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them out!

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active

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Windows 10

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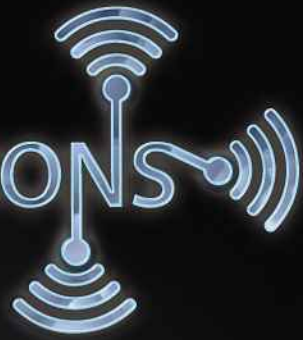
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From the Editor

Several readers have emailed me to say that our current series of 'Problems Fixed' features for Windows 10 has put them off upgrading. If there are so many problems, they ask, why should they abandon Windows 7 and 8?

I can appreciate this view, but it's important to understand that one of the reasons we've answered so many readers' problems is simply that so many readers have upgraded to it – and subsequently contacted us. Indeed, it's a sign of Windows 10's popularity. After all, we didn't need to run an equivalent series for Windows 8 because so few people upgraded to it straight away.

Many readers who have emailed problems



actually say they like Windows 10. Often it's just one niggle that needs fixing. We've fixed more of them this fortnight (see page 57), but our Cover Feature takes a more positive spin. It reveals the best hidden things you can do in Windows 10 that you couldn't in 7 and 8. I hope you find it useful.

Daniel Booth

editor@computeractive.co.uk



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HOW TO USE SNIPCA URLs

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

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Windows 10

COVER
FEATURE
P50

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Windows 10 PROBLEMS FIXED



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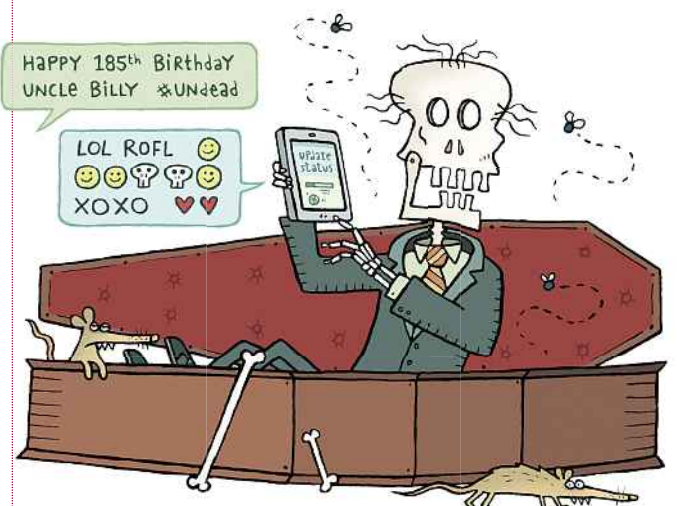
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Windows 10: new version, but the same old problems

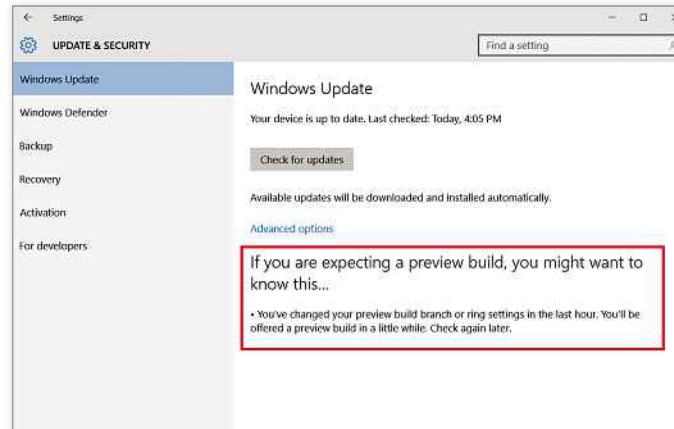
Microsoft has failed to fix major problems in the latest version of Windows 10.

In the Preview Build 10547, which was released to members of the Windows 10 Insider Program (<https://insider.windows.com>) on 18 September, Microsoft admitted that apps from its Store may still not update automatically.

Apps not updating has been one of the biggest problems faced by *Computeractive* readers who have upgraded to the new operating system.

To receive app updates, you'll have to change a setting within the Store. Microsoft explained how to do this in a blog post announcing Build 10547: www.snipca.com/18003.

Another flaw Microsoft hasn't fixed involves using Notepad.exe in Command Prompt. Trying to open a file using only a file name, such as 'file.txt', brings up a permissions error. In the same blog post Microsoft suggests a temporary solution, and says the flaw will be properly fixed in a "future" version of Windows 10.



