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ISSUE 429 | 6 - 19 AUGUST 2014

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Your friendly guide to technology

Scary new scams that steal your identity (they look more real than ever) p50



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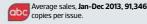
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From the Editor

A few months ago I received an email from a reader who was so embarrassed that she'd fallen victim to a phishing scam that she wanted to "disconnect from the web forever and flush my tablet down the toilet". I told her not to be too hard on herself because these scams are getting harder to spot all the time. Often in ScamWatch readers reveal how close they came to being scammed, only realising just before the final, fatal click what was going on.

In this cover feature we've highlighted the most dangerous new scams, from fake antivirus programs to council tax refunds (if only!). We also tell you what to do if you fall victim. Ultimately, scammers want to steal



your identity, not by taking over your life, but by stealing your account passwords and bank details. They can cause carnage with this information.

Scammers have no scruples. As you'll see on page 8, they'll even exploit tragedy to try to con you. I hope our advice makes you feel safer.

Daniel Booth

editor@computeractive.co.uk



THIS ISSUE IN NUMBERS

£4,000

Fine an Indian callcentre spammer received after sending 500,000 texts a day – p8



2560 x

Pixel-resolution of the new Samsung Galaxy Tab S 8.4 tablet - p18



£170

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million

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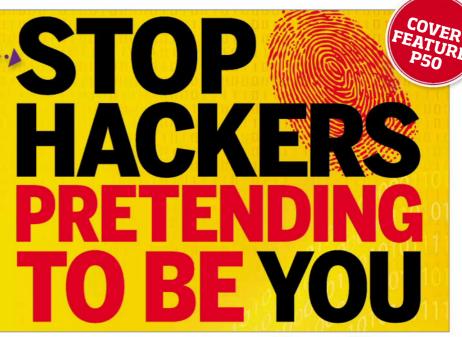
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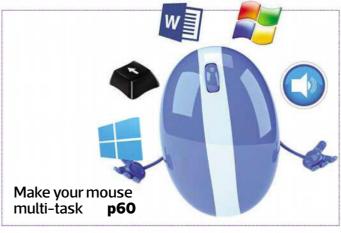
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Computeractive offer of the fortnight **Kaspersky Internet Security 2014** page 33 KASPERSKY3 Kaspersky Save INTERNET **70%** SECURITY 2014 **NOW ONLY £17.99**

News

The top stories in the world of technology

New 'fingerprint' code secretly tracks what you do online

Researchers have discovered software on many popular websites - including Kaspersky (www.kaspersky. com) and BT (www.bt.com) - that tracks your browsing habits in a way that's virtually unblockable using standard privacy protection.

The software was found in the code of 'social bookmarking' widgets made by AddThis, which let you 'like', 'tweet' and share web pages. AddThis has been secretly testing a tracking technology called 'canvas fingerprinting' on five per cent of the world's top 100,000 websites.

You don't need to click a widget to be tracked - just visiting the website is enough.

Canvas fingerprinting works in a similar way to cookies, by keeping a record of which websites you visit. However, unlike cookies, fingerprinting



is "hard to block" and "once some tracking has happened, it is hard to start from a truly clean profile", according to researchers at Leuven University in Belgium.

Many websites on which the tracker has been discovered claim to have been unaware of it, and have now removed AddThis widgets. You can see a list of sites that still track you using canvas fingerprinting at www.snipca.com/12977.

AddThis says the tool is "well within the rules, regulations, laws and policies that we have", because it's only being used for "internal research and development" at this point. AddThis lets you opt out of being targeted by personalised adverts at www.snipca. com/12978, but the campaign group, Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF), claims this doesn't stop you being tracked. The EFF recommends using

COMMENT

It's been three years since the European Commission updated the e-privacy directive, forcing sites to notify users when they're being tracked for marketing. This has given companies enough time to develop clever new tracking techniques that are hard to spot. What's worrying is that companies can use "internal research" as an excuse to hide tracking tools. Companies shouldn't be allowed to get away with this it's still research for marketing, after all. We should be told when it's happening, so we can easily opt out.

their own Privacy Badger (www.snipca.com/12980) software or the Disconnect add-on (www.disconnect.me) to avoid being tracked.

UK nuisance-call blocker only 30% effective

People who sign up to the Telephone Preference Service (TPS, www.tpsonline.org.uk) are still being plagued by large numbers of nuisance calls from cold-calling companies.

Ofcom set up the TPS in 1999 to provide a free way to opt out of receiving nuisance calls from marketing companies. However, a study by Ofcom and the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) has found that the number of cold calls received by people who sign up reduces by only 31 per cent on average..

Many people give their consent to receive marketing calls without knowing it, usually through online forms that require them to tick a box to opt out.

Mike Lordan, Direct Marketing Association (DMA) external affairs director, joined the ICO in calling for more powers and tougher punishments to combat cold callers.

"As the law currently stands,



these wrongdoers are simply able to get away with breaking the rules with impunity," said Lordan. "This means that without deterrence complaints from consumers will

continue to rise."

You'll like this... A US firm has made a spray that adds a waterproof coating to phones and tablets (www.invisiblewaterproofing.com)

but not this Criminals hacked 50,000 WordPress websites using a flaw in the MailPoet pluq-in (www.snipca.com/12976)

No hiding place! Website lists news stories removed by Google

A website has launched that provides links to articles that Google has removed from its search results in the wake of the EU's controversial 'right to be forgotten' ruling.

In May, the EU ruled that people have the right to ask search engines to remove links to articles about them if they are "inadequate, irrelevant, or no longer relevant". The creators of Hidden From Google (www.hiddenfrom google.com) say their website is "a way of archiving actions of censorship on the internet".

Among the articles listed on Hidden From Google are those about a convicted Portuguese sex offender called Carlos Silvino and an article relating to George Osborne's brother's conversion to Islam so he could marry his Muslim partner (see screenshot above).

People can submit articles



they think have been removed from search results, as long as they provide a link to a story confirming Google has deleted the link. Whenever Google removes links relating to a particular search term, it says so at the bottom of the search results page (see screenshot above right).

In July, the Society of



Editors (www.societyofeditors. co.uk) – a group representing editors within 400 media organisations, including the BBC, Sky and ITN - wrote to David Cameron urging him to "firmly resist" the ruling and any attempts to extend its scope from search engines to newspaper website archives. You can download the SoE's letter at www.snipca. com/12915.

At the end of May, Google put up a 'right to be forgotten' online form and has received over 70,000 link-removal requests since. In July, Microsoft added a similar form to its search engine Bing (www.snipca.com/12914).

IN BRIEF

APPS WITH IN-APP PAYMENTS NO LONGER 'FREE'

Google's Play Store will stop listing as 'free' apps that contain in-app purchases. Many apps (especially games) that claim to be free only let you access key features if you pay for them within the app. This change has come about after pressure from the European Commission, which is also urging Apple to do the same on its App Store. Apple has so far not responded.

TEEN 'SEXTERS' FACE SEX OFFENDERS LIST

Police have said that teenagers aged 16 and 17 who text sexual images of themselves to each other could be breaking the law, despite being above the age of consent. Detective Sergeant Jan Rusdale, from Nottinghamshire Police's sexual exploitation investigation unit, said that it could be seen as distributing indecent images of a child. If prosecuted, teenagers could end up on the Sex Offenders Register, though the police say they're more likely to be offered support.

Poor parking shamed by **Facebook photographer**

A man from Lowestoft has been praised by his local council for taking pictures of badly parked cars in his area and posting them to a Facebook group.

The man, known only as 'Stuart', set up a Facebook group called Park It Right Lowestoft (www.snipca. com/12917), after he became frustrated with vans and trailers parked on the pavement.

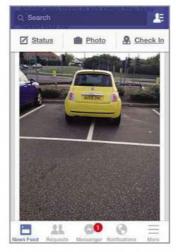
"There's never any parking wardens around and the whole of Lowestoft seems to be getting worse," Stuart told the BBC.

"Some of my friends and family think I shouldn't be bothering, but some of the parking is just dangerous and selfish - and it's annoying."

A spokesman from Waveney District Council said: "Any public support and awareness for considerate parking can only be a good thing and if people wish to report incidents to us they can call us or look up 'nuisance parking' on our website."

Stuart's Facebook group, which has over 2,900 likes, has an active community of people commenting on the photos, which range from the shocking to the absurd. One photo shows a dog left inside a car on a hot day. Stuart called the police, who smashed the car window to release the dog, which was unharmed.

With the amount of publicity the careless parkers



are receiving, Stuart hopes the group will make the people of Lowestoft - and elsewhere be more considerate when parking their cars.

Some of those commenting on the Facebook page seem to be taking the hint, with one posting: "Dreading seeing my van or car on here one day".



Eight blind people in Reading have taken part in a secret test to trial a Microsoft 'headband' that tracks the user step by step and gives them information and directions through an earpiece. Experts say people with full vision could also use it when shopping, travelling and visiting exhibitions. This video by Guide Dogs and Microsoft shows it being used: www. snipca.com/12850.

IN BRIEF

GET MORE ONEDRIVE STORAGE

The promised increase in storage for OneDrive (https://onedrive.live.com), Microsoft's cloud-storage service, has arrived. New and existing OneDrive users now get 15GB of free storage (up from 7GB), while Office 365 subscribers can now take advantage of 1TB of free storage, up from 20GB.

4G SET TO ARRIVE IN NATIONAL PARKS

You could soon be enjoying superfast 4G broadband on your device in Britain's national parks. The Mobile Operators Association is to work with National Parks England to provide mobile broadband to towns and villages that lie within various national parks, where signals are often poor due to the terrain and remote locations. How this will be achieved remains to be seen, but major construction work is unlikely as the parks are protected by UK planning laws.

Malaysia Airlines plane-crash scams spread across web

Scammers are exploiting the Malaysia Airlines plane crash in eastern Ukraine by setting up bogus Facebook tribute pages to some of the victims that contain video links designed to trick people into handing over their personal details.

One such Facebook page claimed to be dedicated to Liam Sweeney, a Newcastle United fan travelling to New Zealand to watch his team play and who was among the 298 people killed in the crash. The page featured a photo of Sweeney, but only one post - a link titled "Video Camera Caught the moment plane MH17 Crash over Ukraine".

Clicking the link took you to a porn site, where you'd be asked to verify you were over 18 by entering your phone number. By doing so you'd be added to a spam list and then targeted by

nuisance phone calls.

Another Facebook link appeared in users' News Feed promising "actual footage" of the crash (see screenshot below). The link took people to adverts and a download for a malicious video player. Facebook has been removing the links and 'tribute' pages as soon as they are reported.

Twitter has also been hit by a wave of bogus links posing as information about the crash. Online security firm Trend Micro has reported links to fake sites designed to generate advertising revenue and to malicious sites containing the Zeus malware.

> which steals bank details from your computer. On its blog Trend Micro warns that such scams will continue to emerge as more details about the MH17 disaster come to light (www.snipca. com/12908).

> Criminals often exploit tragedies to spread scams via the internet. They usually focus on natural disasters and terrorist attacks significant enough to trigger international headlines, such as the Boston Marathon bombing in 2013 and the Japanese earthquake and tsunami in 2011.



Spammer who sent 500,000 texts a day gets off with £4,000 fine

The fraudster behind a spamming operation that sent over 500,000 texts a day to people in the UK has been fined just £4,000.

Jayesh Shah, who lives in London but runs a call centre in India, was behind millions of deceitful texts telling people they could claim compensation for mis-sold PPIs (payment protection insurance). Shah would sell respondents' personal details to claims firms - some based in the UK - for up to £7.50 each. He was finally exposed by an undercover Daily Mail

reporter in December 2012.

Sending unsolicited marketing text messages can result in fines of up to £500,000, but Shah avoided this punishment because he operated from abroad. He was eventually only prosecuted for

lying about the nature of his business on the ICO (Information Commissioners' Office) register, which landed him a £4,000 fine, £2,703 court costs, and a £400 victim surcharge.

The ICO will

continue to investigate Shah, but they admit that it will be difficult to track him because he is not identified in the calls and texts that are made by his employees. David Clancy from the ICO said: "As far as we are aware, he's still operating".



What's new from

The Google Maps apps for Android and iOS have a new button called Explore that shows you what places and activities you can enjoy nearby. Cleverly, the suggestions change depending on the time of day and weather - so you won't receive ideas for outdoors activities during a thunderstorm. You'll see the button at the bottom right of a map. Read more on the official Google Maps blog: www.snipca.com/12918.



Will Amazon kill your local library?

Amazon's new ebook service offers unlimited titles every month. But what does that mean for public libraries?

T n mid-July Amazon launched Kindle Unlimited (www.snipca.com/12982) in the US. For only \$9.99 a month, the service gives customers unlimited access to over 600,000 ebooks and audiobooks. It's been described as a Spotify for books, letting customers read as many titles as they like every month.

This sounds like a great service, but some people are worried about the impact on public libraries. Dino Grandoni of The Huffington Post wrote that people will choose Amazon over libraries because "they will expect Kindle Unlimited to be faster and more convenient to use, since speed and convenience are two things Amazon's proven to be good at" (www. snipca.com/12981).

He's not wrong. Amazon's success is global, and if Kindle Unlimited arrives in the UK



visitors be tempted to abandon their local library in favour of Amazon?

Perhaps surprisingly, some UK librarians think the threat is overstated. Nick Stopforth, head of digital at the Society

ff It's been described as a Spotify for books; customers read as many titles as they like every month ""

(as seems likely should it prove popular in the US), it could damage Britain's already beleaguered libraries.

Libraries have had a tough few years since the Government cut funding in 2010. Over 270 libraries have closed down according to the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), while visitor numbers fell by six per cent in 2013. Will even more

of Chief Librarians (SCL), thinks libraries will always hold a special appeal. "The attraction of public libraries is that they're freely available and the content is chosen by trained staff who have the public in mind." he said. "I can't see a business model that would threaten the public model."

It doesn't help Amazon that so many bestselling and classic

books will be unavailable via Kindle Unlimited. Moreover, readers in the US won't find books from the 'Big Five' publishers (Penguin Random House, Macmillan, HarperCollins, Hachette and Simon & Schuster) because of copyright disputes. Classic books like Nineteen Eighty-Four, To Kill a Mockingbird, and In Cold Blood are off limits, as are six of the top 10 current bestsellers at Waterstones. With these gaps, it's clear that Kindle Unlimited has a long way to go to compete with public libraries.

In fact, ebooks could be libraries' hidden weapon, although only if their ebooklending schemes improve. Currently, systems such as OverDrive (http://company. overdrive.com) are available in around 80 per cent of the UK's libraries, but book publishers currently impose restrictions

on which titles are available. Libraries will suffer if people who prefer ebooks can't find the titles they want, so they need publishing companies to relax the rules.

So it seems that libraries have more to worry about than Amazon - for the time being at least. But if Kindle Unlimited does arrive here, the marketing campaign behind it will be huge. Many people worry that battling Amazon is a fight our libraries will never win.

THE FACTS

- Kindle Unlimited offers 600,000 books for \$9.99 a month
- 270 libraries in the UK have closed since 2010
- Around 80 per cent of UK libraries have ebooklending schemes

Letters **E**

Tell us what's on your mind

Email: letters@computeractive.co.uk Facebook: www.facebook.com/computeractive



Why discourage use of Microsoft Security **Essentials?**

I have been an avid reader of Computeractive for many years, but I am bemused regarding your comments that you should not use Microsoft Security Essentials. I have used this for the past five years and have never experienced a virus. It all comes down to common sense when using the internet - such as not opening emails or attachments if you don't know what they are. Paid-for antivirus programs cost a fortune, and if Microsoft can't keep you safe nobody can. I feel you are doing people out of the opportunity of using a



free virusprotection program at a time when we have to pay through the nose for everything.

Chris Farley

CA says While we agree that common sense plays a big part in staying safe, we think anyone relying solely on Microsoft Security Essentials (MSE) is leaving themselves at significant risk of attack. Not only did MSE come bottom in our last antivirus group tests (Issue 425), but Microsoft itself has said that other programs should be used on top of it because it only offers "baseline" protection (www.snipca.com/12843).

It's true that in our last test the top three programs were paid-for (Kaspersky, Norton and ESET). But Avast and AVG's free products performed well, and we have no problem recommending them. They're certainly both much better than MSE.

Life online in Spain

Readers in the UK might be interested in the attitude of Spanish internet providers. I've had a WiMax account - very popular in Spain - for many years, offering around 1Mbps at €45 a month plus tax. That's fairly pricey, but the bandwidth is both for uploads and downloads, and it is reliable.

However, after British expats lost BBC, ITV and Channels 4 and 5 on the ASTRA satellites earlier this year, my ISP

contacted us and offered increased bandwidth of 3Mbps for no extra cost so we could watch television on the internet.

The guy who came round to tweak my WiMax also installed a phone and fax connection box (which I had not asked for), so we also now have free unlimited landline national phone calls and free 150 minutes a month to mobiles. And as my own router was working well he didn't change it, but left me a brand new one anyway for free.

So that's life in Spain for you - half the time nothing works properly, but when it does, we do very well.

Robin A Flood

From a Sharp PC to Skype in three decades

I was very interested to read in Issue 427 about people's old technology still in use. It fired up a lot of happy memories for me. My first computer was a Sharp MZ80A (pictured above right, for more information visit www.old-computers.com), although my interest in computing preceded the purchase of that. I was hooked by the BBC's Computer Programme (www. snipca.com/12675) and remember the pleasure I got from just learning BASIC before I ever got my hands on a computer.

Thus started years of fun with programming. Working with the MZ80A and its "massive" 48K memory was a



rewarding time. Another love affair followed with the Amstrad CPC6128 (it's on Wikipedia at www.snipca. com/12677). This time there were goodies to be had - a printer and an acoustic coupler. Then followed the Amstrad shows in London where I made the best purchase ever - the Protext, Prospell and Promerge ROMs.

Time marched on and my phone bills increased as I became involved with online bulletin boards and then Micronet. However, the creative days were coming to an end. After more than a decade with the MZ80A and the Amstrad, I moved up to a PC. I no longer did any programming, but used the computer mainly as a reference library. As time went on it became a useful holiday-booking tool, and then social networking and Skype happened, but the euphoria I felt in those early years had vanished. So I have decided to learn another computer language - all I have to do is crack 'C' (www.snipca.com/12678)

Lack of camera manuals 'inexcusable'

How I agree with Stuart Andrews on missing manuals (The Final Straw, Issue 428). When in 2006 I bought my first digital camera, a little Fujifilm, it came with a small but comprehensive manual, as did my Panasonic DSLR which I bought two years later. When last year I bought a Sony RX100 camera for more than £400 it came with just a leaflet that gave almost no information on the myriad controls. I was forced to spend another £16 on a book before I could understand it properly.

The camera itself, a beautiful little thing, is obviously aimed at the keen photographer who is willing to pay

several times the price of a cheap camera, so the lack of a manual of any sort is inexcusable.

Euel Lane



and if I fail at that I've still got the MZ80A and the Amstrad.

Colin Baker

Pro-testing against 'pro' marketing

I was interested to read in Issue 427 (page 54) that Computeractive had become disillusioned with Advanced Uninstaller Pro, with its associated program Optimizer Pro. These would never have breached my mental firewall in the first place, for the following reason. It is almost impossible to sit through an hour of commercial television without being bombarded several times to buy a product which has a name either beginning or ending with the term "Pro". From toothpaste to painkiller, car wax to kitchen mops, I have long come to realise that marketing men will stick the term on anything halfway useless in the knowledge that it will increase sales on a dubious product. Let us be more professional in our appraisal of pro-ducts being pro-moted!

Allan Hailstone

Rise of smartphone zombies is just society changing

It's been amusing reading what Computeractive readers have to say about so-called 'smartphone zombies', but I feel there's a danger of us all sounding a bit old-fogevish. When I was a kid, back in the Sixties, I remember the generation above me moaning about people using transistor radios in public. I remember a stern old gentleman telling me that I was "destroying my brain cells" listening to it while sitting on a train! New technology always changes the way people behave, and it always takes time for those who haven't changed their behaviour to adapt.

Also, as anti-social behaviour goes, walking around with your eyeballs glued to a phone isn't terribly offensive. It's not as bad as spitting or dropping litter, is it? When I see these 'zombies', I do wonder whether they're going to meander in front of a double-decker bus, but I don't feel angry or irritated by their behaviour. Society is always changing, and I think it's interesting to observe how.

Donald Thornton

Sticking with Windows 7, despite end of support

I have absolutely no intention of upgrading from Windows 7 - at

STAR LETTER

Emergency data law is 'necessary' to keep us safe from terrorists

I'm becoming increasingly dismayed by the negative reactions to laws that are intended to keep us safe. In Issue 428 you report that so-called 'privacy campaigners' have criticised the Government's new data law, as have a couple of MPs whose political irrelevance means they can now say what they like without fear of losing their job.

I belong to the silent majority who don't overreact to legislation like this. We don't see this law as Big Brother eroding our privacy, but necessary powers to keep us safe from terrorism. I have no problem if that means the ability to examine the details behind our emails and phone calls. Does this affect my human rights? I don't think so. I would rather have the human right to take a flight somewhere without being blown up.

Also, let's not forget that these laws are commonly used to help build cases against paedophiles, who increasingly use the dark side of the internet to communicate. The police need to be



able to track these terrible people, and it seems perverse of privacy groups to put obstacles in their way. It's hard to avoid the conclusion that privacy groups are more concerned about theoretical 'breaches' of human rights than the prevention of crime.

People need to get a sense of perspective. This law doesn't mean the secret services are bugging our living rooms. It doesn't mean we'll be living in 1970s East Germany - they're not watching as I type this, and I very much doubt they'll care what a 72-year-old retired teacher thinks anyway. It just means that the police are fully equipped to investigate the most evil crimes.

Beatrice Southall

The Star Letter writer wins a Computeractive muq

least, not until it is conclusively proven that not doing so would expose me to lots of malware nasties. I'm getting on a bit now, and don't feel confident enough to move on to Windows 8, which sounds and looks completely alien to me. I know Microsoft wants us to panic over the end of 'Mainstream' support, but thanks to Computeractive's reassuring words in Issue 428 I feel happy continuing with Windows 7. It's the best operating system I've ever used, and will probably be my last.

Paul Burke

Google should 'block' copycat websites

While it's pleasing to read that five people have been arrested in a crackdown on those awful copycat

websites (News, Issue 428), it doesn't address the scandal of Google allowing these sites to advertise in the first place. Google has displayed a shocking lack of responsibility here. As long as the companies advertising with them hand over the cash, Google won't ask any difficult questions about how legitimate they are. Google must do more to block these scam sites.

It's typical of the arrogance that big tech companies have. They think they're above the law, and behave as they think the law should be, not as the law actually is. Google has thought about the risks involved, and assumed that most authorities will lack the determination to take them on. Sadly, that seems to be true.

Simon Graham

Consumeractive

I've been scammed on eBay - what can I do?

I bought a dashboard camera on eBay from a seller in China. When I told the seller it hadn't arrived, he emailed me a tracking number, and when I checked it on the courier's website, it said the device was "still in transit". I filed a claim with PayPal, but the seller then sent PayPal a different tracking number, showing the item had arrived (it hadn't), and my claim was dismissed. Is there anything I can do?

John Grimley

This is a nasty scam and it's not a new one. We've asked eBay if there's anything buyers like John can do when they find themselves in this situation, and also if it's doing anything to stop this fraud. We'll let you know as soon as we get a response.

In this sort of scam, the seller never intends to send you the goods, but they know they need a tracking number if they're going to keep your money. The usual ruse is to send an empty envelope to an address - not necessarily your own - to make the sale look legitimate. This gives them the necessary tracking number eBay requires for proof of delivery.

Given this information from the seller, eBay will dismiss CASE any claim from a buyer ONGOING that an item didn't arrive.

