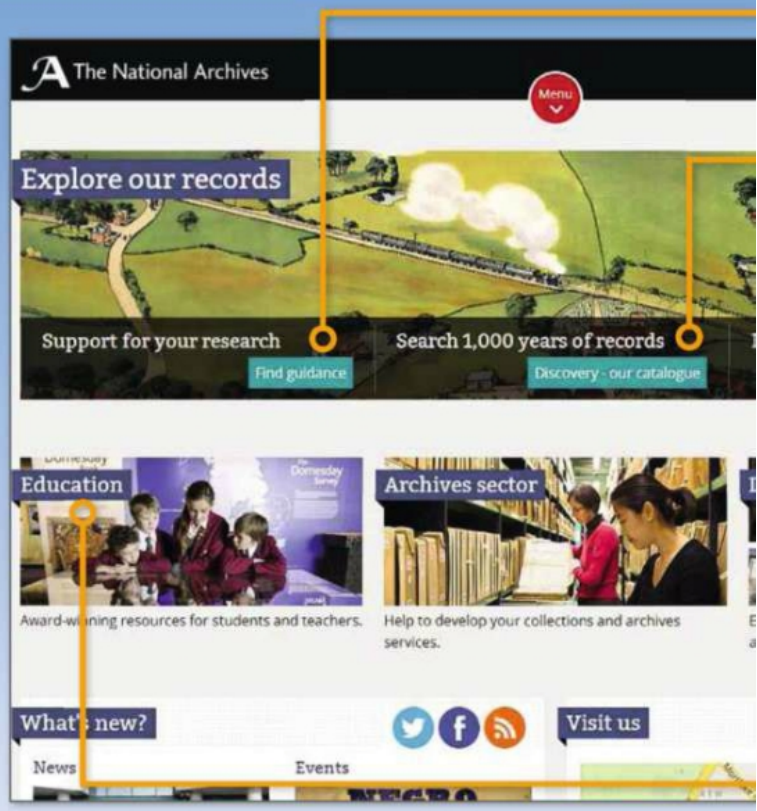
NEW

The National Archives

www.nationalarchives.gov.uk

The National Archives website used to be rather dry, but it's undergone an amazing transformation. Its bold, image-led redesign really brings the content to life – even bits that sound dull such as 'Information management'. We especially like the widescreen illustrations at the top of each section, and that clicking the red Menu button gives you instant access to every area of the site. Pages resize automatically to fit your browser, which means they display perfectly on mobile devices, and you can search the site itself or its extensive catalogue directly from the homepage. There are descriptions of more than 20 million records, of which around five per cent are available to download. The excellent blog, podcasts and videos are now flagged more prominently on the homepage, and further treasures appear as you explore. It's one of the most impressive sites we've seen this year.

Our rating ★★★★★





SHOPPING

RELAUNCH

Waitrose

www.waitrose.com

Waitrose has given its website a fresh, friendlier look with a more streamlined design that adds some welcome tools. These include the new Favourites feature, which lets you click the green hearts next to items to add them to your list. Waitrose also now stores the groceries you buy regularly, so you don't need to select them each time. It reminds you when you've left out essentials and lets you search for up to 50 products at once. Other improvements include a large search box on the homepage to check if there are deliveries in your area, and more editorial content, including recipes and gardening tips. The site looks great and works very smoothly.

Our rating ★★★★★



MUSIC

NEW

LSO Play

play.lso.co.uk

This splendid site from the London Symphony Orchestra (LSO) immerses you in a performance as if you were sat in the orchestra. It lets you view up to four HD streams simultaneously, each trained on different instruments, and the conductor, from the musicians' point of view. You can instantly switch between feeds, as the LSO plays the likes of Ravel's *Bolero*, then explore the orchestra map in more detail to learn about the musicians and their instruments, and watch exclusive 'masterclass' videos. Classical music fans will be engrossed and enthralled.

Our rating ★★★★☆

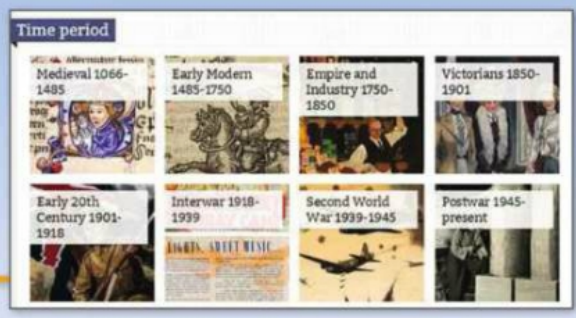
Reviews by Robert Irvine











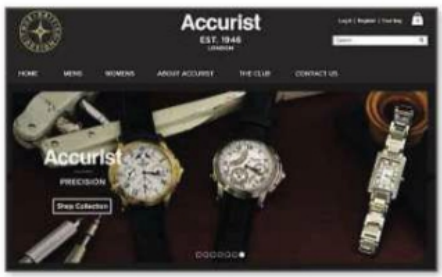
RATINGS GUIDE

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



WATCHES RELAUNCH

Accurist

www.accurist.co.uk

Even if you don't need a new watch, you might be tempted to buy one after spending time at Accurist's revamped site. From its elegant design to its high-quality photos, the site ticks all the right boxes to convey the desirability and affordability of Accurist timepieces. We love the swish menu bar, which uses watch images to represent categories such as Gold, Vintage and Sport, and the ordering process couldn't be simpler. The new blog had yet to launch when we visited, but we're pleased that Accurist has retained its amazing video version of the Speaking Clock.

Our rating ★★★★☆



POLITICS NEW

Constitute

www.constituteproject.org

This site, which was funded by Google, brings together 185 constitutions from nearly every country in the world. These range from Afghanistan (constitution date: 2004) to Zimbabwe (2013), and they can be read online or downloaded as PDFs. Constitute's main aim is to help those who are drafting constitutions compare their work with that of other countries, but it also lets the rest of us have a peek, by searching the documents for keywords, or browsing by theme such as citizenship, elections or civil rights. It's more interesting than it sounds, and very clearly presented.

Our rating ★★★☆☆



SEARCH NEW

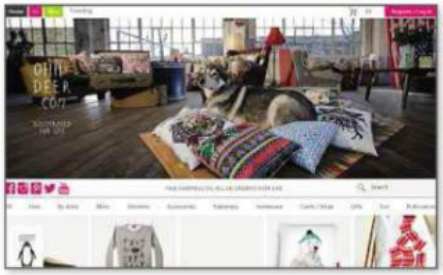
BeNosey

benosey.com

BeNosey aims to reinvent the search engine by letting you find what you want without typing anything. Essentially, this means crowding buttons for as many sites, services and subjects as possible on a single page. At first, it looks like a complete mess, but once you've explored BeNosey, you'll understand the logic, especially on phones and tablets where one-tap access is a boon (although the small buttons make it a bit fiddly). At least there are no ads and, if it's all too much, you can customise the layout or click '2 Busy 4 You?' for a cleaner one.

Our rating ★★★☆☆

Tell us about your website via webuser@dennis.co.uk



GIFTS

RELAUNCH

Ohh Deer

ohhdeer.com

From its huge homepage photo of a Siberian Husky on a pile of cushions, to its even bigger range of quirky, illustrated gifts, there's a lot to love about the revamped Ohh Deer. Its brilliant products, which span everything from clothes to homeware and stationery, are presented in a tidy, attractive layout that's now much easier to browse. If you like a particular item, you can explore other creations from the same artist. When we visited, new products included a Pinocchio pencil sharpener and colourful duffel bags. Ohh Deer oozes personality and is a great place to buy Christmas gifts.

Our rating ★★★★☆



TECHNOLOGY

NEW

Tesco Hudl

www.tesco.com/direct/hudl

Before you read our review of Tesco's 7in tablet on page 20, check out the sparse but informative Hudl website. It tells you all you need to know, from technical specifications to apps and accessories. To emphasise the Hudl's family friendliness, photos of kids sit alongside product shots and the text cleverly matches colours in the images. There's even an 'exclusive unboxing video', which is a bit odd – surely Tesco should be putting it in the box, and leave the taking out to YouTube geeks? Most importantly, there are 'Buy now' buttons for the tablet, and a helpful Tech Support section to fix Hudl hassles.

Our rating ★★★★☆



LIFESTYLE

NEW

Telegraph Luxury

www.telegraph.co.uk/luxury

If you're wondering what style of tuxedo to buy, or whether to sunbathe in Southern Italy or the Caribbean, visit Telegraph Luxury. Described as "the ultimate guide to finer living", it combines articles about luxury products, food and travel with columns from experts in aspirational subjects. Some of the content is even interesting rather than nauseating, such as a video of a 12,000-part Steinway piano being made. Naturally, the site uses the endlessly scrolling layout so beloved of iPad users, but the rich variety of visuals works very well. Also, unlike the main *Telegraph* site, it doesn't fall behind a paywall.

Our rating ★★★☆☆



BOOKS

RELAUNCH

Agatha Christie

www.agathachristie.com

The Queen of Crime's relaunched website strikes the balance between providing information about the author's life and work, and giving her fans a place to discuss all things Christie. The homepage highlights a 'book of the month' (October's was *Murder on the Orient Express*) to encourage forum debate, and there are dedicated sections for her detectives and pages for all 234 stories. As well as plot details, publication history and adaptations, the entries include location maps and links to buy the books, films and TV versions. News and articles about Christie, and quotes from social media, prove she's as popular as ever, and the design is clean and classy.

Our rating ★★★★☆



HUMOUR

NEW

Ghost Singles

www.ghostsingles.com

Lonely spirits can find companionship at this new dating site for the dead. It caters for ghosts between the ages of 18 and 1,000+, who can specify whether they're seeking a partner who died horribly, suddenly or mysteriously. Search results feature photos and descriptions of the deceased, who have names such as 'vengeful1' and '4everlost', and there's even a chat room where you can talk to the dead. It's a fairly amusing spoof of dodgy dating sites (although at least this one is free), and we enjoyed the ghost-dating tips: "Don't be offended if your date suddenly disappears".

Our rating ★★★☆☆

Tell us about your website via webuser@dennis.co.uk



WEB DESIGN

Heart Internet

www.heartinternet.co.uk

RELAUNCH

Heart Internet has applied its web expertise to its own site's revamp, making it smarter and simpler to navigate. You can access everything from the homepage, including info about Heart Internet's latest deals, and tools such as the domain-name search facility and web builders, which include a mobile-site option. The new design makes great use of colour to distinguish between different sections, and fans of Suzi Perry will be pleased to see she now features even more prominently. The content is well presented, and looks just as good on mobile devices as it does on your monitor. See our feature on page 42 for more web-design tools and tips.

Our rating ★★★★☆

ALSO NEW

Bletchley Park Roll of Honour

rollofhonour.bletchleypark.org.uk

This site lists everyone who worked at Bletchley Park and the part they played in the wartime effort.

Streetbank

www.streetbank.com

Lend and borrow locally by joining this revamped community site.

MyHermes

www.myhermes.co.uk

Send parcels via this relaunched site, which is now much easier to use.

The Grow Your Own Show Store

www.thegrowyourownshow.co.uk

Buy products for growing, cooking and eating home produce from this well-stocked online store.

For Hardworking People

www.forhardworkingpeople.com

This Conservative Party site seems little more than an attempt to harvest email addresses. Avoid.



KATE'S WEB CALENDAR

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

GET XMAS GIFT IDEAS FROM THE GADGET SHOW

www.gadgetshowlive.net

It's that time of year again when really smug people start boasting about how much Christmas shopping they've already done. For the rest of us, it's an excuse to head to London for The Gadget Show Live at Christmas to pick up the latest hi-tech stocking stuffers. The event, from 1-3 November, showcases this season's must-have gadgets, toys and games. Plan your trip to Earls Court by visiting the Gadget Show Live website, and when you're done shopping for tech, make the most of your trip to London by taking in a traditional Christmas market at the South Bank or Covent Garden.

FOLLOW THE LONDON-TO-BRIGHTON VETERAN CAR RUN

www.veterancarrun.com

From the gadgets of tomorrow to the cars of yesteryear, there is plenty going on in London over the first weekend in November, as the London-to-Brighton Veteran Car Run sees over 500 vehicles built before 1905 set off from Hyde Park for the coast. Head to the official website to check out the route map and reserve your spectator spot. You could also book a seat on one of the open-top bus tours that will be following the parade. Or just browse the amazing images posted from previous years. Real-time updates of the 2013 event will be posted on Facebook and Twitter.



CELEBRATE GUY FAWKES WITH FIREWORKS APPS



For 5 November, I have a clutch of explosive smartphone apps. Musical Fireworks (bit.ly/fireworks330) is my favourite on iOS. Use it to create a dazzling display backed with appropriate music, such as Katy Perry's *Firework*.

For Android lovers there's some snazzy live wallpaper from Firework Explosion (bit.ly/explosion330). This app has 20 great designs to choose from that will light up your handset this Guy Fawkes Night.

Lastly, Windows Phone owners can use Fireworks Builder (bit.ly/builder330) to create a display, complete with cheesy soundtrack.

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: Tim 'TK' Keanini, chief technology officer at Lancope (www.lancope.com)**

Q Following the recent Adobe hack, is it still safe to use products such as Adobe Reader?

Darren Tailby, via email

A Almost all major brands suffer attacks. It's not the event itself but how the company recovers that's important. Software should always be kept up to date, and responsible companies set up auto-updating to make it easier to get the latest version.

Q How can home users protect themselves against zero-day attacks?

Terry Birch, Twitter

A There is no guaranteed way to avoid a zero-day attack; the best you can do is minimise the damage. If you are worried about losing your data, make sure you perform regular back-ups; if confidentiality is your main concern, use encryption.

Q Are companies that force employees to use outdated browsers just asking for trouble?

Catherine Bywater, Twitter

A Yes! It's hard enough to protect employees when they have up-to-date browsers, but it's a well-known fact that hackers exploit outdated ones. Forcing employees to use old versions of a browser just makes it easier for the bad guys.

Q Why don't online banks force you to change your password on a regular basis as a security measure?

Chris Clarke, via email

A While this would be good practice, an even better tactic would be for banks to require multi-factor authentication. Some already do, and don't just ask you for something you know (such as a password), but also require a challenge and response (CAPTCHA, for example) to log in. This ensures that each authentication session is unique. I think that in the future, we will see clever authentication methods that include biometric and location-based factors.

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

DECODED | Security jargon explained

Hacktivism

Combining hacking with activism, hacktivism is the act of breaking into computers and networks for socio-political purposes. The term applies to groups such as Anonymous, which carries out distributed denial-of-service (DDoS) attacks as a "legitimate form of free speech". Other hacktivist methods include vandalising the websites of governments and news sources that oppose the hacktivists' ideology, such as the recent attacks by the Syrian Electronic Army, and website mirroring, which copies the content of a censored website to another domain.

SECURITY ALERT!

Java gets its own Patch Tuesday

After numerous security problems, Java is now included in Oracle's quarterly patching schedule. The latest (October 15) included 51 fixes for Java. Not all versions of Java update automatically, so security experts Sophos recommend that you update it immediately at java.com or, "if you don't need Java, get rid of it". bit.ly/java330

Yahoo adds email encryption

Yahoo Mail (mail.yahoo.com) is to encrypt all users' emails by default from January 2014. This gives Yahoo Mail users the same level of security they'd find in Gmail, Facebook and Hotmail/Outlook.com, all of which use SSL encryption (HTTPS) . Without HTTPS, people on your Wi-Fi network could read emails you send or receive by using interception software such as Firesheep. bit.ly/ymail330

PATCH TUESDAY: October

It's 10 years since Microsoft launched its monthly patch cycle. To celebrate, Microsoft did what it does every Patch Tuesday: fix some security holes by applying updates to your computer automatically. Celebration enough, surely? This month's eight updates included an urgent response to a hole In Internet Explorer that allowed hackers to take complete control of your computer if you viewed a specially crafted web page. Even an attempted attack would crash your machine and leave you unable to access your system. The update affects all 32- and 64-bit Microsoft platforms except Windows 7 SP1. Other Patch Tuesday fixes included security updates for Microsoft's Word, Excel and SharePoint software. bit.ly/patch330

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

Give their media a bigger stage.

It's the perfect gift to play all their media files on their TV.



WD TV® Live™
Media Player

For the media buff in your life, WD TV Live allows them to enjoy videos, music and photos in virtually any file format, including MKV, MOV, AVI and ISO/VOB. It effortlessly plays files from a USB drive, network drive and any computer in the home. It also streams hit movies and TV shows, the latest viral videos and and more from the best online services. This holiday, give the gift of entertainment.

WD absolutely

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4178-706014-A00 Sep 2013

The electronics specialist
maplin

BUILD A BETTER SITE

Specialist tips, top tools and practical help

WEB DESIGN & HOSTING Q&A

Your questions answered by professional experts. This issue: Tom Greenwood, WordPress expert and director of Wholegrain Digital (www.wholegraindigital.com)

Q What's the best way to back up a WordPress website?

Garth Davies, via email

A If you have a lot of visitors to your site who make constant changes, then you should have a back-up solution that takes frequent snapshots. VaultPress (vaultpress.com) is perfect for this because it syncs every change that gets made to your site, instead of waiting to back up the whole site once a day like most other tools. For $15 (around £9.40) per month, it's very cost effective.

A cheaper option for running daily back-ups is BlogVault (blogvault.net), which lets you do a test restore before you roll back your live site. This is a really valuable feature, and we've also found their support to be first class.

If you don't want to pay any monthly fees, then BackWPup (bit.ly/backwpup330) is a great free plug-in. It lets you schedule back-ups and store them on Dropbox, Amazon S3, FTP and many other storage locations.

Q I want to move from OpenCart to WordPress to develop a simple online shop. Which plug-ins would you recommend?

Bruce Fraser, Facebook

A To create a simple online store with WordPress, we would recommend using WooCommerce from WooThemes (bit.ly/woo330). It is arguably the best supported and most fully featured e-commerce plug-in for WordPress at the moment, with more than 1.5 million downloads. It has a lot of extensions to provide the features you need, and integrates with most online payment tools. It also works with a wide range of themes including – but not limited to – WooThemes. It's also free.

<TOP TIPS>

AdSense ads get responsive

Google AdSense has launched a tool that lets web builders with responsive sites (which become mobile-friendly when viewed on a small screen) match the size of adverts to the device the site is viewed on. The update uses CSS instead of HTML to control the ads directly from the code that configures the layout of the page. Find out more at bit.ly/respon330.

Build a website in an hour

Names.co.uk's SiteMaker service is a quick and easy way to create a website. However, it's not just for beginners: Names.co.uk's YouTube channel at bit.ly/webinar330, shows the software being used by a professional web designer to create a sophisticated site in less than an hour. It's a great tutorial, and includes lots of hints and tips.

Deal of the fortnight

Krystal Hosting (krystal.co.uk) has upgraded its Ruby package, making space, bandwidth and the number of websites you can host unlimited for £11.99 per month.

MINI WORKSHOP | Scan your site for problems

modern.IE: www.modern.ie | 5 mins | Any web browser



1 Microsoft has a new tool for checking your website's code. Go to www.modern.ie, click the 'Scan a webpage' tab, type the address of the site into the 'Enter a URL' box and click Scan. Potential problems are highlighted with an orange exclamation mark. 1 Click the down arrow 2 for information on how to fix problems.



2 Click the 'Get screenshots of your site' tab 1 to see how your page will look when viewed in different browsers on different-sized devices. Click one of the thumbnails 2 or the arrow below 3 to zoom in. Check for any errors or layouts that don't look right.



3 The 'Scan for code no longer supported' tab 1 searches for code that may have been placed in older websites specifically to make them work with out-of-date versions of IE, which can now be removed. Click 'Begin scan'. To run a report on a different page, scroll down and type in the new URL, then click Scan.

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GROUP TEST

We test and compare the latest products

Web filters

TESTED Webuser Labs

Protect your PC from the worst of the web using blocking tools. **Andy Shaw** tests the best web filters

It's all too easy to unintentionally stumble across unpleasant websites, and the prospect can be particularly worrying if you're a parent trying to protect your children from the worst of the web. The best way to keep inappropriate content off your PC is to use a web-filtering service, and in this Group Test, we tested 15 of them. Some need installing on each PC you want to protect, while others filter sites through their own DNS servers, so dodgy sites don't even get to your router. Our top six, reviewed here, all used local installations. There's a full list of the other services we tested on page 22.

HOW WE TESTED

We set up each web filter on a clean Windows 8 PC and applied the strictest filter setting. We then visited 145 sites, including 74 containing porn and others promoting hate, gambling, gore, suicide, anorexia, tasteless humour and web proxies (since these can be used to circumnavigate filters). We also visited 18 acceptable sites on topics such as sexual and mental health, to test for false positives.

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

NORTON FAMILY | FREE | bit.ly/nortfam330

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

Webuser GOLD AWARD

Norton Family is a standalone web filter that you install on each computer you want to protect. It comes in both paid-for and free versions: the former has more features, but the latter covers the basics well, and should be enough for most people.

The filter is centrally managed from a simple web-based control panel. You can install the software on up to 10 PCs, configure restrictions for each user and specify the Windows accounts on each PC that a user has access to.

Default settings are applied based on each user's age, but these can be tweaked. Norton's filter slices the internet into 47 categories so you can, for example, choose to allow access to sites discussing sexual orientation, while keeping practical sex education off limits.

In our tests, these filters were reassuringly effective. With Norton's Young Child filter mode activated, every single porn site and proxy we tried to open was blocked, as was every site promoting gambling, suicide, anorexia and more. Safe Search was locked as 'on' for Google, Ask, Bing, Yahoo and YouTube searches, ensuring we weren't offered access to the most inappropriate elements. A few sites hosting provocative content did slip through, but this serves as a reminder that no filtering software is perfect.

Information sites passed through the filter correctly, with only three false positives. What really impressed us was how Norton handled blocked pages, presenting a non-judgemental holding page with a text field for the user to send an explanation or an access request to the administrator. It's the friendliest and least alarming approach of all the services we tested.

You can also restrict how much time users can spend on a PC and warn them if they attempt to share personal information. Reporting features are basic: you get a log of the past seven days' activity, and no graphical breakdown, but you can view a thumbnail of every site visited.



VERDICT ★★★★★

This family-friendly software will be all that most people need to keep the worst of the internet from inadvertently appearing on their PCs. It has all the most important filtering features and it does an excellent job of blocking the sites you don't want on your PC. The block notice is friendly and gives you the opportunity to explain your reasons and request that the block is lifted. It's as good if not better than most of the other services we tested, which is brilliant in a product you can download and use for free.

Discuss this review at forum.webuser.co.uk

BLUE COAT K9 WEB PROTECTION
FREE | www.k9webprotection.com

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

Webuser SILVER AWARD



K9 Web Protection was very effective at blocking unpleasant websites in our tests. It stopped 94 per cent of the inappropriate sites we challenged it with, though it missed three pornographic sites that were blocked by our Gold Award-winner, Norton Family, which is also free.