Microsoft is also telling users not to worry about a warning message you may see in the Settings app regarding preview builds (see screenshot above). The company says "it is safe to ignore for now".

Add a fourth column to the Start menu

Although users will be frustrated by these ongoing flaws, there are improvements in Build 10547 that make Windows 10 much easier to use. There are also updates to some Windows 10 apps, including Mail, Maps, Photos and Calendar.

One of the most significant new features is that you can now add four columns of tile groups to the Start menu, one more than the default. Microsoft says it introduced this after listening to "feedback from many Insiders". You can make the tiles wider, too.

You can also now turn off the Windows background picture in the sign-in screen. To do this open the Settings app, click Personalization, 'Lock screen', then turn off 'Show Windows background picture on the sign-in screen'.

In addition, Microsoft has fixed a problem with the

COMMENT

Expecting Microsoft to have fixed every flaw in this version is unreasonable, but it is particularly disappointing that many Windows Store apps still aren't updating automatically. Frustrated users will quickly abandon apps if they have to be constantly updated manually. But we're pleased to see Microsoft adding more flexibility to the Start menu. If Insiders like the wider tiles and extra column, we hope they will be added to the first major Windows 10 update, codenamed 'Threshold 2', due for release in November.

notification icon for the Action Center, which was lighting up even when there were no alerts.

To receive Build 10547, and future Previews, you need to sign up to the Windows Insider Program. You'll then receive updates to Windows 10 before the majority of users, though some of the new features may contain bugs, like any beta version of a program.

For more information on the Insider Program and instructions on how to join visit Microsoft's website: www.snipca.com/18007.

Turn to page 57 for Part 2 of our Windows 10: Problems Solved series

COMING SOON - THE SURFACE PRO 4

Microsoft is expected to unveil the Surface Pro 4 at an event in New York on 6 October. The laptop-tablet hybrid will come with Windows 10 and, according

to reports, a 14-inch screen. This is two inches bigger than the Pro 3, which was the first Surface Pro to widely receive positive reviews. In 2014, we gave it a four-star 'Great Pick'

review (see Issue 431). It's still available for £1,299 from Microsoft's store (www.snipca.com/13194), though this price is likely to fall following the Pro 4's release.

You'll like this... Kaspersky researchers helped to catch two criminals sending ransomware (www.snipca.com/17997)

... but not this Experts say Russia has used malware since 2008 to spy on other countries (www.snipca.com/17996)

Is your antivirus program selling your private data to advertisers?

AVG has issued an updated privacy policy that appears to grant the security software company the right to harvest and sell on data collected from users of its popular free antivirus (AV) tool, including browsing and search history.

In the new policy, which comes into effect on 15 October, AVG states that “we collect non-personal data to make money from our free offerings so we can keep them free”. The agreement goes on to say that “AVG may share non-personal data with third parties and may publicly display aggregate or anonymous information”.

Data harvested includes the advertising ID associated with your device, the internet service provider (ISP) or mobile network you use as well as details about other applications you may have on your device and how they’re used. Crucially, the policy also explicitly states that AVG can collect “browsing and search history, including meta data”,



which could, in theory, be used to identify you and track your activity.

In response to criticism and concern about the policy, AVG has published a blog post, where it states that: “We do not, and will not, sell personally identifiable data to anyone, including advertisers.” It also points out that users will be given

the choice to opt out of data collection, should they so wish. “We are currently adding this option to some of our free consumer products, and we can confirm that no sharing of data will happen until our customers are able to make this choice,” the post says. You can read AVG’s new privacy policy in full at www.snipca.com/17993.

Amazon launches £50 tablet

Amazon has just announced its cheapest tablet yet. The Amazon Fire costs just £50 – half the price of a Tesco Hudl 2 – and comes preloaded with the latest version of Fire OS. The new operating system, Fire OS 5 ‘Bellini’, ditches Amazon’s previous carousel interface in favour of a more traditional Android approach.

The new tablet has a 7-inch screen with a resolution of 1024 x 600 pixels, a 1.3GHz quad-core processor and 8GB storage – a microSD slot allows you to expand this by up to 128GB. It has a VGA front-facing camera and a 2-megapixel rear-facing



camera with HD (720p) video recording. Amazon claims the battery will last for up to seven hours of reading,

surfing the web, watching video and listening to music.