Is this eBay seller abusing the new DSRs?

turtletrading

I returned a 40GB external hard drive bought from the eBay seller Turtle Trading (www. snipca.com/12799). They used a clause in the new Distance

Selling Regulations (DSRs) to deduct £2.50 from my refund because I'd opened the hard drive's packaging, which prevented them re-selling it as new. Are companies going to arbitrarily cut refunds because of this new law?

John Kinvig

Yes, we believe many companies will abuse or misinterpret the refunddeduction clause in the Consumer Contracts Regulations (CCRs), which replaced the DSRs last month, because the wording is so open to interpretation. After we contacted Turtle Trading, it has agreed to refund John the £2.50, but not before explaining why it believed it was right to deduct the money from the refund.

It pointed out that the CCRs say: "A deduction can be made [by the retailer] if the value of the goods has been reduced as a result of the customer handling the goods more than was necessary." This 'handling' can include opening the goods or damaging the packaging, so because John had opened the Jiffy bag the hard drive came in to make a deduction.

However, in our opinion John didn't handle the hard drive excessively and obviously had to open the Jiffy bag to examine the drive. We asked the Department of Business, Innovation and Skills for its opinion. It agreed with us that the wording isn't clear and it could lead to problems. They told us that if there's a dispute it's only going to be solved in court.

We think the Small Claims Court will agree that customers are allowed to open the packaging, as long as the box containing the product isn't damaged. But the law says that if the product is in a sealed bag, or in a box with a picture of the product, then you'll invalidate your right to a full refund by opening it.

It's such a grey area that we expect more Consumeractive cases on this soon. If you have a query, please get in touch.



Can I get my money back from an online IT support site?

I was having trouble with my HP 1500 all-in-one printer, and via HP's website was put through to a company called On the Spot IT (www. onthespotit.co.uk) which offered technical help. An advisor called James Barker said it would only take him 10 minutes at 85p a minute to download the drivers I needed. But this damaged my PC, and On the Spot IT has now taken £59.50 from my card. I've had to pay someone else to put it right.

Can you help me get my money back? Robert Miller

It looks like the only thing Robert can do to is take this to the Small Claims Court. James Barker, who runs On the Spot IT, told us he's not going to give Robert his money back. He also claims he did much more work than the 10 minutes Robert believes he agreed to pay for. He said he'll also take legal action against Robert if he tries to get his money back because James claims Robert isn't giving an honest account.

If Robert does take this to court, he should make sure he's got proof from the technician who fixed his PC, outlining what damage On the Spot IT caused. He can find out more at www.snipca. com/12780 and should also CASE read Citizen Advice's guide (www.snipca.com/12781).



☑ Contact us so we can investigate your case

Email: consumeractive@computeractive.co.uk Write: Consumeractive, Computeractive, 30 Cleveland Street, London W1T 4JD Please include both your phone number and address. Unfortunately, we can't reply to all your letters.

We stand up for your legal rights

What can I do if a company ignores my emails?

In November 2013 I bought a Razer Mamba gaming mouse from the eBay seller Star Rich International Trading Ltd. The mouse has now stopped working, so I contacted the company. I received one email from it asking for information, but now it's stopped answering my emails. What's my next step?

Paul Heath

Paul should try phoning Star Rich, or writing a letter. But this isn't going to be easy because the company is based in Hong Kong. On the UK-based website it uses (www.clickyourshop.co.uk) there's no geographical or email address, even though this is a legal requirement. You can



only contact it by filling in an online form. We did find the company's Hong Kong address, but Paul will probably have to

wait a long time for a reply - assuming it's answered at all. If he does find a phone number, calling Hong Kong would be very expensive.

We've tried to contact the company using the customer service email address from the reply Paul received. We've also sent messages using the online form and on Twitter

(@clickyourshop). We'll let you know if we hear back from the company.



CASE UPDATES



Argos refunds reader after repeated laptop repairs

In Issue 427 Roger Davies asked us what his friend John should do if his Toshiba C850-19Z laptop – which had already been repaired four

times in the 20 months since he'd bought it in Argos - became faulty again. Roger got back in touch a couple of weeks later to say the laptop had failed yet again.

We contacted Argos to point out that the laptop is obviously inherently faulty, and John is entitled to a refund or replacement under the Sale of Goods Act when goods are "not fit for purpose". Because he'd already put up with four repairs, John didn't have to agree to another.

Happily, Argos agreed, and has now given John a full rather than pro-rata refund because he's not had much use from the laptop.

The other way John could have sought a refund was to make a claim against Toshiba under the Supply of Goods and Services Act. Toshiba had been carrying out the repairs under a paid-for extended warranty. Because the repairs had failed to fix the fault, John could argue the service wasn't carried out

with "reasonable skill and care". We are still waiting to find out the terms and conditions of this extended warranty, because it may also be possible for John to get a refund as this insurance still has around a year to run.



THIS WILL COME IN USEFUL

Contact details for antivirus companies

Avast 0203 608 7941

Help: www.avast.com/contacts Twitter: @avast_antivirus

AVG 0800 085 3496

Live chat: www.snipca.com/12773 Twitter: @avgfree

Bitdefender 0208 819 2649

Help: www.snipca.com/12651 Twitter: @ukbitdefender

ESET 01202 548888

Email: support@eset.co.uk Twitter: @ESETUK

F-Secure 0870 0130 794

Live chat: www.snipca.com/12787 Twitter: @fsecureukteam

Kaspersky 0871 789 1635

Email: info@kasperskylab.co.uk Twitter: @kl_support

McAfee 01753 217500

Help: www.snipca.com/12774 Twitter: @McAfee_UK

Norton 0844 545 6509

Live chat: www.snipca.com/12755 Twitter: @NortonSupport

Trend Micro 0203 549 3300

Help: www.snipca.com/12753 Twitter: @TrendMicroUK

Protect Your Tech

Scams and threats to avoid, plus new security tools

WATCH OUT FOR...

The return of Simplocker ransomware

What happened?

A deadlier new version of the vile Simplocker ransomware was spotted by security researchers at ESET.

The original version of Simplocker displays a message (in Russian) accusing the victim of "viewing and distributing child pornography, zoophilia and other perversions". A photo of the victim



appears alongside the message to make it look legitimate. It encrypts documents, images and videos on the device and demands a ransom in Ukrainian

currency (hryvnias) to unlock them.

In its new form Simplocker shows victims a message in English supposedly from the FBI (see screenshot) and demands payment of \$300 (around \$280 higher than the original ransom).

This new version of Simplocker also encrypts the archive files ZIP, 7z and RAR, targeting content you've backed up. ESET's Robert Lipovsky said: "Many Android file-backup tools store backups as archive files. In case the user has become infected with Android/ Simplocker.I, these backups will be encrypted as well."

Simplocker now asks to be installed as a Device Administrator, making it more difficult to remove. Many genuine apps need this permission to perform security-related tasks such as remotely wiping a stolen device.

What should you do?

As always, prevention is key. Simplocker sneaks onto devices by hiding in malicious apps, so protect yourself by only installing apps from the Google Play store, and double-checking the legitimacy of any app you want, especially if it asks for Device Administrator rights.

Fortunately, the encryption used by the criminals behind Simplocker remains fairly basic - much more primitive than CryptoLocker's, for example. So there's still hope if you get infected. Should this happen, use ESET's free Simplocker Decryptor to restore your files (click this link to automatically begin the download: www.snipca.com/12892). Alternatively, try Avast's free Ransomware Removal tool (www.snipca.com/12893).

New tools

Firefox 31

www.snipca.com/12896

Mozilla's latest update to Firefox is one of the most impressive in recent years. As well as fixing 14 security flaws, it adds a tool that detects and blocks malicious files before they're downloaded. This tool is powered by Google's Safe Browsing service (www. snipca.com/12901), which provides lists of dangerous URLs to web companies (Apple also uses it to make its Safari browser safer). Mozilla had previously only used Safe Browsing to warn people when they're about to visit a risky website.

However, Google only lets Mozilla use a limited version of Safe Browsing. Mozilla admits that this means Firefox's malware-blocking tool will never be as effective as Chrome's because it may block some downloads that are safe. If this becomes too

annoying, you could risk turning off the tool by clicking Tools, Options, the Security tab, then unticking 'Block reported attack sites' and clicking OK (see screenshot below).





Fooled by iPhone 6 scam

I received an email I thought was from Apple telling me about the launch of iPhone 6. I love my iPhone 5s, so it caught my eye. It was sent by sales@apple.com, so seemed genuine, and contained the subject line 'The wait is over. Proudly introducing the new iPhone 6' (with no spelling mistakes). The email asks you to click a link to find out more, but before I did I searched for 'iPhone 6' on Google and just happened to stumble upon a story about the scam (www.snipca.com/12796). I breathed a sigh of relief, because the scam had almost fooled me.

Michael Clark



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







Infinity 7850K

"A great little system for general duties, high definition media playback and casual gaming." Zardon, KitGuru.net

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- Windows 8.1
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- 2TB SATA III 6Gb/s HDD
- Corsir 450W VS Series PSU
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- 3 Year Standard Warranty



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E749

from

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- 8GB Kingston DDR3 1600MHz RAM
- 1TB SATA III Hard Drive
- 2GB AMD Radeon R9 270X
- Corsair 450W VW Series PSU
- 3 Year Standard Warranty



Vanquish DS Red

"If you want a quiet gaming system, look no further than the PC Specialist Vanquish DS Red"

Custom PC Magazine

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- Windows 8.1
- 8GB Kingston Hyper-X 1600MHz RAM
- 120GB Kingston SSD
- 1TB Caviar Black Hard Drive
- 3GB AMD Radeon R9 280X
- 3 Year Standard Warranty





10.1"Voyager 2-in-1

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10.1" LED Display (1920 x 1080)

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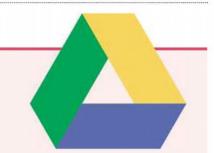
Google Drive

http://drive.google.com

What you need: Windows XP, Vista, 7 or 8

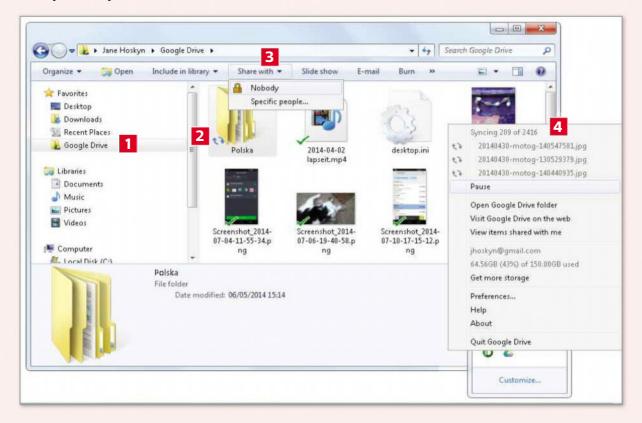
Google's cloud-storage service is an online tool, of course but it's also a Desktop program and mobile app (www. snipca.com/12970), and you'll get the best out of the service if you use all three platforms in combination.

Drive is undergoing a big refurbishment that's currently being rolled out to all users. To check if you've got the new version, sign into Google Drive, click the cog icon, then 'Experience the new Drive'. The new version's interface has been revamped to give you more details about your uploaded files, let you drag and drop items from your PC, and see previous versions of your files, which are saved automatically for 30 days.

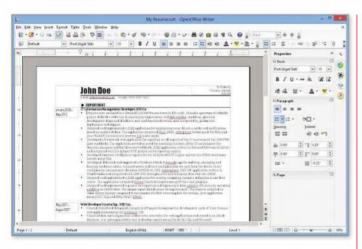


Click Download Drive in the cog menu to get the Desktop tool. This creates a Google Drive folder on your computer and sets up an automatic syncing process to keep your important files backed up. Every file or folder you save in your Drive folder is copied and saved online.

The Desktop tool is free, and Google Drive gives you 5GB of free space, which is enough to keep your most important documents securely backed up to the cloud. If you also want to keep all your photos and videos backed up automatically, you'll need to buy more storage space, but it's cheap - \$1.99 (£1.17) per month for 100GB.



- Move any files or folders to your Google Drive folder to copy them automatically to your Google Drive cloud storage, whenever you're online.
- 2 Blue arrows indicate that a file or folder is in your syncing queue. Once they're synced to Google Drive online, the arrows change to a green tick.
- 3 Select an item, click 'Share with', then 'Specific people' to let someone else access the item online. Select Nobody to prevent anyone else seeing or downloading it.
- 4 Right-click the Google Drive icon in your system tray to see a list of your latest synced items. This menu also lets you pause syncing, open Drive online or quit.



ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY

OpenOffice 4.1

www.openoffice.org

What you need: Windows XP, Vista, 7 or 8

After 14 years and a claimed 100 million downloads, Apache's popular open-source office suite has finally added built-in support for screen readers used by visually-impaired users. OpenOffice now incorporates IAccessible2, the Linux-based assistive technology that lets blind computer users hear which keys they're pressing and use the keyboard to read documents, menus and dialogue boxes. You can find out more about IAccessible 2 on its Linux project page (www.snipca.com/12964). There are a few other changes in OpenOffice 4.1, including new text-field editing options and graphics-cropping tools.

eBOOK MANAGER

Calibre 1.46

www.snipca.com/12962

What you need: Windows XP, Vista, 7 or 8

Edit your ebooks with this excellent open-source program, which supports most major ebook formats including EPUB and MOBI. You can convert from one format to



another (output formats include Amazon's Kindle format AZW3) and edit the text of your ebooks. This new version adds support for third-party extensions (www.snipca.com/12979). Calibre also has an online service that lets you access your book collection on any web-connected computer and subscribe to online newspapers and magazines. Click 'Download calibre' to download the MSI installer file, and click Advanced during setup to choose which shortcuts (which Calibre calls 'subfeatures') to include.



SYSTEM TOOL

dMaintenance Home Edition

www.snipca.com/12969

What you need: Windows XP, Vista7 or 8

Foolish IT's automatic system tune-up tool has been around for a while, but it was always aimed at people who fix computers for a living. This new Home Edition is for the rest of us. It's just as powerful as the old version but it automates everything. You trigger the process with a single click and dMaintenance does the work, including deleting temporary files, emptying the Recycle Bin and removing malware. Scroll down and click the blue 'Download dMaintenance Home Edition FREE' button to download the portable program. Ignore the prompts to upgrade to the full version and click 'Save/Run Maintenance Now'.

WHAT SHOULD I DOWNLOAD?

We tell you what software to use

How can I find and delete duplicate photos?

The Pictures library on my Windows Vista PC is full of duplicate photos and videos, so I'm looking for a free program that spots duplicates and makes it easy to remove them. Can you help?

Ian Little

Duplicate files are all too easy to create by uploading the same photos and videos repeatedly from your tablet, digital camera or phone, or by simply trying to reorganise your folders. Be careful when choosing a duplicate-finding tool, because some just check for duplicate file names and delete "duplicates" automatically, which can result in non-duplicate files being destroyed. Easy Duplicate Finder (free from www.easy

duplicatefinder.com) compares the exact size and content of files as well as their names, and lets you choose what to remove. Click Start Scan or drag and drop a folder onto the program window to scan it for duplicates, then choose what to remove. It works on all versions of Windows from XP to 8.



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

New products tested by our experts

TABLET | £319 from www.snipca.com/12881

Samsung Galaxy Tab S 8.4

Samsung's exceptional 8in mini tablet

Samsung sells a dizzying array of tablets, with seven new models released this year so far in addition to the three 2013 models still available. The Galaxy Tab S 8.4 is one of the South Korean giant's latest tablets and while at first glance it doesn't appear that different from the Galaxy Tab Pro 8.4 (see our review, Issue 423), it's actually a substantial improvement.

Screen

The most significant new feature is the screen. It's one of the first tablets to use an AMOLED screen and it's stunning. While previous AMOLED screens suffered from fuzzy text and over-saturated, unrealistic-looking colours, that's not the case here. It's even sharper than the iPad Mini 2's screen due to its 2560x1600-pixel resolution, while colours are vivid yet look accurate.

It's also so bright that it's almost dazzlingly painful to use at full brightness. However, Samsung's claim

ff The most significant new feature is the AMOLED screen. It's stunning ""

that the increased contrast lets you see hidden details in dimly lit videos and photos proved baseless. We saw no difference in either our own holiday photos or in films with dark scenes such as The Dark Knight and Alien.

Annoyingly, the Tab S has thin borders on the left- and right-hand sides of the screen (when held in portrait orientation) - much like the iPad Mini. This means there's little space to rest your fingers, so we often unintentionally triggered onscreen controls when we were merely resting our fingers. The iPad Mini has

SAMSU lightweight at just under 300g. Unusually,

thumb-rejection technology to counteract this, but the Tab S has nothing like it so you'll have to hold it more carefully.

Tab hardware

Unsurprisingly, the Tab S looks like a larger version of Samsung's Galaxy S5 smartphone (see our review, Issue 423) with a dimpled plastic rear similar to the S5's. Although it's not as rigid or as classy looking as the iPad Mini 2's metal back, it feels less slippery in the hand and it is

the Tab S has two circular holes for snapping Samsung's optional screen covers into place. These ungainly fastenings aren't as secure as the Mini's equivalent magnetic fixtures, with the covers coming away easily when jostled in a bag or handled roughly.

Like the S5, the Tab S has a fingerprint reader built into its home button, making it one of the first Android tablets to have such a feature. You can use this instead of a passcode to lock and unlock the tablet. It's more reliable than the S5's reader, recognising our fingerprints quickly.

Another feature it shares with the S5 is the eight-core processor, the Exynos Octa 5420. It's actually two quad-core processors joined together and while it wasn't that much faster than the quickest quad-core tablet processors in our benchmark tests, it still did well. This made its responsiveness problems all the more surprising - it sometimes struggled to keep up with our finger movements as we scrolled through long websites and documents.

We had no complaints about battery life, though. It lasted 13-and-a-half hours when playing video continuously which was impressive. Although it didn't quite match the 16 hours achieved by the Amazon Kindle Fire HDX 8.9 (see our review, Issue 414), it exceeded the iPad Mini 2's 10-and-a-half hours (see our review, Issue 416).

The Tab S is surprisingly choosy about which chargers it will work with. It refused to work with our Lenovo and Apple USB chargers, but worked fine with our Amazon and Asus chargers. Another disappointment is the lack of a USB3 port for fast data transfers. USB3 is present on the Galaxy Note 3 (see our review, Issue 414) so its absence here in favour of USB2 is odd.

Android TouchWiz

The Tab S runs Android 4.4 KitKat, but with Samsung's TouchWiz interface added on top. Although TouchWiz is far less cluttered than it was before, it still has annoying features that you can't remove such as the widgets showing your calendar, inbox and news headlines. Far more useful is the file-manager app which lets you transfer files between the tablet and your Dropbox account. The Hancom Office app for working on Microsoft Office documents is also included.

The Tab S also comes with SideSync, an app that lets you use the tablet with other devices in interesting ways. For example, you can control the tablet using your Windows computer's keyboard and mouse, letting you reply to text messages using your larger and more comfortable computer keyboard. You can also view the tablet's screen in a window on your

SPECIFICATIONS

8.4in 2560x1600-pixel touchscreen • 1.9GHz + 1.3GHz Samsung Exynos Octa 5420 processor • 3GB memory • 16GB storage • microSD slot • Mali T628 graphics chip • Android 4.4 KitKat • 294g • 213x126x7mm (HxWxD) • One-year warranty www.snipca.com/12882



Use the SideSync app to control your Android smartphone from your Tab S

Windows Desktop and drag and drop files between the two, although this is less useful - especially as you can already easily transfer files without SideSync.

This latest version of SideSync, 3.0 lets you control your Android smartphone from your Tab S. You can even make and receive calls on your tablet, although we could only make this work with a Galaxy S5. It's a clever feature, although it's unlikely to see much use unless you frequently use your tablet in another part of your home away from your phone.

As on previous Galaxy Tabs, you can use two apps side by side on the Tab S. Although this can feel cramped on the relatively small 8.4in screen, apps run far more smoothly in this mode than they did on older Tabs, with none of the slow performance and laggy responsiveness that previously blighted this feature. As a result, it's much more usable and useful than before.

Conclusion

Although some of the Galaxy Tab S 8.4's software additions are of questionable value and it has a few design flaws, it's a great tablet nevertheless. Battery life and screen quality are top-notch, making it one of the best Android tablets available. If you want even longer battery life, then you should consider the Amazon Kindle Fire HDX 8.9, and if you're on a budget then the Asus Nexus 7 is a fine alternative.

HOW WE TEST

Computeractive is owned by Dennis Publishing, which owns a hi-tech facility for testing the latest technology. You'll often read references to our benchmark testing, which is a method of assessing products using the same criteria. For example, we test the speed of every PC and the battery life of every tablet in exactly the same way. This makes our reviews authoritative, rigorous and accurate.

Dennis Publishing also owns the magazines PC Pro, Computer Shopper, Web User, Micro Mart and MacUser, and the website Expert Reviews (www.expertreviews.co.uk). This means we can test thousands of products before choosing the most relevant for Computeractive.

FAIR AND IMPARTIAL

Our writers follow strict guidelines to ensure the reviews are fair and impartial. The manufacturer has no involvement in our tests.

OUR AWARDS



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

extremely impressed by the product, and we think you will be too.



Every product that gets a four-star review is given the Great Pick award. We highly recommend these

products, although they just fail to meet the high standard of our Buy It! winners.

PRICES

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

VERDICT: Despite a few niggles, Samsung's latest tablet is simply superb



ALTERNATIVE: Asus Nexus 7 £199 This 7in tablet is cheaper but still well designed - ideal for smaller budgets



TABLET | £219 without contract from www.snipca.com/12880

Huawei MediaPad M18.0

The cheapest 4G tablet available

If you want a tablet with built-in 4G, then you almost always have to pay a large premium over a Wi-Fi-only model. The cheapest 4G iPad Mini 2, for example, costs £419 - £100 more than the equivalent Wi-Fi-only Mini. This makes the Huawei MediaPad M1 8.0 all the more remarkable - an Android 4G tablet that costs just £219 without a contract.

The M1 can be bought on pay as you go or on contract from O2. It's also available on contract from EE, which sells it as the Eagle.

Although the M1's metal and white plastic isn't quite as sturdy as it first appears - bending a little too easily under pressure - it still feels reasonably well-made. The only truly flimsy part of this tablet is the plastic rear panel which you need to remove to access the SIM and SD card slots.

ff The Huawei MediaPad M1 is merely OK at best ""

Annoyingly, Huawei has aped the design of the iPad Mini with very thin borders on the left- and right-hand sides of the screen (when held vertically). Unlike Apple's mini-tablet, the eight-inch screen isn't smart enough to recognise when you're resting your thumb on the screen and when you're actively pressing it. This means it's far too easy to accidentally press an onscreen control or scroll unintentionally.

The screen's image quality is merely okay at best. Its 1280x800 pixel resolution makes text look fuzzy. It's much worse than the sharper, higherresolution screens of the Asus Nexus 7

SPECIFICATIONS

8in 1280x800-pixel touchscreen • 1.6GHz HiSilicon Kirin 910 quad-core processor • 1GB memory • 16GB storage • micro SIM • micro SD • Android 4.2 Jelly Bean • 330g • 214x121x8mm (HxWxD) • One-year warranty www.snipca.com/12879

and iPad Mini 2 (see our reviews, Issues 407 and 416 respectively). It's reasonably bright, but colours look washed out.

Unusually for a 4G tablet, the M1 has both a microphone at the top of the screen and a phone app installed so you could make phone calls, although we felt very conspicuous doing so on such a large device. We would also avoid using the M1's camera unless it's the only camera to hand. Photos, even those taken in bright daylight, weren't very sharp and had lots of noise.