K9 doesn't use age ranges but has four basic profiles you can choose from, which you can tweak as much as you like. There are 69 categories of site to block and safe search is activated in the main search engines and on YouTube. It'll run on your PC, but also on Android and iOS, if you use its own Firefox-based browser. What it won't do is monitor anything other than the web, so there are no alerts for instant-messaging problems, for example.

The report screens are detailed and can provide a lot of information about your users, but the design is starting to look very dated.

VERDICT ★★★★☆

K9 Web Protection is very good at filtering out the things you don't want to see when you surf the web. It's free, but so is Norton Family Safety, which delivers better performance and offers a handful of extra tools.

NET NANNY 6.5 | £30 per year (1 PC)
www.netnanny.co.uk

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

Webuser BRONZE AWARD



At £30 per PC per year, Net Nanny is one of the most expensive tools we reviewed, but it's also ruthless at blocking websites. With its strictest filter settings applied, it intercepted almost all the dodgy sites we tried to visit, but also blocked many that we included specifically to trip up over-zealous filters. From a safety perspective, this means it errs on the side of caution. While this may annoy your young users (though they can request specific sites be unblocked), it gives the administrator far more control over what everyone else can and can't see, which, if you're a parent, may be exactly what you're after.

The software can also monitor web activities without blocking, and limit access to games and social networking. Instant messaging can be monitored for signs of inappropriate conversations, and the details are logged so they can be reviewed at a later date.

VERDICT ★★★★☆

Use Net Nanny's strictest settings and it will take a very conservative view on what is allowed from the web to your PC, blocking sites that many people would classify as educational. It's costly, but if you want extra protection, Net Nanny is reassuringly stringent.

KASPERSKY INTERNET SECURITY 2013
£22 per year (1 PC)
www.kaspersky.co.uk



Kaspersky's web filter comes tied into its internet security suite, so it's not much use if you don't want the anti-virus and other software, too. There are plenty of features though, including filtering, time-limits, selective download blocking and the option to block all but trusted social-network contacts.

The filtering was less impressive, letting through a site of erotic pictures and failing to block some others until after the explicit welcome pages had been displayed.

VERDICT ★★★★☆

As part of a security suite, this filter is a useful added extra but it isn't the strongest one we tested. If you use Kaspersky, you might prefer to turn it off and use Norton's filter instead

TREND MICRO ONLINE GUARDIAN
£38 per year (3 PCs)
www.trendmicro.co.uk



Another filter that comes bundled with security software (the Maximum and Premium versions of Trend Micro's suites), this did a great job of blocking all our test sites featuring porn, proxies and gambling, with only one false positive (a site about sexual health). It isn't so good at blocking sites that promote hate and anorexia, though.

You can get the filter on its own from the US site (www.trendmicro.com, for $50 – about £31), but you may as well get the whole suite for a similar price.

VERDICT ★★★★☆

While it did well against graphic content, Trend Micro wasn't so good at stopping material that might influence impressionable minds. It's best value if purchased as part of Trend Micro's suite.

BITDEFENDER PARENTAL CONTROL
£20 per year
www.bitdefender.co.uk



As with Norton, there are free and paid-for versions of Bitdefender Parental Control, but the free version doesn't block, it only tracks. Its paid-for filter was tricked by porn sites that don't have obvious keywords, but it did a good job of blocking sites about betting, gore, proxies and hate.

It also covers Facebook monitoring, contact management and location tracking, via the companion Android app.

VERDICT ★★★★☆

Available separately or as part of Bitdefender's Internet Security suite, this filtering software wasn't up to the standard of Norton's free alternative.

Discuss this review at forum.webuser.co.uk

WEB FILTERS GROUP TEST



MANUFACTURER	Norton Family	Blue Coat K9 Web Protection	Net Nanny 6.5	Kaspersky Internet Security 2013	Trend Micro Online Guardian
WEBSITE	bit.ly/nortfam330	www.k9webprotection.com	www.netnanny.com	www.kaspersky.co.uk	www.trendmicro.co.uk
PRICE	Free	Free	£30	£22	£38
LICENCE	10 PCs	Unlimited licence keys available	1 PC for 1 year	1 PC for 1 year	3 PCs for 1 year
FREE TRIAL	N/A	N/A	14 days	30 days	30 days
OPERATING SYSTEM	Windows XP/Vista/7/8, Mac OS X 10.7+	Windows 7/8, Mac OS X 10.4.7+	Windows XP/Vista/7/8, Mac OS X 10.5+	Windows XP/Vista/7/8	Windows XP/Vista/7/8
MOBILE	Android (included), iOS (manage account only)	Safe browser (Android & iOS)	Android (included), iOS (manage only)	No	Android app (£20 extra)
FILTER TYPE	Software	Software	Software	Software	Software
CATEGORY FILTERS	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
CUSTOMISABLE PROFILES	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
CUSTOMISABLE KEYWORD FILTER	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
WHITELIST/BLACKLIST	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
DOWNLOAD BLOCKING	No	No	No	Yes	No
MULTIPLE USER PROFILES	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
REMOTE MANAGEMENT	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
CUMULATIVE/SCHEDULED TIME LIMITS	Scheduled	Scheduled	Scheduled	Cumulative and scheduled	Scheduled
APP/GAME BLOCKING	No	No	No	Yes	No
IM AND SOCIAL NETWORK MONITORING	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
UNBLOCK REQUEST BUTTON/FORM	Optional	Yes	Optional	Yes	Yes
REPORTING OPTIONS	In-app, web, email	In-app, custom	In-app, web, email, custom	In-app, custom	Web (past week), email (bi-weekly)
OTHER MAJOR FEATURES	Block chat, newsgroups, P2P, HTTPS	Timeout blocking, enforce Safe Search	Block chat, newsgroups, P2P, HTTPS	Full security suite	No
TECHNICAL SUPPORT	Email	No	Email	Phone, email	Phone, email

ALSO TESTED

Other services we tested: AVG Family Safety, F-Secure Internet Security 2013, G Data Internet Security 2014, McAfee Family Protection, MetaCert, OpenDNS Basic, SafeDNS, TalkTalk HomeSafe, Windows Live Family Safety

OUR VERDICT

Webuser GOLD AWARD

Our Gold Award goes to Norton Family, a free web filter you have to download and install on your PC. It filtered sites better than any of the other tools we tested, which is exceptional for a free product.

Silver Award-winner K9 Web Protection is also free, and also very good at filtering out unpleasant websites. However, it only monitors incoming sites and its design could do with a refresh.

Net Nanny gets our Bronze Award, although it was a little too strict at its highest filter setting, blocking sites that we felt were acceptable. It's also the only award-winner that costs money, but you may think it's worth it if you want very stringent protection.



Discuss this review at forum.webuser.co.uk

Finally–The cure for Weak Wi-Fi Syndrome!



Wi-Fi experts sound the alarm!

Weak Wi-Fi Syndrome has reached epidemic levels in the UK. Countless people are already complaining of symptoms such as poor reception, -Fi fatigue and progress bar boredom! earchers warn against underestimating the effects of having weak Wi-Fi in your home or office. "I first felt the effects when

ounces breakth

devolo CURES WEAK WI-FI



dLAN® 500 WiFi

FINALLY: WI-FI IN ANY ROOM!

- ✓ A revolution in simplicity
- ✓ Wi-Fi anywhere
- ✓ Best reception for smartphones and tablets

devolo

The Network Innovation

More information:
www.devolo.co.uk/wi-fi

Tesco Hudl

Search engines and booksellers aren't the only companies making great 7in tablets. **Andy Shaw** tests Tesco's new model

Google's original Nexus, a top-quality 7in Android tablet that came at an affordable price, blew our minds when it first launched. The improved hardware and performance of the updated version (which won the Gold Award in our compact tablet Group Test in Issue 328, see bit.ly/webuser328) merit the rise in price to £199, but the Nexus 7 inhabits a more crowded marketplace than its predecessor, and has to compete with a new wave of tablets that are even cheaper.

Tesco branding

The Tesco Hudl costs just £119 and although it doesn't have the cutting-edge technology of the Nexus 7, there's a lot more to the device than its discounted price might suggest.

Tesco could have dramatically altered the Android operating system to push its own services, as Amazon has with its Kindle Fire; blocked access to Google's Play Store to take its own slice of any app profits; and added an impenetrable layer of Tesco-branded shopping opportunities. Fortunately, it hasn't. While there are Tesco services preinstalled on the device and you're encouraged (but not forced) to create a Tesco account if you don't already have one, the changes are remarkably subtle. There's a Tesco button in the bottom-left corner of the screen but it's small and discreet enough not to bug you. Swipe from the home screen to the alternative homepages and you'll find panels offering a range of Tesco services, but tapping, holding and dragging them to the cross in the top left will remove them, as with any Android widget. If you use Tesco's services, from Blinkbox movie rentals to online shopping, you should find these options useful.





A standard version of Android 4.2.2 is installed, with an extra Tesco button in the bottom left corner

Within five minutes of turning on the device, however, you could have it mostly cleaned of Tesco add-ons, if you so wish.

Hudl vs Nexus 7

Aside from the Tesco apps, there's a standard version of Android 4.2.2. This is the first hurdle at which the Hudl drops behind the Nexus 7, which comes with Android 4.3. However, Version 4.2.2 still places Tesco's tablet ahead of most of the rest of the competition.

The Hudl is surprisingly weighty at 370g. By comparison, the Nexus 7 is only 290g, and most other tablets of this size are less than 320g. Its similarly sized to the Nexus 7 (200 x 114 x 8.5mm) but thicker by a millimetre.

With a screen resolution of

Discuss this review at forum.webuser.co.uk

1,440 x 900 pixels, the Hudl again falls short of the Nexus 7, but compares well with most other compact tablets around at the moment. It can't show full resolution 1080p HD video, but it's questionable whether you're going to miss this on a 7in screen.

Tablets tend not to have brilliant speakers because there simply isn't the space to fit in a decent set. The Hudl is no exception to this rule, and you'll need to use headphones if you want decent quality sound from it.

Inside, the Hudl has a 1.5GHz quad-core processor with 16GB of storage, which is a similar specification to the Nexus. However, it doesn't perform as well, running at around half the speed of the Nexus 7 when tested with the Geekbench 2 benchmark. If you're after a tablet that plays the latest cutting-edge games and want it to last a year or two before the latest software demands start to make it look sluggish, it would be worth stepping up to the Nexus 7. But if you're not bothered about games and want a device primarily to watch video and surf the web, you're unlikely to have any problems with the Hudl's lesser performance.

One of the key things you don't want a tablet to cut back on is the battery life. The Hudl's lasted 10 hours and 24 minutes in our tests, which is almost an hour and a half less than the Nexus 7's 11 hours and 48 minutes, but it's still above average compared to the other compact tablets we tested in Issue 328.

Hudl vs Nook HD

Barnes & Noble's Nook HD (uk.nook.com, winner of the Silver Award in Issue 328's Group Test), is currently available for £40 less than the Hudl. To get the price down to £79, the Nook has shed both front and rear cameras, dual-band Wi-Fi and GPS. It also has Barnes & Noble software layered on top of Android, though this isn't offensive and you can still access the Google Play Store and install any Android apps you like.

Within five minutes of turning it on, you could mostly have it cleaned of Tesco add-ons

The good news for buyers is that you can now decide how much you're prepared to pay and get an appropriate 7in tablet for the price. We'd still plump for the Nexus overall, but if you've got less than £100, opt for the Nook HD, because you won't be disappointed with what you get for the money. If you can stretch to somewhere between the two, the Tesco Hudl is a good tablet for the price. Our only niggle is its performance, which has been overshadowed by Google's technological wizardry in creating the top-of-the-range Nexus 7.



The Hudl comes in a range of colours to suit most tastes

OUR VERDICT ★★★★★

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

With the Hudl, Tesco has provided a welcome addition to the choice of 7in tablets, and a viable contender in an increasingly competitive market. At £119, it's significantly cheaper than the top-of-the-range Google Nexus, but has key technologies that the lower-priced Barnes & Noble Nook HD doesn't.

It can't match the performance, battery life or screen resolution of the Nexus 7, and it's a chunkier, heavier tablet. But if you're not hell-bent on playing the latest games, it's a great option, especially if you can't do without cameras, dual-band Wi-Fi and GPS, which are all missing from the Nook.

For its low price and the convenience of being able to pick one up while doing your weekly shop, the Hudl is hard to beat.

PRODUCT INFO

TESCO HUDL

www.tesco.com/hudl

Price: £119

SPECIFICATIONS

- 7in IPS LCD screen
- 1,440 x 900 pixels resolution
- 242ppi
- 10-point multi-touch screen
- 1.5GHz A9 quad-core processor
- 1GB RAM
- Mali 400 Quad core GPU
- 16GB internal storage
- 802.11 a/b/g/n dual-band Wi-Fi (2.4GHz and 5GHz)
- Bluetooth 4.0
- 2MP fixed-focus camera
- 3MP auto-focus camera
- 2 x 1W stereo speakers
- Microphone
- 3.5mm headphone jack
- GPS
- Micro-USB 2.0 port
- Micro-HDMI port
- Micro-SD slot (32GB)
- 193 x 129 x 9.85mm
- 370g

FOR

- Great set of features
- Significantly cheaper than Google's Nexus 7

AGAINST

- More expensive than the Nook HD
- Doesn't have Nexus's cutting-edge technology

TOP OF THE RANGE

Google Nexus 7, £199

bit.ly/nexus330



EVEN CHEAPER

Barnes & Noble Nook HD, £79

bit.ly/nook330



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

HARDWARE

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 the 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

7in TABLET



Google Nexus 7

£199 from play.google.com
Date tested: September 2013

The latest Nexus has a beautiful sharp screen and runs the latest Android software smoothly. Striking the perfect balance between price and performance, it's the king of Android tablets.

KEY SPECS
1.5GHz quad-core processor ■ 16GB/32GB internal storage ■ 7in screen ■ 1,920 x 1,200 pixels resolution ■ 5-megapixel and 1.2-megapixel cameras ■ Dual-band 802.11a/b/g/n Wi-Fi ■ 200 x 114 x 8.5mm ■ 290g ■ Android 4.3 ■ GPS ■ NFC ■ Bluetooth

LAPTOP



Acer Aspire S3

£390 from www.saveonlaptops.co.uk
Date tested: September 2013

The super-stylish Acer Aspire S3 looks far more expensive than it is. Although its internal specification is slightly out of date, its performance and battery life are impressive. It also has a clear, bright screen and a compact case, which makes it much lighter than most other laptops.

KEY SPECS
Windows 8 64-bit ■ 1.4GHz Intel Core i3-2377M processor ■ 4GB DDR3 memory ■ 13.3in screen ■ 1,366 x 768 pixels resolution ■ 500GB hard drive ■ 1.38kg ■ Dual-band 802.11n Wi-Fi ■ One-year warranty ■ 323 x 219 x 18mm

SMARTPHONE



HTC One

£480 SIM-free from www.htc.com/uk
Date tested: July 2013

The HTC One is a top-of-the-range smartphone with an excellent design. It works smoothly, is capable of taking impressive photos and features all the latest technologies for connecting it to Wi-Fi and mobile phone networks. It's also cheaper than the Samsung Galaxy S4.

KEY SPECS
4.7in screen ■ 1,920 x 1,080 pixels resolution ■ 1.7GHz quad-core processor ■ 2GB memory ■ 32/64GB storage ■ 3G/4G/Wi-Fi ■ 4-megapixel camera ■ 137 x 68 x 9mm ■ 143g ■ Android 4.1.2

MI-FI DEVICE



EE Huawei E5776 Mobile Wifi

From **£12.99 per month** from ee.co.uk
Date tested: June 2013

The EE Mi-Fi device has a built-in screen that usefully displays the strength of your connection; tells you whether you're using 3G or 4G; and shows how many devices are connected via Wi-Fi. It isn't as cheap as rival devices, but its impressive speed makes it well worth paying for.

KEY SPECS
4G, 3G and 2G connectivity ■ 802.11b/g/n Wi-Fi ■ WPA security ■ 1.45in display ■ 10 hours battery life (500 hours standby) ■ 106 x 66 x 16mm ■ 149g

LASER PRINTER



Oki B401d

£67 from www.amazon.co.uk
Date tested: June 2013

The B401d is a fantastic all-round performer, delivering top-quality prints quickly, accurately and at a low cost per page. It has good-value replaceable parts that will save you money in the long term. It's a large printer, so make sure you've got enough space to store it.

KEY SPECS
1,200 x 600 dpi resolution ■ 29 pages-per-minute print speed ■ 2.2p per A4 mono page ■ 250-sheet tray capacity ■ USB and parallel-port connections ■ 387 x 364 x 245mm

All prices correct at time of review

Get more tips in our newsletter at www.webuser.co.uk/newsletter

SOFTWARE & SERVICES

WEB FILTER

NEW!

Norton Family



Free from onlinefamily.norton.com
Date tested: October 2013

This family-friendly software provides everything you need to keep the worst of the web from your PC. It 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.squirrelsave.co.uk
Date tested: August 2013

With its unlimited storage, ability to handle back-ups from multiple PCs and external devices, 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

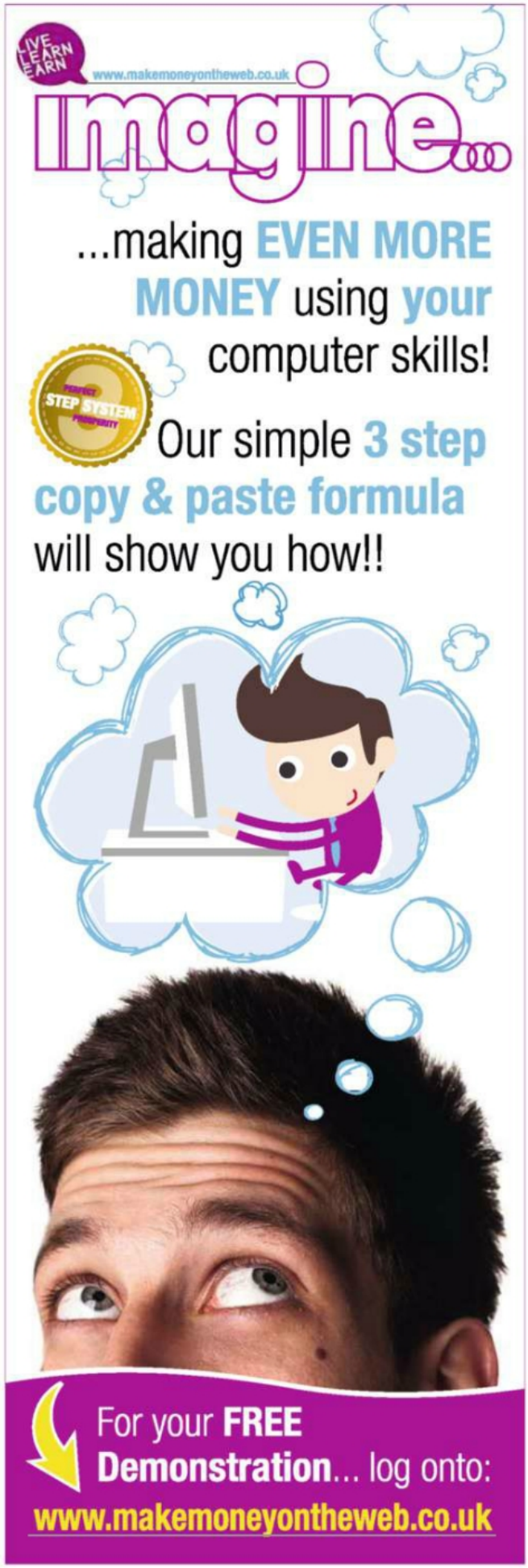
Serif WebPlus X6



£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 combination of tools, templates and flexibility, and the ease with which it lets you add extra features, 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



BEST FREE SOFTWARE

This fortnight's top FREE software downloads

19 FREE DOWNLOADS

ANTI-MALWARE TOOL

Ad-Aware Free Antivirus+ 11

www.lavasoft.com

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8
File size: 1.6MB (installer only)



Ad-Aware has been protecting computers from spyware and other threats since 1999. The company added basic anti-virus protection to its free version three years ago, and turned on real-time protection in its 2012 release. For this year's update, the company has switched to the Bitdefender anti-virus engine, and made various other tweaks and improvements.

When you install the program, Ad-Aware will look for any existing anti-virus tools on your system. If it detects what it describes as "incompatible software", it will switch to Compatible mode, so you can run Ad-Aware as a second line of defence. You'll then be offered the chance to activate web protection by installing a toolbar. You can choose which features to include, or bypass the toolbar installation completely by clicking the Skip button. This is greyed out to suggest it's not available, but don't be fooled – it is.

The installation takes a while because the program has to download around 175MB of definition files before it can perform the first scan (you can skip this last stage).

Once it's up and running, you'll notice the new release has a lighter, more attractive interface. The Home screen provides a protection summary and lets you toggle features such as real-time protection, email protection, web protection, network protection and gaming (silent) mode on or off. A sidebar on the left provides access to various modules and lets you enable or disable available features. Select Scan Computer and you can choose to run Quick, Full or Custom scans and set a schedule.

Overall, Ad-Aware 11 is a big improvement, and the inclusion of Bitdefender's anti-virus engine means it should protect your PC from most threats.

DISTRACTION BLOCKER

Cold Turkey

getcoldturkey.com

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8, .NET Framework
File size: 996KB

The internet is filled with time-wasting distractions, such as Facebook, YouTube and Reddit. Cold Turkey is designed to help you stop procrastinating and get on with whatever task you're occupied with, by blocking access to the sites or programs that tempt you away from your work. Once you've set a schedule, you won't be able to access those sites, or prematurely end Cold Turkey. There's a downloadable uninstaller if you get desperate and want your time wasters back!



The software is free, though you'll be asked to consider making a donation before downloading.

GAME

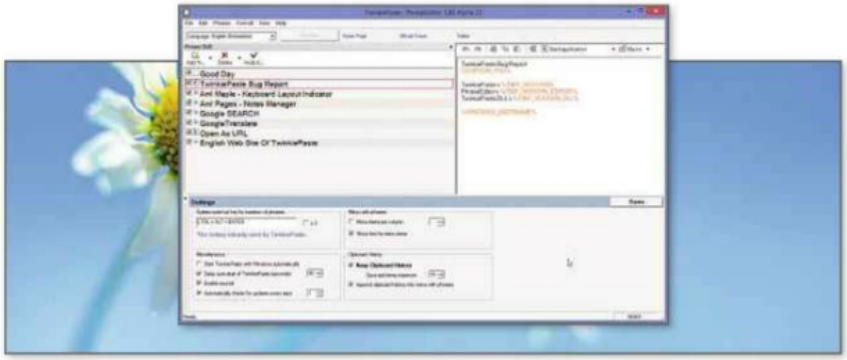
Guardian Witch

bit.ly/witch330

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8, Mac OS X or Linux
File size: 33MB

In this game, your village is under attack from marauding goblins. As a witch, you can help protect it by turning some of the weak villagers into demons. Unfortunately, as well as attacking goblins, the demons also attack ordinary people. Fortunately, your magic can boost a villager's health, and destroy goblins and out-of-control demons with fireballs.