In addition to the budget model, Amazon has also announced a number of other new Fire products, including three more tablets – the 8-inch Fire HD 8 (£130), the 10.1-inch Fire HD 10 (£170) and a revamped 7-inch Fire Kids Edition (£100) – and a new 4K Ultra HD-capable Amazon Fire TV (£80).

The new Fire tablets are already on sale, while the Fire TV is due to launch on 5 October. All devices are available direct from Amazon as well as John Lewis, Argos and Tesco.

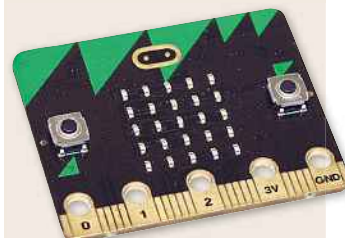
IN BRIEF

RESEARCHERS PROVE DRIVERLESS CARS CAN BE HACKED

Driverless cars can be easily hacked using basic electronic equipment, according to scientists at tech firm Security Innovation. The hack works by fooling a car’s laser-ranging systems into thinking there’s an obstacle ahead, forcing the vehicle to take evasive action. A hacker could use a cheap laser pointer and a Raspberry Pi.

FREE BBC CHILDREN’S COMPUTER DELAYED

The BBC has postponed the launch of its micro:bit computer until sometime after Christmas. The tiny PC was due to be given away to a million 11- and 12-year-olds this October but a flaw in the power supply has been discovered.



Tomorrow's world

Do aliens exist? And, if so, are we inadvertently sending them junk mail and malware? These were among the questions being asked at the British Science Festival last month. At the event, Dr Anders Sandberg of Oxford University warned that humans must make sure we send “clean” digital information into space. “Some people think we’re already spamming the universe with reality soaps,” he said.

IN BRIEF

APPLE ANNOUNCES NEW LARGE IPAD

The iPad Pro was among the new products announced by Apple at a recent launch event. The new tablet has a larger 12-inch screen with a resolution of 2732 x 2048 and can be used with an optional smart keyboard and stylus. UK release date and pricing have yet to be confirmed, though a November launch seems likely. Other products announced include new iPhone models, the 6s and 6s Plus.

'SMART' WHEELCHAIR THAT COULD SAVE LIVES

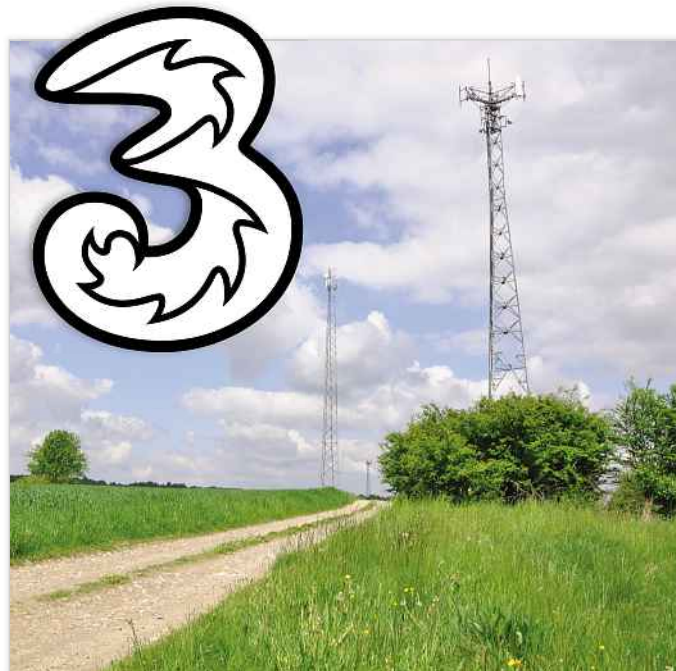
An internet-connected wheelchair was demonstrated at the CTIA wireless industry conference in Las Vegas last month. The motorised chair from Swedish mobility firm Permobil connects via mobile networks. It can relay diagnostic and tracking information over the net, while a built-in **accelerometer** can warn relatives or carers if the user has fallen over.

Three hopes to banish rural 4G blackspots

A new service from mobile network Three will dramatically improve rural and indoor **4G** coverage, the company claims. Powered by Voice-over-LTE (or VoLTE) technology and a new 800MHz frequency, the 4G Super Voice service (www.snipca.com/18001) allows signals to travel much further than before, helping to penetrate 4G blackspots in hard-to-reach areas of the UK as well as inside your home. Customers should be able to make calls, send texts and get online in places where they previously had a very poor signal.