Huawei has used one of its own processors in the M1, the 1.6GHz quad-core HiSilicon Kirin 910, instead of the more common Qualcomm Snapdragon or Nvidia Tegra processors. It's not very impressive, though,

lagging far behind other mini tablets in our benchmark tests. The M1 sometimes stuttered when scrolling through long, complex websites or even when just using the Android 4.2 Jelly Bean interface. At least battery life is lengthy - it lasted 12 hours and 37 minutes when playing videos on a loop.

Huawei has modified the Android interface by removing the app drawer, so all your installed apps end up on your homescreens which means lots of clutter. It's not all bad though. You can use the 'do not disturb' feature to block all notifications, apart from calls and messages from your most important friends and family members, when you want some peace and quiet. There are also some useful apps pre-installed - Kingsoft Office for editing Office files and an app for wirelessly streaming media files stored on the M1 to a network media player or smart TV.



The Huawei MediaPad M1 is a merely OK tablet at best. Far too many compromises have been made to keep the price low while still including 4G. Unless you're on a tight budget, it's worth spending £80 more for the 4G version of the Asus Nexus 7. Although its battery life isn't as long, its screen and performance are much better.

VERDICT: Not a bad tablet, but the compromises made to keep the price low won't suit everyone



ALTERNATIVE: Asus Nexus 7 £299 The 4G version of this slightly smaller tablet is a little more expensive, but far superior in almost every way except battery life





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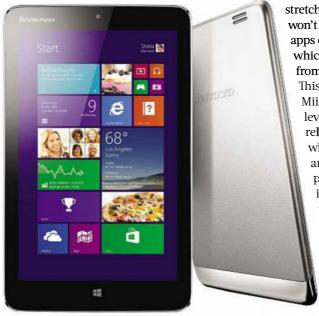


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Lenovo Miix 28

A cheap but classy-looking Windows 8 tablet



Many of the Windows 8 tablets we've seen so far have been thick, heavy and unattractive, but that's not the case with Lenovo's latest 8in tablet. The Miix 2 is wafer thin, weighs just 350g and has a sleek, appealing metallic appearance.

Unsurprisingly at this price, though, the Miix is actually made of plastic rather than metal. It's not too sturdy either the casing bent easily under pressure, revealing worrying gaps between its plastic seams.

Like most budget Windows 8 tablets, the Miix comes equipped with a quadcore Intel Atom processor. Although it's generally fast enough for running tablet apps, it becomes unusably slow if you have lots running simultaneously. This isn't helped by the meagre 2GB of memory which isn't enough to ensure good performance on a Windows tablet. Battery life is reasonable at nine hours nine minutes when playing videos on a loop, but other mini tablets last even longer.

You can run Desktop programs designed for older versions of Windows,

SPECIFICATIONS

8in 1280x800-pixel touchscreen • 1.33GHz Intel Atom Z3740 quad-core processor • 2GB memory • 32GB storage • Intel integrated graphics chip • Windows 8.1 • 350g • 8x132x216mm (HxWxD) • One-year warranty www.snipca.com/12912

stretching back to XP, but these won't run as well as more recent apps designed for touchscreens, which can be downloaded from Microsoft's app store. This is due in part to the Miix's mediocre performance levels, but also to its relatively small screen, which makes tapping menus and buttons in older programs fiddly. The screen itself is reasonably bright with accurate colours, but its low resolution of 1280x800 pixels means text looks fuzzy, which makes reading a strain on the eyes. Unusually for a

Windows 8 tablet,

there's no HDMI or MHL port for connecting a monitor, TV or projector. If you want to connect an external display, then you'll have to do so wirelessly using a Miracast-compatible smart TV or adapter. The Miix does have a microSD slot though. This is essential because only half of the built-in 32GB of storage is available for use, with the rest taken up by Windows. You can connect peripherals such as printers and USB sticks to the USB port using a USB-On-The-Go adapter (£6 from www.snipca.com/12913).

The Lenovo Miix 2 isn't a bad tablet and it is inexpensive, but so is the Asus Nexus 7. Unless you absolutely have to run older Windows programs or connect USB peripherals, the identically priced Nexus 7 is superior thanks to its higherresolution screen and longer battery life.

VERDICT: Inexpensive, but hampered by miserly storage, performance problems and a low-resolution screen



ALTERNATIVE: Asus Nexus 7 £170 A cheap 7in Android tablet with a superior screen and longer battery life



Weird... but useful

SAS Survival Guide

£4 from www.snipca. com/12884

This app version of a survival guide written by a former member of the special forces unit not only has



the original book, but also guizzes and videos to test and enhance your knowledge. It even has built-in tools such as a Morse code transmitter.

RailDriver Desktop Train Cab Controller

£179 from www.snipca.com/12886

A dedicated controller for train simulators, although it also works with other

highly technical games such as flight simulators. You can even

change the

labelling of its buttons and levers.

Brookstone the Perfect Drink

£60 from www.snipca.com/12887

A set of scales combines with an iOS or Android app to help you

pour accurate measures for cocktails and other tipples. Usefully, the app can suggest recipes based on what's in your drinks cabinet.



Sound Asleep

£11 from www.snipca. com/12888

A pillow with built-in speakers - simply connect your smartphone, MP3



player or other device and lull yourself to sleep with music, audiobooks or white noise.

AUDIO-CONVERSION SOFTWARE | £70 from www.snipca.com/12878

Magix Rescue Your Vinyl & Tapes 2014

An easy way to convert cassettes and LPs into MP3s

Software that lets you use your PC to convert the music on your old LPs and cassette tapes into MP3 files has been around for years. Magix has been making programs like this since 2008, and the last one we reviewed was Magix's Rescue Your Vinvl & Tapes 4 back in Issue 380. The new 2014 version not only has to be the easiest ever to entice people who've been put off before, but it must also have enough new useful features to attract owners of previous versions.

Included in the box is an adapter for connecting your cassette or record player to your computer. There are phono sockets for the player, while the adapter itself connects to your computer over USB. All the necessary cables are included. Although the adapter feels cheap, it worked perfectly with our old Bush record and cassette deck.

The adapter works with both moving magnet and moving coil turntables. You'll need to find out which kind of turntable you have and flip the corresponding switch on the adapter because it will affect the quality of the sound recording. If in doubt, try Moving Magnet first as that kind of turntable is more common. Annoyingly, the adapter doesn't come

ff Using the adapter, the software records music in real time ""

with any documentation so we had to figure this out ourselves.

Using the adapter, the software records your music in real time, so seven hours of music will take seven hours to record. Once that chore is done, using the software is straightforward. You can edit the recording and add metadata and tags. You can burn the finished tracks to CD, save them in a variety of music file formats or upload them to websites such as SoundCloud, YouTube and Facebook - copyright permitting.

Although the adapter remains unchanged from previous versions, the



software has been updated. Instead of manually editing recordings as before, you can use the improved pre-sets to remove hiss, crackles and pops with a single click but without affecting sound quality. These can be applied to an entire album, a specific track or even just a particular part of a track where the LP had suffered more scratches. If the pre-sets don't do the job, there are wizards which analyse your recordings and then walk you through the process of editing them. There are also new pre-sets which do a surprisingly good job of mimicking the sound of a certain genre or period, such as Fifties big band or Eighties American pop, although this is a bit gimmicky.

The other big new feature is outside the program's traditional focus on vinyl and tape conversion - it can now edit recordings made on smartphones. There are pre-sets for removing distracting background noises, such as crowds or phone alarms, from your recordings and

SPECIFICATIONS

Windows XP or later • 1GHz processor or faster • 1GB of memory minimum • 1GB of free hard-drive space • 1024x768 resolution monitor or higher • 16-bit sound card www.snipca.com/12876

for boosting the volume of recordings. The latter should be used sparingly though, because it often adds a lot of hiss. These editing features work well, but unless you frequently use your phone for recording concerts or interviews, they are unlikely to see much use.

Magix Rescue Your Vinyl 2014 is a great package if you're just starting out on converting your tape or LP collection, but if you're already well into this task, then there's not enough here to tempt you to upgrade from an older version or to switch from a rival program.

VERDICT: A generally well designed package, but documentation could be better and some of the new features only have narrow appeal



ALTERNATIVE: Honestech Audio Recorder 3.0 Plus £40 A competing

audio-recording and conversion program that comes with a USB tape player



New products tested by our experts

LED TV | £519 from www.snipca.com/12812

Sony KDL-42W705B

Sony's superb 42in TV

Like all TV manufacturers Sony is making a big fuss about 4K as the future of television, but 4K TVs are far too expensive and there's little suitable content to watch anyway. It makes much more sense to buy a 1080p HD TV such as Sony's 42in KDL-42W705B.

The 42W705B is impressively stylish for a TV at this price. It's so thin that Sony couldn't even fit the power supply inside; it uses an external power brick instead. The pencil-thin metal stand looks great when sat on a tabletop, but can also be flipped around and used as a basic wall mount, saving you the cost of an expensive bracket.

There are still plenty of connections on the back despite the thin dimensions, including four HDMI ports, two USB connectors as well as component, SCART, digital optical audio and phono ports. It even has both Freeview HD and satellite tuners. Disappointingly, the satellite tuner isn't Freesat-compatible, but you will receive most of the same channels.

You'll also want to connect the TV to your home network (using either the Ethernet port or integrated Wi-Fi) in order to get the most from Sony's smart-TV features. Pressing the Home key on the remote opens a full-screen menu with icons for the Video, Music and Apps screens as well as an EPG. Music and Video contain Sony's own Music Unlimited and Video Unlimited streaming services, as well as any of your own content from your networked computers or NAS devices. The Apps page contains on-demand and catch-up video services, including Netflix, BBC iPlayer, Demand Five and YouTube. Unlike Samsung smart TVs, it doesn't have all the terrestrial TV catch-up services, or as many movie-streaming services, but it's not too far behind.

SPECIFICATIONS

42in LED TV • 1920x1080-pixel resolution • 4x HDMI •2x USB2 •1x component •1x composite •1x SCART • 1x Ethernet • Wi-Fi • Freeview HD • 600x108x126mm • 12kg • One-year warranty www.snipca.com/12813



Regardless of what you watch on it, the 42W705B produces an excellent picture, with accurate colours, plenty of detail and a bright image. Darker scenes appeared slightly grey at the edges of the screen rather than black, but tweaking the picture settings helped reduce this effect.

If you'd rather avoid fiddling with the settings as much as possible then there are plenty of preset picture settings to choose from, including General, Cinema, Sports, Music, Photo, Game and Live Football. The Cinema setting provides the best video quality, delivering a faithful picture that doesn't overwhelm you with over-saturated colours unlike some of the other presets.

We weren't impressed with the LED Motion Mode setting, which inserts extra frames into your videos to give the illusion of a smoother picture. It dims the brightness too much and makes brightly lit scenes flicker, which looks distracting. However, Sony's Reality Creation feature is a welcome addition: it can both sharpen and smooth out standard-definition content, giving the impression of more detail. It even works some magic on 1080p HD video, making some textures and facial features like hair and skin look more detailed and realistic. The only thing missing is 3D support you'll have to pay extra for the 42W805B (£549 from www.snipca.com/12800) to get a Sony TV that plays 3D video. But if you think 3D is a gimmick, it's unlikely you'll miss it.

If you aren't fussed about 3D, then the KDL-42W705B is a superb-value TV with plenty of features and excellent image quality without you having to make too many changes in the picture settings. Samsung's TVs, such as the 32in UE32H6200 (see our review, Issue 427) have more streaming-video services, but Sony has the edge in terms of picture quality.

VERDICT: Superb picture quality and features make this a great-value TV

ALTERNATIVE: Samsung UE32H6200 £400 Cheaper with poorer picture quality, but has a wider selection of online services



LAPTOP | £849 from www.snipca.com/12807

Dell Inspiron 17-7737

A big, powerful metal monster of a laptop

If the Dell Inspiron 17-7737 looks familiar, it's because it's the bigger 17in version of the Inspiron 15 7000 reviewed back in Issue 420. Although this huge Windows 8.1 laptop isn't quite as fast as the admittedly more expensive Toshiba Satellite P50t-B-10k (see our review, page 29), it's still easily capable of replacing a desktop PC.

The 17-7737 is a thick, heavy laptop at 3.3kg which rises to a back-breaking 3.9kg when its charger is included. This is due to its robust metal construction, built-in DVD writer and large 17in screen. Although it's not the brightest screen we've seen, colour accuracy, contrast and viewing angles are all reasonably good. Plus, its large 1920x1080-pixel resolution means you can easily work on two documents side by side or on large spreadsheets without lots of scrolling.

The screen is touch-sensitive, but using an upright touchscreen for long periods will cause arm ache. There's no need to do so, though, because you can use the

SPECIFICATIONS

2GHz Intel Core i7 4510U dual-core processor • 16GB memory • 1TB hard drive • 2GB Nvidia GeForce GT 750M dedicated graphics chip • 17.3in touchscreen 1920x1080 pixels • 802.11a/b/g/n • Windows 8.1 • 3.3kg weight (3.9kg with charger) 26x412x270mm (HxWxD) • One-year warranty www.snipca.com/12808

same gestures on the large and accurate touchpad, such as swiping in from the left to switch between recently used apps. The laptop's large dimensions means

there's also enough space for a full-size number pad for fast data entry in spreadsheets. The large silver keys could do with darker lettering that stands out more, but the keys do have plenty of feedback and travel for comfortable, fast and accurate typing.

As expected, the 17-7737 is a very fast laptop thanks to its 2GHz dual-core Intel Core i7 4510U processor which is paired with a generous 16GB of memory. However, although the Satellite P50t only has half as much memory, it was a third faster in our image-editing test and almost 50 per cent quicker in our video-editing test because it has a faster quad-core processor. The 17-7737 is still powerful enough for most computing tasks though. Plus, it has the edge over the P50t when it comes to 3D graphics because its Nvidia GeForce GT 750M dedicated graphics chip is almost twice as fast as the Satellite's equivalent. Its biggest flaw is how long it takes to start and wake from sleep, lagging behind SSD-equipped laptops.

Battery life isn't great at just four hours and 17 minutes, but this isn't a serious flaw as this laptop's lumbering weight means it's too heavy for regular travel anyway. Disappointingly, Wi-Fi is 802.11n and not the faster 802.11ac standard, but you can always plug an 802.11ac USB adapter into one of the four USB3 ports.

The Dell Inspiron 17-7737 is a powerful and well-made laptop. There are even faster alternatives, but overall it's good value if you want a speedy laptop with a big screen.

VERDICT: A fast, stylish and well-made laptop to replace your desktop PC



ALTERNATIVE: Chillblast Defiant Mini £899 A smaller screen, but an even faster performance and the option of Windows 7, too



WHAT SHOULD I BUY? We solve your buying dilemmas

What's the best scanner with an automatic feeder?

I am looking for a scanner that can automatically scan multiple documents without me having to individually load each page or individually initiate each scan. Sometimes I need a separate PDF for each page I scan and sometimes I require a single PDF for a document consisting of several pages.

Is there a scanner you can recommend that meets my particular requirements?

Peter Creasey

Some scanners have an automatic document feeder. or ADF, built in. This lets you scan multiple pages unattended, but the various options for saving scans as PDF files depends on the software that comes with the scanner. The Canon Pixma MX535 MFP (£65 from www.snipca. com/12909) has a built-in ADF and can save multi-page documents as separate PDFs or a single PDF.

If you'll only be scanning documents, but not photos, or you work away from

home then it's worth considering the Fujitsu ScanSnap S1300i (£210 from www.snipca.com/12910). This portable

document

scanner also has a builtin ADF and its software can also do what you want.

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

CAMERA | £349 from www.snipca.com/12802

A beast of a camera with a 50x zoom

Sony Cyber-shot DSC-HX400V

The Sony HX400V camera is pretty big, about the same size and weight as a budget digital SLR. But it also has lots of attention-grabbing features. There's a 50x zoom lens and a 20-megapixel sensor, 1080p video recording at frame rates up to 60 frames per second (fps), a hinged screen, an electronic eyepiece, Wi-Fi, GPS and a mount for an external flash.

The plastic build quality could be better. The control dial that sits under your right thumb feels particularly cheap (like something out of a Christmas cracker) and it didn't rotate smoothly. The curvy contours mean it fits snugly in your hand, while the 50x zoom is great for sports and wildlife photography, which require fast performance so you don't miss the crucial moment. The HX400V can capture 10 shots a second, but then takes 12 frustrating seconds to save them, during which time you can't use the camera. There's an alternative mode that takes two shots per second, but after 10 shots this still takes 12 seconds to save them. Both modes show captured shots on the screen or in the eyepiece, rather than using a live preview of what you're seeing, which makes tracking moving subjects virtually impossible.

We like cameras that appeal to all types of photographers and can turn novices into enthusiasts. The HX400V caters well for casual users with a sophisticated automatic mode that employs various advanced shooting techniques to improve



More experienced users will appreciate the quick access to 12 key settings via the Function button at the top of the camera. There's also a Custom button, but it's worth re-assigning this from its default EV Compensation function as there's a dedicated button for this on the back. Twisting the lens adjusts the zoom, except in manual focus mode, when it adjusts focus instead - a nice touch.

Image quality is generally up to scratch but it's let down by the clarity of details. This is partly because 50x zooms rarely

deliver sharp focus at maximum zoom, although surprisingly

> the HX400V fares reasonably well in this respect. It's more down to the use of a small sensor - it's the same size as sensors used in far cheaper budget compact cameras. This results in photos with a lot of noise, especially those taken in low light. It can also cause problems when zooming in or capturing scenes with shady areas. The

resulting photos looked fine at first, but cropping the photos on a computer showed lots of image flaws. Videos looked much better than photos, with the optical stabilisation keeping footage steady even at the full 50x zoom.

The Sony Cyber-shot DSC-HX400V isn't a terrible camera, but the mixed performance and grainy photo quality means it isn't the well-balanced all-rounder we were hoping for.

SPECIFICATIONS

RONY

20-megapixel sensor • 50x zoom (24-1200mm) • 3in hinged screen • electronic eyepiece • accepts SD, SDHC, SDXC and Memory Stick Pro Duo storage cards • 660g • 95x128x115mm (HxWxD) • One-year warranty www.snipca.com/12803

VERDICT: Lots of impressive features, but image quality and performance could be better



ALTERNATIVE: Panasonic Lumix

DMC-TZ60 £320 Lots of features including a 30x zoom, all packed into a pocketsized camera









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- * Chillblast won more awards in the leading IT press publications PC Pro, PC Advisor and Computer Shopper combined than any other retailer 2010-2013 ** World's fastest PC as tested by PC Pro Magazine http://www.pcpro.co.uk/reviews/desktops/371152/chillblast-fusion-photo-oc-iv

NAS | £56 from www.snipca.com/12810

Connected Data Transporter Sync

Create your own Dropbox with as much storage as you want

The Connected Data Transporter Sync is an alternative to cloud services such as Dropbox. Plug a USB hard drive into the Sync, then connect it to your router and you'll be able to access your files from any computer with internet access.

The Transporter Sync appeals to us because USB storage is cheaper than cloud storage in the long run - a 1TB USB desktop drive costs just £45, while 1TB of Google Drive space costs \$120 (£71) a year. Remote access technology is nothing new - it's a common feature in NAS devices - but the Transporter Sync is far easier to set up than any NAS we've tested.

Once you plug a USB drive into the Sync, it's automatically reformatted into a proprietary format. This means you can't use a disk already filled with the files you want to access, which is very inconvenient. Reformatting took about an hour for our 1TB USB drive, which is too long.

There's no need to fiddle with router settings as is often necessary with NAS devices. You will need to create an account on Connected Data's website and then install apps on your devices - there are apps for Windows, Mac OS X, iOS, Android and Kindle Fire.

Under Windows and Mac OS X, the Sync's drive appears not as another drive or as a server, but as a special Sync folder. Any files in this folder are automatically copied onto your other Windows PCs and Macs, space permitting on their internal drives, and can all be accessed even without an internet connection. If you want, you can also automatically copy the contents of other folders, such as Music and Photos, to the Sync folder.

SPECIFICATIONS

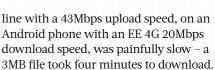
Accepts one USB hard drive • 1x Gigabit Ethernet port • Requires broadband internet connection • Compatible with Windows 7 or later, Mac OS X 10.7 or later, Android 4 or later, Kindle Fire and iOS 5.1 or later •50x100x100 mm (HxWxD) • One-Year warranty www.snipca.com/12811

Inside the Sync folder is another folder called Library. Any files in the Library folder aren't automatically copied onto your other computers so you'll need internet access to view them. It's a confusing distinction, especially as it doesn't apply when you're using a mobile device all files, whether in the Sync or Library folders, can only be accessed if you are online. This wouldn't be so bad if it wasn't for the mobile app's inability to save specific files for offline viewing.

ff The Transporter Sync is a great idea, but hard to recommend **99**

The iOS and Android apps are very crude, especially compared to the apps for cloud storage services such as Dropbox. With the Desktop apps you can create a link for your files so you can share them with others - an option unavailable in the mobile apps. Bizarrely, you can't sort the file list, preview the contents of a file, upload files or download a folder with a single tap. The workaround for the latter is to open the folder, select all the files inside and then download them all. You can't even stop a download once you've started it, which is especially annoying if you've accidentally started downloading a very large file.

The speed with which you can access your files obviously depends on both the upload speed of your home broadband connection as well as the download speed of the connection for your remote device. Even so, accessing files from our Sync, which was connected to a cable



Copying files to a Sync disk in the first place isn't fast either. When using a laptop connected to the Sync through a dual-band 802.11n network, it only managed a glacial 1.4MB/s overall for large files and an even slower 0.9MB/s for small files - equivalent to an old USB1.1 drive.

The Transporter Sync is a great idea and is almost painless to set up, but it's hard to recommend. Even if you have terabytes of data you want to access remotely, the slow performance, rubbish mobile apps and the needlessly confusing distinction between Sync and Library is very off-putting. If you really want remote access to your files without using cloud storage services, we'd recommend using a NAS such as the Synology DS213j instead (see our review, Issue 404). It's a bit more fiddly to set up, but in the long run it's far less hassle.

VERDICT: Easy to set up and inexpensive remote access, but slow and fiddly to use



ALTERNATIVE: Synology DiskStation DS213j £163 A NAS enclosure with a remote-access feature that's useful and easy to set up





LAPTOP | £1,200 from www.snipca.com/12804

Toshiba Satellite P50t-B-10K

A powerful laptop with a huge resolution screen

Some of the most powerful laptops available now come with super high-resolution screens which produce text that's so sharp it looks like a printed page. Plus, they allow you to see incredibly fine details in photos and videos. The 15in Toshiba Satellite P50t-B-10K has the highest resolution screen yet - it's the first laptop available with a 4K resolution of 3840x2160 pixels. This is more than twice the resolution of 1080p laptop screens.

However, while Windows 8.1 Update 1 works just fine with such a highresolution screen, many Windows programs and browsers still don't. In Chrome or Adobe Photoshop, for example, text is unreadably small or appears jagged. This wouldn't be so bad if image quality is top-notch, but colour accuracy is merely okay. The grainy sheen, mediocre contrast and lack of brightness compared to other super high-resolution laptops is disappointing.

We strongly suspect the powerhungry display was responsible for the P50t's short battery life of just three hours in our light-usage test. This is disappointing, but it's not a fatal flaw. The P50t weighs 2.4kg, rising to an arm-aching 3kg with its charger, so it's unlikely you'll use it out and about often. But if you do use it outside, then it will turn heads because the metal lid and wrist-rest are eye-catching.