CLIPBOARD TOOL

TwinkiePaste

bit.ly/twinkie330

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8 **File size:** 438KB

If you regularly need to paste the same phrases or keywords into Windows applications and websites (your address into a Word document or web page, for example), TwinkiePaste can save you a lot of time. It stores your phrases and clipboard history, and will present them in a list ready for you to select and paste whenever you hit the hot key.

The software is available in both installer and portable versions.



PASSWORD TOOL

Xpeon-Lock

bit.ly/xpeon330

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8 **File size:** 2MB

If you've got personal files stored on your PC, you can use this simple tool to protect them. Assign a password to a folder and it will prompt you to enter the details every time you want to access the files it contains. The software can also be used as a basic parental-control tool by automatically killing any process that contains a specific keyword.

COMPETITION

WIN 1 OF 6 COPIES!

Rescue Your Videotapes 7

Available to buy now priced £59.99, MAGIX Rescue Your Videotapes 7 has all you need to salvage your videos, including MAGIX Video easy, a USB video converter and a SCART adapter. It has an optimised user interface, new menu templates, intro and outro animations, more sound-optimisation options, and you can preview transitions before you use them. It's suitable for VHS, Video 8, S-VHS, Hi8, Betamax and any other tape format.

To enter, email your address to webusercomp@dennis.co.uk with 'rescue' in the subject line. For more info visit www.magix.com/gb.



NEW WINDOWS 8 APPS

Weave

bit.ly/weave330

Min requirements: Windows 8 or 8.1

File size: 1.8MB

Weave is an attractive news-reader app. Select categories that interest you and it will present the latest stories from a selection of popular sources. You can choose which sites you want to include.



Six Guns

bit.ly/sixguns330

Min requirements: Windows 8 or 8.1

File size: 455MB

Gameloft's Wild West action adventure is very similar to Rockstar's Red Dead Redemption game. You can make in-app purchases (with real money) to unlock extra items in the game, but these aren't essential.



Sound Editor

bit.ly/soundedit330

Min requirements: Windows 8 or 8.1

File size: 700KB

This app lets you record audio from your microphone or line-in port and save it in MP3, WMA or WAV format. You can view, copy and cut and paste samples, add fades and normalise audio.



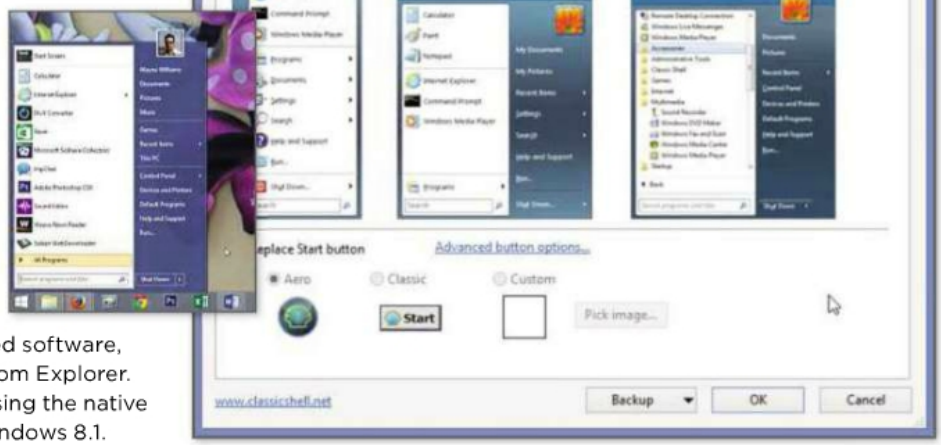
START MENU

Classic Shell 4

www.classicshell.net

Min requirements: Windows 8 or 8.1

File size: 5.3MB



If you're not a fan of the Start screen in Windows 8 or 8.1, and miss the Start button and menu combination found in Windows 7, you can get it back using Classic Shell. The software perfectly recreates the Windows 7 menu style and the updated version adds lots of new features. There's now a dedicated shutdown button, and you can search for files as well as programs using the Windows Search tool. The menu will show the most frequently used software, and programs can be pinned directly from Explorer. The Start menu can also be called up using the native Start button Microsoft has added to Windows 8.1.



MEDIA MANAGER

Nero MediaHome

www.nero.com

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8

File size: 182MB

MediaHome is an updated version of the program that used to be called Nero KwikMedia. It will search your system for media files, and add and organise them in date order under the Photos & Videos and Music tabs. You can view or play files, and get details on each item. The program lets you build slideshows, rotate images, add tags or markers (for easy access), rip CDs, burn video discs and stream media over a network.

There's a separate MediaBrowser, which lets you drag and drop files from your library to other applications.

• Be sure to decline the bundled AVG extras during installation.

SYSTEM TOOL

Windows Repair 2

bit.ly/winrepair330

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8

File size: 4.7MB

Windows Repair is an all-in-one tool that can fix a host of common PC problems including repairing file-permission errors and replacing damaged system files. You can jump from section to section using the tabbed interface, or step through the repair process by clicking Next.

The latest build changes the interface's colour scheme and updates the tools. It also adds support for Windows 8.1 and uses fewer system resources. The updated logging feature can record more information and presents the data better. If your PC is playing up, it's definitely a tool worth trying.



READER RECOMMENDS



I've found a great tool for geeks, called ASCII Generator (ascgendotnet.jmsoftware.co.uk). It turns photos into ASCII art (pictures made entirely of text). It's very easy to use: just double-click to add an image or drag and drop it to the main window, and ASCII Generator automatically converts it. Fab!

John Gormley, via email



DOWNLOADING TOOL

WebDownloader

www.saleensoftware.com

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8
File size: 4.3MB

This tool makes it easy to download photos and videos from the web. It also comes with a library for managing downloaded content. It currently works with Flickr (photos and videos), Google Images, YouTube, Facebook (photos), Picasa Web Images and Photobucket, with support for additional websites coming soon.

GAME

Donkey-Me: Raiders of the Lost Ark

bit.ly/donkeyme330

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8, Mac OS X or Linux **File size:** 4.4MB

Donkey-Me is essentially Donkey Kong given an Indiana Jones-themed makeover. You play as Dr Jones and must evade rolling rocks and angry tribesmen to rescue a golden idol. Instead of a hammer, there's a whip you can collect to overcome the natives. It plays just like the classic arcade game.



UPDATED | New tweaks and fixes for your favourite programs



MEDIA SOFTWARE

iTunes 11.1.1

www.apple.com/uk/itunes

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8 or Mac OS X
File size: 91MB

Apple has updated the most recent iTunes to fix a couple of problems. The first of these caused the iTunes Extras feature, which offers additional content for films, to display incorrectly, and the second prevented podcasts from being deleted properly.

BROWSER

Opera 17

www.opera.com

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8, Mac OS X or Linux **File size:** 32.1MB

The latest version of Opera adds the ability to pin tabs to the tab bar so you don't close them accidentally. It also lets you add custom search engines to the address bar, in addition to Opera's default options, and enhances the browser's performance and stability.

COMPRESSION TOOL

PeaZip 5.1.1

peazip.sourceforge.net

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8 or Linux
File size: 5.2MB

The excellent free archiving tool has been updated to add Box.com to its range of options for backing up files to the cloud. It also fixes a few bugs and corrects a keyboard shortcut. See our Workshop on page 61 to find out how to use PeaZip to create automatic back-ups.

SYSTEM OPTIMISER

Glary Utilities 3.9.3.142



www.glarysoft.com

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8 **File size:** 15.9MB

The popular program for cleaning and speeding up your PC has been updated to add Registry-cleaning support for Windows 8. The new version of Glary Utilities also offers improved options for cleaning Microsoft Office files and analysing your hard drive.

ONLINE-STORAGE TOOL

Dropbox 2.4.2



www.dropbox.com

Min requirements: Windows XP/Vista/7/8 or Linux
File size: 33.7MB

A few tweaks have been made to the online-storage tool to ensure that it works equally well for all users. These include a fix for the 'Import to iPhoto' option and a problem that was causing a memory leak in Windows.

GET FREE SOFTWARE FIRST subscribe to Web User at subscribe.webuser.co.uk

BEST FREE APPS

This fortnight's top FREE smartphone and tablet apps



SECURITY

Mobie

bit.ly/mobie330

Min requirements: Android 2.3.3

Size: 4.8MB

Apps that try to do too much can spread themselves a bit thin, but Mobie is genuinely a master of all trades. Its two security tools are so good that we'd happily pay to use them, but not only are they free, you also get another four distinct functions to track your data usage, boost your phone's memory, optimise its battery life and monitor your installed apps.

Of the two security tools, one scans your phone for viruses, malware and "madware" (software that inserts annoying ads onto your photos and other data), plus any rogue apps that access your personal information. Most anti-virus apps don't catch madware, so this feature alone puts Mobie ahead of the crowd.



Its other security feature is an anti-theft tool that remotely locks your lost or stolen phone and lets you activate an alarm, even when it's in silent mode.



LANGUAGES

Linqapp

bit.ly/linq330

Min requirements: Android 2.2

Size: 3.9MB

This virtual phrasebook uses 'social translation' to help you find the right word or phrase when you're abroad. Take a photo or record an audio clip of anything you need the word for, such as an object, activity or street sign, and post it to the Linqapp community for translation via the magic of live chat. It's a brilliant idea that has all sorts of great social potential.

NEWS

Twitter

bit.ly/twitapp330

Min requirements: Android (varies with device)

Size: Varies with device

Twitter has redefined the way we look at news and social networking, but it's never been great on tablets – until now. This new Android version is optimised for the Samsung Galaxy Note 10.1 (bit.ly/note330), with tablet-exclusive features (multi-screen view and doodling on photos). Support for other Android tablets is promised by the end of the year.





EBOOKS

Readmill

bit.ly/read330

Min requirements: Android 4

Size: 10MB

It's a brave app that goes up against Kindle (bit.ly/kindleapp330), but Readmill manages to thrive in the giant's shadow. Its minimalist design makes reading a pleasure, and you can shop for hundreds of thousands of free or inexpensive titles. Its killer feature is support for the industry-standard DRM-free EPUB format, unlike Kindle, you can read *all* your ebooks here.

DRIVING

Potholer

www.potholer.info

Min requirements: iOS 5

Size: 1.4MB



Potholes, and hating them, are facts of British life. Now you can crowdsource your way to smoother roads by using this app as you drive. It monitors your route, logs potholes and sends the data to the relevant authorities in your area. No personal information is recorded. Your phone needs to stay very still, so the app isn't suitable for cyclists, and it's currently only available on iOS.

QR codes

Mobie

Linqapp

Twitter

Readmill

Potholer

PHOTOS

Snapchat

bit.ly/snap330

Min requirements: Android 2.2, iOS

Size: Varies with device



The app that turned self-destruct into an art form has a new feature called Snapchat Stories, where you create a photo story and share it with several contacts at once. You can include videos and captions if you wish, but none of it will last long: in 24 hours, Snapchat's self-destruct mechanism deletes your story from everyone's phones, including your own. Turn to page 54 for more self-destruct tools.

ART

Touch Van Gogh

bit.ly/van330

Min requirements: Android 4.1, iOS 6 (tablet only)

Size: 47MB

Get up close and personal with the great Dutch painter by swiping to "remove" layers of varnish and paint on some of his best-loved works. You get to find out how the colours have degraded over time, how he reused his old canvases and, in one notable case, painted on a tea towel. A superb app for anyone who has even a passing interest in art. Time to buy that tablet?



QR codes

Snapchat

Touch Van Gogh

MixBit

Wordament

VIDEO

MixBit

bit.ly/mix330

Min requirements: Android 4

Size: 8.9MB



This video app from the founders of YouTube has got to be worth a look, and MixBit is certainly an eye-catching idea. You record video clips as long as 16 seconds each, edit them using the slick but simple built-in tools, stitch them together in whatever order you like (or stitch lots of versions of the same video if you want), and play or share the result as one seamless film.

WORD GAME

Wordament

bit.ly/wordament330

Min requirements: Android 4.0.3, iOS 5.1

Size: 16MB



Does the app world need another free word game? Microsoft thinks it does, and has brought this word-search tournament for the Xbox and Windows Phone to Android and iOS. It's a real-time continuous championship where you progress through rounds by swiping a lettered grid to find hidden words. Store your stats, connect with rival 'frenemies' and earn rewards as you go.

5 NEW APPS WORTH PAYING FOR

PRIVACY

HMA Pro VPN

hidemyass.com

Min requirements: iOS 5

Size: 2.8MB **Price:** From £5 per month

Encrypt all your online activity on your iPhone or iPad with this subscription service from leading virtual private network (VPN) provider HideMyAss. The app is free to download, but you need to pay for a subscription.

VIDEO

Pinnacle Studio

bit.ly/studio330

Min requirements: iOS 6 (iPad only)

Size: 97.9MB **Price:** £8.99

You may think £8.99 is a lot to pay for an app, but for video-editing software as sophisticated as this, it's a steal. This updated version includes enhanced cloud storage and scores of add-ons and templates.

DOWNLOADS

uTorrent Pro

bit.ly/utorrent330

Min requirements: Android 2.1

Size: 3.1MB **Price:** £1.99

Use this lightweight, ad-free Bittorrent client for your Android device to search for content from inside the app and set it to download on Wi-Fi only.

POETRY

The Love Book

www.iliterature.net/thelovebook

Min requirements: Android 4

Size: 30MB **Price:** £1.99

No, this isn't a touchscreen edition of the *Kama Sutra* but a collection of highbrow poems, letters and literature on the subject of love. Read by leading British actors including Helena Bonham Carter, Gina Bellman and Damian Lewis, it's actually rather lovely.

TRAVEL

Realtime Trains

bit.ly/trains330

Min requirements: Android 2.3

Size: 1.3MB **Price:** £3.99

'Tis the season of mists and leaves on the line, so come prepared with the UK rail app to beat all others. As well as live rail information, it's got platform details, alarms and alerts, 'favourite' train and route lists, timetable downloads and much more.

BEST NEW ADD-ONS

This fortnight's 10 most useful tools for your browser

CHROME

WOT

www.mywot.com



The updated online security tool has new features for categorising and rating websites. It's now easier for WOT (Web of Trust) users to add and read comments about a site. There are also more detailed warnings about potentially unsafe content and search results.

Ferro

bit.ly/ferro330



Ferro lets you give your mouse a rest by controlling Chrome with your keyboard. Press Alt+Shift+F to launch the add-on, which lets you use shortcuts to open bookmarks and sites from your history; close and reload tabs; access downloads and extensions; and much more.

Fruumo

bit.ly/fruumo330



Fruumo is yet another add-on for customising your New Tab page, and it's a good one. It applies an attractive wallpaper to the page; shows you the time, date and weather; and lets you search your bookmarks and extensions. It also displays RSS feeds and Facebook notifications.



Facebook Unseen

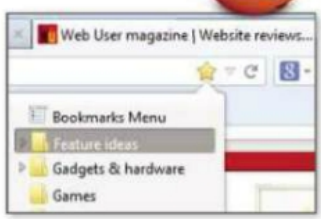
bit.ly/unseen330

When someone sends you a Facebook message, the social network tells them when you've seen it, a feature that many users don't like. This add-on prevents the 'Seen' details from appearing, so you don't feel pressured into replying and can ignore the message if you want.

FIREFOX

QuickMark

bit.ly/quickmark330

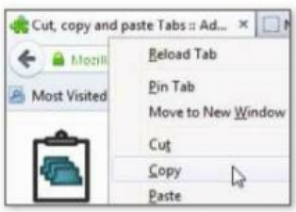


This add-on lets you bookmark sites more quickly by clicking the bookmark star in your address bar and dragging it to the folder you want to add the site to. Alternatively, press Ctrl+D and type the first few letters of the folder name.

TabStash

bit.ly/tabstash330

TabStash was inspired by the Chrome extension OneTab (www.one-tab.com) and lets you save memory while hiding what you're doing from nosey parkers. When you click its add-on bar icon, all your open tabs shrink down to one. Click it again and the tabs will be restored.



Cut, Copy and Paste Tabs

bit.ly/cutcopy330

Rather than copying and pasting a URL, this add-on copies the actual tab. Right-click the tab and choose Copy (or Cut if you want to close the tab afterwards) then select Paste to paste the link wherever you want.

RAM Restart

bit.ly/ramrestart330

RAM Restart displays a figure and an indicator on your add-on bar that show how much memory Firefox is using. When the indicator turns from green to red, you can click it to restart the browser so it doesn't crash.

OPERA

Ghostery 5

www.ghostery.com



The latest version of the popular privacy add-on (also available for Chrome, Firefox and Safari) has an improved interface and provides more information about web trackers. It also adds the ability to block trackers on a site-by-site basis, so you can allow specific ones when needed.

TED: Ideas worth spreading

bit.ly/ted330



Get enlightened every time you launch your browser by installing this add-on from ideas website TED (Technology, Entertainment, Design, www.ted.com). It places a tile on your Speed Dial page showing a video of a TED speech, which you can click to watch on the site.

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

INBOX
Share your views!



CONTACT US
You can let us know your views and opinions via webuser@dennis.co.uk, www.facebook.com/webusermagazine, www.twitter.com/webusermagazine and forum.webuser.co.uk

STAR EMAIL

£25 winner

Why the new Yahoo Mail is a major fail

Never mind what Google's done to Chrome, what the hell has Yahoo done to Yahoo Mail? Talk about tweaking something for the sake of trying to look fresh, and making it a lot worse! I'm not eight years old, so being able to apply a colourful background or a photo of a puppy to my inbox doesn't really appeal to me. I did try, just to see what it looked like, but it only made my emails more difficult to read. Considering that 'themes' are a feature I've always ignored in my Gmail account, it's hard to get excited about them coming to Yahoo Mail.

Even worse is that Yahoo has removed tabs from the interface, so you can't keep messages open while



you browse your inbox. This is a massive step backward and suggests they don't understand how people use email these days. Tabs make reading and managing a busy inbox much easier, so I fail to see the point of 'streamlining' Yahoo Mail's design to get rid of them. You can't even sort your emails by sender anymore, only by date – another useful feature gone.

To top it off, Yahoo has removed the Print button from the top of messages. Yes, you can still press Ctrl+P, but not everyone knows that shortcut and I fail to see the logic in taking away such a crucial option. There's still room for it on the toolbar, so why isn't it there anymore?

Yahoo has really messed up with this one, I fear. Updating its logo is one thing, but upsetting the users of one of its most popular services is another matter entirely. There are already online petitions demanding the return of removed features. I just hope Marissa Mayer is prepared to listen to our complaints and undo some of these unwanted changes.

Caroline Barfield, via email

Switching ISPs is easier than you think

Oh, how I sweated blood in the past when I finally decided to change from one ISP to another. I remember not so long ago, when I changed from Tiscali to BT, I was without a phone line for 10 days and without broadband for 12 days. It was dreadful; no matter how often I rang BT, I was told my broadband and phone line would be connected "later today". When I was finally connected, it took me hours to sort out the final bill! After several months and letters passing between Tiscali and myself, I was finally offered a £70 cheque for all my time wasted and inconvenience caused, which I gladly accepted.

But how things have changed! Last month, I decided to change from BT to Sky. After getting a fantastic deal for broadband and telephone only, I have saved a massive £14 each month! And upon accepting Sky's offer, I was told I need do nothing else – not even contact BT and fight for a code to let me leave.



Sky did it all, after just one phone call.

I'm not naive enough to think that Sky and BT have done this out of the goodness of their hearts. I'm sure it's taken many years of complaining to the correct authorities for the changes to happen, but it's paid off. Now it really is that easy to change from one ISP to another. Try it yourself next time your contract expires. I was stunned, and I hope you will be too.

P Cowell, Canterbury

Innovative gadgets are worth the money

What on Earth is Leon Holt talking about in your Star Email in Issue 328, entitled 'Too many gadgets in too little time' (bit.ly/webuser328)? Of course tech companies are going to release new devices every year; if they didn't, they wouldn't be doing their job very well, and people would soon lose interest in the brand. This would cause the companies to go bankrupt, as did some of the big names in Eighties computing such as Commodore.

As for the comment that gadgets aren't being "radically redesigned" enough for Mr Holt's liking – why would companies deliberately abandon the things that have made their products popular? The new iPhone 5S and iOS 7 have done a lot more than just "make the app icons flatter and squarer", introducing several innovative features



such as the fingerprint scanner and Control Centre, but without sacrificing the iPhone's sophisticated and still unrivalled design.

It's true that handsets such as the iPhone and Samsung Galaxy S4 are very expensive when you buy them unlocked, but they're intended to be top-of-the-range and you can usually get good deals on contract. They also offer the latest cutting-edge technology, and many of us don't mind forking out a little extra to get the best features available.

Perhaps Mr Holt is perfectly content to use the same phone he's had for years, and there's nothing wrong with sticking with something you feel comfortable with. Personally, however, I love owning the latest gadgets and I'm happy that companies such as Apple continue to innovate.

Jason Franklin, via email

Air your views, write to us at webuser@dennis.co.uk

New Tab page could risk your privacy



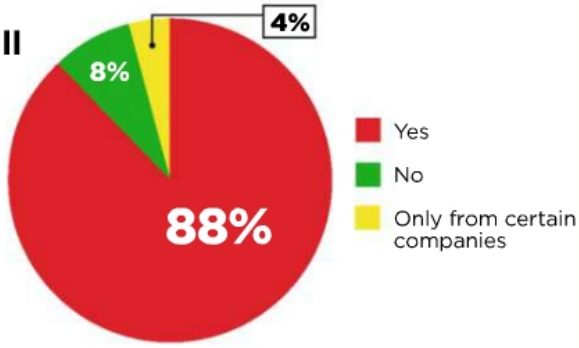
Although I enjoyed reading your suggestions in Issue 329 (bit.ly/webuser329) about how to make the New Tab page in Chrome and Firefox more useful, I prefer to leave mine blank. Otherwise, if you share a computer with someone, like I do, it tells them exactly which websites you visit most often. This could prove embarrassing if, for example, you've been looking for a surprise gift for that person or if you've accidentally stumbled on an adult site. If you want what you do online to stay private, then don't forget that your browser's New Tab page can be a dead giveaway!

Colin Chapman, via email

Your Vote Counts

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

Is broadband still too expensive?



NEXT FORTNIGHT...
What type of content do you stream the most?
Vote online at www.webuser.co.uk

Think twice about blocking online ads

I counted no fewer than four references to blocking web adverts in the latest issue of *Web User*. Don't you realise that if you want sites to remain free to use, then ads are a necessary evil? How else are website owners supposed to pay hosting and design fees, not to mention justify the time, money and effort they invest in creating original content?

No-one likes those ridiculous adverts that fill your whole screen, or the flashing ones that distract you from what you're reading, but I fail to see the harm caused by a few Google Ads down the side of a homemade web page. And as for adverts at the beginning of YouTube videos, are people really in such a rush that they can't wait five seconds to click the 'Skip' option?