The P50t is powerful enough to take the place of a desktop PC. Its 2.4GHz quad-core Intel Core i7 4700HQ processor, which can temporarily increase its speed to 3.4GHz, is very fast and sped through our benchmark tests. The AMD Radeon R9 M265X

SPECIFICATIONS

2.4GHz Intel Core i7 4700HQ quad-core processor • 8GB memory • 1TB hard drive • AMD Radeon R9 M265X dedicated graphics chip • 15.6in screen 3840x2160 pixels • 802.11ac/a/b/q/n • Windows 8.1 • 2.4kg weight (3kg with charger) • 28x378x244mm (HxWxD) • One-year warranty www.snipca.com/12805



dedicated graphics chip can play graphically detailed games and 4K video with ease. The underside can become uncomfortably warm, though.

Unusually for a laptop, a Blu-ray writer is built in. Rarer still is its support for 100GB Blu-ray discs, but these discs are very hard to find. Alternatively, you can plug external hard drives into the four USB3 ports.

The keyboard is one of the best we've used - the large keys have plenty of travel and feedback for comfortable, fast typing. The touchpad is flawed, though. If often lagged behind our finger swipes, while its buttons required a firm, precise press.

The Toshiba Satellite P50t-B-10K is an exceptionally fast and well-equipped laptop, but its 4K screen is an unnecessary luxury as long as Windows software support remains immature and lacklustre. Even if you have the money, this laptop is a curiosity rather than a must-have.

VERDICT: A fast and well-equipped laptop, but the 4K screen is more bother than it's worth



ALTERNATIVE: Apple MacBook Pro

Retina 13in £1099 Not quite 4K, but a highresolution screen and a better range of software to take advantage of it



COMING SOON

SEPTEMBER 2014

The Motorola Moto 360, one of the first smartwatches to use Google's Android Wear operating system, has been announced. Due out this summer, the 360 will apparently support wireless charging.



SEPTEMBER 2014

Rumours suggest the iPhone 6 will come in two sizes - 4.7in and 5.5in, with the smaller model released first. The screens will allegedly have a resolution of 1704x960 pixels and a scratch-proof sapphire coating.

AUTUMN 2014

The latest leaks say the Nexus 9 tablet, the HTC-made successor to the Nexus 7, will have a whopping 5GB of memory and a 2560x1440-pixel 9in screen.



DECEMBER 2014

Microsoft has announced a range of budget Windows laptops to rival Chromebooks. The HP Stream will be followed by models from Acer and Toshiba. They will cost \$249 in the US, with UK pricing to be confirmed.

NEXTISSUE

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Google Glass

The Androidcompatible wearable computer

Dell Inspiron 15 5000

Dell's budget 15in laptop

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LAPTOP

Apple MacBook Air 13in 128GB

£849 from www.snipca.com/10020 Tested: Issue 402



Apple's latest MacBook Air isn't cheap, but it's the best lightweight laptop available. It has excellent battery life, a comfortable keyboard, a sensibly sized screen, a sturdy and classy build and great bundled software.

ALTERNATIVE: Dell Chromebook 11 A

Chrome OS ultra-portable laptop with good battery life and a great keyboard. £179 from www.snipca.com/12413

DESKTOP PC

Palicomp AMD Kaveri **Evolution**

£500 from www.snipca.com/11804

Tested: Issue 422



A budget PC with a fast overclocked processor. It also has good upgrade potential and comes with a surprisingly good 24in monitor, as well as a quality USB keyboard and mouse.

ALTERNATIVE: Braebo Hemera A cheap complete PC system that's powerful enough for basic tasks. £350 from www.snipca.com/12606

TABLET

Asus Nexus 7

£170 from www.snipca.com/12922

Tested: Issue 407



An excellent budget 7in Android tablet with a high-resolution screen and good battery life. It's not quite as cheap as the original Nexus 7 and Android still needs more high-quality tablet apps, but it's still a fantastic bargain.

ALTERNATIVE: Apple iPad Air A lightweight 10in tablet with an excellent screen and peerless selection of apps. £399 from www.snipca.com/10545

PHONE

Motorola Moto G

£160 without contract from www.snipca.com/12924

Tested: Issue 413



Motorola's budget Android smartphone is a steal. It's responsive, well made, fast and has a good screen. It's better than many phones at twice the price.

ALTERNATIVE: Apple iPhone 5s An excellent smartphone with a fingerprint scanner, a great-quality camera and very fast performance. £549 without a contract from www.snipca.com/10171

DIGITAL CAMERA

Panasonic Lumix DMC-GF6

£300 from www.snipca.com/12607 Tested: Issue 405



This compact interchangeable lens camera is small and reasonably priced, yet it has well-designed controls, a wide range of available lenses and shoots excellent quality photos. The GF6 really is unbeatable value.

ALTERNATIVE: Fujifilm XF1 If you don't need the flexibility of removable lenses, this slim compact is a great choice. £130 from www.snipca.com/11115

E-READER

Kobo Aura

£119 from www.snipca.com/12147 Tested: Issue 410



A great e-reader with an easy-to-read lit touchscreen that can be tweaked extensively through its settings. There's no 3G version for downloading books on the go, but, unlike the Amazon Kindle, you can buy ebooks from independent retailers that use the ePub format.

ALTERNATIVE: Amazon Kindle

Paperwhite (2013) An e-reader with a brilliant screen and some useful features. £109 from www.snipca.com/10532



SECURITY SOFTWARE

Kaspersky

Internet Security 2014 £23 from www.snipca.com/12054 Tested: Issue 425



The best malware protection suite for the second year running also has good parental controls and the ability to create a rescue disc for emergencies. Click the link above for a 3-device licence, or buy a 1-device licence on our Software Store for just £17.99 (www.snipca.com/11134).

ALTERNATIVE: Norton Internet Security 2014 Great antivirus software, but sometimes blocks legitimate software. £34 from www.snipca.com/11279

PHOTO EDITING

Adobe Photoshop Lightroom 5 £99 from www.snipca.com/12926 Tested: Issue 402



Lightroom is a consistently elegant, powerful and fast photo-management program packed with sophisticated features. If you want to keep on top of your photos and make them look great, there's no better software to do it with.

ALTERNATIVE: Adobe Photoshop Elements 12 A fast and polished photo-editing program with excellent advanced editing tools. £50 from www.snipca.com/12739

PC MONITOR

Dell UltraSharp U2412M £200 from www.snipca.com/12740

Tested: Issue 378



An exquisite monitor with superb image quality, an adjustable stand, a high resolution and even a built-in USB hub. It costs a little more than other monitors, but it's money well spent. It's easily the best value monitor we've seen and is the one by which all others are judged.

ALTERNATIVE: AOC i2360PHU A goodquality budget 23in monitor that's easily adjustable and has a built-in USB2 hub, too. £155 from www.snipca.com/12927

SECURITY CAMERA

Y-cam HomeMonitor HD £147 from www.snipca.com/11646 Tested: Issue 420



A home-security camera that's well priced and easy to set up. Plus, it has great picture quality, useful apps and there's no need to subscribe to any extra services. It's a worthy successor to the original HomeMonitor, our previous favourite security camera.

ALTERNATIVE: D-Link Wireless-N Day & Night Camera A good-value security camera with excellent night vision. £90 from www.snipca.com/12741

ROUTER

Trendnet TEW-812DRU £68 from www.snipca.com/12609



An incredibly fast 802.11ac router that's also one of the cheapest we've seen. It's superb and the router to buy if you're ready to make the jump to 802.11ac. It's easy to set up, too.

ALTERNATIVE: Linksys WRT1900AC More expensive, but even faster and with loads of features, too. £235 from www.snipca.com/12610

NAS

Synology DiskStation DS213i

£160 from www.snipca.com/10575 Tested: Issue 404



This NAS enclosure has it all - fast performance, easy configuration and plenty of extra features. It's not perfect - disk installation is a little fiddly and it's a little pricey – but there are few other NAS devices we would rather buy.

ALTERNATIVE: Synology DS414j A four-drive NAS that's generally fast and easy to set up and use too. £258 from www.snipca.com/12545



WEB DESIGN

Serif WebPlus X7

£84 from www.snipca.com/12338 Tested: Issue 414



WebPlus X7 is one of the best programs available for designing a website without having to write a line of code. It comes with lots of templates, with more available for purchase if you need them. It also has lots of specialist tools for building a small business website.

ALTERNATIVE: Jimdo Pro This browserbased program for creating websites is slick and feature packed, but lacking in high-quality templates. £60 a year from www.jimdo.com/pricing

SMART TV

Samsung UE32H6200

£405 from www.snipca.com/12490 Tested: Issue 427



A stylish 32in smart TV with great picture quality and apps for all the terrestrial TV catch-up services. It has plenty of extras, too, such as recording-to-USB storage, 3D, playing media files stored on a NAS or USB stick, and plenty of HDMI ports.

ALTERNATIVE: Sony KDL-42W705B Excellent image quality, stylish looks and a 42in screen. £519 from www. snipca.com/12931

MULTIFUNCTION PRINTER

Canon Pixma MG4250

£50 from www.snipca.com/12457 Tested: Issue 382



This budget multifunction printer (MFP) isn't the fastest available, but it's cheap to buy and inexpensive to run. Just as importantly, both prints and scans look great. Unless you need faster print speeds or separate ink tanks for each colour, this MFP is the one to buy.

ALTERNATIVE: Canon Pixma MX535

A MFP aimed at small offices with duplex, ADF and fax, but also good photo print quality. £65 from www. snipca.com/12909

SOLID-STATE DRIVE

Crucial MX100512GB

£151 from www.snipca.com/12743 Tested: Issue 427



A blindingly fast, high-capacity SSD at a remarkably low price. If you've been put off buying a SSD because of the cost, then now is finally the time to take the plunge. It's far faster than any hard drive and is one of the best upgrades you can fit to your computer.

ALTERNATIVE: Crucial M550 SSD 1TB

If you need a bigger SSD, this fast 1TB model is great value. £306 from www. snipca.com/12932

EXTERNAL HARD DISK

Western Digital My Passport Ultra 1TB

£55 from www.snipca.com/11908 Tested: Issue 307, Computer Shopper



The My Passport Ultra 1TB is a very fast USB3 portable hard drive that's very keenly priced. It comes bundled with backup software, although it can be clunky to use.

ALTERNATIVE: Toshiba StorE Canvio 500GB Not as good value or as fast, but it does come with better bundled software. £38 from www.snipca. com/12459

HOMEPLUGS

TP-Link AV500 Nano Powerline Adapter Starter Kit (TL-PA4010KIT)

£25 from www.snipca.com/10742 Tested: Issue 395



TP-Link's tiny Homeplug adapters are a great choice, especially if socket space is at a premium or you don't want to block an adjacent socket. Despite their low price, they're also very fast making them great value.

ALTERNATIVE: Devolo dLAN 500

AVPlus Starter Kit These fast Homeplug adapters can block adjacent sockets, but they do have a passthrough socket. £87 from www.snipca.com/12933



OFFER OF THE FORTNIGHT

Kaspersky Internet Security 2014

Since January 3,426 Computeractive readers have bought this antivirus software, which has won our past two security group tests.

You'll be able to upgrade to Kaspersky Internet Security 2015 for free when it's released later this year.

In addition to the regular anti-malware protection, the suite includes:

- ✓ Real-time protection against the latest internet and PC threats
- ✓ Identity protection to secure your data while online shopping and banking
- ✓ Anti-phishing to prevent cybercriminals from collecting your personal data
- ✓ Full support from Windows XP through to Windows 8.1

Includes a 1-PC, 1-year licence. Multi-PC, multi-year options available. Supplied as a download. *Computeractive* readers can choose to add an installation/bootable system restore CD during the order process.

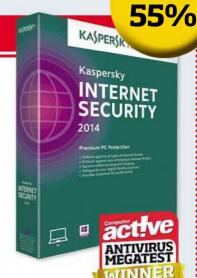
NOW ONLY £17.99

Normally £39.99

WINNER OF THE PAST 2 COMPUTERACTIVE ANTIVIRUS TESTS

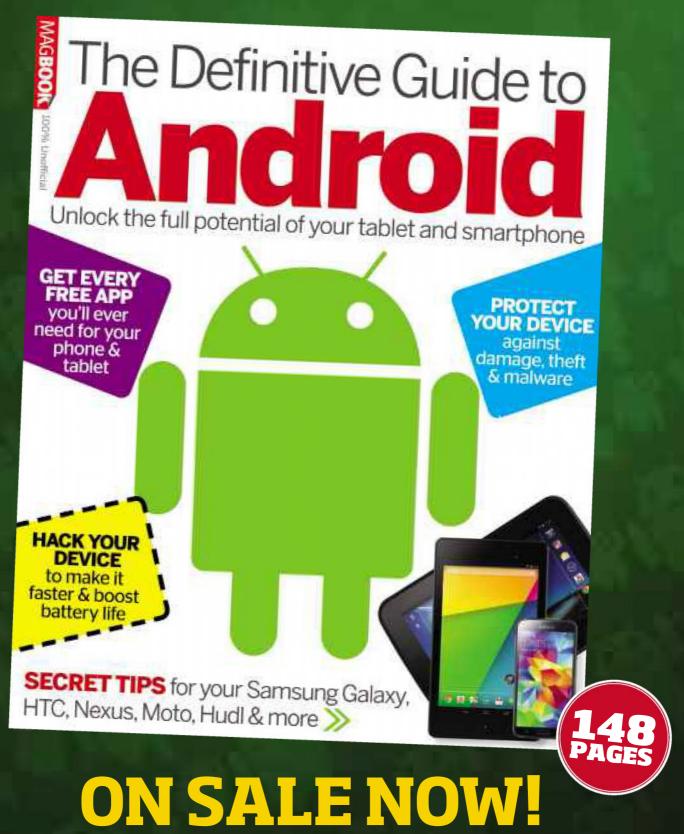
Issue 415, 22 January 2014 & Issue 425, 11 June 2014

Find this offer and more at http://store.computeractive.co.uk



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Workshops & Tips





14 pages of easy-to-follow workshops and expert tips

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PLUS

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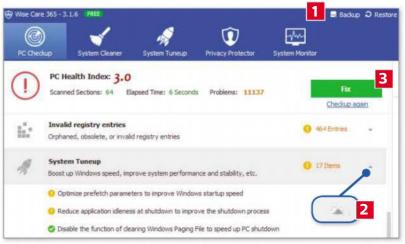
Fix problems that CCleaner can't

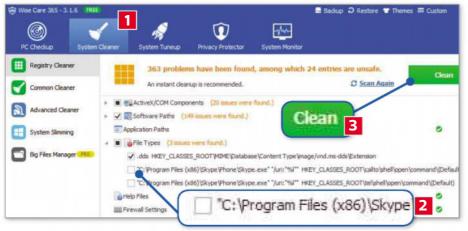
What you need: Wise Care 365; Windows XP, Vista, 7, 8 or 8.1 Time required: 60 minutes

he latest free version of Wise L Care 365 claims to find and fix more problems than CCleaner, one of our highest-rated PCmaintenance programs. Wise Care 365 is a sophisticated but easy-to-use program that includes numerous tools for clearing out the junk that slows down and clogs up your PC. Its tools include a defragmenter, a file-shredder and a Startup Manager that lets you see and disable the programs that slow down your PC when you start it.



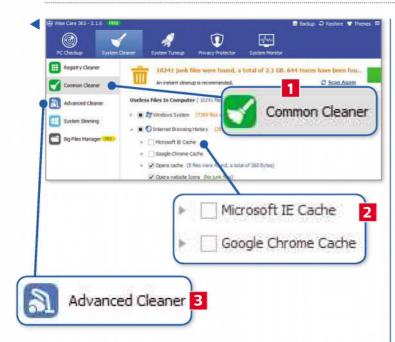
Go to www.snipca.com/12821 and click Download. On the page that opens, click the green Download Now button. Open the setup file, click Yes, Next, 'I accept the agreement', Next (twice) and Install. Untick 'View the introduce and released log' and click Finish to launch Wise Care 365. Before you run its powerful one-click maintenance tool (PC Checkup, which opens by default), create a restore point so you can undo all changes. Click Backup , 'Create a system restore point' and click OK. Now click Checkup to let Wise Care scan your PC for performance and stability problems. In the list of results, click the small arrows on the right to see more information 2. Click Fix 3 to let Wise Care fix all the problems automatically.



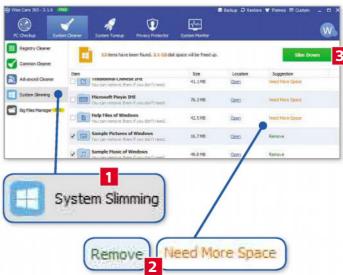


STEP Wise Care 365 has four main cleaning tools that optimise your PC in different ways. Click System Cleaner 1 to open these in a lefthand menu. Registry Cleaner is selected by default. Click Scan to scan your Registry for errors. In the list of results, click the grey arrow to the left of an item to open a list of problem files. Untick any files or folders you don't want to remove 2 Click Clean 3 to delete all the ticked files. Be aware that removing files from your Registry can stop Windows running properly, so be very cautious.

Workshops



Click Common Cleaner and click Scan to scan for system cache files, browser history files and other junk on your PC. In the list of results, untick any files or folders that you don't want to remove and click Clean to delete all the ticked files in one go. Click Advanced Cleaner and click Scan to run a deeper scan for leftover files and traces that Common Cleaner didn't find. Untick items that you don't want to delete, then click Clean.



The fourth System Cleaner tool, System Slimming, frees up space by deleting items you don't need, such as Windows sample pictures that came pre-installed on your computer. Click System Slimming and click Scan. This time, each item has a brief description beneath it. The Suggestion column coffers advice on what you should do with each item, such as Remove. Tick items that you want to remove. Above the list, Wise Care reveals how much space you'll free up by removing your ticked items. Click Slim Down to delete them from your PC.

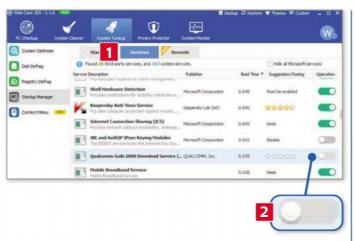


The System Tuneup tool aims to speed up your PC and your internet. Click System Tuneup, Clean, then Optimize to let Wise Care automatically boost your selected items. To boost your system further, click Disk Defrag 1 to defragment your hard drive. This may take a few hours, so tick 'Shut Down after disk defrag' 2 and leave the tool running after you go to bed. Wise Care 365 will now shut down your PC when it's finished. The Disk Defrag tool also lets you optimise or analyse your hard drive. Click Defragment 1 then click Full Optimization or Analyze in the dropdown menu.

For an even more thorough defrag, click Registry Defrag 1. Close any open programs first, then click Analyze to run a scan. Your PC may slow down and the screen may dim slightly while this scan is running, but this stops when the scan ends. After the scan you'll be shown your 'optmization rate' 2 and advice on whether to defragment your Registry. If a defrag is recommended, click Defragment 3. Click Yes to confirm that you want to reboot your PC after defragging.



Fix problems that CCleaner can't



If lots of programs are set to run automatically when STEP you start your PC, your boot (startup) time will slow down. Wise Care's Startup Manager identifies these items, reveals how many seconds they add to your boot time and lets you stop them running. Click Startup Manager to see the list of programs, or click Services
☐ to see the system services that run at startup. Click the Boot Time column to sort them in order of seconds they add. Move the slider 2 beside any program to disable it at startup. Use the Suggestion/Rating beside each item for guidance. Don't disable any programs you haven't heard of.



Your hard drive may contain deleted files that can be **STEP** un-deleted by recovery software. To remove these files completely so that no-one can ever recover them, click Privacy Protector 1, click Disk Eraser at the left, tick the drives you want to scan then click Erase 2. Tick 'Shut down after disk erasing' 3 to shut down your PC automatically afterwards.



STEP You can also select individual files and folders to delete completely. This is useful for deleting files that contain your bank details, passwords or any other data that hackers want. Click File Shredder L click Add Files (or Add Folders), navigate to the file (or folder) that you want to add and click Open. There's also a built-in password generator that'll help you create passwords that can't easily be cracked by hackers. Click Password Generator 2, click inside the text box and type a combination of letters (upper-case and lowercase), numbers and symbols until the box above your password says Strong 3. Click 'Copy to Clipboard' to copy your new password for storing somewhere safe.



Themes

To find out your PC's specifications, such as the make and model number of your processor and motherboard, and which sound and graphics cards are installed, click System Monitor in the top menu then click Hardware Overview 1. Click one of the options below it to find out about your Processor, Mainboard (motherboard), Memory and so on. To personalise Wise Care, click Themes 2 and select a default colour or click one of the free options \blacksquare .

Workshops

Record everything you do on your PC

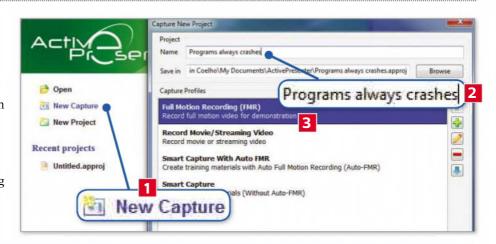
What you need: ActivePresenter; Windows XP, Vista, 7, 8 or 8.1 Time required: 30 minutes

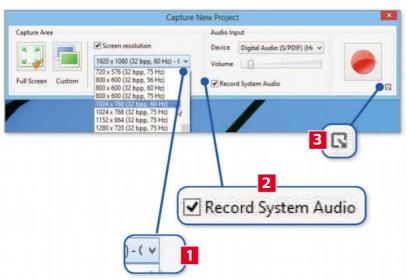
ctivePresenter is the best free $oldsymbol{\mathsf{H}}$ program to record everything you do on your PC. You can use it to create a video that illustrates a problem you're having with

Windows or a particular program. It lets you record the entire screen or just that portion of it you want, edit your video, and add a narration, captions, screenshots and more.



STEP To download ActivePresenter, go to www.atomisystems.com and click the green Download button under Free Edition. Click the setup file that downloads to your PC and follow the instructions to install and open it. You'll be greeted with a simple menu. To record a video, click New Capture 11 and name your project 2. There are four capture styles available. To record videos, click the first one - Full Motion Recording (FMR) and then click OK.

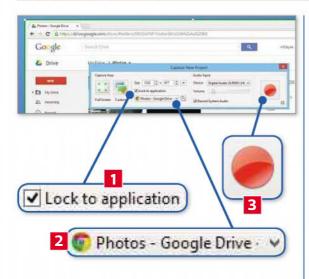


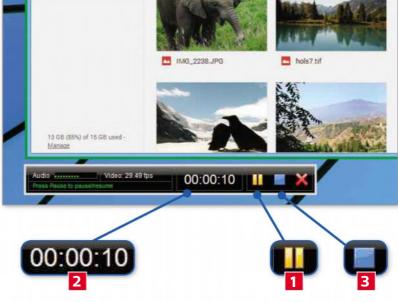


The software will capture everything that happens on your screen. By default, your video will be recorded at the same resolution as your PC but you should decrease this because a high resolution will result in large files. Click the dropdown menu 1 and select '1024 x 768 (32bpp, 60Hz)'. This is a good, clear video resolution. ActivePresenter will record any sounds your PC makes, but if you don't want this, or you plan to add your own narration later, untick Record System Audio 2. The small square under the red Record button provides access to advanced settings that let you customise your audio input.



By default, ActivePresenter records your **STEP** entire screen, but you can specify only a certain portion to record. To do this, click Custom **1.** A green border will appear around your screen indicating that's the area that will be recorded. If you can't see this border, click the target icon 2 and move it. To resize the recording area, click and drag any of the white square edges 3 on the green borders.



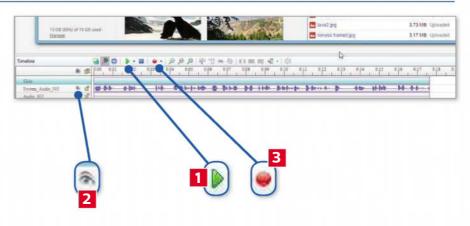


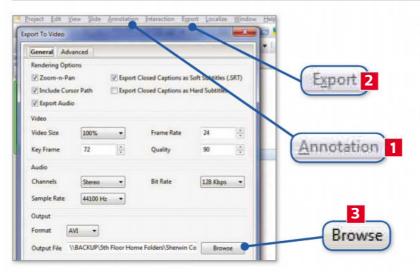
If you want to record only what's **STEP** happening within a particular program (such as a web browser or Google Drive), first open it. Next, tick the 'Lock to application' box 1, click the dropdown menu 2 and select the program. The green recording boundary will appear around it. Finally, click the Record button 3

Click Pause II if you need to pause the recording. If you've ticked STEP Record System Audio (see Step 2), confirm that the green Audio equaliser moves whenever your PC makes a sound. Keep an eye on the duration 2 as you don't want your video to be too long. Ideally, try to keep your recording to under 30 seconds to keep the video file small. After you've finished recording, click Stop 3. The ActivePresenter window will open to let you edit and save your file.

Click Play on the timeline to STEP watch your recording. The different audio and video layers (at the bottom left) can be hidden or locked. If you decide you don't want system sounds playing, for example, click the eye next to System_Audio 2. Click the small record button 3 to activate your microphone letting you record a voiceover. The video-properties pane on the top right (not in screenshot) provides details about the recording.

to start recording.





ActivePresenter lets you add shapes, text, highlights, spotlights, gesture effects (such as single or double clicks) and more. Click Annotation ■ and select what you want to add. When you've finished editing your project, you'll need to save it as a video file. To do this, click Export 2 then Video. Though you can save the video in different formats, leave it as the default AVI format as that's the most compatible. Click the Browse button 3 to change where you want to save the video, click Save and then click OK. Finally, click Yes to play your edited video.

Workshops

Update your contact lists automatically

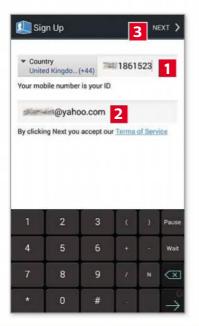
What you need: ContactBox; Android phone or iPhone Time required: 20 minutes

ontactBox is a new free app that lets ■ you create and share contact lists with anyone you want. When one user updates a contact's details, they are automatically updated across the contact lists of everyone in the group.

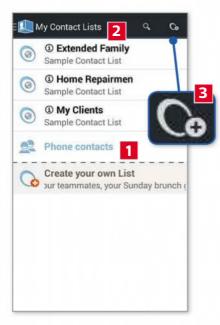
We used two Android phones in this Workshop but the app is also available for iPhones. Download the Android app from www.snipca.com/12835 and the iOS app from www.snipca. com/12836.

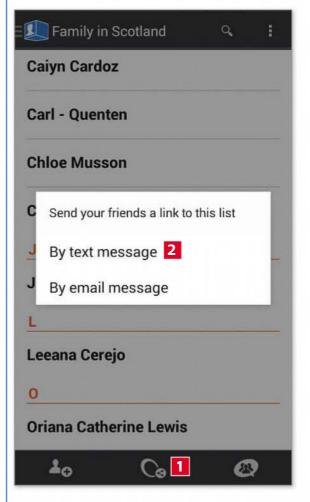


STEP Open the app and tap Start. To register your account, type your phone number 1, your email address 2 and then tap Next **3**. You'll now receive a four-digit code via text message. Type the code in the next screen and tap Continue to validate it. If you don't receive the code, tap the 'Didn't get the code? Help' link and follow the instructions. Swipe right to follow the app's tutorial or tap Skip.

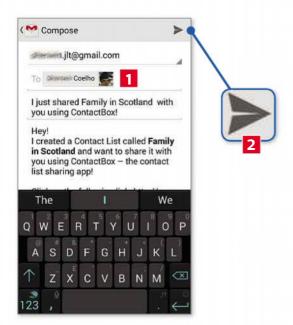


STEP When the app opens you'll see three default contact lists (Extended Family, Home Repairmen and My Clients). Tap 'Phone contacts' 11 to see your Gmail contacts. To create your own contact list, tap My Contact Lists 2 or the icon at the top right **3**. Give your list a title and then tap Next. To add contacts to this list, tap the Add icon at the bottom left and then tap 'Copy from Address Book'. Tap the search bar and start typing to bring up autosuggest options. Tap to tick the contacts you want to add to your list, then tap Done.



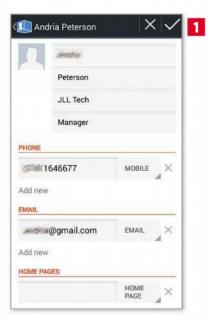


To share your contact list by text message, STEP tap the Share icon **1**, then tap 'By text message' 2. Start typing the names of contacts you want to send the list to and tap the relevant autosuggest options. Once you've done that, tap Next to insert an automated text message with a link. Tap the Send icon in your text-message app.



To share your contact list via email, tap 'By **STEP** email message'. Start typing addresses and tick the boxes beside the auto suggestions.

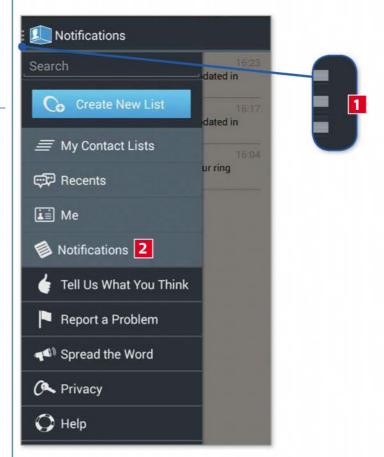
Tap Next, then select the email app you want to use. Add more recipients if you want in the To field 1. You can also delete contacts from here. Now tap Send 2 within your email app (in this case Gmail).



To update the details for an individual **STEP** contact within the list, open the contact list, tap the contact's name, then the Pen icon at the top right. Update the contact's details by typing them in. Scroll to the bottom and tap '+Add field' to see more options (Gender, Nickname, Job Title, Birthday, etc). After making the changes, tap the tick 11 then OK to confirm you want the changes to be synced to everyone with access to this list.



Ideally, all the people you send the contact list to should have ContactBox installed. They'll need to open the email or text message on their phone and tap the link, which will open in their default browser app. If they don't have ContactBox installed, they'll need to tap Download ContactBox 11 and follow the instructions to install it. Once this is done, they can tap the name of the group (in our example "Family in Scotland") 2 to add that group to their Contact Box.



To see recently updated contact details and who made these STEP changes, open ContactBox, tap the three lines **■** and then tap Notifications 2. Any contacts added using ContactBox won't appear in your phone's contacts list. However, you can chat to these people by opening a contact within ContactBox and then tapping Call, Email or Text. This will open the relevant default app on your phone.

Workshops

Convert every file in one click

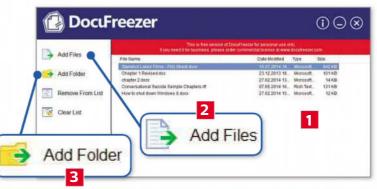
What you need: DocuFreezer; Windows XP, Vista, 7, 8 or 8.1 Time required: 10 minutes

ocuFreezer (www. docufreezer.com) is a free program that lets you batch-convert Office files such as Word documents and Excel spreadsheets into other formats, including PDF, PNG and JPEG. You can also convert PDF documents into

image files. DocuFreezer lets you choose your output type and resolution to ensure that your converted files are the right size for sending by email or storing for your records. To convert Office files, you'll need to be using Microsoft Office 2010 or later.



To download DocuFreezer, go to www.snipca. STEP com/12809 and click 'Download free version of DocuFreezer now!'. Double-click the setup file and follow the steps to install the program. Select a batch of files to convert then drag and drop them onto the DocuFreezer program window 1. DocuFreezer supports Word, Excel, PowerPoint, PDF and XPS (XML Paper Specification) files, as well as plain text and rich text. Alternatively, add files via Windows Explorer. Click Add Files 2, select the files and press Enter. To convert all the files in a particular folder, click Add Folder 3 and navigate to the folder.





STEP If you add a file by mistake (which can happen if you're importing lots of documents in a folder), click it then click Remove From List or press Delete on your keyboard. Click Clear List on the left to remove all the files you've added. Use the Destination dropdown menu to choose an output file format such as JPEG 2. If you want to save the converted files to a folder other than the default location you selected in Step 1, click the three dots under 'Save to' 3 nagivate to your destination folder and click OK.



You can also save in a format other than the default STEP format you selected in Step 1. Click the cog icon beside the Destination dropdown menu and click one of the four available output formats (PDF, JPEG, TIFF or PNG). Each format has various options in a dropdown box. To increase image resolution, type a new resolution in the 'Rasterization resolution' box 1. Ensure 'Check for updates' is ticked 2. Click OK 3, then Start to convert your files.

NEXT ISSUE Stop websites stealing your personal info Send lengthy videos in seconds Use your tablet as a telescope Remove toolbars that clutter your PC Subscribe to Computeractive at getcomputeractive.co.uk

Readers' Tips

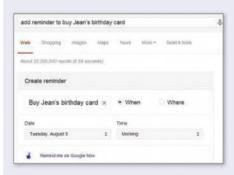
Handy hints and tips from your fellow readers ☑ Email us your tips: letters@computeractive.co.uk

TIP OF THE FORTNIGHT

Instantly add events to Google Calendar via search terms

It seems that I spend half my life on Google Search, and the other half planning events on Google Calendar, so my eyes lit up when I read about a brilliant new way to use both at the same time.

Basically, you can add events to your calendar without leaving the search



page, as long as you're logged into your Google account and using Chrome (I couldn't get it to work in Firefox or Internet Explorer). You do this by typing add event into Google's search bar. Up pops a box that lets you instantly add an event to your Google calendar. You can then click 'Edit event' to add more details.

The drawback is it can only add events that start within the next hour. so it's not much use for planning further ahead. It's better to search for something more specific, such as 'create event for Friday 5pm with family'.

You can also create reminders in a similar way. These pop up in the form of Google Now 'cards' (www.google.co.uk/ landing/now) that display timely

information personalised for you, such as traffic updates and sports results, on Android and in Chrome. If you've not turned on Google Now, here's how to it in Android (www. snipca.com/12940) and in Chrome (www.snipca.com/12941).

Once that's done, you're ready to go. Just type add reminder into Google search and you'll see a box asking you for more details. Fill these in, then click the 'Remind me on Google Now' link. Some of these details will be automatically filled in if you enter more information in the original search, such as 'add reminder to buy Jean's birthday card' (I can see this preventing several marital arguments!).

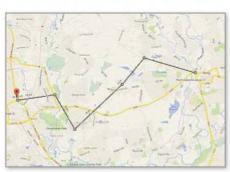
Malcolm Smith

The winner of every Tip of the Fortnight wins this exclusive Computeractive mug!

GOOGLE MAPS Measure distances in Google Maps

You can now measure a distance between multiple points in the Desktop version of Google Maps (www. google.co.uk/maps), which will come in handy for anyone planning a cycling holiday (as I will be soon). Just type a destination, press Enter, then right-click the map and click 'Measure distance'. Type another destination, press Enter, then right-click the map and click 'Distance to here'. You'll then see the distance in kilometres marked out on a black measurement line (see screenshot below). Check the box on the left, next to 'Total distance', for the equivalent in miles. You can drag the line from any point to create stop-off points on vour route.

Duncan Dawson



UBUNTU Access Ubuntu Desktop from Chrome

I decided to migrate from Windows XP to Linux Ubuntu earlier this year, and have enjoyed getting to grips with a new operating system. My fellow Ubuntu disciples will be delighted to learn that they can now remotely access an Ubuntu PC's Desktop from another PC using Google's Chrome browser (assuming they use Chrome, which is - in my opinion the best browser by far).

First, you need to add the Chrome Remote Desktop extension to Chrome from www.snipca.com/12919. A word of warning before I go any further, though - the Ubuntu version of this extension is in beta, which means it's still being tested. You may therefore encounter the occasional flaw. And you also have to create a 'virtual desktop session' in Ubuntu. But if you're happy to do all that, then you should definitely

The precise instructions to create a virtual desktop session are too fiddly to explain in full here, so you're best following Google's explanation at www. snipca.com/12920. Click 'Enable remote access to your computer', then 'Linux (Beta)'. You'll see what you have to do.

Be aware that the instructions for Ubuntu 12.10 (and higher) are different to those for 12.04. Good luck!

Barry Clarkson

PLUG-INS Get pluq-in updates automatically

I worry a lot about running out-of-date versions of plug-ins on my browser (Firefox) because I know hackers are so good at exploiting them. Flash and Java are my biggest concerns, and I'm sure other readers will feel the same. Well, I'm glad to say I've recently discovered a new browser extension that helps ensure you have the latest versions. Called 'auto-plugin-checker' (www. snipca.com/12921), it tells you when updates are available - so you've only got yourself to blame if you get infected!

It's important to note that the extension doesn't actually update the plug-ins - you still need to do that yourself. But that's easy enough. Just click the plug-in's icon and you'll be taken directly to the website.

What I like most about it is that you can decide how often it checks for new updates. I've chosen every time I launch Firefox, which seems sensible, and hopefully not too over-cautious.

Patrick Graham

Phone and Tablet Tips Brilliant things to do on your device

iOS

Use your earphones to control your music

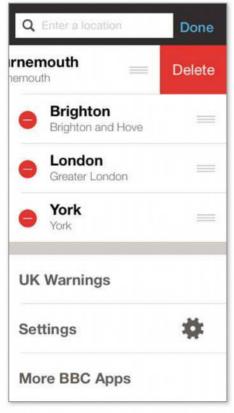
Your iPhone earphones come with hidden features that make them more useful. For example, double-press the centre button (between Volume '+' and '-') to skip to the next song in your playlist. To fast-forward during a song, double-press the button and hold down the second press to begin forwarding. Release the button when you want the track to resume. If you want to return to the start of the track at any time and replay it, triple-press the centre button. If you triple-press it again at this point, it'll play the previous song.

To send an incoming call straight to your voicemail, press and hold the button for two seconds. To take a photo using your earphones, launch your iPhone camera and then press the Volume Up '+' button.

Track the weather and get **Met Office warnings**

(www.snipca.com/12822) you can track the weather in different locations and receive weather warnings issued by the Met Office. Open the app and tap OK to see an hourly weather forecast for your current location. To see weather warnings, tap the icon with three lines at the top left, then tap UK Warnings. These are only issued when

With the free BBC Weather app



severe weather is expected within the next 24 hours.

To add another location, tap inside the search bar, start typing the name of the location and then tap the correct autosuggest option. This will be added to your list of locations, which you can then access by swiping down in the app or by tapping the three lines.

To rearrange the order of locations,

tap the three lines at top left, Edit, then tap and hold the three lines beside a location and drag it up or down. To delete a location, tap the red circle beside it, tap Delete and then tap Done (see screenshot left).

If you want to change the temperature and wind-speed settings, tap Settings then the options you want (Celsius/ Farenheit and mph/kph). Then tap Done.

ANDROID

Schedule text messages to be sent later

Text Later (www.snipca. com/12823) is a free app that lets you schedule when your text

messages will be sent. It also lets you edit unsent scheduled messages and notifies you when the message has been delivered. It's a great way to write birthday, reminder or anniversary messages in advance.

Open the app, then tap Schedule SMS. Tap the To column and start typing the name of the recipient, then tap the relevant name from the autosuggest options. Add further names and repeat this process if you want to include other recipients. Tap 'Tap to compose', type your message, then tap Date Not Set. You'll see the month, date and the time (see screenshot opposite). Set the schedule by swiping the month, date and time sliders so the correct values are in the centre (and in bold), then tap Set. Check your message and settings and then click the Send icon at the top right.

Best New Apps

What you should install this fortnight

Ginger Page & Grammar Keyboard

Android: www.snipca.com/12825

This keyboard app lets you type quickly without having to worry about typing errors. Once you've typed a sentence, tap



the tick icon to instantly correct any spelling mistakes. Tap the feather at the bottom to see alternative options for what you've typed. The app also gives you definitions and synonyms.

Do Not Forget Your Pills

iOS: www.snipca.com/12826

This app reminds you when to take any



medication you might be on. Add the number of pills within different categories (such as antibiotics, vitamins, etc) and the days and times you need to take them. It lets you add multiple profiles for family members.

MyRoll - Smart Photo Gallery

Android: www.snipca.com/12827 iOS: www.snipca.com/12829

MyRoll organises all the photos on your device. Swipe down from the right to see

all photos in order of the date they were taken, or tap Moments to see your best photos (based on smiles, clarity, etc) arranged in groups. Tap the Share icon beside an album to share it.



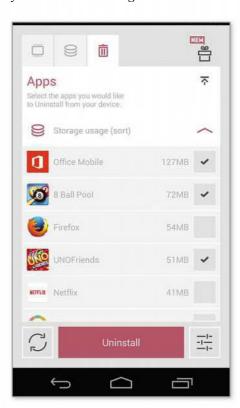
To edit a scheduled message, tap View Scheduled. Tap a message to open it and then tap the Pencil icon at the top to edit the recipient's details, the message itself or the scheduled time. If you want to delete the message, tap the Bin icon at the top.



ANDROID

Recover space from apps running in the background The Cleaner (not to be confused

with CCleaner) is a great free app for identifying and recovering storage space from other apps running in the background. This will boost your RAM and make your device run faster. It also deletes your app cache to reclaim space and sorts apps into categories, making it easier to uninstall all the apps you don't want in one go.



Install the app from www.snipca. com/12824, open it, then tap Analyze. The Cleaner will tell you how much space you can recover by closing apps running in the background, providing a breakdown of how much space each app takes up. Tap Clean to recover that space.

Tap the middle icon at the top left and then tap Analyze to see a full breakdown of how much storage space you can recover by deleting your app cache. Tap Delete.

Tap the third icon at the top, then Analyze to see dropdown menus such as 'Install date', Alphabetical and 'Storage usage'. Click one to sort your apps based on that category (see screenshot below left). Tap the boxes beside the apps that you want to uninstall and then tap Uninstall and OK (for each app) to uninstall them.

ANDROID

Get a new free song every week



Every week the Google Play Store offers one free track that you can download to your device. Because

Google prefers that you pay for music, it keeps fairly quiet about this. To find it, open the Play Store, then tap Music. Swipe down till you see Free Song Of The Week along with a brief description of the artist. Tap the song to see the genre and other tracks within the album (which aren't free). To listen to the free song, tap the Play icon. If you like it, tap Free beside it and then tap Buy (beside £0). Open Play Music to add it to your device for free.

Get more tips and hacks in our 148-page book The Definitive Guide to Android (www.snipca.com/12476)

Games With Kids

What to play together on your phone and tablet

AGES 0-5

Memory Matches

Free www.snipca.com/12829 (Android) Free www.snipca.com/12830 (iOS)

In this fun memory game, select different types of cards (such as animals or letters) and grids (4x4, 8x8, etc). Tap a card to see it briefly and keep tapping the other cards until you find a match, then tap the two cards in succession to complete the pair.

AGES 6-10

Brainbean

Free www.snipca.com/12831 (iOS)

Brainbean is a fun compendium of nine games that help children develop problem-solving skills, expand their vocabulary and express themselves creatively. Our favourite is Incomplete Drawing, in which you have to build upon a basic doodle to create an interesting new picture (see screenshot right).

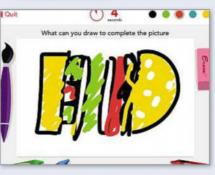
AGES 11-16

Lettro Challenges Free www.snipca.com/12832 (iOS)

This two-player game starts with random letters on a grid. You need to identify and tap adjacent letters with the aim of forming a word. Once you make a complete word, the letters from it are awarded to you. The first player to claim half the letters on the grid wins.









WINDOWS 7, 8, 8.1 Jump to any date in just a few clicks



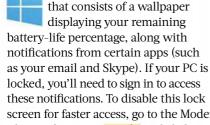
Windows always displays the date and time at the bottom right of your

screen. However, you can jump to any date you want with a few clicks. Click the calendar at the bottom right to see the current month. You can click the forward and back arrows to navigate through the years, but a faster way to do this is to click the month heading (such as August 2014). This will display all the months of the year in a grid. Now click the year heading to see a decade-long calendar (2010-2019). Click this again to see a century-long calendar (2000-2099).



Windows 8 has a lock screen

WINDOWS 8, 8.1 Kill the lock screen



these notifications. To disable this lock screen for faster access, go to the Modern tile interface, type regedit and click the first option that appears. In the Registry Editor window, navigate through the following path by clicking the small triangular dropdown menus beside them:

HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\ Policies\Microsoft\Windows

In the right-hand pane, search for a key called Personalization. If you can't find it, right-click Windows, move your mouse over New and click Key. Name this key Personalization and then press Enter. Now right-click the Personalization key, move your mouse over New and click 'DWORD (32-bit Value)'. Name this NoLockScreen and press Enter. Double-click this key, type 1 in the Value data field and then click OK. Booting up your PC will now take you

WINDOWS 7, 8, 8.1

Manage your taskbar notifications



Many of the programs you download to your PC will add

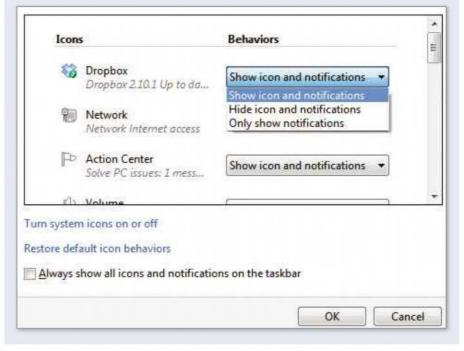
their own icons to your taskbar. While some of these will regularly display update notifications, most can safely be turned off. To see all your taskbar programs, right-click the taskbar, click Properties, the 'Taskbar buttons' dropdown menu, 'Always combine, hide labels'. Click Apply, then OK.

You'll see four taskbar icons near the date and time, along with an arrow pointing upwards. Click the arrow to reveal your hidden notification icons. If you want to move any of these to your taskbar, drag them from the hidden icons section to your taskbar. Drag and reposition them

wherever you want.

Right-click the taskbar, click Properties and then click the Customize button. You'll see all your taskbar programs alongside dropdown menus. Click the dropdown menu next to any program whose taskbar notifications you want to change and click an option ('Hide icons and notifications', if you want to hide that program's icon from the taskbar). If you want a notification to appear only for specific actions (such as for a software update), then click 'Only show notifications' after clicking its dropdown menu.

If you want to reveal all the program icons on the taskbar, tick 'Always show all icons and notifications on the taskbar'. Click OK to save your changes.



directly to your login screen, bypassing the lock screen.

WINDOWS XP Disable balloon tips



Windows XP displays balloon tips in the notifications area. These include software updates,

antivirus updates or changes to your PC. However, if you keep your computer up to date and get irritated by these notifications, there's an easy way to disable them.

Click, Start, Run, type regedit and then press Enter. Navigate through the following path to the subkey:

HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\ Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\ **Explorer**\Advanced

Right-click in the right-hand pane, move your cursor over New, select DWORD Value and name it EnableBalloonTips. Double-click this key, type 0 in the Value box and then click OK. Restart your PC and the balloon tips won't bother you again.

OUTLOOK

Set up automatic email replies



Automated email replies are commonly used by work employees to inform

anyone who emails them that they are away from the office, usually on holiday or a business trip. However, they can also be used to inform people that you currently don't have access to email, to redirect contacts to a new email address or when you want people to contact you by some other means (your phone, for example).

To set up an automatic reply in Outlook 2010 and 2013, click File at the top left, then click the Automatic Replies button. In Outlook 2007, click Tools at the top, then click 'Out of Office Assistant'.