An increasing number of us now depend on the web for income, so applying a blanket block of online ads is, in my view, irresponsible if you expect to get content for free. I wouldn't go as far as to call it stealing, but there's definitely a moral issue at play here. So please, think carefully before you block every ad on every site in every browser.

Steve Bartlett, via email

THIS FORTNIGHT'S CROSSWORD

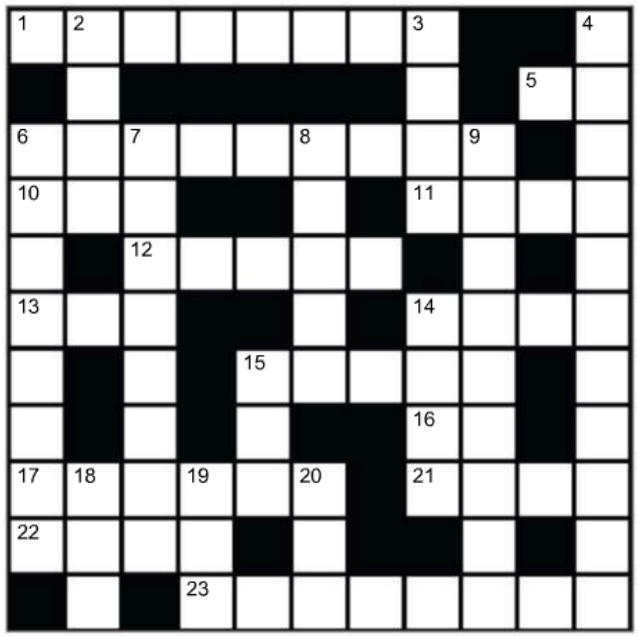
Clues marked with an asterisk are cryptic and refer to sites and software featured in this issue of *Web User*. All other clues are literal. Answers online at www.webuser.co.uk/crossword

ACROSS

1. *Bizarre circus act lost about a site for buying timepieces (8)
5. (With 15 down) __ and ___, back and forth (2, 3)
6. *Muddled dream won't produce letter-grid game app (9)
10. Measure of (long) time (3)
11. Eager; sharp (4)
12. Prefix to Flash, Photoshop and Acrobat (5)
13. Nugent, Bundy or Danson (3)
14. 4047m² or 43,560ft² (4)
15. *Offer room inside app that uses keyboard shortcuts to control Chrome (5)
16. Internet domain name for Switzerland (2)
17. Sickly, yellowish colour (6)
21. James, Helen or Gareth (4)
22. Singer Fitzgerald (4)
23. *Help root out app for smoother driving (8)

DOWN

2. Wooden shoe (4)
3. Armoured vehicle (4)
4. *I understood complicated recording app (5,6)
6. *Raise two unconventionally for supermarket site (8)
7. *Running machine failed to start app to rival Kindle (8)
8. *Crowd that is producing security app (5)
9. *The clouds dispersed to reveal a new 7in tablet (5,4)



14. Curved construction; part of the foot; roguish (4)
15. See 5 across
18. Everything (3)
19. Lick; circuit; seated person's thighs (3)
20. *At first, we only tried a security tool for websites (3)

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

Get more tips in our newsletter at www.webuser.co.uk/newsletter

What you say...

THE NEW VERSION OF BBC IPLAYER WILL LET YOU WATCH CATCH-UP TV FOR 30 DAYS. IS THIS LONG ENOUGH?

I think so. If you can't find time in a 30-day period to watch a programme, you really don't have time for TV.

Bruce Fraser

Yes, it's very good news. It means that if I miss a couple of weeks of *Casualty* or *Holby City* , I can still catch up.

Nicki Hastie

This is good news. Seven days is too short for catch up, especially if you're on holiday for two weeks.

Simon Mellor

I am more than happy with 30 days. It will cut down on the need to download programmes so often.

Chris Armstrong

ARE YOU HAPPY THAT FACEBOOK NOW LETS YOU EDIT STATUS UPDATES AFTER THEY'VE GONE LIVE?

That should have been available from the outset. We can all make typos, so we should be able to correct what we have said.

Ursula Vasey

There's always been that option - it's called 'delete and re-do'. Besides, people making typos on statuses is part of the amusement. I think it will result in less responses.

Emmy UpTo-NoGood

I think it's a brilliant idea. I'm always missing words out and not spotting mistakes until after I've posted. Now I'll be able to edit them so they read correctly.

Phil Graham

To be honest, I'm getting fed up with all the changes. As soon as you get used to one thing, it's all change again.

Jenny Francis

WILL YOU STOP USING GMAIL'S ANDROID APP NOW THAT IT SHOWS ADVERTS?

There are better alternatives. I will wait and see if the ads are annoying.

Daniel Data

Ugh - that would be an epic, unnecessary annoyance. I wouldn't stop using it because I don't have much choice. I just hope the adverts are more discrete than on most apps.

Thomas Hartmut Langzik

You mean a service I pay nothing for has the audacity to show me adverts? How dare they?! I'm reverting back to sending all my mail through the post.

Andrew Duerden

I haven't used Gmail's app since I got my first Android device. I much prefer ProfiMail Go (bit.ly/prof330) and MailDroid (bit.ly/mail330).

Roy Cullen

Surely this kind of advertising only works if people click on the adverts? So if no-one clicks on them, maybe they'll give up the idea?

Branden Grant

HAVE YOU MOVED FROM A BLACKBERRY PHONE TO ANDROID OR IPHONE?

I had a BlackBerry Curve - it was so slow. I now have a Samsung Galaxy S2, which is so much better.

Dave McLean

I moved from a BlackBerry because it kept breaking, so I went for an iPhone 4 and the screen packed in. Now I've got a Galaxy S3 and so far there are no faults.

Samantha Louise Jones

Yep, because my BlackBerry was slow. It took about 10 to 15 minutes to install an app, and they weren't even that good.

Justin Lawes

Just got an iPhone 5 and I'm not happy. My BlackBerry 9900 is much better. The camera on my iPhone is rubbish. I just updated to iOS 7 but it's terrible. I'm going back to using my BlackBerry again.

Tony Tobias

YOUR ONLINE RIGHTS



Jane Hoskyn answers all your consumer questions

Beat the car insurance fraudsters

Car insurance fraud costs every driver £15 a year, according to the AA. That may not seem much compared with the other costs of running a car, but it's still theft from your pocket.

In a move to combat the problem, you'll have to show your Driving Licence Number (DLN) when buying car insurance from next summer. Your DLN reveals information held by the DVLA (Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency), such as the sort of vehicles you can drive and any points you've incurred.

A survey by the AA (www.theaa.com) found that 92 per cent of drivers support the ruling, which has industry and government backing. "Drivers are fed up with a fraudulent minority getting cheaper insurance by telling lies," says AA Insurance Director Simon Douglas.

We're broadly in favour, not least because insurers won't need to ask so many searching questions when you apply for cover. But it relies on the accuracy of the information held on you by the DVLA, so check it at www.gov.uk/view-driving-licence. To find out what the two or three-digit code numbers on your licence mean, see www.gov.uk/driving-licence-codes. To contact the DVLA about any mistakes, call 0300 790 6802 or use the form at www.gov.uk/contact-the-dvla.

It's also worth noting that it's not just customers who can commit insurance fraud. In early October, 27 people were arrested for selling cover that didn't actually exist. These "ghost brokers" used bogus insurance websites to con up to 20,000 victims, many of whom only realised they weren't covered after they'd had an accident. Check your policies – and if something seems too good to be true, it probably is.

SEND YOUR EMAILS TO WEBUSER@DENNIS.CO.UK

Air your views, write to us at webuser@dennis.co.uk

AN INSTANT EXPERT GUIDE TO

Curved phones

Your flat, rigid phone may soon seem as dated as a landline. **Jane Hoskyn** looks at the shape of touchscreens to come



The concave curved screen of Samsung's newly announced Galaxy Round phone is designed to fit comfortably in your hand

Q WHAT IS IT?

A The curved handset is the latest trend among phone makers who want to get a step ahead of Apple. A couple of weeks after the iPhone 5S, iPhone 5C and iOS 7 grabbed headlines, Samsung and LG both unveiled phones with curved touchscreens.

Q LIKE ON SMARTWATCHES?

A Actually, most smartwatch screens are flat. The i'M smartwatch has a curved screen (bit.ly/watch330) but it's convex (bulges out), whereas curved smartphones are concave. Samsung's newly announced Galaxy Round has a 5.7in screen that curves from side to side, whereas the LG G Flex curves from top to bottom.

Q WHAT'S THE POINT OF A CURVED SCREEN?

A The "exclusive experiences of a curved display," to quote Samsung, include a 'roll effect' which frees you from the need to tap or press anything: you just roll the phone gently to see battery life, missed calls and other notifications. There are ergonomic advantages, too. The Galaxy Round fits comfily in your hand, while the shape of the LG's G Flex curves the bottom of the phone closer to your mouth, making it easier to speak into.

Q BUT HOW CAN YOU WATCH VIDEOS ON A CURVED SCREEN?

A More easily than on a flat screen, thanks to its wider viewing angles, according to Samsung and LG. Judge for yourself at your local Currys or PC World, both of which now stock LG's 55in curved TV (bit.ly/tv330). It's also available online (bit.ly/currys330 or bit.ly/pcw330). On the downside, it costs £7,999.

Q ARE CURVED PHONES REALLY EXPENSIVE, TOO?

A There's no word on the G Flex's price at the time of writing, but the Samsung Galaxy Round is on sale in Korea for the equivalent of around £630. Samsung hasn't revealed plans for worldwide availability.

Q THAT'S PRICEY. WHAT ELSE DOES IT DO?

A The Galaxy Round is essentially a curved Galaxy Note 3, which is a top-of-the-range £600 phone that uniquely supports the Galaxy Gear smartwatch (see First Look, Issue 328: bit.ly/webuser328), so you're not just paying for a gimmick. The Galaxy Gear itself was rumoured to have a flexible screen, but launched in August with a conventional flat touchscreen.



LG's giant curved OLED TV offers wider viewing angles

Q FLEXIBLE SCREEN? AS IN BENDY?

A Yes. Curved screens, whether they're TV screens or touchscreens on phones, tablets, TVs or watches, are not solid – they're just attached to solid casings. The screens themselves are flexible 'organic light-emitting diode' displays (OLEDs), which can bend because they are made of plastic rather than glass.

Q SO WHEN CAN WE EXPECT THE GALAXY BENDY?

A Given the fierce competition in this area, it won't be long before you can buy a bendy phone. Samsung showed off its prototype YOUM bendy display last January (see it on YouTube at bit.ly/youm330), Nokia is working on its bendable, self-cleaning Morph devices in Cambridge (research.nokia.com/morph) and LG was reported to be mass-producing fully flexible E Ink screens as long ago as last October (bit.ly/bend330). Philips, Sharp, NEC and Sony are also developing rollable and foldable phones.

Q MY PHONE FOLDED IN 2006!

A Okay, but its screen didn't. "In the next 18 months or so, we could see Samsung launching foldable display devices," technology analyst Warren Lau told Bloomberg (bit.ly/fold330). "That is going to be a game changer."

Discuss the latest phones at forum.webuser.co.uk

THE FEEL OF SCREENS TO COME

Not all touchscreen researchers are focused on making displays more flexible. Some are more interested in developing the "touch" part of the touchscreen, so the displays of the future may be tactile as well as bendy.

Q TOUCHSCREENS ARE TACTILE BY DEFINITION, AREN'T THEY?

A No, they're flat, smooth and not particularly intelligent. When you tap and hold an icon on your phone, the whole phone vibrates – not just that icon. A new generation of 'haptic' touchscreens aims to make the experience more nuanced and textured.

Q HOW CAN YOU MAKE A TOUCHSCREEN TEXTURED?

A When you feel selective friction with your fingertips, your mind is tricked into thinking that you're feeling 3D textures. The consumer potential for this is vast.

Q WHO'S BEHIND THESE TOUCHY TOUCHSCREENS?

A Disney, for one. The cartoon conglomerate has developed technology that lets you "feel" pictures and video as you're watching them. The haptic display uses selective vibrations to create the illusion of texture, so it tricks your mind into thinking that you can feel moving objects when you touch the screen.



Disney's latest 3D screens have images you can "feel"

Q ARE THERE OTHER USES FOR THIS TECHNOLOGY?

A Medical science and gaming could benefit hugely from textured displays. Microsoft's researchers have developed a touchscreen with force sensors that "read" the resistance in your fingertip, so you can manipulate as well as feel textures on the screen. Apple was also said to be developing a tactile screen for use on the iPad 3, after patenting the idea, but when the tablet appeared on shelves in 2012, its screen was as flat and smooth as ever.

Q BENDY SCREENS, BUMPY SCREENS... WHAT NEXT?

A Touch-free touchscreens that you interact with in thin air (actually, make that touch-free screen-free touchscreens). Scientists at Bristol University have developed UltraHaptics: technology that uses air pressure much like a "textured" haptic touchscreen uses vibration. A pattern of different pressure points in the air lets you interact with your device and feels like texture. A similar technique uses lasers to create 3D displays in the air – but you probably wouldn't want to touch those.

Q WHAT'S THE POINT?

A Partly to give Tom Cruise something cool to do in *Mission Impossible*, but mainly to enhance the kind of mid-air gesture-based technology that you're already used to, such as Microsoft's Kinect sensor. Touch-free tech would be extremely useful for phones, especially for those of us with clumsy fingers, and Apple is rumoured to be working on mid-air gesture control for the iPad. Even if that rumour proves as unfounded as the textured iPad 3, mid-air keypads aren't far off: the technology exists, but the price needs to drop a lot further before its affordable to the public.

Q HOW FOLDABLE IS FOLDABLE?

A As foldable as a piece of paper, and a lot more resilient. Researchers have wowed the crowds at gadget shows with paper-thin prototype handsets that you can scrunch into a ball, roll up and even wear. Warren Lau predicts that you'll be able to buy a tablet that folds in half, or a 5.5in phone that unfolds to an 11in display, potentially creating a whole new market that does away with the distinction between phones and tablets.

Q WON'T THEY JUST SNAP?

A Besides the fact that plastic OLED displays are more durable than conventional LCDs, they're also reinforced by a protective film which makes them, to quote LG, "unbreakable". Flexible displays are far less likely to break than the phone you're currently carting about in your pocket. Nokia even claims that its Morph display is self-cleaning.

Q WHAT ABOUT NON-FLEXIBLE COMPONENTS SUCH AS BATTERIES?

A That has been the sticking point since the 1960s, when the concept of flexible electronics was first explored.



Nokia's protoype screen rolls up and even cleans itself

Flexible screens were conceivable, but flexible components were not, and without components, a screen is nothing more than a blank sheet. Technology had moved on by 2005, when Philips produced a rollable display prototype, but flexible components were still far too expensive to include in a mass-market product. That's why consumer items such as the Samsung Galaxy Round and the Kindle have flexible screens in solid casings.

Q THE KINDLE ISN'T CURVED! OR IS IT?

A It's not curved, because its casing isn't curved, but the display ('optical frontplane') in Amazon's first Kindle was flexible. The Kindle's casing had to be flat and solid to protect the transistors, but the screen inside the casing was flexible. That fact may come in handy in a pub quiz one day.

Get more tips in our newsletter at www.webuser.co.uk/newsletter

BUILD A BRILLIANT WEBSITE FASTER THAN EVER

COVER FEATURE

The days of dull websites hand-coded in HTML are long gone. **Wayne Williams** and **Barry Collins** explain how to use the latest web-design and hosting tools to create the ultimate cutting-edge site



Creating your own website has never been cheaper or easier, and you no longer need to have experience in design or coding to build a great-looking home on the web. And with innovative and sophisticated tools such as the new Google Web Designer being launched all the time, there's never a shortage of new ways to make your site even better.

In this feature, we reveal how to get your website ready for 2014, whether you're improving an existing one or creating pages from scratch. We'll introduce you to some of the very latest site-building services, uncover ways to improve your site that you might not have considered, and show you the best methods to make it look perfect on mobile devices – which can have a positive impact on your Google rankings.

We'll also explain how to make money from your online content and discuss the new domain suffixes that are about to become available. And on page 46, we provide expert advice on what to look for in a web host, so you can choose the best package for your needs.

NEW WEB-BUILDING SERVICES

Webeden V6

There are numerous benefits to designing a website using HTML5, including the fact that you don't need to use Flash for audio or video, and your site will display perfectly on mobile browsers. The latest version of the excellent easy-to-use Webeden site builder (www.webeden.co.uk) lets you create and publish your sites in HTML5, and you can even migrate existing sites created in the previous version of the tool (V5) to the new format. When you build a Dektop site, a mobile one is created at the same time so it works on any device. There are also new options for formatting text, as well as new menu widgets.



Google Web Designer

Google's new HTML5 design tool, Web Designer (www.google.com/webdesigner), lets you create your own rich interactive web ads and single-page sites that display perfectly on any type of screen, including PC monitors, tablets and mobiles. It's designed to help people with no coding ability produce



static or animated content, but you can switch between Design and Code views if you want to make some manual changes. See our Mini Workshop below to find out how to use Google Web Designer.

WordPress 3.7

The latest build of the popular blogging software introduces automatic background updates to make sure you're always using the very latest version. The password meter has been improved, to encourage use of stronger logins, and search results are now ordered by relevance, as well as date. You can download stable, beta and nightly builds from wordpress.org/download/beta. Ther are more improvements due in version 3.8, which is expected to launch in mid-November.



eUKhost Build a Website

Powered by the Web Presence Builder from Parallels (www.parallels.com), eUKhost's Build a Website creator (www.eukhost.com/build-a-website) is a great help if you're taking your first steps into web design. It offers more than 100 templates across 10 categories, and includes integrated modules for online shopping, commenting, blogs, social sharing, embedded video and more. You can get hosting, a web address and the builder from £3.49 a month.



MINI WORKSHOP | Get started with Google Web Designer



1 Download and install the GWD beta, then run the software and go to File, 1 'New file'. Select HTML 2 under 'Blank file' and enter a title 3 and file name. 4 You can change the location to save the files to 5 and pick an animation mode 6 (either Quick or Advanced). Click OK 7 and a blank document will open.



2 The interface is reminiscent of Adobe Photoshop, with the tools you need to design your site housed in a strip on the left. 1 These include a Pen tool, Text tool, Rectangle tool, Fill tool and more. The Tag tool can be used to add images and videos to your site. When you select a tool, the options for it appear in a strip across the top. 2



3 The sidebar on the right gives you access to the colour options, 1 properties for the current item, 2 components (different image galleries, iFrames, maps and touch areas), 3 Events 4 and CSS. 5 You can switch between Design and Code view, 6 preview the results in various browsers 7 and Publish your site. 8

Website Builder

Fasthosts' new Website Builder (www.fasthosts.co.uk) replaces the old SiteBuilder that came with the company's hosting packages. It's a quick and easy-to-use tool that includes over 200 fully customisable templates. To help your site 'go viral', you can integrate a range of social-media widgets including Twitter, Facebook, Google+ and Flickr. You can also add ecommerce and mobile-site builder features.



Jimdo Mobile

You don't need to be sitting in front of a computer to build a website. Jimdo Mobile (www.jimdo.com/mobile) is a free app for iPhone and iPad that lets you create and maintain a website while out and about. You can add text and images (pulling the latter directly from your iOS device's Camera Roll), modify or create pages, and monitor your statistics. The app isn't as fully featured as the main Jimdo website creator, but it provides the main functions (with more elements coming soon), and you can jump back and forth between the website and iOS tools as required.



NEW WAYS TO IMPROVE YOUR SITE

Make sure your site is running speedily

It's important that your website displays as quickly as possible on even the slowest connections. The Pingdom Website Speed Test (tools.pingdom.com/fpt) will measure the load time of a page, analyse it and identify any bottlenecks. To use it, you just have to enter the site URL and hit the Test Now button. It will perform the assessment and display your performance score out of 100, as well as listing the number of requests used to load the page, its load time, and average page size. It will also tell you how much faster your site is, on average, compared to other websites. The tabs at the top provide a more detailed breakdown of your site's performance. You can download the results in HAR (HTTP Archive) format for offline viewing.



Ensure your site uses good colour combinations

Just because your website looks perfect on your PC doesn't mean it will look as intended on every monitor, laptop and tablet screen out there. WCAG 2.0 (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines)



is an open standard developed by the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C), which covers various aspects of website accessibility, including colour-contrast minimums. You can see what rating your site would be given using the Contrast Ratio tool (leaverou.github.io/contrast-ratio).

Turn your website into a Facebook page

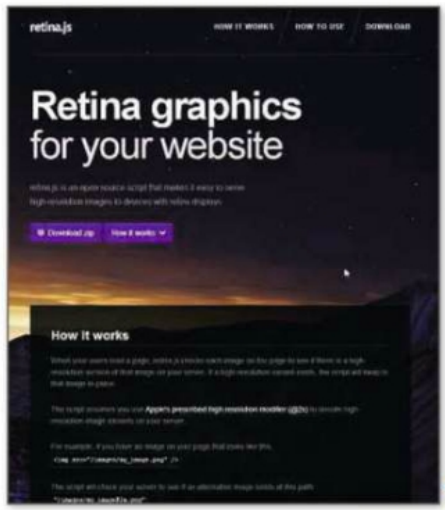
These days it's not enough to simply have a website. Ideally, you need a Facebook page to go with it. It can be a pain having to create and maintain a separate page, but 1&1's new Social Media Hub (website.1and1.co.uk/social-media-hub) does the hard work for you. The Hub takes the content from your 1&1 MyWebsite and uses it to create a Facebook page, complete with name, website imagery, contact info, logos and more. Any changes you make to your site are automatically mirrored on the Facebook page. It saves you a great deal of time and hassle, and the results look great.

The Social Media Hub can also send and manage simultaneous Facebook and Twitter updates. It's now included in 1&1's Plus and Premium packages.



Create a Retina-friendly site

The sharpness of Apple's Retina display means that pictures and videos look crisp and vibrant, as indeed do websites – provided they are properly optimised for Retina displays. All you need to do is upload higher-resolution versions of any images to your server and then use the retina.js (retinajs.com) script to serve those better quality pictures to Retina devices.



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MAKE YOUR SITE MOBILE-FRIENDLY

Build a mobile site from scratch

According to StatCounter, some 18 per cent of all global web searches are now performed on mobile devices, so it's important to have a version of your website that will display properly on smartphones and tablets.

Heart Internet's goMobi Mobile Website Builder (www.heartinternet.co.uk/mobile-website-builder) lets you create a mobile site with fast-loading pages and automatic device detection. You don't need to know anything about coding sites for mobile hardware because the service has a brilliant wizard to guide you through the creation process, and there's a choice of attractive templates on offer.

The goMobi Mobile Website Builder costs £3.99 a month, but there's an online demo you can play around with to make sure you're comfortable with the tool before you sign up.