In the Automatic Replies window, select 'Send automatic replies'. If you want to specify start and end times for



your automated replies, tick 'Only send during this time range', click the dropdown menu beside 'Start time' and select a date from the calendar. Next,

click the time dropdown menu and select a time. Repeat this process for the 'End time'.

Click the 'Outside My Organization (On)' tab, tick 'Auto-reply to people outside my organization' and then select 'Anyone outside my organization'. This will ensure automatic replies are sent to anyone who emails you, not just work colleagues.

Type the automatic reply message, then format the text using the font type and size dropdown menus and the bold, italics and underline icons beside them. Click OK and then Yes.

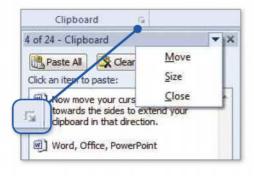
If you want to turn off automatic replies earlier than the date and time that you set, click File and then click 'Turn off' in the Automatic Replies section.

OFFICE

Manage and organise your **Clipboard items**

Any element (text, images, etc) that you copy to any Office program is automatically saved to your clipboard. To access this, click the small diagonal dropdown menu (see screenshot below) beside Clipboard at the top left. You can then paste any item into your Word, Excel or PowerPoint document by clicking it in your Clipboard. To paste every saved item, click the Paste All button. If you want to clear your clipboard, click Clear All. To paste or delete a specific selection, move your cursor over it, click the dropdown menu beside it and then click Paste or Delete.

To change your clipboard's appearance, click the dropdown menu at the top and



then click Move. You can also position your clipboard wherever you want. Click the dropdown menu again and then click Size. Next, move your cursor up or down, or towards the sides, to extend your clipboard in that particular direction. Click Close when you want to hide your clipboard.

OFFICE Search the web from within Office

All Office programs have a thesaurus, which you can use to find people, quotes, places and events on the web, using Bing search. Highlight a search term, click the Review tab, then click

Thesaurus in the Proofing section. The Research pane on the right will show the meaning of the word. If you want to search for the term on the web, click the dropdown menu and then click Bing. You'll see a list of search results



displaying your highlighted term. Click any link to open it in your default web browser.

Make quick changes to OneNote

You can make changes in OneNote or quickly customise how it works by using the Quick Access Toolbar at the top left (above File). While you can do this in other Office programs, OneNote provides lots more options. For example, there's an Undo icon at the top left and you can click the Back icon to switch between open pages or sections.

Click the 'Dock to Desktop' icon to split your screen into two parts – one for OneNote and the other for whatever other program your using (such as your browser). Click the Full Page View icon at the top left to hide all the OneNote tabs on your Ribbon. Click the Quick Styles dropdown menu to select a new heading style. If you want to add or remove Ouick Access Toolbar icons, click the dropdown menu at the right and then click the options for those icons you want to add (Print, Forward, etc). Untick any options to remove their icons from the Quick Access Toolbar.

Secret Tips For...



System Mechanic

Recover lost files, delete duplicates and make your PC start faster

Disable startup programs to speed up your PC

System Mechanic is a suite of tools for boosting your PC's performance. The full program costs \$39.95 (about £23) but you can download the free version, which we feature here, from www.snipca. com/12635 (click the Download Free Version link). It doesn't try to add any adware during installation.

One way to speed up your PC is to cut the number of programs that run automatically at startup, and System Mechanic lets you do this quickly and easily. Click Dashboard, Problems, Analyze Now to scan for what the program calls 'potentially unwanted programs' that run when you switch on your PC. Click Review to open the list of programs, each of which has a coloured bar to indicate its reputation among System Mechanic users. Red bars, for example, indicate 'Highimpact programs' that are frequently disabled by users. Click a program's 'Turn it off' button to disable it at startup and speed up your PC's boot time.

Find out what happens when your PC crashes

System Mechanic lets you take before and after snapshots of your system to help you



Click Export to save a detailed snapshot of your PC after it's crashed

find out what happens when it crashes. These snapshots will come in handy if you seek help from an IT expert, who can use them to diagnose and fix your PC.

Start by taking a snapshot of your PC while it's working normally. Click Toolbox, Individual Tools, Perform Diagnostics and click the Start button beside System Change Tracker. Select 'Save current system state for future comparison' and click Next. System Mechanic will save the snapshot on your hard drive. Next time your computer crashes, go to System Change Tracker, select 'Compare current system state...' and click Next to take a

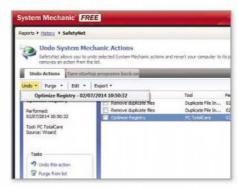
new snapshot. Click Export, give the file a name and click Save.

Find and delete duplicate files

System Mechanic lets vou delete duplicate files to save space on your PC. Click Toolbox, Individual Tools, Manage System Configuration and click the Start button next to Duplicate File Inspector. Select Quick Search and click Next to run a scan. When it's done, you'll see a long list of 'Duplicate pools' containing your duplicate files. Click 'Sort by' and click Type to organise the duplicates by file type (MP3, PNG, JPEG and so on). Click '+' next to any listed file to open more information about it. In the expanded list, click the duplicated file that you want to remove and click Tools at the top. Click Remove, Selected File, Yes.

Undo any action in System Mechanic

System Mechanic sometimes deletes files and stops running programs if it thinks they're harmful to your PC. In most cases this is helpful, but it can find false positives. The SafetyNet tool lets you undo System Mechanic's automatic actions (and any actions performed by you) and bring back any files deleted in error or restart programs that have been stopped. Click Reports, History, click the Open button under SafetyNet and go to the Undo Actions tab to see a list of actions. Tick any actions you want to undo, click Undo and click Yes.

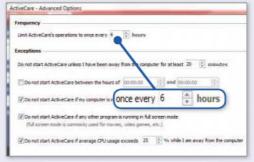


Use SafetyNet to undelete files and restart programs that System Mechanic has stopped

Stop ActiveCare slowing down your PC

System Mechanic's ActiveCare tool runs in the background, optimising your PC's performance automatically. But this uses memory and can slow down your computer, especially if it doesn't have much **RAM** and you're using other programs at the same time. To schedule ActiveCare to run only at certain times, click Options, ActiveCare, Edit Advanced Options and tick 'Do not start ActiveCare between the hours of'. Enter a time for ActiveCare to

stop running, and a time for it to start.



Set ActiveCare to run every few hours rather than constantly in the background

You can also tell ActiveCare to run once every few hours only.

What's All the Fuss About...



Project Adam

Microsoft's new artificial intelligence mimics the human brain to deliver more accurate results. But how will you use it?

What is it?

Microsoft's new Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology that its creators claim is twice as powerful as other AI technologies, such as Apple's speech-recognition software Siri, and Google Brain, which helps to power Google Maps and Google's voice search, among other tools. Like its rivals at Google and Apple, Adam uses 'deep learning' to process information, recognise photos and decide the best response to questions, but does so in a new way that Microsoft says is "game-changing".

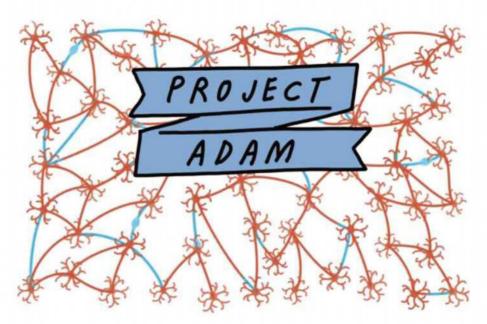
How is it game-changing?

Adam's network of computers is more accurate and less prone to crashing thanks to a process called 'asynchrony'. This means it doesn't force its computers' data to synchronise, instead letting it pile on top of - and 'collide' with - each other. Adam then learns from this data to build up its knowledge. With this approach, Microsoft claims Adam can achieve results twice as accurate as those of its rivals, while using 30 times fewer computers.

Even former Google Brain developer Matt Zeiler is impressed by Adam, saying the fact that it manages to increase in accuracy as more computers are added to its network "kind of goes against what people in research have been finding, but that's what makes it interesting".

How is Adam capable of 'deep learning'?

By using hundreds of computers and servers working together in a 'neural network', replicating the way neurons in our brains build connections with each other when we take in information. To demonstrate Adam's power, Microsoft's researchers uploaded 14 million images of various objects, dividing them into 22,000 categories. Adam made 2 billion connections between these objects. Microsoft says Adam is now "the world's best photo classifier", capable of



distinguishing between images as similar to each other as those of a Pembroke Welsh Corgi and a Cardigan Welsh Corgi (just one of the examples on the Microsoft Research blog: www.snipca.com/12875).

So it can tell dogs apart – why should I care?

Because it will give you more accurate information from your PC, phone and tablet that could help save your life. In its video explaining Adam (www.snipca. com/12874), Microsoft claims that if you photograph an abnormality or growth on

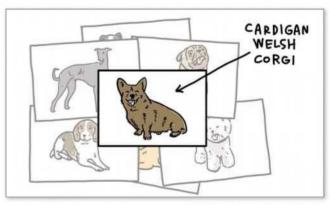
your skin, Adam will compare it to similar images in its database and tell you how serious it is, and whether you should visit your doctor.

Microsoft also says that by photographing the food you're eating, you'll see its nutritional information (salt, sugar content, calories, etc) appear on your phone or tablet screen.

When will I be able to use it?

Microsoft hasn't confirmed that yet, but it will probably be integrated into Microsoft's digital 'assistant' Cortana (see What's All The Fuss About? Issue 424) and its Bing search engine soon.

It's unlikely that the technology behind Adam will be made available to Android and iOS users, but Google and Apple are working hard on improving their own AI technologies, and they'll be determined to make them better than Microsoft's. If Adam doesn't come to iOS and Android, then something similar surely will.



Project Adam can recognise small differences in photos, such as the distinguishing features between breeds of dog

Hackers want to steal your logins - and they're trying to scam their way into your PC. Jane Hoskyn reveals their tricks and shows you how to beat them

ou might wonder why a hacker would want to pretend to be you, but that's how they steal your money. Instead of breaking into your house, they break into your PC and plunder your digital data - which is worth far more than anything on your mantelpiece. Once they've got their hands on your goldmine of passwords, usernames and

KEY POINTS

- Discover the latest dangerous scams
- Stop ransomware getting onto your
- Spot any phishing email, scam website or fake app
- Prevent hackers stealing your private data and login info
- Remove hackers' hidden files

personal documents, they can use it to log into your online accounts, including your bank account, and spend your money just as if they were you. And you may know nothing about it until everything is gone.

Phishing scams are the hacking equivalent of tricksters who sweet-talk you on the doorstep. They seem interesting and innocent, but they're trying to con their way into your home. If you click a link in one of these fake emails or websites, malicious files will automatically download to your computer and scoop up your data like a burglar chucking valuables into a sack.

Hackers are continually honing their criminal craft, so their scams are getting ever more convincing and their malware is getting ever more powerful. Threats are being developed at such a rate that antivirus companies are forever playing catch-up. It's never been more important

to have reliable security software installed and to keep it updated, but recent threats such as the CryptoLocker ransomware and the Gameover Zeus banking Trojan have caught even security experts by surprise. Panda Security (www.pandasecurity.com) reported 30 million new malware strains last year - that's an average of 82,000 every day. By the time you read this, a dangerous new type of ransomware may be waiting for you in your email inbox.

Over the next few pages we'll reveal the new malware strains that are even nastier than CryptoLocker, and expose the scams that criminals are using right now to get these vicious bugs onto your computer. We'll show you how to find and kill any malware on your PC, using free tools that remove it completely before it can do any more damage.

THE NEW MALWARE THAT WANTS TO STEAL YOUR IDENTIT

Critroni Kidnaps your data forever

The latest strain of ransomware is even more powerful and resilient than the infamous CryptoLocker, which became so prevalent in spring 2014 that we dedicated our Issue 418 Cover Feature to helping you block it. Critroni (officially Curve-Tor-Bitcoin Locker, or CTB-Locker) encrypts all your documents, photos and other files much faster than CryptoLocker and demands a ransom to unlock them. It's the first ransomware seen using the anonymous Tor network to help it evade detection. Like CryptoLocker, Critroni gives you 72 hours to pay the ransom (usually 0.5 Bitcoin, or about £200), or your data will be locked forever.



CryptoWall Doubles your ransom

Criminals have taken CryptoLocker's code, tweaked it and released copycat malware under names including CryptoDefense, PowerLocker and CryptoWall. CryptoWall holds your data to ransom like CryptoLocker, but doubles its ransom demand if you don't pay up by the hacker's deadline (see screenshot, right).

Unlike CryptoLocker, which tricks you into installing it by masquerading as a Flash video player, CryptoWall comes disguised as simple adverts on mainstream websites and can infect your computer in one click. It's also been circulating in fake tax refund emails (see box, below).

Android Simplocker Holds your tablet hostage

Ransomware has proved so profitable for hackers they're now using it to steal data from your tablet or phone - which includes all your friends' and family's personal details as well as your own. As we reveal on page 14, new malware called Android Simplocker (or Simplock A) encrypts your tablet's data – including your backups - and cons you into believing that the police have confiscated it.

Real Deal Hijacks your browser

Adware is not just some irritating but inevitable side-effect of downloading free software. Like Conduit and Optima, newcomer Real Deal hitches a lift onto your hard drive in the installation wizards of other software and embeds its code in all your browsers, redirecting you to unwanted web pages and taking over your toolbars, search engines and shortcuts.

Pushdo

Funnels malware onto your PC

This tenacious Trojan, which uses hundreds of encrypted domains to get other malware onto your computer, has just resurfaced in a vicious new form that encrypts its traffic to escape detection. The revamped Pushdo was discovered in mid-July and compromised more than 11,000 computers in just 24 hours including 77 PCs in the UK.

Kronos

Steals your bank details

Hackers still love banking Trojans, and this dangerous new variant is the latest hot property. It's being touted on a Russian hackers' forum as the ultimate Trojan, capable of logging key-presses and stealing bank details from even sandboxed PCs. You can read its developer's odious advert at www.snipca. com/12960 (this is a safe link).

Your files are encrypted.

To get the key to decrypt files you have to pay 500 USD/EUR. If payment is not made before 22/06/14 - 07:06 the cost of decrypting files will increase 2 times and will be 1000 USD/EUR

Prior to increasing the amount left:

119h 43m 56s

DON'T FALL FOR THESE INTERNET SCAMS

FLIGHT MH17 FACEBOOK PAGES

After the Malaysia Airlines tragedy, criminals rushed to pollute the internet with scams that tricked people into clicking Flash video players with ransomware (see page 8).

DOCTOANTIVIRUS

Latest in a dishonourable line of malicious programs that pretend to be security tools. DoctoAntivirus tricks you into believing that your PC is infected with threats, and the only way to remove them is to buy the 'full version'.

COUNCIL TAX REFUND SCAM

Don't be fooled by an email from the

address refund@direct.gov.uk that offers you a refund on your council tax - and definitely don't be fooled by its request



DoctoAntivirus tricks you into believing that your PC is infected

that you hand over your card details to "process the refund".

FACEBOOK MERCEDES SCAM

"Like this to win a Mercedes" is the latest example of 'Facebook Like-farming', which scammers use to gather Facebook 'likes' in order to perpetrate further scams on users, whose details are sold on the black market.

DROPBOX TAX REFUND SCAM

Hackers have been using emails containing Dropbox links to trick you into downloading CryptoWall. The emails purport to be from banks and tax firms and urge you to "reclaim money" by clicking a link.

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STOP HACKERS INFECTING YOUR PC OR TABLET

Use antivirus that's fit for purpose

With hackers releasing and reinventing malware every day, antivirus companies are playing catch-up. That's why it's so important to keep your antivirus updated, and to use a product that constantly updates its virus definitions to stay one step ahead of the criminals.

Good antivirus must be able to block malware as well as remove it. Windows' own security tools aren't up to protecting you from the latest scams. Windows Defender and Microsoft Security Essentials



Kaspersky Internet Security blocks threats and has a Safe Money tool to guard against banking fraud

aren't strong enough to keep ransomware off your computer, and they may conflict with other antivirus programs and stop them working properly. Instead, use a powerful product such as Kaspersky Internet Security 2014 (www.kaspersky. co.uk) or Norton Internet Security (http:// uk.norton.com), which are both paid-for programs, or the free antivirus suites Avast Free Antivirus 9 (www.avast.com) or AVG Anti-Virus Free 2014 (http://free.avg.com). All these products achieved superb scores in the latest lab tests run by our security team at Dennis Security Labs. They run silently in the background, using real-time malware scanners to spot and block ransomware, Trojans and other malware. Their database of virus definitions is updated constantly to keep you safe against the latest scams and their payloads. All these products have pledged to support Windows XP for at least two more years.

When choosing an antivirus, look for one that updates automatically and includes tools designed specifically to guard against phishing and web scams. For example, Kaspersky's product, which got the top score in our past two antivirus lab tests, has a Safe Money feature that

provides extra protection when you're banking or shopping online, and has a built-in tool for creating a disk image backup of your computer in case it ever gets compromised and has to be wiped. We'll feature a full update of our latest security tests in the next issue of Computeractive.

Block ransomware with free software

There are plenty of specialist malwareblocking tools that can run alongside vour antivirus without causing any conflicts, and some are designed specifically to block ransomware. Free portable tool CryptoPrevent (www. snipca.com/12938; scroll down and click the blue Download CryptoPrevent button) stops CryptoLocker and other ransomware getting into your PC and encrypting your files. Click OK to run the program then Apply Protection to start blocking ransomware. Only the premium version (\$19.95, about £12) updates automatically, but you can update manually at any time by clicking Updates in the free version. Don't be put off by the obnoxious web address – the program is completely safe to use.

Bitdefender Safepay (www.snipca. com/12945) is a free 'hardened' browser that claims to block keyloggers. At first we had trouble downloading it, possibly because our antivirus identified it as malware. It's not unusual for security tools to trigger false positives from installed antivirus suites. But we did eventually get



Click Apply Protection in CryptoPrevent to block ransomware and other malware

Safepay to work, and it provides a very useful extra layer of protection when you're shopping or banking online.

Block threats in Chrome, IE and Firefox

One rock-solid way to never have your logins stolen by hackers is to never go online - but that's impossible in these days of online-only bill payments and banking. Hackers welcome this increased

IS YOUR ANTIVIRUS WORKING?

The only quaranteed way to find out if an antivirus product or firewall is doing its job is to throw some malware at it and see what happens - but that's obviously not wise unless you're working under controlled lab conditions. So security company Eicar has come up with a clever,

safe alternative. Its Anti-Malware Testfile (www.snipca.com/12943) is a simple text (TXT) file that's designed to be identified by antivirus products as malware. Ignore the Download Anti-Malware Testfile button at the top right - that takes you to a page for developers. Instead, scroll to the

> 'Download area' box and click the 'eicar.com.txt' link. If your antivirus is running in the background and blocking threats, as it should be, it will instantly block the Eicar file and tell you so in a pop-up warning. At the very least, it should quarantine the file and tell you to delete it. If your antivirus neither blocks nor quarantines the file, it needs updating - or replacing completely with a product that's up to the job. To avoid conflicts, uninstall your existing antivirus completely before installing

> > a new one.



If your antivirus is working properly, it will instantly block the Eicar Anti-Malware Testfile

pressure to live our financial lives online, partly because it gives them so much juicy personal data to steal (passwords, account numbers, transaction details and so on) and partly because it gives them plenty of phishing opportunities. They can embed their malware into anything from fake bank emails to web pages designed to look like voter-registration sites. The more determined scammers become, the harder it gets to tell the real emails and sites from the fakes.

Web of Trust (WOT, www.mywot.com/ download) is a free extension for Chrome. Internet Explorer and Firefox that spots the scams for you. WOT uses a trafficlights system to warn you about phishing links, malicious sites and other traps before you click them. A green icon indicates that a link has excellent safety reports; amber means 'unsatisfactory' and red means 'poor'. Red links are blocked by default, but you can click them if you really want to. WOT is browser-based and constantly updated, so it works in all versions of Windows, including XP. McAfee's free SiteAdvisor is a Desktop tool (www.siteadvisor.com; click the red Free Download button) that adds a Secure Search box to your browser and uses a WOT-style system of red, yellow, or green ratings to alert you to risky links before you click. It doesn't try to add any adware, but untick 'Make Secure Search my browser's default search engine' during setup.

Facebook is a favourite target for scammers, so Norton has created its Safe Web Facebook app (www.snipca. com/12947) to warn you about potentially malicious adverts or links in your News Feed.

A firewall is another essential weapon against potential threats from the internet. Comodo Firewall Free (www. snipca.com/12948; ignore the Buy Now button and click the red Download button further down) works alongside



Web Of Trust blocks dodgy links that hackers use to infect your PC



Keep malware off your Android tablet or phone with Kaspersky Internet Security

your antivirus and scam-blocking programs and acts like a shield to protect you against threats including malware and zero-day attacks.

Stop malware infecting your tablet

A fake app is a simple and very efficient way for a hacker to get into your tablet and gain your trust. Fake apps tend to pretend to be something they're not (such as a recent app masquerading as CCleaner, which Google removed almost immediately from the Play Store) or claim to let you do something you shouldn't (such as hack your iPad's operating system). So if an app seems too good to be true, be wary, and don't download apps from third-party sources. Security company F-Secure (www.f-secure.com) found that just 0.1 per cent of malware threats last year came from Google Play, so it pays to stick with apps from the Play store or Apple's App Store. Always check the permissions requested by apps, and only grant them if you're happy. F-Secure's free Android app App Permissions (www.snipca. com/12950) helps you spot the permissions that compromise your privacy, use your location and potentially cost you money. Clueful (www.snipca. com/12959), from the makers of Bitdefender (www.bitdefender.co.uk), monitors your installed apps and reveals which ones track your location, access your photos and view your contacts. It gives you an at-a-glance list of the apps that may be playing fast and loose with

Kaspersky Internet Security for Android (www.snipca.com/12949) provides reliable defence against mobile

your personal information.

malware and is completely free. If you run a scan and it doesn't find any problems, you'll see a green tick; if it does, you'll see a red cross. There's also an Anti-Theft tool that lets you lock and wipe your tablet remotely if it falls into the wrong hands. McAfee's Free Antivirus & Security app (www.snipca.com/12957) also blocks access to risky sites and lets you lock apps that contain personal information, such as notes apps.

Update all your software

Software updates, including Windows updates, include security patches that protect you against new scams and malware. So don't just bat away those 'software update required' warnings that appear when you're in the middle of something - they are important.

But, as you know, scammers are exploiting our need to keep our software updated, and bogus Flash updates were commonly used to spread CryptoLocker. So be wary of clicking any web or email links that claim to contain updates, particularly for plug-ins such as Flash or Java. Set your browser to update them automatically, or install updates from the



Find out which programs and plug-ins need updating with Secunia's Personal Software

developers' websites. For Flash, go to http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer, and for Java, go to www.java.com. Do not attempt to update Flash by clicking a link in a video.

Better still, use a specialised program to update all your installed programs and plug-ins for you. Secunia's Personal Software Inspector (www.snipca. com/12942) is a free tool that scans for missing updates to Windows and your installed software. Click 'Download now' and run the installer, which doesn't try to download any junk to your PC.

The first time you open Secunia, it gives vou an instant insight into the state of your software updates - in our case, a giant exclamation mark and the exhortation: 'Please run a scan'. Click 'Scan now' to find out what needs updating. A minute or two later, Secunia reveals your System Score, which represents how much of your software is up to date, and shows you which of your programs and plug-ins need updating. Our System Score was 94 per cent, which



Update a batch of programs without downloading any adware using online tool Ninite

isn't too bad, but leaves us at risk of having software flaws exploited by hackers. Click the 'Click to update' link for any software listed under 'Programs that need updating'.