Optimise your current site for mobile

Tidio Mobile (www.tidiomobile.com) transforms your existing site into a mobile version in seconds. Just enter your web address and it will load the content, and intelligently build a mobile site for you. You can edit the logo, menu and template afterwards. You'll need to register (using your email address, or Facebook or Google details) to save the results. Although the free service will be fine for most users, Tidio Mobile can create a professional mobile site for £249, and there are E-commerce Pro (£349) and Premium Pro (£549) plans available, too.

Whichever option you go for (even the free building tool), you'll need a monthly Tidio Mobile subscription. Prices start from £7 a month.



Ensure your mobile site is responsive

Responsive web design is all about crafting sites so that they deliver an optimal viewing experience on different screen sizes. You'll want to make sure your site works on as many devices as possible, and rather than trying to view the site manually on multiple screens, you can use a testing tool such as Dimensions (www.dimensionsapp.com). Just click the Start Testing button, enter the site URL and hit Test.



You can also test your site offline using the Dimensions Chrome app (bit.ly/dimensions330).

Test the performance of your site

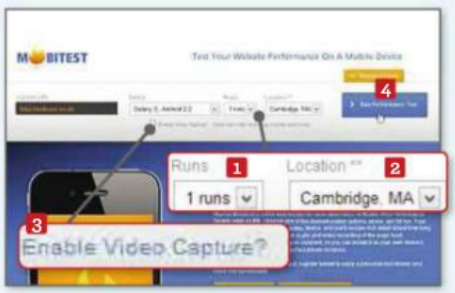
Your website might load wonderfully fast when accessed on a PC or tablet over a wired or wireless network, but what if someone wants to view it on a smartphone on a 3G (or worse still 2G) connection? Studies have shown that people will bail on a site that takes too long to load on a mobile, and if you do keep people waiting, there's a very good chance they won't come back. There are lots of tricks you can perform to ensure your site loads quickly on a smartphone (building a mobile-optimised site being the obvious one) but how can you tell exactly how long your creation will take to load? The answer is to use a service like Akamai Mobitest (mobitest.akamai.com) which records loading speeds on a variety of actual devices. Tests mostly take place in the US, so bear in the mind the site will likely load a bit quicker when accessed in the UK.

See our Mini Workshop below to find out how to use Akamai Mobitest.

MINI WORKSHOP | Test the speed of your site on mobile devices



1 To make sure you get the best performance on a smartphone or tablet, you ideally need to create an optimised mobile site. To test it (or to see how the regular version loads) enter your website URL in the box on the Akamai Mobitest site (mobitest.akamai.com) 1 and choose any of the real mobile devices. 2



2 Choose the number of runs 1 to perform. The places listed in the Location box 2 vary depending on the device you selected, but Cambridge, Massachusetts will be the main option. You can choose to capture the process on video. 3 Click the Run Performance Test button. 4



3 Because your site is loaded onto real mobile devices (rather than simulated ones), you'll be placed in a queue. Once the test is completed, the site will show you the results, including the average load time 1 and average page size. 2 The waterfall chart 3 shows how long each stage took, and you can view how the site displays. 4

NEW WAYS TO MONETISE YOUR SITE

Sell an unused web domain

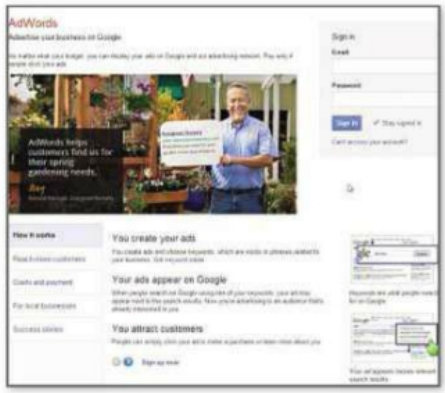
It's not unusual for people to buy a web domain on a whim – perhaps for a future project – and then never use it. Similarly, you might have a website you simply don't have the time to maintain any more. If you find yourself with domains you no longer have a use for, it's worth trying to sell them before they expire because you might get back your initial outlay, and could even turn a tidy profit. 123-reg's Sell My Domain (bit.ly/123reg330) makes it very easy to flog unwanted site names. Just sign up, add the domains and they'll be listed on Sedo, NameMedia and 123-reg.

123-reg is also a great place to buy new domains, and has a smart free Android and iOS app (bit.ly/123regapp330) you can use to register them on the move, whenever inspiration strikes.



Google AdWords Keyword Planner

The easiest way to make money from a website is to display adverts on it. But you're not going to get many ad impressions if you don't have enough people coming to visit. Similarly, if your site is for a business, you want to make sure you get a steady stream of visitors, and you can't always rely on search results for that.



Google's AdWords programme (adwords.google.com) lets you advertise your site on the search engine to attract as many casual visitors as possible. To get their attention, and ensure that your ads hit the right audience, you need to make sure you choose your search keywords carefully. Google's new Keyword Planner tool (adwords.google.com/ko/KeywordPlanner) can help with this, suggesting keyword and ad group ideas, and providing performance estimates. When people search for specific keywords, they should see your site displayed in their search results.

Ensure your site ranks highly in mobile searches

Although it's not very precise, SEO (Search Engine Optimisation) is an important way of getting your website to appear higher in search results than it might otherwise do, and you don't have to pay for the privilege. You probably already engage in a spot of SEO, but you might not be aware that if your site is not mobile-friendly or is misconfigured, Google will demote it in



mobile search rankings. This will make the site harder for someone to find when searching on a smartphone. To prevent this from happening, follow Google's guidance on its 'Common mistakes in smartphone sites' page (bit.ly/mobileseo330). This covers everything from videos not playing properly to slow-loading pages.

CLAIM A NEW DOMAIN

Registering a domain used to entail a simple choice between a '.com' and '.co.uk' version, or settling for '.net' if it was the only variant available. You could of course go for another country code top-level domain (ccTLD), such as Spain's '.es', if you wanted a clever Web 2.0 style name like www.magazin.es.

However, things are about to change significantly, because ICANN (Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers), the non-profit private organisation that oversees the public domain name system (DNS), is set to dramatically expand the number of available generic top-level domain names, or gTLDs as they're known, giving you a far greater choice.

Soon, you won't just be able to own bobsmith.co.uk, but could have bobsmith.london, bobsmith.art and bobsmith.wow – the list of possibilities is endless. There are more than 700 new domain extensions to choose from and you can register your interest now to be sure to get the ones you want.

All the main domain-registration and hosting companies are offering the new gTLDs, and you'll find dedicated sections for them at GoDaddy (bit.ly/godaddy330) and 1&1 (bit.ly/1and1domains330). Just enter the domain you want and fill in your details. You'll be contacted as soon as the domain becomes available, but you're under no obligation to purchase it if you've changed your mind or have chosen an alternative.



GoDaddy and 1&1 both let you browse the new domains by category to find the perfect one for your site.

CHOOSE THE BEST WEB HOST

Before you get to the fun part of building your own website, you need to choose a company to host it for you. With dozens of potential web hosts offering a variety of different hosting packages, it's easy to make an expensive mistake that locks you into an unsuitable deal. Here, we explain what to look for in a web host so you don't end up paying over the odds for tools and services that you're never likely to need.

Domain names

Many web hosts include a domain name (the address of your website) as part of the package when you open an account with them. Shop wisely, though. Domain names aren't expensive – £10 should secure you a .co.uk address for a couple of years – and companies such as GoDaddy (www.godaddy.com) run regular half-price discounts, so you don't want to be paying an extra monthly fee for a package, just because it comes with a domain thrown in.

Take your time when choosing your domain name. Although it's not very expensive to rectify the mistake if you change your mind later, your website's control panel and configuration will be based around the domain name you chose initially. Switching domains once you've got your website up and running is possible, but it's a hassle that's best avoided.



Bandwidth and storage space

Web-hosting packages increase in price – sometimes sharply – based on the amount of bandwidth and storage you require. One of the most common mistakes people make when choosing a hosting package is over-estimating how much of both they'll need. You're not running Google: the bandwidth requirements of a personal or small business site – that is, the amount of data visitors will suck down from your website – are modest.

"Most personal or small business sites typically do not need more than 1GB of bandwidth per month," says Richard Stevenson of web-hosting service 1&1 (www.1and1.co.uk). "However, if you plan to have a lot of multimedia files or downloads of data, you may need to make a real calculation of your bandwidth requirement per month. Your web host will help you to do this."



Likewise, don't think you'll need tons of storage space for your website. The installation files for a WordPress blog, for example, will only take a few megabytes. Keep image file sizes down and host videos on sites such as YouTube, then simply embed them into your website. In this way, you're unlikely to ever exceed even the smallest storage quota offered by your web host.

Start on the most modest package available, and most hosts will let you upgrade to a more expensive package, without penalty, should it become necessary. Likewise, most will send a warning email if you're nearing your bandwidth or storage limit, rather than issuing excess-data bills or, worse still, taking your site offline.

Keep your storage requirements low, and you can pick up a real bargain. For example, the cheapest package at friendly web-hosting service Planet Hippo (www.planethippo.com) gives you 1GB of web space for a mere £1.20 per month.

Linux or Windows?

Most web hosts offer the choice between Linux and Windows hosting packages. Don't be drawn like a moth to Windows just because it's what you're familiar with on your PC – the decision should be based on the type of site you're planning to build, not what's installed on your desktop. "It is important to remember that whichever of these you choose, it has no bearing on the operating system you use on your computer," says Alex Kellett, marketing executive with Heart Internet (www.heartinternet.co.uk).

In day-to-day use, you'll never see the underlying operating system anyway, and you don't need to be a Linux expert to build a website on it. "Linux hosting is more popular, with around 80% of all

WEB HOSTS ON TEST

When we reviewed web-hosting services earlier this year, GoDaddy scooped our Gold Award, scoring highly for features, ease of use and value for money. Here's what we said about it:

"For the price, Go Daddy's hosting packages have a higher specification than packages from rival companies included in this Group Test. You get a single domain, but both storage and bandwidth are unlimited, so your site can be as big and as busy as you like. GoDaddy's set-up and configuration tools are among the simplest we tested, using a straightforward step-by-step process that makes it as easy as installing software on your PC. It also has a generous range of features across all its hosting packages".

Our Silver Award went to 123-reg's Business package (www.123-reg.co.uk), which we praised for its unlimited storage, bandwidth, databases and email mailboxes. Third place went to 1&1, which "performed all the tricks we wanted it to, including a smooth installation of the latest version of WordPress".

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SUPPORT AND RELIABILITY

The safety net of having good technical support and reliability is critical in a web host. Even with one-click installations and friendly management consoles, there are plenty of potential problems that can trip up even experienced website builders. Having someone on the end of the phone line who can talk you through a fix is invaluable.

Before signing up with any web host, check its online support forums and Help pages. You can often get a good indication of how helpful and responsive a web host is by scanning these online support pages, and it's often preferable to solve a problem via online help than waiting for someone to pick up the phone on the support desk, especially if it's charged at national or premium rate.

For example, if you sign up for one of the hosting packages at Nativespace (www.nativespace.com), you'll get support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days of the year. You'll also get a free domain name, 50 email address, 20GB of bandwidth and much more. Nativespace responds to most technical queries within 30 minutes, and never longer than an hour, no matter what the time of day.

Our sister magazine, *PC Pro* (www.pcpro.co.uk), recently rated web-host support and reliability in its annual, reader-voted Excellence Awards. The table below shows the results for all the web hosts that earned enough votes to be statistically valid. More than 11,000 people took part in the voting, which makes it the largest independent technology survey in the UK.



Heart Internet said: "We're proud to say we have one of the best support teams in the web-hosting industry, as confirmed by the PC Pro Excellence awards 2013. No matter what time of day or night you raise a support query, our friendly team is on hand to resolve issues, answer questions, and ensure you get back to what's important – your website – as soon as possible. Best of all, our domain-name and web-hosting support is completely free. We also have an extensive web-hosting support database to ensure you have thousands of handy articles, tutorials and how-to guides at your fingertips."

WEB HOST	RELIABILITY	SUPPORT	OVERALL
Heart Internet	95%	94%	94%
Memset	90%	94%	92%
1&1	83%	75%	78%
123-reg	68%	70%	66%
Go Daddy	69%	71%	66%

websites running on it worldwide, and it has a huge range of software and scripts supporting it," says Kellett.

Linux is the option to go for if you're planning to build a website based on one of the more popular content-management systems, such as a WordPress blog, or a site built with Joomla or Drupal. Most web hosts, including Heart Internet, offer a control panel that provides one-click installations of these packages.



You should plump for Windows if you're planning to build a website involving Microsoft-specific technologies, the most common of which is a Microsoft SQL database that might handle orders and stock management for an online store. "Windows is useful for sites that incorporate searchable databases, because it delivers reduced development time and better integrated functionality," says 1&1's Stevenson.

Management console

Your web host will provide you with a management console (sometimes referred to as a control panel) that allows you to manage the various aspects of your hosting package, from backing up your website to managing your email inboxes.

Many web hosts, including Nativespace, use a console called cPanel, which provides what can initially appear to be a bewildering number of features and options. However, you only need concern yourself with a few of these.

One of the most useful is the option for one-click installations of popular content management systems (CMSes), such as WordPress, Drupal or Joomla. This normally involves merely selecting the chosen CMS from a long list, clicking Install, and letting the control panel get on with the installation in much the same way you install software on a PC. It's certainly much easier than attempting to install such packages manually, which can involve a lot of complex fiddling with installation files. Thereafter, you simply log into, say, your WordPress blog from its administration page (normally www



.yourdomainname.co.uk/wp-admin) and get on with building your site.

There are dozens of features in management consoles that we haven't got the space to go into here, but most will include meters that keep track of your bandwidth and storage allocation. It's worth keeping an eye on these during the early stages of building and promoting your site to check that you're not in danger of exceeding the limits of your hosting package. Some web hosts won't allow you to add new files if you exceed your storage limit, for example, while others may impose excess charges.

One of the most flexible and best-value services is 123-reg, which offers free '123-reg apps' (bit.ly/123regapps). You can use these to add features to your site, including an online store, galleries, blogs and much more.

Email addresses

Your domain name isn't only your website address – your hosting package will almost certainly include a set number of email inboxes, too. Like bandwidth and storage, the number and size of email inboxes available to you often depends on the cost of the hosting package. These can vary enormously: Heart Internet, for example, offers 1,000 400MB mailboxes on even its most basic Starter Pro package, which should be more than enough for anybody. Zen Internet's entry-level Bronze package, on the other hand, comes with only 10 mailboxes. At the top end of the price scale, you can even get unlimited email addresses from companies including Nativespace. Shop around to find the package that best suits your needs.

Your management console will normally allow you to manage your email mailboxes, allowing you to assign the names that you'll use before the '@' in your domain name, such as contact@yourdomainname.co.uk. If the idea of manually checking several different email accounts sounds like a hassle, you can normally set up forwarding to, say, a Gmail address and handle the messages from all your different email addresses in one inbox. Again, check the forwarding options offered by your web host before signing up for an account.



What you say...

We asked *Web User* readers about their favourite web-building tools and hosting services. Here's what you told us.

For hosting services, I like Review Signal's Compare Web Hosting page (bit.ly/webhosting330), which tracks the best ones and shows you why they are good.

Kevin Ohashi

My favourite is 1&1 (www.1and1.co.uk). I love them!

Bruce Lauderdale

Equiphase (www.equiphase.net) for hosting. You can't beat Notepad++ (notepad-plus-plus.org) for HTML, CSS, JavaScript and script editing.

Adam Law

WordPress.com for hosting. I have Notepad++ and Topstyle Lite (topstyle4.com) for scripting and CSS.

Chris Cole

Wordpress.org and Serif WebPlus X6 (www.serif.com). GoDaddy for hosting. I've been with them for years and never had any problems.

Tom Cunliffe

Weebly (www.weebly.com) for building, GoDaddy for hosting.

Paul Giddings

I use Heart Internet for hosting, and Notepad++ and FileZilla for editing.

Catherine Eadie

NEXT ISSUE ON SALE THURSDAY 14 NOVEMBER 2013

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Find info that Google HIDES FROM YOU

Google may be the most popular search engine, but there's some content it can't – or won't – find. **Robert Irvine** reveals how to beat Google at its own game

Use Bing to find stuff Google ignores

Although Bing has recently gained a little ground on Google, most of us still rely on the latter for our everyday web searches. Microsoft is hoping to change this with its new Bing It On campaign (www.bingiton.com), which provides a blind-test comparison of Google and Bing. Enter a search term to view the results side by side, then decide which set seems to be the best quality (or if it's a draw). After five rounds, you may be surprised by the victor and discover that Bing often finds stuff that Google doesn't.





Access content that's blocked in the UK

According to Google's Transparency Report (www.google.com/transparencyreport), since 2009 the UK government has made 286 requests for content to be removed from Google's websites and services. The reasons for these requests range from privacy and national security to defamation and government criticism, and span Web Search, Gmail, YouTube, Blogger and more (see bit.ly/govrequests330 for details).

However, just because a page is no longer available through Google doesn't mean it's gone for good, and there are ways you can access content that the search engine hides (besides knowing the exact URL). For example, you could try the recently released PirateBrowser (piratebrowser.com), which is designed to circumvent the censorship of sites "your government doesn't want you to know about", with particular reference to North Korea, Iran and – yes – the UK. The browser is built on Firefox and uses the Tor network to disguise where you are, so you can search for content that Google blocks in the UK.





Browse sites that aren't there anymore

You can use Google to view the 'cached' version of a web page (how it looked the last time it was indexed by the search engine), by hovering your mouse over its link in your search results, clicking the green arrow and choosing Cached. But if you want to see how a site looked one month, one year or even 10 years ago, especially if it no longer exists, you need The Wayback Machine (web.archive.org). This contains more than 250 billion archived pages dating back to 1996, effectively allowing you to travel back in time online. To use the Machine, simply enter a URL, click Take Me Back and choose a date from the calendar. This will show you how the page looked, although images, Flash content and other design elements may not appear. Here's how the *Web User* homepage looked in 2003 (see below).



There's also a Wayback Machine bookmarklet you can drag to your browser's Bookmarks bar. Click this when you're visiting a site to view its previous versions.

Find pictures that Google Images misses

If you can't find a good photo of something through Google Images, it's worth trying Picsearch (www.picsearch.com). This image-search engine claims to index more than three thousand million (3,000,000,000) pictures, with "a relevancy unrivalled on the web". You can filter your search results by size (including a handy Desktop-wallpaper





option), dominant colour, orientation and type (animation or face).

Other alternative search engines include Everystockphoto (www.everystockphoto.com), which searches more than 19 million images at sites including Flickr, Fotolia and Wikimedia Commons. Most of these are free to use, although they usually have specific licenses that dictate how you can do so (such as if you need to credit the photographer/copyright owner).



There's also Bing Images (www.bing.com/images), which used the 'infinite scroll' format long before Google Images, and offers useful features such as related topics and common variations on your search term.

Get answers to tricky questions

Although Google can perform conversions, calculations, translations and a few other tricks, it's a veritable dunce compared to Wolfram Alpha (www.wolframalpha.com). This 'computational-knowledge engine' answers all your scientific, linguistic and mathematical questions. Because most people's first query is: 'What should I ask?', Wolfram Alpha recently made things easier by introducing an



'Examples by Topic' area, which lets you play around with examples in categories such as People & History, Dates & Times and Places & Geography to discover all manner of fascinating facts and figures. There's even a Surprises section, which answers the perennial question: "How much wood could a woodchuck chuck if a woodchuck could chuck wood?".

You can also expand your knowledge by clicking the Random option below the search box on the homepage. When we tried, we learned the average life expectancy in Europe, the nominees for the Best Picture Oscar in 1987 and the width of Victoria Falls.

Find people online that Google can't

Trying to find someone through Google can mean wading through page after page of irrelevant results. Facebook is the other logical place to try, but not everyone uses the social network. You may have better luck with a people-search engine such as 123people (www.123people.co.uk), which runs a name search through multiple online services and databases, including 192.com, Flickr, Last.fm, Pinterest and even Findmypast. There's also a free 123people app for Android and iOS.

Another option is to try the similar people-search engine Pipl (www.pipl.com), which searches a variety of public records, social networks and other sources.



Scour scientific information using Scirus

If you want to know more about the latest developments in cancer research or the effects of global warming, skip Google and Wikipedia and visit Scirus (www.scirus.com). This science-specific search engine indexes more than 575 million items from scientific journals such as the BMJ (*British Medical Journal*), as well as news stories, educational resources and scientists' homepages. The advanced-search tool lets you look for articles dating back to 1900; filter the results by author, source and file format (HTML, PDF or Word); and email, save and export selected results for future reference. Scirus also omits non-scientific results. So, for example, if you search for REM, Google finds the rock group while Scirus comes up with information on sleep.

Sadly, Scirus is due to close early next year, so if you want to do some in-depth scientific research, make the most of it while you can.



Hide your own info from Google

If you like Google's search results but not its data-collection methods, why not switch to StartPage (www.startpage.com) instead? Described as "the world's most private search engine", it's powered by Google so you'll get the same quality of results, but it doesn't record your IP address, use tracking cookies or store what you search for.

Rather than solely rely on Google, you could try StartPage's parent site Ixquick (www.ixquick.com). This adopts a quality-over-quantity approach, producing a small set of results that ranks pages according to how many other search engines have them in their top 10. A site gets a star for each top 10 entry, up to a maximum of five. This helps prevent irrelevant results, because dodgy sites are unlikely to fool all the engines used by Ixquick. As with StartPage, no details are stored about your location or searches.



Find more search tools at forum.webuser.co.uk



Get the best of iOS 7 on ANDROID

There's no need to abandon your Android device if you're tempted by iOS 7. **Jane Hoskyn** reveals seven ways to steal the cleverest new iPhone tools for Android

Get the iOS 7 look

The flat icons and pastel colours in iOS 7 aren't to everyone's taste. When YouTube user Derek Colling installed the new iOS on his iPad, his young son Jack was heartbroken (bit.ly/ijack330).

But if you like the new look, which Apple describes as "eschewing the skeuomorphic panache of earlier iterations", or if you're just curious to know what that means, Espier Launcher iOS 7 (bit.ly/idroid330) will give your Android a full iOS 7 makeover for free.

The effect is disconcerting. It really does look like Apple has invaded your Android device. Your existing app icons are morphed into iOS 7 versions and you can store them in iOS-style folders. Everything still functions as before, including your widgets and shortcuts, so the app effectively merges iOS 7's looks with Android's brain.



Get the parallax effect



Some love it, some hate it, and others are made nauseous by it. The iOS 7 home screen adds a touch of the 3D experience to make its icons float when you move the phone around, and this so-called "parallax effect" has been making some users seasick on dry land. For more on the science of this phenomenon, see bit.ly/sick330.

If you feel you can handle a bit of motion sickness, iOS 7 Lockscreen Parallax HD (bit.ly/parallax330) brings the tilts, zooms and rolls of iOS 7's parallax effect to your Android, along with an iOS 7-style lock screen and Control Centre toolbar app. The iOS 7 Live Wallpaper 3D app (bit.ly/wallpaper330) isn't as slick, but it has some very pretty iOS 7 backgrounds with optional parallax animation.



Get a passcode lock screen

Once you've installed Espier's Launcher, there's a whole family of plug-in apps that you can use to mimic other iOS 7 features. For example, Espier Screen Locker iOS 7 (bit.ly/locker330) lets you lock your phone with an iOS 7-style slider and optional passcode PIN.

Once you've disabled your system lock and set up the Espier version (see our Mini Workshop, top-right), your lock screen will be indistinguishable from an iOS7 lock screen, except that it's not encased in an iPhone. You can then customise the name of your phone, change the 'Slide to unlock' text to something else and, for an in-app purchase, customise the sound that your phone makes when you lock, unlock or charge it.



Get the fingerprint lock (sort of)

Not even the cleverest setting-tweaks will let you recreate a biometric fingerprint scanner on your Android phone (although HTC has just announced a new Android handset with

MINI WORKSHOP | Set up an iOS 7 Passcode Lock on your Android device



1 Install and open Espier Launcher iOS 7 (bit.ly/idroid330). Tap OK on the validation pop-up. Your Android home screen relaunches with pastel wallpaper, 1 flat rounded app icons 2 and four sticky icons. 3 Your Android notifications bar remains at the top. 4 Tap OK to dismiss the licence pop-up.



2 Tap the Espier Hub icon, tap 'Plugins for Launcher' and tap 'More online plugins'. Free plug-ins display their file size; 1 paid-for plug-ins display their price. 2 Tap 'Show more', scroll to Espier Screen Locker iOS 7 3 and tap '1.21MB'. 4 Tap Install, tap Accept and open the app. Tap OK.



3 Tap System Screen Lock and tap None to disable your Android's system screen lock. Tap Back. Tap Passcode Lock; tap Turn Passcode On, and enter and re-enter a four-digit passcode. 1 Tap Require Passcode and tap a locking time. To open your screen next time, swipe to the right and tap in your code.



a fingerprint reader). But you can fool people into thinking that you have.

Fingerprint Lock Screen (bit.ly/finger330) and iOS 7 Fingerprint Lock (bit.ly/print330) are genuine screen-locking apps based around non-genuine fingerprint scanners. Fingerprint Lock Screen is the most iOS 7-like, in appearance at least, and we like that it says your name when you unlock the phone successfully.

Get the Control Centre

One of the most coveted features of iOS 7 is the Control Centre, which appears when you swipe up from the bottom of the screen to give you instant access to the controls you use most often: Wi-Fi, screen orientation, music player, torch, and more.



Easy Controller Control Center (bit.ly/control330) adds this widget to Android, along with the option to open it anywhere on your screen. The tool outshines its Apple original because you can choose from an even bigger range of controls to include, such as an auto sync switch, map app shortcut and screen timeout settings.

Espier has also created a Control Centre for Android (bit.ly/escontrol330). Like the Espier Screen Locker, it's a plug-in that only works if you've got the Launcher installed. As with iOS, you can also choose whether to make the Control Centre accessible from within other apps.

Get iOS-style notifications

Espier Notifications iOS 7 (bit.ly/not330) is another free plug-in for the Espier Launcher. This one lets you see all your app notifications in the style of iOS, including red notification badges (the dots you see on iOS app icons) or, if you've installed Espier Screen Locker iOS 7, banners overlaid on your lock screen. It's quite useful for merging multiple notifications from individual apps, but other than that it's just a slightly tidier way of getting your familiar Android notifications.



Get AirDrop, but better

Getting files on and off an iPhone or iPad has always been a pain, and Apple's awkward file transfer is well known even to iPod owners. So it's easy to see why the new AirDrop tool, which lets you share files wirelessly between your phone and your PC and with other users, seems revolutionary. But in truth, AirDrop is nothing to get too envious about. The superb free ES File Explorer (bit.ly/filex330) achieves the same thing on Android devices. And while AirDrop can transfer between devices, even when they're not on the same Wi-Fi network, that's hardly new if you're used to Dropbox (bit.ly/drop330). If you have a Samsung Galaxy S3 or later, the built-in S Beam tool sends files to devices near and far (bit.ly/sbeam330). And AirDrop only lets you send files to another user with AirDrop – for which you need an iCloud account and an iPhone 5 or above.

Android developers have more than matched AirDrop. AirDroid (bit.ly/air330) lets you take complete (and secure) control of your phone or tablet via your Desktop browser. You can send and receive text messages from your PC, locate and lock your phone or tablet when it's lost, wipe its data remotely and, of course, transfer files without a cable. It was voted App of the Year by Android Police (www.androidpolice.com), and its user reviews are the stuff of app developers' dreams (our favourite: "It's like WD-40 but in a software version").



How to make everything self-destruct



Now you see it, now you don't. **David Crookes** reveals 11 ways to make messages, photos and other private info self-destruct automatically

Send a time-limited message

If you've ever sent a text message after a few drinks or following a heated argument, you may have instantly regretted it and wished you could delete it from the recipient's phone, so it couldn't be used against you in the future.

Frankly Messenger (chatfrankly.com) is a free app for iOS and Android that does the next best thing by encrypting the messages you send. The blurred text only becomes readable when the recipient taps it, and even then they have to be quick, because the messages will delete after 10 seconds.



If you want to decide for yourself the length of time before the message vanishes, try Burnnote for iOS and Android (burnnote.com). This lets you set a timer that starts the moment a message is opened, and destroys it upon completion.

Make your photos fade away

Stop potentially embarrassing photos falling into the wrong hands by using Snapchat (snapchat.com). Images sent from this mobile app have a time limit of between one and 10 seconds, after which the photo self-destructs. The shorter the time frame, the less chance the recipient has to take a screenshot. The idea is that friends can send images



back and forth, complete with text and random scribbling, but without keeping a permanent record. It's fun and very addictive, although there is some scope for abuse (see sidebar, opposite).

Snapchat has also introduced a new feature called Snapchat Stories (bit.ly/snapchat330), which brings together images taken over the course of a day. These remain available for 24 hours.

Delete attachments automatically

The Silent Text app for Android and iOS (silentcircle.com) lets you send attachments of up to 100MB with your emails, which expire when you say so.



It has an automatic self-destruct option to erase attachments after a set period of time, which prevents confidential documents from being kept and distributed afterwards. However, it costs $9.95 (about £6.19) a month.

Create notes that disappear after reading

If an email is intended for one person's eyes only, then consider using Privnote



(https://privnote.com) or NoteDIP (notedip.com) to send your private missives. Privnote is an easy-to-use website that has a big yellow 'sticky note' for your text. Once you have finished writing, you simply tap the 'Create note' button to generate a URL, which can then be emailed or sent via a message. The link can only be used once – subsequent clicks tell you that the message has been destroyed. You can also find out when the message has been read by inputting your email address and a reference number. NoteDIP offers a similar service and also allows you to password-protect your private messages.

Write notes with a set time limit

While Privnote and NoteDIP messages self-destruct as soon as they've been read, Destructing Message (destructingmessage.com) lets you set a



strict time limit, ranging from 15 seconds to five minutes. You can post the message online or create an email and make the sender anonymous. The timer can start once the email has been opened and the link has been clicked, or it can begin from the moment the link is generated. If an email isn't opened, the message is automatically erased after 90 days.

Make audio messages inaudible

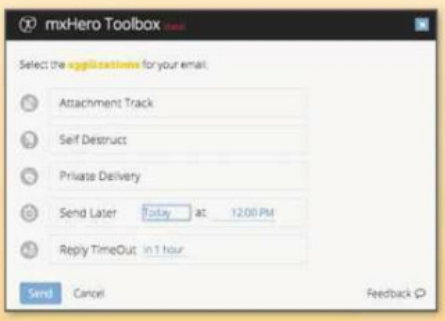
As well as letting you send texts, pictures and video messages, and



determine how long they're viewable for, the free Android and iPhone app Wickr (www.mywickr.com) also lets you record and share time-limited audio files. Tap the audio option, record a message and then set the timer before sending. The recording is also encrypted against eavesdropping.

Stop emails being saved and shared

The Chrome extension mxHero Email Toolbox (toolbox.mxhero.com) adds a Self-destruct feature to Gmail. When you compose an email and select this option, the message is turned into an image to prevent anyone from copying and pasting it. The recipient is then given just five minutes to read the message after they've opened it, before it self-destructs. The add-on also bans people from forwarding the message, so it's ideal for private communication.



Make passwords vanish after sharing

There are times when you need to tell someone a password for a service so they can access your account. To prevent the password from remaining on their computer or phone, use One



Time Secret (onetimesecret.com). Type in the password and generate a secret link which the recipient will only be able to use once. The site also gives privacy-conscious users the option of thinking up a difficult word or phrase which would be needed to unlock the original message.

Time limit your Facebook photos

Connect Secret.li (www.secret.li) to your Facebook account and not only can you encrypt photos and limit who will see them, but you can also set them to self-destruct after an hour, a day or a



month. The app can grab images already on your iPhone or iPad, and it promises not to store unencrypted versions of them on its servers. Your friends will need the Secret.li Facebook viewer to see your photos, which works on PCs, Macs and iOS and Android devices.

Make all Facebook content self-destruct



The Facebook Poke iPhone app (bit.ly/facebookiphone330) lets you limit the time that messages, videos and photos stay on the social-networking site. It works with newly shot images and videos, which you can set to disappear between one and 10 seconds later, selecting as many recipients as you like.

Make your Tweets #selfdestruct

The Twitter app Spirit (twitterspirit.com) lets you control the length of time a tweet will appear. It works using a series of timescale hashtags. For example, writing a tweet and finishing it with '#25m' means it will remain on Twitter for 25 minutes. Likewise, #10h and #3d would limit the tweet to 10 hours and three days, respectively. This is better than putting out a contentious tweet and forgetting to remove it, or having to use a service such as Retwact (go.rtrt.co) to tell retweeters you have made an amendment.



THE DARKER SIDE OF SELF-DESTRUCTION

For every good use of a self-destruction tool, there is invariably a bad one. A poll by Voucher Codes Pro (www.vouchercodespro.co.uk) found that 67 per cent of Snapchat users were sent images of 'inappropriate poses or gestures' when using the app, while 47 per cent had received nude pictures and 11 per cent had seen criminal acts taking place.

The fact that some of these self-destruct services can be used anonymously makes them easy to abuse, a problem made worse by the fact that the messages, images and videos are largely untraceable once they have been deleted.

Another problem is that the services don't always perform as well as they should. A forensics firm called Decipher Forensics (decipherforensics.com) found that deleted Snapchat photos continue to be stored on people's phones, and someone only needs to know the hidden location to extract them. Similarly, savvy recipients can pre-empt the speedy disappearance of an image or a message by quickly taking a screenshot.

For many people, however, these services are very useful, preventing embarrassing snaps and messages from resurfacing (most of the time) and stopping sensitive information such as passwords or credit card numbers from languishing in emails and texts for months and years.

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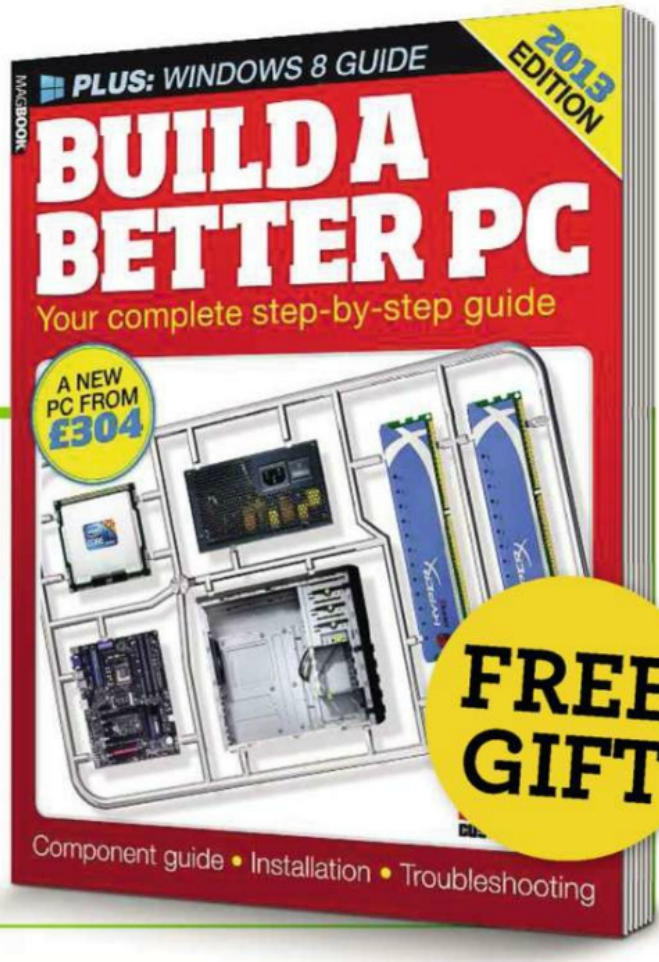
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Do things in Chrome that Google doesn't want you to



Tampermonkey: bit.ly/monkey330 | 10 mins | Chrome

We love Google's Chrome browser, but there's a lot that it won't let you do – especially things involving tweaks to Google websites such as YouTube and Gmail.

Tampermonkey is a Chrome extension that puts you back in control by letting you install and manage userscripts. Userscripts, also known as scripts, are small snippets of code that change the look or behaviour of a website. For example, you can get scripts that disable autoplay on YouTube videos, or that give you one-click access to original photos on Google Images. In short, if you can't find a Chrome extension that does it, you'll find a script that does.

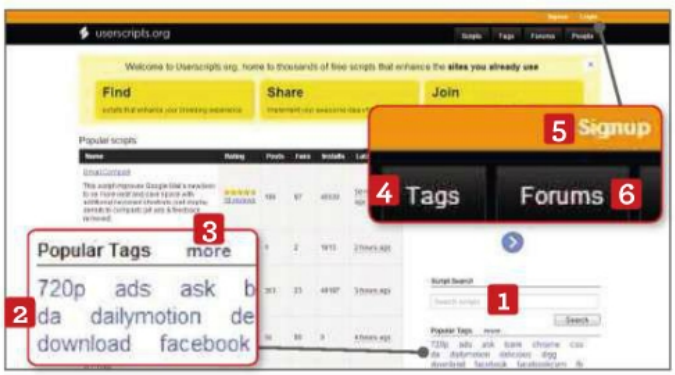
In this Workshop, we show you how to install scripts in Chrome by adding them to Tampermonkey first. It's extremely easy, and you don't need to know one end of a line of code from the other. However, if you're feeling confident, Tampermonkey also includes a scripts editor so that you can write your own.



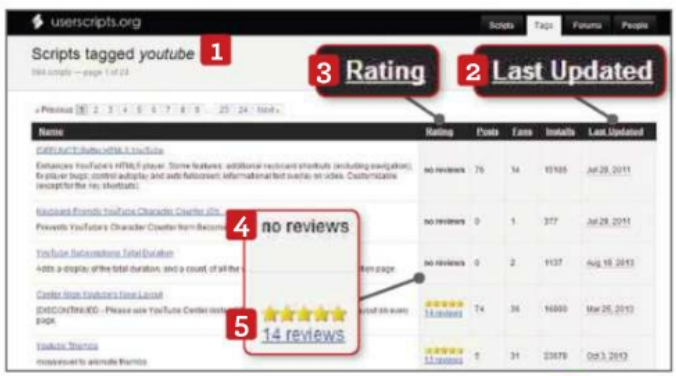
1 Go to bit.ly/monkey330, click Free and then Add 1 to install Tampermonkey and add its bookmarklet. 2 Click the bookmarklet to open Tampermonkey's menu of tools, including Help 3 and an Enabled/Disabled toggle 4 that you can click to temporarily switch off Tampermonkey.



2 Click 'Get new scripts' 1 to open Userscripts.org (userscripts.org), a constantly updated database of thousands of free userscripts. The default homepage includes a list of popular scripts, 2 along with their user ratings, 3 installation statistics 4 and details of recent updates. 5



3 To find scripts for specific tasks or websites, use the Script Search box 1 or click a word or phrase in the tag cloud. 2 Click 'more' 3 or click Tags 4 to see a page full of popular tags. You need to sign up 5 to use the Forums 6 or add scripts, but not to use scripts or browse the website.



4 Run a search or click a tag, such as 'youtube', 1 to see a list of matching scripts, with Last Updated 2 scripts at the top by default. Click Rating 3 to see the best-rated scripts at the top. Annoyingly, you may need to scroll past scripts with 'No rating' 4 before seeing those with five stars. 5

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EXPERT TIP

JANE HOSKYN says

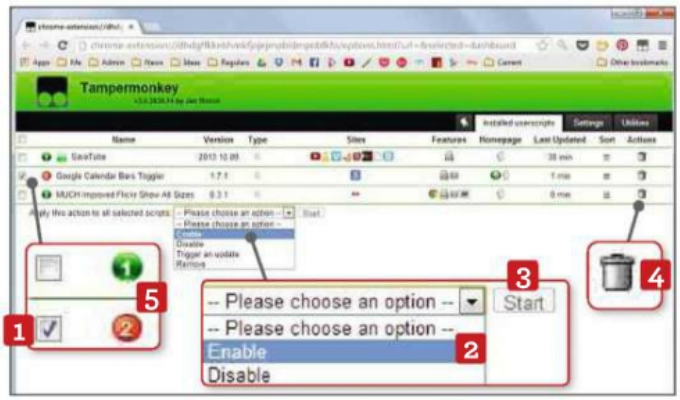
Userscripts are addictive. Once you get used to a script-hacked YouTube, you won't want the old version on your phone or tablet. Here's where Tampermonkey's free script-supporting Android browser (bit.ly/monkeydroid330) comes in. It's not as powerful as the Chrome version for your PC, because many scripts are not designed for mobile versions of websites, but it's well worth exploring.



5 Click a script's name to open its Userscript.org page with user reviews, 1 screenshots 2 and other information. From here, you can add the script directly to Firefox, but with Chrome you need to add it to Tampermonkey first by clicking the Install button 3 and clicking OK in the pop-up.



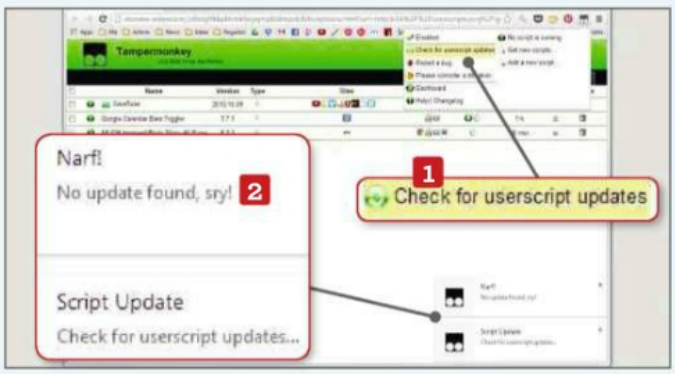
6 Click the Tampermonkey bookmarklet, click Dashboard and click 'Installed userscripts'. 1 Here you can manage any scripts installed using Tampermonkey. To rearrange the list, click and drag the icons in the Sort column. 2 The Sites column shows which websites work with each script. 3



7 To enable a script, click its tick box, 1 select Enable from the drop-down menu 2 and click Start. 3 Use the same process to disable it, but select Disable instead. To delete it, click its bin icon. 4 Toggling a script's enabled/disabled button 5 on and off won't actually enable or disable it.



8 An enabled script runs when you visit a website that supports it. For example, when we enabled SaveTube and opened YouTube, the SaveTube download tool 1 appeared below the video player. Running scripts are listed in the bookmarklet menu 2 and indicated by a red badge. 3



9 Userscripts are regularly updated to keep in line with website changes, as you can see from the Last Updated column on your Dashboard. To install updates, open the bookmarklet menu and click 'Check for userscript updates'. 1 See the Desktop pop-ups for details. 2



10 If there's a script you want that doesn't exist, you can write your own. To open the scripts editor, click 'Add a new script' 1 in the bookmarklet menu, or click the scripts icon 2 on your Dashboard. For advice and links, see the Writing 101 at userscripts.org/guides/22.

Plug privacy leaks you didn't know you had

Your Facebook posts and Google search data can be accessed by anyone, if you're not careful. AVG's free PrivacyFix software shows what you're sharing and lets you plug leaks from your PrivacyFix Start page. This Workshop uses the PrivacyFix add-on for Chrome, but it's also available for Firefox, Android (bit.ly/droidfix330) and iOS (bit.ly/ifix330).

AVG PrivacyFix: www.privacyfix.com | 10 mins | Chrome/Firefox/Android/iOS



1 Go to www.privacyfix.com, click 'Get AVG PrivacyFix for free' and click Add in the Chrome pop-up. When Chrome has finished installing the CRX (add-on) file, a PrivacyFix tutorial opens in a new tab. 1 Click the arrows 2 or dots 3 to scroll to the fourth page and click 'Connect with Facebook'. 4



2 Click OK 1 to allow PrivacyFix to access your Facebook privacy settings. In a disclaimer, AVG promises never to share this data. 2 Click OK again to enable CrowdControl, which helps you create Facebook friend lists with customised privacy permissions.



3 Your Start page opens automatically. On the pop-up overlay, click Enable PrivacyFix Alerts 1 so you get notified when a site changes its privacy policy. To disable Alerts, hover over PrivacyFix Alerts 2 and click Disable. 3 Click Fix 4 to send a data removal request to a specific websites.



4 The Facebook, 1 LinkedIn and Google sections list and assess your privacy settings. Green settings 2 don't need changing; grey settings 3 are unknown; and orange settings 4 should be changed. Hover over any text for more information 5 and click Fix 6 to make changes.



5 The Tracking section 1 reveals which websites track you with cookies. Hover over a website icon to find out more about that cookie, 2 and click Fix 3 to make changes. You can also block ad tracking 4 and widgets that collect your browsing data for use in advertising. 5



6 The column on the right 1 displays statistics about your privacy levels, including your estimated worth to Google and Facebook 2 (find out more at bit.ly/worth330). If your Start page doesn't update your statistics after you make changes, click 'Having trouble?' 3 for troubleshooting tips.

Get more practical advice at forum.webuser.co.uk

Make automatic back-ups with PeaZip

The latest version of PeaZip has integrated with Windows Task Scheduler, so you can create regular zipped archives of your most important files. This is a great way to make compact back-ups automatically, so you don't have to remember to do it.

- Watch out for unwanted add-ons during installation.