Free online tool Ninite (https://ninite.

com) makes it even easier – just tick any of the programs you want to check and update, and click the big green Get Installer button to install updates in the background. Ninite automatically blocks toolbars and other junk.

Find and kill ransomware and Trojans

Malware isn't just something that happens to other people. No matter how hard you try to avoid scams and block malware from your PC and other devices, vou may one day become a victim - and you may have no idea it's there until it's too late to save your data.

The single most useful security program on your PC is your antivirus suite, and any reliable antivirus will detect ransomware and Trojans. But it's also worth having some free tools to hand for tackling specific features of the latest scams and threats. These smaller tools aren't just free and specially designed, they're also smaller than antivirus suites and can be run quickly without slowing down your other programs. For example, AVG has a free tool



Run an extra-deep scan for ransomware and other malware with Norton Power Eraser

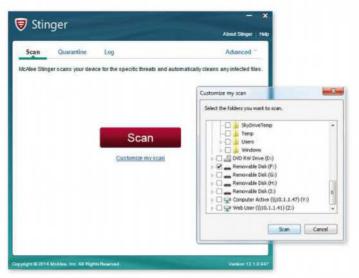
for removing Gameover Zeus (also known as Win32/ Zbot). Click the 'rmzbot.exe' link at www.snipca. com/12591, run the scanner and, if it finds an active Trojan, restart your PC to clean the infection. Norton Power Eraser (www. snipca.com/12952) is a free portable tool designed to remove what it calls "crimeware"

- deeply embedded malware that other

antivirus programs might miss. Click the orange Download link and double-click the EXE to run the program, and click 'Scan for Risks' to find and remove threats. It's an aggressive file-remover, so there's an Undo Previous Fix option that can roll back changes you didn't want it to make. We'd recommend saving a system restore point before you run it.

Remove malware with a USB

Portable tools such as Norton Power Eraser are occasionally flagged as



Scan for malware from - or on - a USB stick with McAfee Stinger

malicious by antivirus programs, but they're actually great for security because you can run them without installing files or connecting to the internet. They're also very useful for removing infections from friends' and family's computers, and from your laptop and older PCs.

Avast Free Antivirus has a Rescue Disk tool that lets you create a special bootable CD or USB that can be used for offline scanning and cleaning. Free portable antivirus tool McAfee Stinger (www. snipca.com/12953; click the red Download Stinger link) doesn't just let

Stop hackers pretending to be you

you scan for malware from a USB - it also lets you scan and clean the contents of USB sticks and other removable drives. Stinger's tabbed window contains as many tools as you'd expect in a full antivirus, and you can set it to scan specific targets such as the Registry only or the USB stick it's on. If Stinger finds any dodgy files, it can kill or quarantine them safely, just like the full version of McAfee.

The main drawback of portable security software is that it and its virus definitions can't be updated automatically, so make sure to download the latest version before you run it.

Get any toolbar off your PC

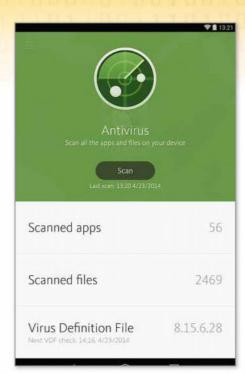
Browser hijackers, toolbars and other potentially unwanted programs (PUPs) are used by hackers to pretend to be you by stealing your data and redirecting your browser to websites that you never wanted to visit - and which could cost you money.

Adware like this usually gets onto your computer by hitching a lift with free software, and you can opt out by ticking or unticking the (often well-hidden) boxes during setup - but

this doesn't always work. Real Deal is the latest nasty hijacker that takes over your browser and refuses to be removed by even the toughest software uninstallers, such as Revo (www. revouninstaller.com). Conduit Search Protect and Optima Pro are also still circulating and are all too easy to download unwittingly.

The brilliant portable adware-remover AdwCleaner (www.snipca.com/12955) removes the malicious junk that Revo and Malwarebytes Anti-Malware (www. malwarebytes.org) can't. Download and run AdwCleaner, click Scan, select a tab, click Clean and restart your PC. Repeat the process until all tabs (including your browsers and Registry) are clean.

Trend Micro's bug-identifier HijackThis is handy for finding unauthorised settings and modifications that may be evidence of adware, and logs them in a report. It can scan for data that's not visible in Windows Explorer and gets missed by most malware scanners, such as metadata embedded in files. Click HijackThis at www.snipca.com/12956 and click the 'Get HijackThis' link to download the program from open-source mirror SourceForge.



Scan your apps and updates for malware with **Avira Antivirus Security**

Remove malware from your tablet

Malware prevention is always better than cure, and this is particularly true for your mobile devices, which contain an amazing database of personal data that hackers can use to steal your identity. Avira Antivirus Security

(www.snipca.com/12903) scans your

apps and app updates for malware, and its new Identity Safeguard tool lets you check whether your email has been compromised by a hacker. Avast Ransomware Removal (www.snipca.com/12936) can remove Android Simplocker and decrypt any files that the malware has locked, so you won't have to pay the hackers' ransom. The big antivirus firms' security apps, including Kaspersky Internet Security and McAfee's Free Antivirus & Security, can remove malware as well as block it - but make sure that you download the official app



Use AdwCleaner to remove any toolbar or browser hijacker from your PC

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Build your **WWI family tree**

One hundred years after World War I began, Robert Zak reveals where to explore your family's role in the Great War

he centenary of World War I has focused our minds on our recent ancestors who fought in the Great War. A huge amount of material that had been locked inside private archives and libraries is now available for free online, and it gives us all a much clearer picture of who our family members were and what they experienced.

If you've already started building your family tree, this material - from service records to battlefield maps - will help you fill gaps in the jigsaw. If you haven't, this is the ideal place to start. All you need is the name of an ancestor to start exploring your family's past in amazing detail.

Trace any British WWI soldier

Perhaps you know that one of your ancestors died in the war, but would like to know more about where and how it happened. The 'Researching a soldier' page of The Long, Long Trail (www. snipca.com/12834) is an ideal starting point. Here you'll find numerous links offering advice on how to search for soldier records and awards, and find family details from military records. If you're struggling to find basic information about your ancestor, click the 'When all else fails' link to browse the 1918 Absent Voters list. On the Commonwealth War Graves Commission site (www.cwgc.org) you can search for war dead (from WWII as well as WWI) by name, rank, age, date of death and other details.

Find out what regiment your ancestors served in

UK-based Find My Past (www.findmypast. co.uk) is among the best genealogy tools with built-in wartime resources. The Military section (www.snipca.com/12833) lets you search for ancestors by name and their year of birth or death (there is a 'Give or take' dropdown which lets you give or take up to 40 years). Using these details, you can find out what regiment they

served in. Good genealogy software costs money, and Find My Past is no exception: full membership costs £9.99 a month. But registration is free, and you can unlock a 14-day trial that gives you access to documents that will help you build a family tree on your PC. A forthcoming software update will add automatic notifications about specific historical events and let you attach records from the Find My Past archive to your family tree.

Search WWI service and medals records

Ancestry.co.uk has a British Army WWI Service Records section (www.snipca. com/12854) that lets you search service records, medal rolls and military pension records for free. The site keeps 27 million records sourced from the National Archives and elsewhere. It's a fascinating resource - whether you want to find a specific person's medals or regiment, or simply want to find out more about the UK's role in the war.



Browse up to 27 million war records on Ancestry.co.uk

Map your ancestors' war experiences

Once you've discovered your ancestor's regiment from the Service Records on Ancestry.co.uk, find out exactly where they fought using maps from The National Archives (www.snipca.com/12853).

Type the regiment name followed by the words 'AND map' or 'AND plan' into the search box, and be patient - you're browsing a large collection here, so it may

take a while to find the details you want. Even if you don't find the place your ancestors fought, you'll have an engrossing time studying these extraordinary maps and military documents.



iPad app Timeline WWI lets you explore the battlefields where your ancestors fought

Presented by TV historian Dan Snow (son of Peter), Timeline WW1 (www.snipca.com/12852) is a brilliant iPad app that lets you browse a neatly assembled database of footage, pictures, timelines and maps from the war. Its coverage of the first two months of the war is free. To access information for the rest of the conflict you'll need to pay £6.99 – but it's well worth the money.

On the interactive map, you can switch on markers that point out locations of major battles and fronts, and you can zoom in to see maps of the battlefields. The app also acts as a handy interactive guide if you visit the Western Front yourself.

Ask a fellow researcher

On the Great War Forum (www.snipca. com/12818), genealogy and World War I experts discuss all sorts of topics, from stories passed down by their ancestors, to the tactics used by the armies. If you want to ask about the records of family members in the war, go to the topic Soldiers and type your question there. The community is very active and its members enjoy helping people find out more about their WWI history.

Stop other people

seeing your PRIVATE **FILES**



We all have things we'd rather keep to ourselves. Jane Hoskyn reveals how to stop family and friends finding private photos and documents on your PC

e've all got something to hide, and there's nothing wrong with that. You're entitled to keep your private stuff private, and certain things - gift receipts, embarrassing photos, mementoes from your past - are definitely best kept to yourself. Years ago you hid this stuff in sock drawers and shoeboxes until that awkward moment when a family member came across them. Today's sock drawer is a clumsily disguised folder in My Documents. You think no-one's looked in it yet? Wrong.

There's quite a bit of software around to solve this problem, and the best of it works by encrypting your secret files as well as hiding them. All the tools we mention here are free.

Double password-protect your private files

Wise Folder Hider (www.snipca. com/12846), from the makers of Wise Care 365 (www.snipca.com/12841),

adds a simple Hide option to the right-click menu for any file or folder on your PC - including the contents of any USB stick. You can password-protect the program, password-protect your hidden files and even double-password-protect them if you really don't want anyone to see them (or if your nosy brotherin-law hacks computers in his spare time).

Wise Folder Hider is

simple, efficient and safe, but its installation is a minefield. When you click the green Download Now button on our snipca.com link, you'll see a download mirror where you have to click



Hide and password-protect any file or folder, including those on USB sticks, with Wise Folder Hider

LOCK UP YOUR FOLDERS WITHOUT EXTRA SOFTWARE

Windows 8.1 has a couple of built-in options for locking access to your personal files. The first is a simple right-click 'Stop sharing' option in File Explorer that stops other people opening a file or folder, but it's very easy to override. All someone has to do is log in using another administrator account, try to open the folder then click Continue in the warning pop-up that appears.

To keep other noses out of your folder

for good, right-click it and click Properties, go to the Security tab, choose the account or accounts of the people you want to block, click Edit and click Deny next to 'Full control'. Click Apply, OK. This blocks access to the folder and its contents completely.

Trouble is, anyone can still see the folder - and that's just going to intrigue (or infuriate) them. Luckily it's very easy to hide your locked folder (or indeed any folders and files you've created), and this works for Windows 7 as well as Windows 8.1. Open Properties again, go to the General tab and tick Hidden. To un-hide it when the coast is clear, go to View, Options, 'Show/hide' (Windows 8.1) or Organize, 'Folder and Search Options', View. 'Show hidden files and folders' (Windows 7). When you reveal your hidden folders, you'll also see folders and files that Windows hides by default so that you don't accidentally delete them.

Stop other people seeing your private files

another green Download Now button (anything else is an advert). You must click the grey Decline button in Steps 2 and 3 to avoid downloading adware. At Step 5, click Install Now. In the next box, click Install. Finally, type and confirm a login password.

We were excited to hear about EncryptThat (www.snipca.com/12842), a new, free portable program that claims to disguise encrypted files as 'damaged' or 'broken' when someone tries to open them without the password. It's a brilliant idea - files that play dead! But sadly we couldn't get it to work. It sounds promising, though, so we'll let you know when and if the program's bugs are ironed out.

Lock secret documents inside photos

Steganography is the process of concealing secret data inside other data, and it has been used by Greek historian Herodotus, computing pioneer Charles Babbage and the Bletchley Park codebreakers to encrypt, hide and decrypt information. Open-source program OpenStego (www.openstego.info) adopts this idea by letting you hide text documents inside any photo. The photo looks the same to anyone else, but when you open it in OpenStego and enter your password, out comes the secret text you'd locked and hidden inside.

Another steganography trick is to pick a document to hide (OpenStego calls this the Message File, but it can be any text file), pick a Cover File (which must be a photo), choose a password and click Hide Data. This automatically encrypts and copies your document into your Cover File, which won't look any different. The original document stays in its original place until you delete it.



Competely shred sensitive files in IObit's File Shredder so they can never be recovered

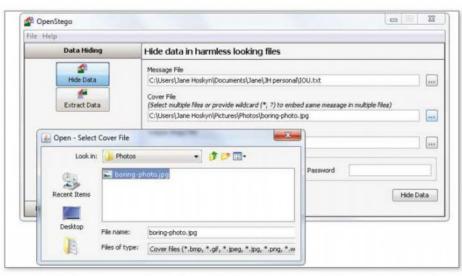
OpenStego is quick and easy to install and doesn't try to add any crapware, but it does require Java to run. Java itself is not malicious but it's a popular target for hackers, so keep it updated. If you don't have Java and want to install it (www.java. com), untick 'Install the Search App' during setup. There are other steganography programs that don't rely on Java, but they're a mixed bunch. Quick Stego (www.snipca.com/12883) looks great and lets you hide photos in photos, but it doesn't encrypt the hidden file like OpenStego. We also tried Our Secret (www.snipca.com/12877), whose website and reviews are reassuringly good, but Chrome blocked it as malware. It may be a false positive, but we decided to avoid it until we know for sure.

WinTrezur (www.snipca.com/12838) isn't quite steganography, but it does let you turn photos into passwords (see our Workshop, Issue 428). Download the portable version to a USB stick for hiding files on an old computer that you just use for offline storage.

Get rid of telltale leftovers

You already know to empty the Recycle Bin to delete files properly, but you may not realise that these emptied files can still be recovered by accident. Imagine a scenario where someone using your computer is using recovery software such as Recuva (www.piriform.com/recuva) to bring back some photos they accidentally deleted. When they run Recuva, a huge list of recoverable thumbnails will appear - including photos and other sensitive stuff you thought you'd deleted for good. They may stumble across your deleted emails, receipts and browser history as well as photos and documents.

Wise Care 365 has a File Shredder tool that destroys your deleted files so they can't be read by programs like Recuva (see Workshop, page 35). If you'd prefer to use a portable tool that doesn't need installing, download IObit Uninstaller (www.snipca. com/12840). The new version includes a File Shredder that overwrites files, folders and their leftover traces to prevent them coming back from the dead to haunt you. Click the menu icon, click File Shredder, choose files and folders that you want to obliterate for good, and click Shred. Keep a copy of IObit Uninstaller on a USB stick and run it on any computer that might contain sensitive files - including any PC that you decide to sell or give away to a friend or family member.



Encrypt and hide your secret documents inside any image file using OpenStego

Hack Windows with your mouse

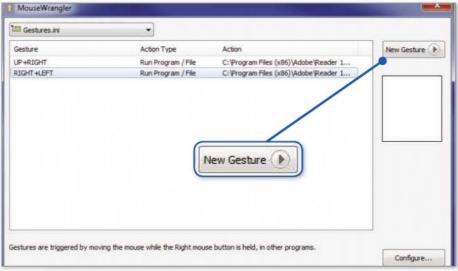
Your mouse can do a lot more than just point and click. Robert Zak reveals the best free software for turning your plain old PC mouse into a multi-tasking Windows tool

Cs have evolved dramatically over the years, but the good old PC mouse has barely changed. It may now have a red light on its underside instead of the ball you had to clean every few months, or it might have a couple of extra buttons, but that's about it. What you do with it hasn't changed much either: left-click, right-click, double-click and scroll. But your humble mouse is capable of so much more. Here we look at the free programs that let you configure your mouse to go beyond simple point-and-click tasks.

Open Ctrl+Alt+Delete in one swipe

Your mouse may only have a few buttons, but the fact that you can move it in any direction effectively gives it eight more (up, down, left, right, and four diagonals). MouseWrangler (www.snipca. com/12814; scroll down and click 'Download mwv103.zip') is a free tool that lets you configure hotkeys or key combinations to be controlled by mouse gestures. For example, you can set a certain mouse swipe to activate a key combination that's easy to get wrong, such as Ctrl+Alt+Delete.

To set up the gesture, click New Gesture from the MouseWrangler menu (see screenshot above), press Ctrl+Alt+Delete, and perform a gesture (such as moving your mouse up) while right-clicking your mouse. From now on, whenever you move your mouse up while rightclicking, Windows will open the Ctrl+Alt+Delete menu. You need to move your mouse a good few inches to record a



Click New Gesture in MouseWrangler then press a keyboard combination to turn it into a mouse click

gesture. This will prevent hotkeys from triggering accidentally when you're using your mouse.

You can edit or delete your saved gestures at any time in MouseWrangler, and you can also set your mouse to open specific folders and programs.

Automate your mouse clicks

GhostMouse (www.ghost-mouse.com) is a simple Desktop program that lets you record and save a sequence of actions that you regularly carry out with your mouse. The next time you need to carry out the same sequence, play it back in GhostMouse and the actions will be carried out automatically - without your hands having to do anything.

This is useful for a regular task that involves the same sequence of mouse clicks, scrolls and swipes every time (such as finding and activating a specific command in the Control Panel). Record your mouse's movements and clicks as you carry out the task, save the recording then play it next time you want to do this task. Other useful sequences you can record include opening all your usual programs after you start up your computer and opening several photo folders at the same time and positioning them around your screen.



Record and save sequences of mouse actions using free program GhostMouse

Scroll to change volume

Most audio and video programs and tools let you change the volume of your PC's speakers using your mouse's scroll wheel, but you usually have to navigate to the volume control first. NirSoft's Volumouse lets you adjust your PC's volume instantly, no matter what program you're using. To install it, go to www.snipca.com/12815, scroll down to the

Feedback section and click either the 'Download self-install...' (32bit) or 'Download Volumouse x64...' (64bit) link. Once the program is installed, you can change volume by scrolling the wheel while holding down Alt.

Volumouse includes some Advanced Rule Options that let you control system tasks and even programming components with your mouse, but these are best left to very confident users. We do recommend making a couple of changes to the default options in the program menu: tick 'Load Volumouse at startup' and untick 'Display this window when you start Volumouse'. This way, the program will run unobtrusively in the background when you switch on your PC.

Scroll without clicking

When you have a few windows open on your Desktop and you want to scroll up or down one of them with your mouse wheel, it's easy to end up in the wrong window and waste time scrolling through the wrong content. WizMouse (www. snipca.com/12816) helps you avoid this by letting you scroll in a window even if you haven't clicked to select it. For example, if you're writing a letter in Word, WizMouse lets you scroll up or down a webpage in your browser at the same time without the need to constantly click between the two. WizMouse also lets you use the scroll wheel in programs that don't normally support it.

KatMouse (www.snipca.com/12820) also lets you scroll within windows without selecting them and through the window your cursor is hovering over without clicking. You can also use your middle mouse button (or the scroll-wheel button) to toggle between open programs, speeding up the fiddly process of pointing and clicking through them when you have several windows open at the same time.



Use Volumouse to control your PC's volume by pressing Alt and moving the scroll wheel

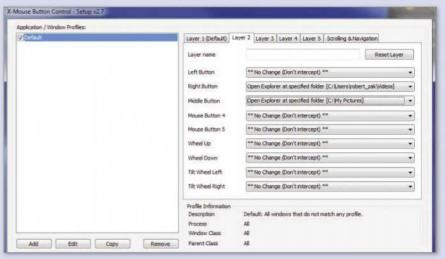
CREATE YOUR OWN MOUSE HACKS

All the programs we've mentioned offer different, specific ways of tweaking your mouse, but with X-Mouse Button Control (www.snipca.com/12819) you make your own tweaks. It's an advanced program and takes longer to set up, but it effectively turns your mouse into an incredibly customisable Windows controller. You create your own configurations (profiles) for different programs and Windows tools, and switch between them by pressing a hotkey or hovering over a specific window. You can create profiles for any installed program or Windows feature, including the Desktop and taskbar, such as a profile that turns the scroll wheel into a volume control when you hover over the system tray, or a profile that turns your mouse into a screenshot tool (one click to capture the screen, then just click and drag to crop

the image).

To create a profile that opens all the photos from a specific folder in MS Paint for example, click Add at the bottom left of the X-Mouse program window and select Paint. Click OK, click 'Layer 2' (leave 'Layer 1' - your default mouse settings - unchanged) and click one of the dropdown menus to select a mouse button or gesture. Scroll down to 'Open Explorer at specified folder' and select one of your photo folders. You can also select a hotkey to press at the same time as clicking your mouse to open all the files in your specified folder.

If you like the sound of X-Mouse, click the 'Latest version' link to download the installer, or 'Portable version' to download a version that you can run from a USB stick. [63]



Use X-Mouse to configure 'profiles' for your mouse so it can carry out complex actions

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Problems Solved

PROBLEM OF THE FORTNIGHT

How do I get the data off my broken Nexus 7?

I dropped my Nexus 7 tablet and the screen cracked in several places. To my initial relief. I switched it on and it seemed to still be working, because the screen came on and everything looked normal. However, when I touched the screen to try to operate the device I discovered it was dead - it simply wouldn't register my taps. I checked on Google and found out that I could reset it by holding down the power button. Sadly, it was just the same when it restarted.

To be honest, I'm not too bothered about the device itself because it's now two years old and quite slow, but I do want to rescue my stuff. How can I do that if the screen won't work? Is there anything I can do?

Michael Arlington

Much depends on the apps you use, the type of 'stuff' that you want to rescue and whether or not your Nexus is protected by a passcode.

If your tablet isn't protected by a passcode, then you'll be able to use a standard micro-USB cable to connect it to a computer and then copy across photos, music and videos. In Windows, press Windows key+E to open Windows Explorer (or File Explorer in Windows 8/8.1) then navigate through the folders to find what you want – photos will be stored in the Pictures and DCIM folders.

This method won't give you instant access to all the data stored on your device. If you use the pre-installed Gmail app, for example, you won't be able to simply drag and drop your emails. Of course, if you use Gmail as your email platform, then you'll be able



Repair your tablet's cracked screen with this LCD and Digitizer Touchscreen assembly kit

to set up your account on a new device to sync messages stored on Google's server. Likewise, any contacts stored in the People app.

Unfortunately you won't be able to follow these guidelines if your Nexus is protected by a passcode, because it won't allow Windows Explorer/File Explorer access unless the device is unlocked - and you can't do that without a working screen. It's possible to replace the Nexus 7's screen-anddigitiser (the bit that recognises your touch input) assembly, with a complete kit costing around £40 from Amazon (see image above - www.snipca. com/12549). It's a tricky job requiring steady hands, specialist tools and careful use of a heat gun or hairdryer to loosen the screen adhesive but, if you work slowly, it can be completed by mere mortals. We'd recommend following iFixit's comprehensive illustrated guide, which you'll find at www.snipca.com/12550.

Finally, be sure to buy the correct screen-and-digitiser assembly: we're pretty sure you have the original Nexus 7 model, manufactured in 2012 (and that's what we link to above), but remember that Google released a new model in 2013 - and this requires parts with different dimensions.

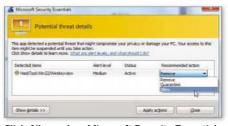
How do I obtain a virus-free version of WirelessKeyView?

You recently suggested installing a program called WirelessKevView to reveal Wi-Fi network passwords. I liked the sound of this so visited the published address (www.snipca.com/11658) and attempted to download the program. When I did, a warning from Microsoft Security Essentials popped up saying a potential threat had been detected that might compromise my privacy or damage my PC. The recommended action was to remove the file, so I did that. I really would like to try WirelessKeyView so what should I do? Is it really a virus? Or did I somehow download a version that had picked up a virus?