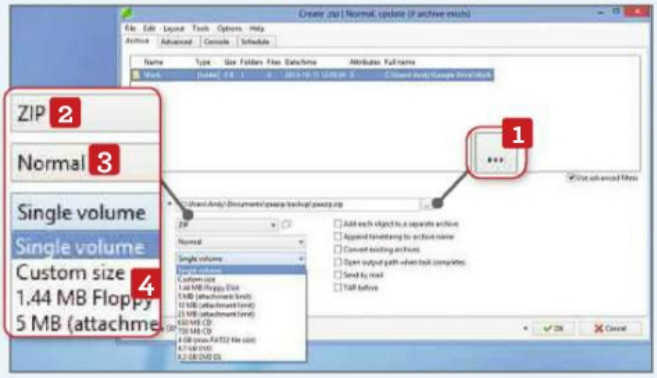
PeaZip: peazip.sourceforge.net | 5 mins | XP/Vista/7/8



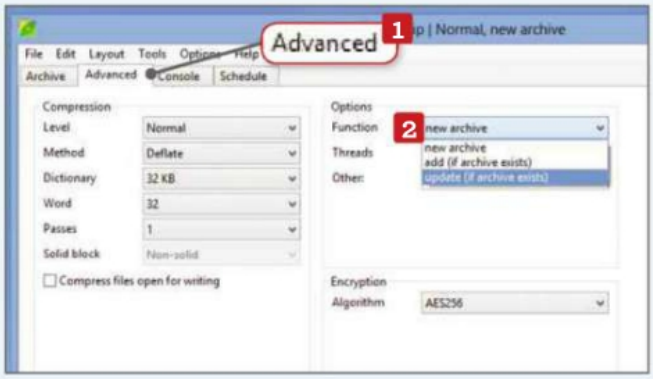
1 Open PeaZip and click the Add button. Right-click the main box 1 and choose 'Add folder'. 2 Locate the folder you want to back up and click OK. Repeat for all the folders and files you want to include in your zipped archive.



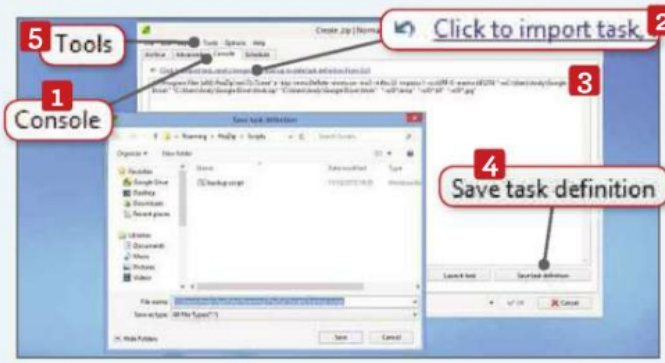
2 Tick the 'Use advanced filters' box 1 to add or removes specific files. To exclude a type of file, enter the filename wildcard and extension. Typing `*.jpg` 2 into the Exclusion box would exclude JPEG images, for example. Type each exclusion on a new line. Click OK. 3



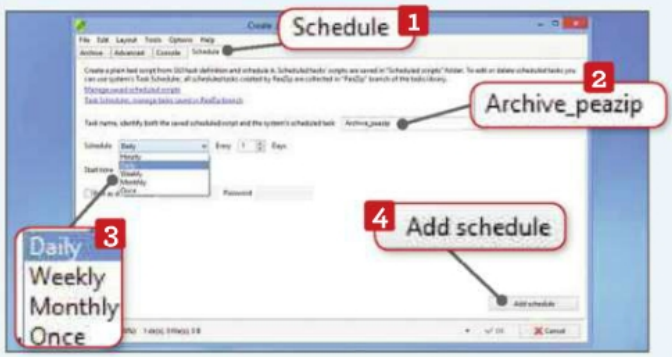
3 Click the '...' button 1 to choose where to save the archive and to give it a name. Choose the type of archive to save it as, 2 the balance between speed and compression, 3 and whether the file needs splitting to fit onto particular types of storage. 4



4 Click the Advanced tab. 1 Click the menu next to Function. 2 If you want to create a new archive each time, choose 'new archive'. Or you can choose 'add' or 'update', depending on whether you want old files in an existing back-up to be overwritten with new versions.



5 Click the Console tab, 1 then the 'Click to import task' link, 2 which puts the instructions you've set up in the box below. 3 Click 'Save task definition'. 4 You can then run this task any time by going to Tools, 5 choosing 'Saved scripts' and selecting the file you've just created.



6 Click Schedule, 1 name the task 2 and choose how often you want it to run. 3 The options in the boxes will change depending on the frequency chosen. Click 'Add schedule' 4 to add the task to Windows Task Scheduler, which will run the back-up automatically.

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

ANTI-VIRUS

Remove Web Connect pop-ups

In the last two days, I've seen the same voucher pop-up on Amazon, Play.com and The Book People, despite having a pop-up blocker installed. It appears at the top-right of the page and there's no way to delete it. I checked my add-ons and Program Files and found several files under the name Web Connect.

I did some digging and found a few articles warning about Web Connect. Malware Tips (malwaretips.com) describes it as "an adware infection designed specifically to make money" and classes it as a PUP (potentially unwanted program – see bit.ly/webconnect330).

If you've been seeing Web Connect pop-ups, run a malware scan to make sure that none of its files are left on your computer. Anvisoft has a useful step-by-step guide to removing it completely at bit.ly/connect330. Anvisoft prompts you to use its own product but your existing anti-malware software should do the job.

FratPark & Madeline, Web User Forums



Run a malware scan to delete Web Connect adware files from your PC

GENERAL PC

Windows-key tricks

I already knew that pressing the Windows key with the right or left cursor makes a window half-close to the right or left, so I thought the up and down cursors might split the screen horizontally. It didn't work, but I discovered that Windows+down minimises all open windows and Windows+up maximises the active window. Windows+Tab moves through your active windows.

To shut down Windows 7, press the Windows key, then the right cursor, then press Enter if 'Shut down' is selected in the menu. If Sleep appears rather than 'Shut down', you can press the right cursor a second time to shut down. This trick also works in Vista and Windows 7.

Bedstor, Mgmcc and Ezyduzzit, Web User Forums

TOP TIP

£25 winner

GENERAL PC

Delete temp files with Disk Cleanup

Disk Cleanup is great for clearing clutter such as temporary files from your hard drive. However it doesn't delete them all. If you press Windows+R and type `%temp%` after using Disk Cleanup, you'll see that it ignores files less than a week old, in case they're still in use. That's useful if you leave your computer switched on, but not if you turn it off every night.



Make Disk Cleanup more efficient by clearing out recent temporary files

To set Disk Cleanup to delete all temporary files older than a day or two, press Windows+R and type `regedit`. Go to HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Explorer\VolumeCaches\Temporary Files

Double-click LastAccess on the right and change it from 7 to 2 to delete all temporary files more than a day old.

Rob Tregoning, via email

WINDOWS 7

Quick links from Sticky Notes

The Windows 7 Start menu includes a useful little program called Sticky Notes, which gives you quick access to web pages in your default browser. Write yourself a note containing a URL and save it to your Desktop, then Ctrl+click the URL to open the link.

FratPark, Web User Forums

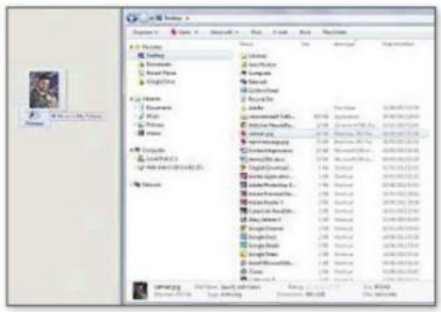


Ctrl+click a link in Sticky Notes to go straight to that web page

GENERAL PC

Launch libraries instantly

To create a Desktop shortcut to one of your Windows Libraries (such as Documents or Music), open Explorer and drag a Library to the Desktop. Right-click the icon that appears, select Rename and delete the word Shortcut, so that it just says Documents, Music, Pictures or Videos. You can now add files to that library just by dropping them onto the shortcut. To open the Library, double-click the shortcut.



To move files easily, create a Desktop Shortcut for a Library and drag files to it

Tom Blossom, via email

GENERAL PC

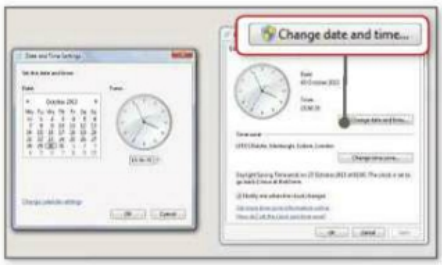
Check your computer's time settings

Your PC's time and date are supposed to sync online at certain intervals to stay accurate. Mine didn't update when the clocks went back at the end of October because my computer thought I was in a

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different time zone. To make sure that you're seeing the correct time and date, right-click the time display on your taskbar, click 'Adjust date/time' and choose the correct time zone. To adjust the date and time manually, click 'Change date and time'.

G Emery, via email



If your PC's clock is out of sync, check your time zone settings

SOFTWARE

Collapse Word headings

While I was writing my ebook in Word 2013, I discovered a feature which you may find useful when managing long documents. If you use headings to separate sections of text, you can use them to hide and un-hide different sections, so you can focus on the section you are working on.

To set this up, select a heading in the text. Go to Styles and select a style (such as Heading 1). Hover your mouse to the left of the heading in the document and you'll see a little triangle. Click it to shrink or expand the section of text under the heading. Heading 1 hides all text up to the next Heading 1; Heading 2 hides text to the next Heading 2, and so on. It's really useful. Unfortunately, it doesn't work in older versions of Word.

Gary Hitchcott, via email

BROWSERS

Select and search in Firefox

You can search the web for highlighted text in Firefox without downloading any plug-ins. Just select some text on a website, right-click and select 'Search Google (or your default search site) for (the selected text)'. You can change your default search engine in the drop-down menu on the Search bar. There's more information in a Mozilla Support article about choosing your favourite search engine at bit.ly/search330 and in a Mycroft Project article about search plug-ins at bit.ly/plugins330.

Madeline, Web User Forums



Right-click highlighted text in Firefox to search for it on the web

GENERAL PC

Mouse activation

To switch between windows on your Desktop, you usually have to click the one you want. However, there is a Control Panel setting that lets you activate a window by just hovering your mouse over it, which makes it easier to work with multiple windows. To enable this, go to the Control Panel and open 'Ease of Access Center' in Classic View. Click 'Make the mouse easier to use', then tick 'Activate a window by hovering over it with the mouse'.

John Birkett, via email

TV

Get US Netflix in the UK

The Media Hint extension for Firefox or Chrome (mediahint.com) lets you access the US Netflix library from outside the US, so you can watch shows that aren't available in the UK. I found out about it on Reddit (www.reddit.com) and was wary of downloading it at first, especially as Chrome wouldn't let me install the CRX file, but I've had no trouble using it in Firefox, though I disable it when I only need to access the UK Netflix library. The installation process is explained very clearly on the Media Hint website.

Gary Wood, via email



Install the Media Hint browser extension to watch US Netflix shows in the UK

BROWSERS

Grab and shorten image links with Goo.gl

I've started using Chrome's Goo.gl URL Shortener extension (bit.ly/googl330) to shorten URLs in the same way that *Web User* uses Bitly (bitly.com). The extension is more useful than I'd expected, because it also lets you shorten image links, and you can see who's been clicking the links you create.

To grab an image link, right-click the image and select 'Shorten this image with goo.gl'. Similarly, if you right-click a web link on a page, you can select 'Shorten this link with goo.gl'. To view a history of your shortened links, go to goo.gl while signed into your Google Account.

Bedstor, Web User Forums

BROWSERS

Favorites on your Desktop

The Links toolbar is a handy shortcut for Internet Explorer, although it's been around for so long it's easy to forget that it exists. In Windows 7, right-click the taskbar and select Toolbars, then Links. This adds the word Links to the right of the taskbar, along with a double arrow. Click the arrow to open a menu of your Favorites.

Sarah Rowe, via email



Get to your IE Favourites quickly from the Links menu on the taskbar

IOS

Make your iPhone readable

After my iPhone 4S updated to iOS 7, I couldn't read any words on my home screen! The new type is so faint that you can hardly see it, even if your eyesight is good. I keep most of my apps in folders, so I need to be able to see the folder names.



Enable Bold Text in iOS 7 if you find that the text is difficult to read

Luckily, I found a solution and it's quite simple. Go to Settings, General, Accessibility and enable Bold Text. You can also make the type larger and increase the contrast. My folder names are readable again, but unfortunately my text messages are now bold too!

S Hutton, via email

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.

Send your tips to webuser@dennis.co.uk - win £25 for the best tip!

Readers' helpdesk

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

SECURITY

Do I need an outbound firewall?

Q I've just read a Lifehacker article (bit.ly/hack330) that says outbound firewalls are "largely useless". It argues that we should focus on stopping incoming threats, not outgoing ones. What do you think?

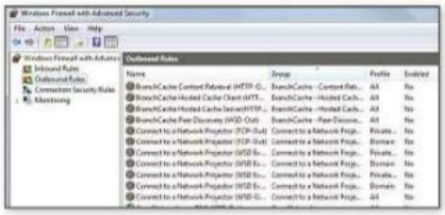
Vista, Web User Forums

A Outbound firewalls definitely aren't useless. They may not be able to stop malware getting onto your PC, but they limit what it can do once it's there. For example, your outbound firewall could stop an intruder emptying your bank account.

The trouble with articles like this is they assume everyone understands computer security when generally they don't. I recently found out that my neighbour had no idea that he should update his anti-virus regularly, or even at all. Another neighbour thought it was fine to open attachments in emails from people she's never heard of. They would read this article and think, "I don't need a firewall".

Of course firewalls (inbound and outbound) have their downsides, but you can stop them being too heavy-handed by excluding certain programs and processes in your settings. Go to 'Windows Firewall with Advanced Security' in the Control Panel and click Outbound Rules to set up your exclusions (see Microsoft's guide at bit.ly/rules330). There's also an interesting Stack Exchange discussion on the usefulness of outbound firewalls at bit.ly/firewall330.

Madeline and BobClayton, Web User Forums, and Sharon Dwyer, via email



Set up Outbound Rules for Windows Firewall to let some programs send data

GENERAL PC

Why is my PC so noisy?

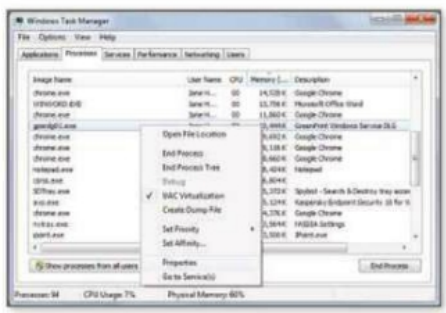
Q Whenever I open Firefox, my PC's fan makes a loud noise that goes on for ages but eventually winds down. Then it gets really noisy again if I go onto YouTube or some other streaming website. I also get lots of 'unresponsive plug-in' warnings, and everything freezes regularly. Firefox's memory usage in Task Manager is usually about 300,000.

Gazmix, Web User Forums

A It sounds like your processor is very overloaded. Open Task Manager (Ctrl+Shift+Esc) while you're online, click Processes and click the Memory column heading to sort the processes in order of the amount of memory being consumed, so you can see which ones are straining your computer.

Don't click End Process on any process you don't recognise. Instead, right-click it, select Set Priority and choose Low. The program will still run, but it will be less likely to overload your computer. You can find out more about a process by right-clicking it and selecting Properties. There's a great article at bit.ly/task330 on using Task Manager to fix runaway processes.

Uninstall any programs you don't use. Even if a program isn't running, its files fill



To investigate a process in Task Manager, right-click and select Properties

NETWORKING

Why does my laptop want to connect to a proxy server?

Q When I switch on my laptop, I get the message: 'Cannot connect to proxy server'. I've tried unticking the 'Use a proxy server' box in Internet Settings but it won't stay unticked. Why? I ran a malware scan but it made no difference. The only software I've installed recently is DoNotTrackMe (bit.ly/dnt330). Could that be causing it?

Cyberbabe27, Web User Forums



Stop your PC searching for a proxy server via the Control Panel

A A thread on DaniWeb (bit.ly/proxy330) outlines how to fix this by tweaking Internet Settings in the Control Panel. Click Start, type `proxy` and click 'Configure proxy server'. Under the Connections tab, click 'LAN settings'. Leave the 'Use a proxy server' box ticked and click Advanced. Delete everything in the text boxes, including Exceptions (this will include server names such as '*.local'). Click OK. In the Invalid Proxy Server dialogue that opens, click Yes. That should stop the proxy server switching itself back on.

Just in case it's malware or the result of Registry changes that's the cause, uninstall DoNotTrackMe to see if that's the culprit. I believe it's a legitimate program, but it may have installed a dodgy toolbar. Dave's Computer Tips has a good article on problem toolbars and how to get rid of them at bit.ly/tool330.

You could also try AdwCleaner (bit.ly/clean330) to get rid of unwanted programs and sweep your computer and browsers for bloatware. It's free to download and you'll find all the help you need at bit.ly/cleanhelp330.

Cantrel, Web User Forums

Share your knowledge at forum.webuser.co.uk

up your hard drive. A drive that's nearly full can't use virtual drive space, so it shows as excessive memory instead.

I'd also suggest posting a HijackThis log to the Forum (bit.ly/hijack330) and getting the volunteers to help trim down your computer's workload. Read the sticky threads at the top to find out how to create and post a HijackThis log.

Bedstor, Web User Forums

SOFTWARE

Which reviews should I trust?

Q I've been shopping around for new anti-virus software and I'm impressed by the reviews of Vipre (vipreantivirus.com). But this one (bit.ly/review330) ranks it tenth out of 10! Why are these reviews so different?

Rcrowell, Web User Forums

A There are a lot of factors that reviews can't take into account. Your needs and your computer are different from other people's, so the perfect software for you may not be suitable for someone else. For example, I tried Bitdefender after reading all the great reviews, but it slowed my PC to a crawl. It just wasn't a good match for my machine. You're best off trying a few alternatives, including Vipre, to find out what's best for you and your machine.

Sneakybeaky and Madeline, Web User Forums



Reviews are a useful guideline, but the real test is finding out what works for you

SOFTWARE

Why did my software stop working after I paid for it?

Q My password manager Dashlane (www.dashlane.com) stopped working when I upgraded to the Premium version. I've emailed Dashlane several times but haven't heard back. Has anyone else had this problem?

Um_please, Web User Forums

A I use the Premium version and it works fine for me. Try updating it to see if that makes a difference. You could even uninstall and re-install it – your account details will still work. If for some reason they don't, there's an article on re-setting your account at bit.ly/dash330.

Your security software may be blocking it, so go into your anti-virus settings and add Dashlane to the list of trusted applications.

Jack Gold, Web User Forums



List a program in the trusted applications to stop your anti-virus blocking it

SOFTWARE

What does this Flash error mean?

Q Whenever I open my browser, I get an Adobe error message telling me that "an ActionScript error has occurred (Error 2044)". What is this? Is there a simple way to get rid of it? I'm not up to fiddling with the Registry.

Mikesang, Web User Forums

A Someone on the Microsoft Community website had the same problem (see bit.ly/error330). Microsoft support replied with a couple of links to fixes (bit.ly/scriptfix330 and bit.ly/runfix330). You could also try switching off script debugging and notifications (see bit.ly/debug330).

If you're using Internet Explorer, you may need to upgrade your version of Flash following some recent security updates. There's more info in Web User Forum threads at bit.ly/upflash330 and bit.ly/ieflash330. Find out if you've got the right version of Flash at bit.ly/flash330 and, if not, download it free from get.adobe.com/flashplayer. In IE, you should enable the Flash Player plug-in and disable ActiveX Filtering (IE 9).

If that doesn't get rid of the error message, remove Flash and its installation files with the Adobe Flash Player uninstaller (bit.ly/unflash330), then re-install it. Make sure to untick any extras you're offered. Adobe has an excellent installation guide (bit.ly/helpflash330) and advice on using Flash Settings Manager (bit.ly/flashsettings330).

Madeline, Web User Forums, and Lynn Adlington, via email



Adobe's website tells you which version of Flash is installed on your computer

SOFTWARE

How do I get Office back?

Q I sent my PC to the local repair shop, but as well as removing a virus it had picked up, they also removed Office 2010. I don't have the product key to reinstall it and I can't find anything on Microsoft's website. What should I do?

Jonthy, Web User Forums

A Take the computer back to the shop and tell them to put it right! Cleaning a virus should not involve deleting paid-for software. If the shop can't fix it, they should buy you a new version of Office and install it for you.

Greysts, Web User Forums

BROWSERS

Why does my Chrome icon change?

Q When I click the Chrome icon on my taskbar to open the browser, the icon turns into a little square with dots. What's going on?

Count zero, Web User Forums

A Not sure, but you can try fixing it by unpinning the icon and re-pinning it from the Start menu. Right-click the icon, select 'Unpin this program from taskbar', find Chrome in your Start menu and – assuming it's got the right icon – right-click it and select 'Pin to Taskbar'. Alternatively, change Chrome's icon manually to see if that re-sets it. Right-click Chrome in the Start menu, select Properties and click Change Icon.



You can change a program's icon in Properties

Moonshine, Web User Forums

Ask the Experts

Web User answers all your technical questions.
Email us for help at webuser@dennis.co.uk

BROWSERS

Missing Chrome backgrounds

Q Can you offer any advice on a niggling problem I'm having with Chrome? I used to have custom background pictures but for some unknown reason I can't get them now. If I click to change the background image, I get the following message: 'Failed to open Database. Corruption: 2 missing files; such as ../001553, sst.' I haven't a clue what this means.

Roy Thompson, via email

A Chrome is updated several times a year and features come and go. You may be trying to use one that is no longer available. One solution is to install a theme. Click the menu button, then Settings. Click 'Get themes' under Appearance to see collections of themes by Google and other artists.



There are lots of Chrome themes to choose from in the Google store

A theme takes over the whole browser and changes the window background and tabs. You can't choose your own background. If you'd prefer to choose your own, try Custom Google Background extension (bit.ly/bground330), which lets you replace the white background on the Google homepage with your own wallpaper image.

HARDWARE

Memory not working

Q I have been using two 512MB memory modules, but recently upgraded by installing two 1GB modules. As soon as Windows opened, the blue screen appeared with the error code beginning with 0X000000A. This kept occurring but with differing codes, such as 0x0000008e, 0x000000c5, 0x0000007e. I reduced the memory to 1.5GB and although the blue screen kept occurring, there was at least 30 minutes before it appeared. With 1GB of memory the computer is stable. Is there a simple answer to this problem?

I have had conflicting advice to update the BIOS and also not to touch it, so I'd rather not go there unless I have to. The computer is home-built using a Gigabyte GA-7N400 Pro2 Series 2 motherboard, 500GB hard drive, Radeon 9600 graphics and 500W power supply.

Bill Hewit, via email

A The maximum memory that your motherboard can accept is 3GB, so in theory you should be able to use all four modules, but this is obviously not working. When installing memory in a computer, it's best to use pairs of identical modules. Your motherboard accepts DDR PC2700 and DDR PC3200 modules in 512MB and 1GB sizes, but it may be that mixing them causes problems. Take out the old memory and try your PC with only the two new 1GB modules. Put them in slots one and two, but if that doesn't work, try slots one and three. To check that you have the correct memory for the motherboard, take a look at bit.ly/crucial330 for examples of the type you need.

GENERAL PC

Reformatting a laptop

Q Having read in Issue 327 (bit.ly/webuser327) how to format a drive, I thought I would give it a go, but what should I save? Do I drag and drop it to my USB drive from my Acer laptop?

Jim Curtis, via email

A You're referring to a question from a reader who wanted to reformat the drive and reinstall Windows to solve various problems. You will need a Windows DVD and a back-up of the PC's hard drive before you start. If you have a USB drive, you could drag and drop the Documents, Videos, Pictures and Music libraries to it. A library consists of your personal folder, such as C:\Users\YourName\My Pictures, and the public folder, such as C:\Users\Public\Public Pictures. A better solution is to use a back-up program such as Macrium Reflect (bit.ly/macrium330) to copy the whole drive to an external one.

After making a back-up, the PC can be started with the Windows DVD in the drive. There is an option early on to erase the current drive contents and start with an empty drive. This is best for a clean install. Bear in mind that you will lose all your software, printer drivers, and so on, and everything will need to be reinstalled afterwards. Make sure you can do this before you format the drive. After reinstalling Windows, you can copy your files, such as photos, videos and documents, back from the USB drive, then reinstall the printer driver and any other essential software.

It's a big job and is only recommended for experts. Try the clean-up suggestions in the answer to Tref Williams' problem (below) first.



Back up your PC to a USB drive using the free version of Macrium Reflect

INTERNET

Plagued by pop-ups and surveys

Q I have Windows 8 on my PC and my wife has Windows 7 on her laptop. We are getting increasingly bothered by sites diverting us to fill out surveys. Other annoyances are the pop-ups saying the PC is slow, the Registry needs sorting and so on. I have tried a pop-up stopper but with no joy. I tried Adblock, which has some success, but it doesn't stop everything. Is Rapport causing the problem?

Tref Williams, via email

A Rapport is a security program often provided by banks, and it

Find more solutions to PC and web problems at forum.webuser.co.uk

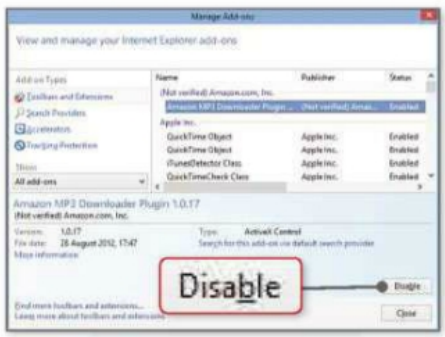
doesn't cause the problems you describe. The culprit is software on your computer, but the possible causes are too numerous to give any specific advice, so we can only talk in general terms and point you in the right direction.

Free software sometimes includes unwanted extras, such as extensions, add-ons and toolbars. These are sometimes installed into Internet Explorer, so cleaning up Windows and IE should help.

Go to the Control Panel and open 'Programs and Features'. Look for programs you don't need, such as toolbars for IE, and anything you don't recognise or use. This helps to reduce pop-ups and adverts.

In IE, click the gear icon and select Manage Add-ons. Select All Add-ons on the left. On the right, you'll see everything that loads with Internet Explorer. Anything you don't need can be selected. A Disable or Remove button appears that will stop it running. The hard part is deciding what you do and don't need. Anything from Microsoft is OK, but everything else can usually be disabled.

Press Windows+R, type `msconfig` then press Enter. Select the Startup tab and clear the tick against anything you don't need (click Disable in Windows 8). Finally, try switching to Chrome (bit.ly/chrome330) for web browsing because it tends to have fewer problems.



Disable unnecessary add-ons in Internet Explorer and remove toolbars

WINDOWS 8

Update goes blank

Q I have a Toshiba laptop which I upgraded from Windows 7 to 8. When Windows downloads automatic updates, the Windows icon and the round timer appear, followed by a blank screen showing only the backlight. To try to solve this problem, I have left it for several hours and pressed F8, F2 and F12 at various times to try to reboot. The only way I can restart is to reset, delete everything and start again, which I have had to do a number of times. Restoring to another point in time also fails.

Archibald Brown, via email

A There are clearly problems with Windows and you need to check the hard drive, repair damaged files and fix Windows Update.

Start by opening Explorer, select Computer on the left, then right-click the hard drive and select Properties. Click Check on the Tools tab and ignore any messages that say you don't need to scan the drive (because you do!). Click 'Scan drive'. Afterwards, go to the Start screen and type 'command'. Right-click Command Prompt and click 'Run as administrator' at the bottom, even if you are already logged on as an administrator. At the command prompt, type `sfc /scannnow` and Windows will check that all the files are present and correct, repairing any that aren't. Finally, go to bit.ly/fixit330, expand Method 2 in the Resolution section and click the 'Fix it' button.

Windows 8 has a very useful refresh feature that puts back Windows 8 to how it was when it was installed, but without losing your files. It is always best to copy your documents, photos, music and videos to a USB drive as a back-up before you start, though. Move the mouse to the top-right corner to show the Charms bar, then click Settings, 'Change PC settings'. Select the General category on the left and click 'Get started' under 'Refresh your PC without affecting your files'. Then just follow the instructions.

OFFICE

Reading Word and Excel files without Office

Q I recently bought a new computer with a trial version of Microsoft Office and used it to create documents in Word and Excel. When the trial expired, I uninstalled it, but I forgot about my documents. How can I access them? If I install another trial version of Office, will it let me load and edit my documents?

Matthew Wilkins, via email

A Trial versions of software can only be installed and used once. When the trial expires, you can't re-install it and get a new trial. The one exception is if you use different versions. So if you had a trial of Office 2010 and it expired, you could install and use a trial of 2013.

An alternative is to use LibreOffice (www.libreoffice.org), which is free. It loads Microsoft Office files, and straightforward Word documents and Excel spreadsheets should open perfectly.

GENERAL PC

Switch to Lubuntu

Q My enquiry relates to my old PC, which I was hoping to revive as you suggest in *Web User* 325 (bit.ly/webuser325), by loading Lubuntu.

When I switch on the computer, it seems to step through the boot-up sequence, load Windows XP, then proceed to check the files on the hard drive. I can cancel this by touching any key within five seconds. But whether the file check runs or not, the screen goes blank and 'Don't switch off' appears. As soon as this icon disappears, the start sequence begins again automatically. This repeats until I switch off the PC.

Derek Wellings, via email

A Windows does not need to be working to install Lubuntu Linux. Download it from lubuntu.net and burn it to a CD using another computer, or get a friend to do it. Now put the disc in your old PC and boot from that to install it.

If you need to get XP working first,



Lubuntu is a lightweight Linux OS designed to run on older PCs

press F8 a couple of times just before Windows begins to load. If you time it right, a menu of options appears. Select Safe Mode or 'Safe Mode with networking' and Windows should start. If you can get to the Desktop, you can set about fixing the start-up problem. Press Windows+R, type `msconfig` then press Enter. Clear all the ticks on the Startup tab, then click the Services tab, tick 'Hide all Microsoft services', and clear the ticks on anything remaining. That usually solves start-up problems.

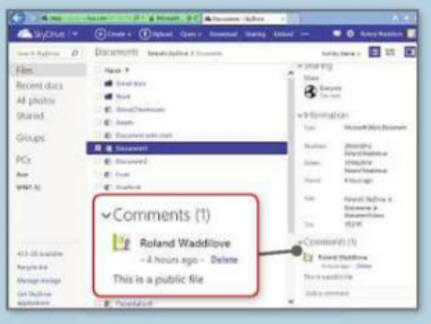
Web User's top tips

Our experts delve deep to unearth **new tips and tricks for SkyDrive**



TOP TIPS FOR SKYDRIVE

Comment on files



Most online storage services let you share files, but SkyDrive also lets you (and anyone else with a Microsoft account) add comments. This can be handy when you're sharing files, because any attached notes can be passed around with the file, and won't get lost or separated.

Click your name in the top-right corner and select 'Edit profile'. Click 'Messenger profile', then the Edit link below 'contact info', and click the link next to 'Shared with'. Drag the Comments slider all the way to the right. This means that anyone with a Microsoft account can add comments to your files.

Click Save, return to SkyDrive and right-click a file you want to share. Select Sharing, choose 'Get a link' and choose an option, such as 'Make public'. You now have a shared file that anyone can comment on.

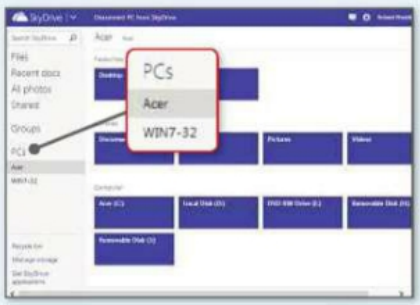
Right-click the file in SkyDrive and select Properties. A panel will open on the right with a comments section at the bottom where you, and anyone else, can enter comments.

Access forgotten files

Have you ever forgotten an important file and wished you could remotely grab it off your PC? SkyDrive lets you access files on your PC from any browser, as long as the PC is switched on. You also need to set up the service beforehand.

First, install the SkyDrive software (bit.ly/sdapp330) on the PC you want to be able to access. Right-click the SkyDrive icon in the system tray and select Settings. Enable 'Let me use SkyDrive to fetch any of my files on this PC'.

Now, when you're away from your computer, you can log into the SkyDrive website and click the PCs section on the left. Your accessible PC will be listed and you can retrieve the files you need from it.



Sort email attachments

Just because you use SkyDrive doesn't mean you have to be tied to Microsoft's Internet Explorer browser and Outlook .com email. If you prefer Google Chrome and Gmail, you can make them work just as efficiently with SkyDrive using the Attachments.me extension.

Go to bit.ly/attach330 and install it. Give it access to your Gmail account and it will provide a list of services you can connect to. Click Connect under SkyDrive. Sign into SkyDrive and give the extension permission to access your storage.

You now get the option to create rules that determine what happens to your Gmail attachments. For example, you can tick an option to save all photos to Skydrive, and another to save all documents. If you connect Attachments.me to more than one service, such as SkyDrive and Google Drive, click the pencil next to the location to choose the service and select a folder, such as SkyDrive\Pictures.

When you open an email in Gmail that has an attachment matching the rules, it will automatically upload to the folder you specified on SkyDrive. Other attachments can be uploaded by clicking the 'Send to Your Cloud' button.



Access previous versions

SkyDrive stores previous versions of Office documents such as Word and Excel files. This means that if you make changes to a document, you can go back to an earlier version, even if you've saved over it. Go to SkyDrive in your browser and double-click the Office file to open it in its associated web app. Click File, Previous Versions. Files are listed by date on the left. Click one to view it. You can then Restore or Download it.

Sync selected folders

The SkyDrive app keeps a folder on your PC that's identical to your SkyDrive storage, but you don't have to sync everything if you don't want to. If you have work and home PCs, you could have Work and Home folders on SkyDrive and sync the Work one with your work PC, and Home with your home PC. And you can still access all folders on SkyDrive via a browser.

To set this up, right-click the SkyDrive app in your system tray and select Settings, then 'Choose folders'. You can tick only the folders you want to keep a copy of on that computer. Each computer you use can have different sync settings and your work and home PCs can be set differently. Any file or folder not selected for syncing is deleted from the computer, so you won't waste space on files that aren't relevant. And nothing is deleted from your online SkyDrive storage.

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2	plusnet	Plusnet: Broadband & Calls	£9.99 (£2.99 for 12 months)	18 months	16Mb max speed	∞	£35.88
3	Primus saver	Primus: Broadband & Calls	£4.00 (HALF PRICE for 6 months)	18 months	15Mb max speed	∞ **	£36.00
4	sky	Sky: Broadband & Calls	£10.00 (HALF PRICE for 12 months)	12 months	16Mb max speed	∞	£60.00
5	EE	EE: Broadband & Calls	£10.00 (HALF PRICE for 12 months)	12 months	16Mb max speed	∞ **	£60.00 ***
6	Virgin media	Virgin: Broadband & Calls	£14.50 (HALF PRICE for 6 months)	18 months	30Mb max speed	∞ **	£130.50
7	TalkTalk	TalkTalk: TV, Broadband & Calls	£15.50 (£10 for 6 months)	18 months	16Mb max speed	∞	£153.00
8	Primus saver	Primus: Fibre Broadband & Calls	£16.00 (HALF PRICE for 3 months)	18 months	38Mb max speed	∞ **	£168.00
9	plusnet	Plusnet: Fibre Broadband & Calls	£19.99 (£12.99 for 9 months)	18 months	76Mb max speed	∞	FASTEST £176.88
10	sky	Sky: Fibre Broadband & Calls	£20.00 (HALF PRICE for 6 months)	12 months	38Mb max speed	∞	£180.00

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**Fair-usage or restriction policy applies.

***EE broadband - just £2.50 for 6 months (£5 thereafter) for existing EE/Orange/T-Mobile customers.

Data supplied by www.broadbandgenie.co.uk. Correct as of 23 October 2013

Ofcom

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Weekend project

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



How to...

Small upgrades that make a big difference

Upgrading your hardware is still the most efficient way to speed up your PC, and it doesn't have to be complicated. **Wayne Williams** shows you how

If your PC is starting to feel a little slow, there are lots of housekeeping tasks you can carry out to reclaim some speed, such as uninstalling programs, clearing clutter, defragging and optimising your hard drive, and so on. But this kind of basic maintenance can only give your computer a slight boost. To really to make a difference, you need to consider a hardware upgrade.

Don't worry, we're not talking about extreme actions such as installing a new motherboard or swapping the processor for a faster one. There are several simple, affordable upgrades you can perform that won't cost you a fortune but will breathe new life into your aging PC.



Take precautions

When handling components inside a PC, you need to beware of static electricity, because this can damage fragile electronics. Turn your computer off at the mains but leave it plugged in, then briefly touch an unpainted metal part of the computer case or another earthed object (such as a radiator) to discharge built-up static. You can also buy an anti-static wrist strap to ensure complete safety.

Add more physical memory

Boosting the amount of memory in your PC is one of the easiest upgrades you can perform and it can significantly boost the speed of a slow PC. You can't just go out and buy memory, though – you need to know the type required by your motherboard. There are lots of different types available, including SDR, DDR, DDR2 and DDR3. Laptop memory is also very different from the memory you put in a desktop PC.

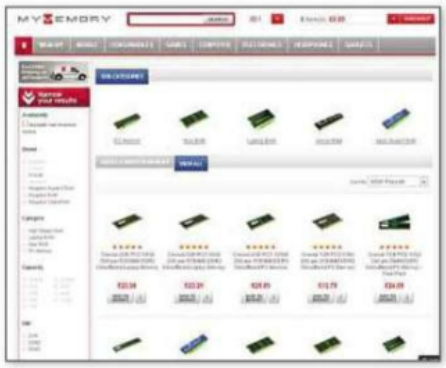
If you're not sure what type you need, use the Crucial System Scanner (bit.ly/crucialscan330) to find out. Just download and run it, and it will tell you



Crucial's System Scanner tells you what memory your motherboard will accept

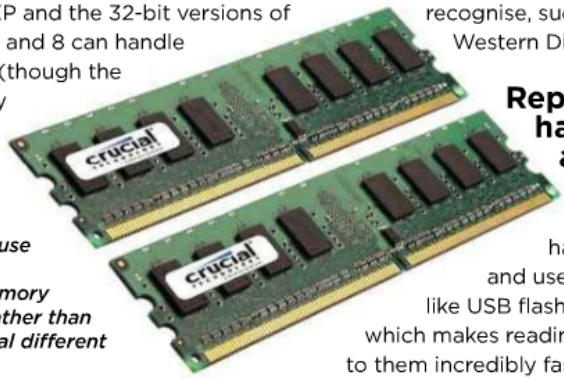
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the type of memory you have and need. It will recommend memory to buy from Crucial, but you're under no obligation to purchase from there, so shop around. MyMemory (www.mymemory.co.uk) stocks RAM from both Crucial and Kingston.



Memory comes in all shapes and sizes, so be sure to get the correct type for your PC

The amount of memory you can add depends on two things: the number of free slots on your motherboard (you can always replace existing RAM modules with larger capacity ones), and the version of Windows you're running. Windows XP and the 32-bit versions of Windows 7 and 8 can handle up to 4GB (though the OS will only use around 3.5GB).



It's best to use matched pairs of memory modules, rather than using several different types

The 64-bit Home Premium edition of Windows 7 can use 16GB, while the Professional and Ultimate editions can access up to 192GB. The 64-bit version of Windows 8 supports up to 128GB while the 64-bit Windows 8 Professional supports up to 512GB.

Our Mini Workshop, below, shows you how to install memory.

Add extra storage

Storage is getting cheaper all the time. You can now pick up a massive hard drive for a reasonable price – expect to pay around £70 for a 2TB model (internal and external drives are similarly priced). If you can afford it, it's always worth buying one drive to go inside your PC and another USB version to use for back-up. As with buying memory, it's safest to go for a drive from a named manufacturer that you recognise, such as Seagate or Western Digital.



Hard drives are getting faster, bigger and cheaper all the time

Replace your old hard drive with a super-fast SSD

Solid-state drives have no moving parts and use flash memory (just like USB flash memory drives) which makes reading from and writing to them incredibly fast. It's no exaggeration to say that replacing a mechanical system drive with an SSD will make a massive difference to the speed of your computer. Windows will boot up in seconds, not minutes, as will any programs you have installed on it.

SSDs are, however, much more expensive, and come in smaller capacities, so you'll need a second, regular hard drive on which to store your data. SSDs also don't last as long as mechanical drives, but if you aim to never use more than about 50 per cent drive capacity (sticking to just your OS and important programs) a decent SSD should last around 5 years.

Kingston (bit.ly/king330) offers a range of SSDNow drives to suit different needs and budgets. The V300 comes in capacities of 60GB, 120GB and 240GB and with read and write speeds of up to



For a great-value speed boost, Kingston's V300 SSD range starts from £46 for 60GB

MINI WORKSHOP | Install extra memory



1 To install memory in a desktop PC, turn it off and switch it off at the mains socket, but leave it plugged in. Touch something earthed, such as a radiator, to discharge static. Open the case and locate the memory sockets. To remove a RAM module, pop the left and right brackets open and pull out the chip.



2 Insert a new stick of memory into the slot. It will only fit one way. Press down hard on the top of the module with your thumbs. You'll hear a click and the locking tabs will pop up to secure it. Close the case and turn everything back on. You should see the new memory on screen when you reboot.



3 Adding memory to a laptop is a similar process, except you'll normally have to replace what's already there. Shut down the laptop and remove the battery. Unscrew the back of the case and locate the memory. Pull the locking levers free, remove the existing memory and replace it with the new.

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450MB/s (around 10 times faster than a 7,200RPM mechanical hard drive) and can be bought with or without an installation kit (the attachments you may or may not need to secure a 2.5in SSD into a 3.5in hard drive bay). The 60GB version (with kit) will set you back around £46, while the 240GB drive is around £100 more.

SanDisk (bit.ly/sandisk330) also sells a choice of SSDs. Our favourite is the Extreme II, which promises read speeds of up to 550MB/s and comes in a choice of capacities. The 120GB costs from £94.95, the 240GB is £173.95 and the 480GB model is £331.95 (from www.pixmania.co.uk).



SanDisk's Extreme II SSD comes in sizes up to 480GB

If you're replacing your current hard drive, you'll need to make sure you buy an SSD, which is much larger than the capacity of the used space on the drive you're replacing. Our Mini Workshop, below, shows you how to install an SSD.

Replace your DVD with Blu-ray

Blu-ray discs can hold 50GB of data, much more than DVDs (4.7 GB). You can also buy rewriteable Blu-ray discs that hold up to 25GB.

Replacing your existing internal CD or DVD drive is just a matter of opening up the case, removing the cables from the back of the drive and then swapping it with the new model. A good internal writer will set you back between £60 and £100. You can also buy external drives. MyMemory sells the Samsung Slim Retail External 3D Blu-ray Writer in black or white for £84.81 and £75.99 respectively.



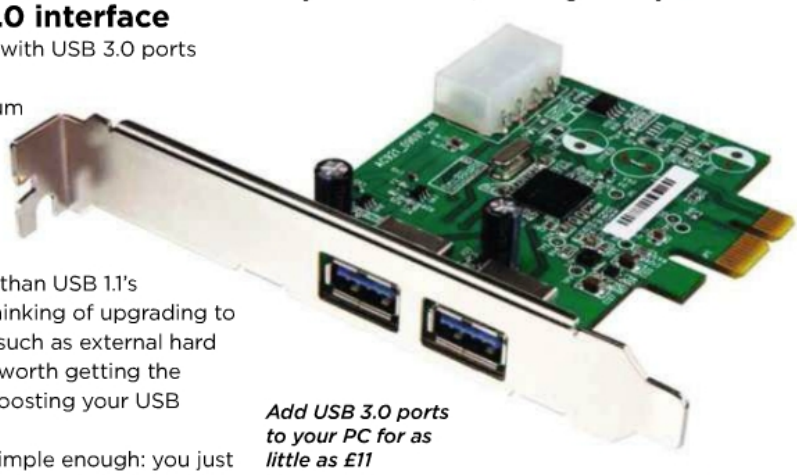
Add Blu-ray to your PC with an internal or external drive

Add a USB 3.0 interface

Modern PCs come with USB 3.0 ports that offer a theoretical maximum transfer speed of 5Gbps, which is much faster than USB 2.0's 480Mbps and significantly faster than USB 1.1's 12Mbps. If you're thinking of upgrading to faster peripherals, such as external hard drives, it might be worth getting the most out of it by boosting your USB ports.

The upgrade is simple enough: you just install a USB 3.0 PCI card by opening up your case and inserting it into a spare PCI or PCI Express expansion slot. You'll also need to attach the relevant power cable.

It's a very affordable upgrade. The Transcend USB 3.0 Expansion Card from MyMemory (bit.ly/USB3-330) will only set you back £10.99, including delivery.



Add USB 3.0 ports to your PC for as little as £11

MINI WORKSHOP | Install an SSDNow V300 SSD



1 SSDs are 2.5in drives, which makes fitting them in a laptop very straightforward. Power the laptop down, remove the battery and unscrew and remove the back of the case. Locate and remove the existing hard drive. It probably comes with an enclosure. Insert the SSD into this, attach the power and SATA connectors and reassemble everything.



2 To install an SSD in a desktop PC you'll probably need a 2.5in – 3.5in adapter. Insert the SSD into the adapter, and screw it in place. 1 Switch off your PC at the mains, remove the case, insert the drive into a spare bay and attach the power and SATA cables.



3 You can clone your existing C: drive and copy it to a new SSD using EaseUS Todo Backup Free (bit.ly/todo330). Select Clone 1 and choose either 'Disk clone' 2 or 'Partition clone' 3 depending on how your drive is set up. Choose the source and target drives, tick 'Optimise for SSD' and click Next to begin.

NEXT ISSUE

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TOP TIP £

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bit.ly/seasons330

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