Kerry Clark

WirelessKeyView is a legitimate tool but, because its contains code with behaviour that might be considered malicious (ie, revealing passwords), then some security programs flag it up as a concern. That's almost certainly what happened here, though it's possible you clicked the wrong link and initiated the download of a program that was harmful.

To be on the safe side, download WirelessKeyView from the developer NirSoft's own website, (www.snipca. com/12507). Microsoft Security Essentials will still probably flag it as potentially harmful but, so long as you've doublechecked that you're definitely at the NirSoft website, you can safely choose the Allow option from the 'Recommended action' dropdown menu.



Click Allow when Microsoft Security Essentials flags up WirelessKeyView as a potential threat

Our experts solve all your tech problems

Email us your problem and we'll try to help: noproblem@computeractive.co.uk

How do I transfer my old emails to Windows 7 or 8.1?

I'm planning to buy a new desktop computer running either Windows 7 or 8.1 to replace my old XP machine. On my old PC I use Outlook Express for email. I understand this isn't available on Windows 7 or 8.1, but I do want to be able to transfer my emails. Which version of Windows would be better for this and how do I do it?

Jacqueline Taylor

Neither operating system is, as such, 'better' for email but Windows 8.1 does have a built-in mail app that adopts Microsoft's Modern interface style, called simply Mail. Regardless of your feelings toward Modern, Mail is a very basic email app that we couldn't with a straight face recommend to anyone. Moreover, Mail lacks an import option, so there's no



Transfer emails from Outlook Express by using the Windows Live Mail Import tool

(easy) way get your Outlook Express messages into the app.

The answer is to use a free alternative, such as Microsoft's own Windows Live Mail. This is part of the Windows Essentials suite and works with Windows 7 or 8.1 - download it from www.snipca. com/12389.

Next, you need to copy all of your Outlook Express email files to a USB stick. To find the location of these, in Outlook Express click Tools then choose Options. Next, click the Maintenance tab and click the Store Folder button. Click the box in the Store Folder dialogue box

and press Control+A to highlight the file path and then Control+C to copy it to the Windows Clipboard.

Press the Windows kev+E to open Windows Explorer

and then Control+V to paste the file path into the box at the top of the Windows Explorer window. You should now see a group of files, such as 'Folders.dbx', 'Inbox.dbx' and 'Outbox.dbx' - these contain your email messages and folder information. Copy all these to a USB stick.

Switch to your new computer and, in Windows Live Mail, click the down arrow at the top left to open the menu and choose 'Import messages'. Next, select Microsoft Outlook Express 6 followed by Next. Now, click Browse, select to the USB stick with your Outlook Express files, click Next and then follow the prompts.

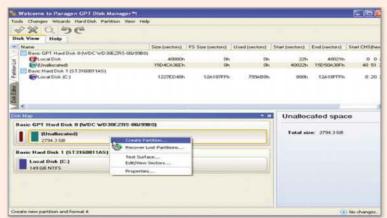
Can I restore my Windows XP backups to new PC?

I run a Windows XP PC with loads of old hardware that, ideally, I'd like to keep going. I back up my system drive with Norton Ghost to a secondary hard drive. If I suffer a serious hardware failure, I'm worried that I won't be able to restore the Ghost backup to a new PC.

Are there any compatibility issues

with current state-of-the-art hardware that might prevent a new installation of XP? Would my XP licence be valid? Would Microsoft need to get involved? Would Ghost work?

James Dennerly



To create larger hard-drive partitions after installing Windows XP on a new computer, use Paragon GPT Loader

Windows XP will work on a new PC, but there are caveats. If you own the 32bit edition of XP (as is likely) then you won't be able

to partition hard-drive storage beyond 2.2TB, a limit imposed by the old

technology underlying the XP operating system.

Many newer PCs come with larger hard drives and, while drivers to get around XP's limit might be available from the drive manufacturer, you can't bank on it. Commercial software, such as Paragon's GPT Loader - \$19.95 (£11.60) from www.snipca. com/12508 - can also help. The 32bit version of XP can't make use of memory beyond 4GB. Your XP licence will be

valid on a new PC but XP might request to be activated. Microsoft is keeping the activation service going, so no problem there. Norton Ghost is discontinued but the last edition (15) is compatible with Windows 8.1 - earlier editions are not.

Problems Solved

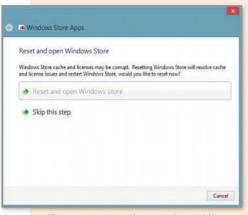
Why can't I launch the Windows 8 Store app?

I bought an HP laptop just over a year ago that runs Windows 8. Recently, I've been trying to get onto the Windows Store app but, when I click the tile, the app appears to launch and fill the screen, but then it quickly goes back to the Start screen without opening. How can I fix this?

Naomi Rall

Several things can cause this problem. First, check that your PC's time and date are correct. Press Windows key+C to open the Charms bar, then click Settings followed by 'Change PC settings'. Next, click 'Time & language', then 'Date & time'. Check that the 'Set time automatically' switch is in the On position, or click the Change button below to set the time manually.

However, we think it's more likely that your Windows Store app's cache has somehow become corrupted. Microsoft has issued a tool to fix this problem (download it from www. snipca.com/12403 - just click the 'Apps troubleshooter' link). Doubleclick the downloaded file, then click Next followed by 'Reset and open Windows Store'. Now restart Windows and you should be able to access the Windows Store app.



Restore corrupted app caches with Windows' new app troubleshooter

How do I add widgets to the Android lock screen?

I recently updated my smartphone with the latest version of Android (4.4.3). The update went perfectly but somehow all my widgets were left disabled. I've worked out how to re-enable them on the home pages, but I can't figure out how to add them to the lock screen.

I've read various online guides that say I just have to swipe to the left to see a '+' symbol, but that doesn't seem to work. I even watched a video tutorial, but the techniques demonstrated didn't work. Any ideas?

Charlie Grayson

The method has changed from earlier versions of Android, so our guess is that the tutorials you've read and watched are out of date. Now, from the lock screen you first need to swipe down from the clock to remove the PIN-code number pad. Next, swipe from left to right across the screen to reveal the '+' symbol - tap this to view the list of widgets. To add a widget,

simply tap its icon, then tap in your PIN code. Some widgets might require you to make additional choices, such as the style of the widget.

That's it. However, if you want to rearrange the order of your widgets, repeat the above steps but instead of tapping the '+' symbol, tap and hold a widget and then move your finger to drag and drop it into the desired position.





Restore widgets to your phone's lock screen by swiping across it and tapping the '+' symbol

How do I lock rotation in the Kindle app?

I use the Kindle app for Android and I'm sure I used to be able to lock the screen rotation. I recently updated Android to KitKat and also updated my Kindle app, and now the option seems to have disappeared.

Am I going mad? Helen Major

No, that option did indeed exist - you'd tap

at the bottom right to toggle a little padlock symbol. For whatever

reason, Amazon (not Google) has removed this feature from the latest version of its Kindle app for Android.

There is a workaround. If you're using an Android tablet, use two fingers to swipe down from the top right of the





Switch off 'Auto-rotate screen' in the Kindle app via settings

screen then tap the Auto Rotate icon to toggle it on and off. If you're using a smartphone, tap Settings followed by Display then tap to remove the tick from the 'Auto-rotate screen' box. This change affects all apps, not just Kindle, but it's the best we can offer.

Is MightyText suitable for my phone?

Having read your recent article about using MightyText (www. mightytext.net) to send texts from a tablet, I was keen to give the app a try. I downloaded the app to my tablet and then tried to download the app to my phone. It should have been compatible as my phone is an Android Nokia Lumia 520 that runs Windows 8. However, apparently this app is not suitable for my devices. Any advice?

Colin Spence

You didn't tell us anything about your tablet but if you managed to install MightyText it must run Android, as the app is available only for that particular mobile operating system.

However, there seems to be some confusion about the operating system used by your phone. You referred to your handset as running "Windows 8", describing the handset as an "Android Nokia Lumia 520". The Lumia 520 runs Windows Phone 8 (which is not actually the same as Windows 8 for desktop computers, even though it looks similar). Moreover, this has no connection whatsoever with Android, so we're not sure why you called your Lumia 520 phone an "Android Nokia".

Regardless, vou're right to conclude that MightyText isn't suitable for your all your devices - because the app is not available for Windows Phone 8. But don't give up just yet. Another free app, called Viber (www.viber.com), is available for both Android and Windows Phone 8 (and even for PC), so install it on your tablet and phone to keep your text messages in sync across your various devices.



Sync your text messages across multiple devices with the free Viber app

How do I copy multiple items in LibreOffice?

Following the news in one of your recent issues that Word 2003 is no longer supported by Microsoft, I decided to try an alternative - LibreOffice Writer (www.libreoffice. org). I really like it, but one thing I can't work out is how to copy multiple items to the clipboard. In Word 2003, all I had to do was press Control+C twice and a column would open on the right-hand side of the screen showing a history of my copied items. When I try this in LibreOffice, nothing seems to happen. Is there a different shortcut I should be using?

Dennis Tooley

There's no such shortcut in Writer because, sadly, Writer has no such feature. It relies instead on the Windows Clipboard, which can store only one item at a time. Press Control+C in Writer to copy something and you'll find the last item in the Clipboard is dumped to make way for the latest one. Word (or rather Microsoft Office) uses its own suitewide clipboard, which is why you were



Store text and images from documents in the clipboard-style tool Yankee Clipper 3

previously able to copy and paste multiple items.

If you want to stick with Writer then the solution is to install one of the many tools that enhance or replace the Windows Clipboard. Yankee Clipper 3, for example, is a free utility that stores up to 200 items, including copied text and images. Download it from www. snipca.com/12404.

Yankee Clipper 3 is easy to use and employs the same Control+C shortcut that you're used to. To paste something, click to select the relevant item and then click the target icon or press F8 to trigger a paste with a four-second delay. Next, press Alt+Tab to revert back to Writer (or any other app) within four seconds and you'll see the item has been pasted.

Why do I get sound but no video on email attachments?

When I get an email with a video-clip attachment, and I click the clip, I only hear the audio but can't see any video. I receive regular emails from a martial-arts firm that include video clips, but I can't see them - only hear them. I don't know what is happening here. The funny thing is, I can both see and hear the clips normally on my iPad. Why won't my PC do the same?



down to either your graphic

card's drivers, a lack (or presence) of something known as

hardware acceleration, or missing codecs

To check for new drivers in Windows 7,

left-hand column. Next, click the 'Display

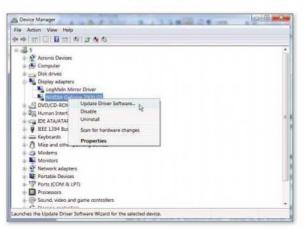
This is probably

that are required to play the video.

then click Device Manager in the

press the Windows key+Pause/Break,

adapters' category to expand it, then



If you're having problems playing video on your computer, try updating your graphics card's driver via the Device Manager

right-click your graphics card and choose Update Driver Software. Next, choose 'Search for updated driver software' and follow the prompts.

If no new drivers are found (or the problem persists), then try disabling or enabling the card's hardware-acceleration feature, as either status can potentially cause problems with video playback. Right-click an empty area on your Desktop, then choose 'Screen resolution'

from the pop-up menu. Next, click 'Advanced settings' then the Troubleshoot tab. Click 'Change settings' then move the 'Hardware acceleration' slider to None. Restart Windows.

If neither of these methods work then your video-playing software might be lacking the codec necessary for interpreting the video file. This is likely if you're using Windows Media Player (WMP) to play your videos. You can bolster WMP's limited codec roster by installing free codec packs such as K-Lite (www.snipca.com/12425). However, we'd advise you to use a better-equipped video player, such as VLC - get it free from www.snipca.com/12426.

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Can Luse Essentials in Windows 8.1?

Could anyone tell me if Microsoft Windows Essentials programs are compatible with Windows 8.1. I'm specifically interested in the Photo Gallery and Movie Maker programs. However, when I try to install them, the process reaches 20 per cent complete and then stops. Any ideas?

> Fuller, Computeractive Forum

Yes, the Windows Essentials tools will work with Windows 8.1 – I've installed Windows Live Mail, Movie Maker and Photo Gallery, and all work with no problems. You can get Windows Essentials from www.snipca.com/12524. If you're still having problems, launch Control Panel (from

the Start screen, type control panel then click to launch it. Next, click Action Center followed by Maintenance and then View Reliability History. That might give some idea as to what has gone wrong.

Helmut, Computeractive Forum

If your PC won't install programs, check the Reliability History via **Action Center and Control Panel**

Microsoft's program names can be confusing, not least because the company has another program called Microsoft Security Essentials – and this is not compatible with Windows 8.1 and

therefore will not install.

Check to see if the download is the correct Windows Essentials item, following the suggestion by Helmut. It might be that you've tried to install Security Essentials. If not, try to install Microsoft Essentials again, only this time delay or turn off your security software for a short period to see if this allows the install to go ahead successfully.

> Beebs. Computeractive Forum





External hard drives

Speed up slow drives, see hidden folders and take back control of your files

Windows can't see your external hard drive

If you've plugged in your external hard drive but it fails to show up in Windows Explorer, check that the drive's activity indicator light is on at the front. If it's off, the hard drive may not be working and you may need to replace it. Check the manufacturer's website for guidance. There's also a useful discussion about recovering files from malfunctioning drives on Piriform's online forum (www. snipca.com/12806). Piriform are the software developers who make CCleaner, Recuva and Defraggler.

If the drive's light is on but you still can't see it in Windows Explorer, it may be because there's no letter assigned to it. Click Start, type disk management and press Enter to see a list of all the drives that Windows can detect. Find a hard drive with an empty Volume column this will be your undetected hard drive. Right-click it, click 'Change Drive Letter and Paths', click Add, select 'Assign the following drive letter', choose a letter from the dropdown and click OK.

Files and folders on my external drive are hidden

If you can't see certain files that are on your hard drive, they may be hidden. To view hidden files, open Windows Explorer and click Organize, 'Folder and Search options', View, 'Show hidden files, folders, and drives', then click OK.

If this fails to make your files appear, try using the Command Prompt to remove attributes that might be hiding files on your external hard drive, such as 'readonly', 'hidden' and 'system file'. Type cmd in the Start menu, right-click 'cmd' in the results and click 'Run as administrator'. Type attrib -h -r -s /s /d g:*.*, replacing 'g' with the letter of the hard drive you want to access. You can check its letter in Disk Management (see previous tip). After you've typed the command, press Enter.

Windows tells you to format your drive

If your external hard drive stops working



Click Partition Recovery Wizard to recover lost data on your hard drive

and Windows tells you to 'format the disk', don't do it. This will delete all your data. Instead, download and install the free program Partition Wizard (www. snipca.com/12795). Open the program and click MiniTool Partition Wizard. If your external hard drive is marked as Unallocated in the program's File System column, Windows won't be able to access its data. Click Partition Recovery Wizard in the left-hand pane, then keep clicking Next until you reach the Choose Searched Partitions option. Your missing partition should appear here in the Status column (marked Lost/Deleted). Double-click it and you'll see all your lost files. Click Close, then Finish. You now need to assign a letter to your external hard drive so that Windows can find it. Right-click it, click 'Change letter', give it a letter and click Apply.

External drive is too slow

Your external hard drive will slow down over time. To speed it up, first optimise it using Windows' then tools. In Windows Explorer, right-click the drive, click Properties, Hardware, select your external drive in the list, then click Properties again. In the new window,



Use Windows' 'Better performance' tool to speed up your external hard drive

click 'Change settings', Policies, select 'Better performance' and click OK. You can also use the free program Glary Utilities (www.glarysoft.com) to defragment your drive and check it for errors. In Glary Utilities, click Advanced Tools, choose an option under 'Hard disks' and select your drive from the list.

External hard drive won't let vou edit files

If you've connected your external hard drive to a new PC and try to make changes to the files on the drive, you may see the message 'You'll need to provide administrator permission to (delete this folder/copy to this folder/delete this file)'. This means your PC has strict default permissions. To change the permissions and get control over your files, right-click the external hard drive in Windows Explorer and click Properties, Security, Edit. Click your Windows username under 'Group or user names', tick Allow next to 'Full control', then click OK.



Enable 'Full control' via Properties to regain editing rights over your own files











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At Premier Ink, we stock two types of cartridges for Epson printers - Originals, which are made by Epson, and Compatibles, which are made by a UK company called Jet Tec. Using Jet Tec Compatibles is a way of saving money, without compromising on the quality of your prints. Here're the results from two independent ink tests that agree.

'Jet Tec's colours were superb, with ingle greys and blacks very close to Epson ...so Jet Tec wins!" - Total Digital Photography Magazine

"What we're looking at here is not only the best choice of ink for the R300 printer, but also the best ink in this group test, period. There's just no getting away from the superb combination of performance and pricing" - Computer Upgrade Magazine



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Winner!

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T041 Colour		£4.99 46ml, 3 for £13.99	
T050 Black			440, 640, 660 Photo 700, 1200
T051 Black			740, 760, 800, 850, 860, 1160
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T0961-9 each		Check Website.	
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T1281 Black	£7.99 5.9ml		SX420W/425W/435W/445W,
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Jargon Buster

1080p High-definition video at 1920x1080 pixels.

32bit A measure of how much data a PC can process at once.

4K Video with a resolution of at least 3840x2160 pixels

802.11ac A standard for wireless networks that allows for much higher transfer speeds than 802.11n.

802.11n A slower standard for wireless networks

Adware Unwanted adverts that come with software.

AMOLED Active-Matrix Organic Light-Emitting Diode.

Batch-convert A software feature that converts multiple files in one go.

Boot The process of starting up a PC after it's been turned off.

Bootable A DVD with system files on it so it can be used to start up your computer.

Cache A temporary space for storing information.

Codec A file that tells a PC how to record or play a type of media file.

Component video High-quality video connection that uses three cables, plus two more for sound.

Dedicated graphics chip A graphics card or chip that has its

own dedicated memory.

Defragment To reorganise the data stored on a hard drive so files can be accessed quickly.

Driver A file telling Windows how to work with a peripheral device.

DSLR Digital single lens reflex.

Dual band Wireless routers that work on the 2.4 and 5GHz frequencies or bands.

Dual core When two processors are combined into a single chip.

Eight-core A standard processor has one core, but most modern processors are dual, quad or even eight-core, making them faster.

EPG Electronic Programme Guide.

EV Compensation Exposure Compensation. An override control on a camera

Extension A program that adds extra features to your browser.

False positive When an antivirus program erroneously detects a malware infection

Feedback Tactile response keys on a keyboard give when pressed.

Firewall Software that prevents malware from the web infecting your computer.

Hardware acceleration Using a graphics card to radically improve video and games performance.

HDMI High-definition media interface. A type of connection that transmits HD video and audio.

Hotkey A key set up to perform a complex action.

JPEG Joint Photograph Experts Group. A type of image file.

Memory See RAM.

Metadata A set of data that gives information about a file.

MHL Mobile high-definition link.

MicroSD A small memory card.

Micro USB A smaller version of USB, often found on tablets.

Miracast A standard for connecting a PC to a TV or monitor wirelessly.

Motherboard The main circuit board inside a PC.

NAS Network-attached storage.

Noise Visible dust-like speckles that appear in images.

Optical stabilisation Mechanism in cameras that compensates for shaking or vibrations.

Partition Splitting a large hard drive into two or more sections.

Phono Standard stereo (red and white) audio connections.

Plug-in A small program that adds extra features to your browser.

PNG Portable Network Graphics.

Processor The brain of a computer.

Quad core A PC that has four processors on a single chip.

Ram Random-access memory.

Ransomware Malware that locks files on a PC and demands a payment to hackers to release it.

Registry WIndows database containing important system data.

Resolution Detail in an image.

Restore Point A Windows backup of system files and settings.

Sandbox A digital barrier that protects an operating system.

SCART A standard connector for video and audio signals.

SD card A type of memory card.

Sensor The part of the camera that captures each image.

SLR Single-Lens Reflex.

SSD Solid-state drive

Tag A keyword used to describe a file or web page.

TB Terabyte. 1.000GB.

Travel The distance the keys of a keyboard have to be pressed before the keystroke is recognised.

Trojan A malicious PC program.

USB3 A faster version of the USB standard.

Widget A small program that runs on PCs, phones and tablets.

Zero-day attack A hack that exploits a previously unknown software flaw.



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The Final Straw



STUART ANDREWS is Computeractive's Mr Angry @SATAndrews

In this issue Stuart Andrews definitely feels 'negative' about...

Facebook's manipulation

was going to rant about something else this issue, but then Facebook came along and effortlessly pulled my wrath its way. I'm referring, of course, to Facebook's little experiment; the one where it altered the News Feeds of nearly 700,000 users to emphasise positive or negative posts. Some users had posts containing upbeat content quietly shuffled out of their feed. Others had the same treatment with downbeat posts. Apparently, Facebook wanted to see if users seeing more negative stuff

Facebook thinks it's OK to mess around with your feelings, just to see what makes you tick



would become more negative in their own posts, or more positive if they saw more smiles and cheer.

Well, Facebook's research has definitely stirred up some pretty strong emotions. It turns out that when we see a lot of misery in our feeds, we tend to post more miserable stuff ourselves. Facebook, in its inimitable style, calls this 'emotional contagion', as if empathy were a disease, and the normal response to a feed full of woe was to tell everyone to keep a stiff upper lip and let the good times roll. It also turns out that when you do this kind of thing - then smugly publish your research - a lot of people feel very negative about you. You trust Facebook as a place where you share your life, your

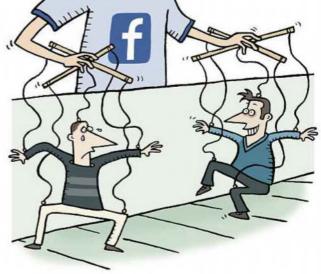
thoughts and feelings with your friends and family. Facebook. however, thinks it's OK to mess around with all this stuff, just to see what makes you tick.

I won't go into the legal issues here - Facebook thinks that when you sign up for its service, you've given it permission to monkey around. It's pretty clear, however, that something's not right with a powerful company that feels it can play with people's lives.

Admittedly, some of the media coverage has been overblown. From the way some papers have put it, you'd think Facebook had bombarded victims with videos of poor neglected kittens set to a Leonard Cohen soundtrack and followed by a detailed analysis of their shortcomings delivered by the people they loved most. As far as I know, nobody was driven to suicide by Facebook's research, or even to drink. Similarly, some of the more paranoid responses from global politicians have seemed hopelessly dim-witted. Facebook might have hidden that post where your mate Kevin said he was pleased as punch, but it hasn't been telling anyone how to vote. This isn't thought control, even if the potential for abuse is clear.

Facebook has been pretty open about why and how it's done this. Of course we manipulate your news feed, it says. In fact, we do it all the time. Facebook's algorithms are constantly working to ensure that you see the posts they think you think are most important, while other posts, which you might actually want to read, slip further down.

This makes clear, however, that Facebook could do so much more if it wanted. It might think that negative posts



aren't good for advertising, or that content that spreads the wrong emotions makes you want to use Facebook less. Imagine Facebook making these decisions for you, and then the errors its algorithms make. Don't you feel just a little bit cross?

There are two real issues here: transparency and accountability. Oldfashioned mainstream media has someone to answer to, but Facebook isn't really accountable to anyone. And how many of us use the service without understanding how its algorithms work, or the rationale behind them? Yet we all have so much invested in Facebook - so many friends we might lose touch with - that we'll use it all the same.

If anything good comes out of this, I hope that we will all think a little more about our relationship with social media, and about how much we want to trust the companies that control it. I haven't lost my trust in Facebook, but then I didn't really have much in the first place. Given Facebook's willingness to manipulate, I'm not convinced I ever will.

Do you agree with Stuart? Let us know at letters@computeractive.co.uk

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