The service also finally allows Three customers to make calls over 4G, enhancing the quality of calls and speeding up connection rates. Until recently, Three's 4G network only ran data services, so if you wanted to make a call, you'd automatically be switched back to 3G.

4G Super Voice currently covers 50 per cent of the UK population, including most of



London, Edinburgh, Exeter and Birmingham. The service will soon be rolling out in many other cities across the country, including Cardiff, Manchester, Liverpool and Bristol, and Three expects up to 5.5 million customers will have access to 4G Super Voice by 2017.

However, there's a slight catch – you need a compatible

phone in order to use the service, and right now, only the Samsung Galaxy S5 and LG G4 support it. To take advantage of Super Voice, customers will also need to be running the latest Android update on their phone. When the update is ready for a customer's particular phone, they'll receive an alert along with instructions on how to update.

Massive flaw found in Android's screen lock

Researchers have discovered a severe vulnerability in the Android operating system that allows anyone to gain access to your device – even if it's locked. The flaw, which affects smartphones and devices running Android version 5.1 (Lollipop), allows a potential hacker to bypass the screen lock by copying and pasting an extremely long string of random characters into the password prompt of a locked device. Doing so causes the

lock screen to crash, sending the hacker directly to the device's home screen, and giving them full access to all the data and apps installed.

The experts at the University of Texas who discovered the flaw have only been able to reproduce it on devices locked with a password – those locked by a PIN or pattern are immune. Additionally, the hacker would need to gain physical access to your device.



Google has subsequently issued a patch to fix the flaw, but only to its own Nexus models. Users of non-Nexus devices will need to wait for their manufacturer or network provider to release the fix. In the meantime, it's recommended that users avoid password protection and lock their device with a PIN instead. You can watch a video of the hack being performed at www.snipca.com/17977.

Question of the Fortnite

Has Windows 10 been smuggled on to your PC?

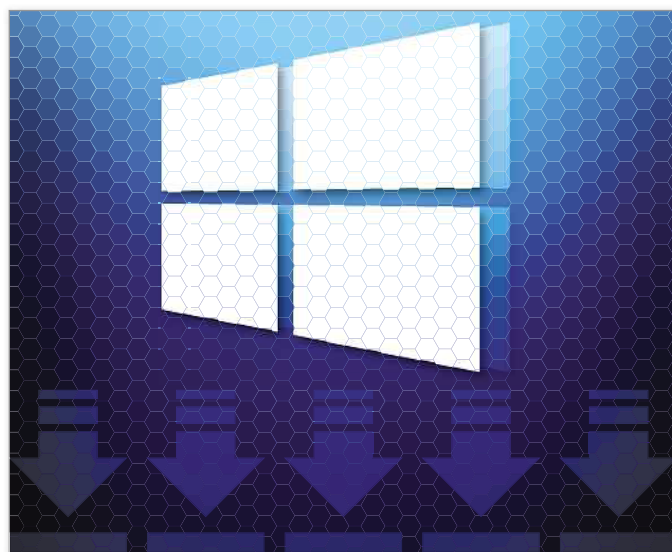
Don't look now, but Microsoft may have sneaked Windows 10 on to your PC without you knowing

If you have no intention of upgrading to Windows 10 you may think there's nothing Microsoft can do about it. But the company isn't taking no for an answer. While it can't actually *force* you to upgrade, it is secretly downloading files on to PCs in order to get them "ready" for Windows 10.

This came to light after worried users started reporting seeing an unexplained file called "\$Windows.BT" on their PCs, alongside a message saying they had failed to update to Windows 10.

You may think that Microsoft is downloading these files only on PCs owned by people who have reserved their Windows 10 upgrade. But that's not the case. The company was forced to admit as much following investigations from the website The Register.

It said: "For those who have



upgrade. That means the only way to stop these downloads is by turning off automatic Windows updates (www.snipca.com/17930). The problem with doing this is that you'll probably miss out on all sorts of security fixes.

So what is Microsoft up to? Its official reason for

broadband, and may even nudge you over your monthly data limit. Every time you boot your PC, the files try to install themselves, though you can remove them using the Disk Cleanup tool in Windows (we'll explain how in our next issue).

Microsoft's behaviour is in keeping with its aggressive marketing of Windows 10. Dozens of *Computeractive* readers still using Windows 7 or 8 have emailed us to complain about Microsoft's persistent reminders to upgrade. One reader said she was fed up with being "pestered, prodded, badgered and tormented" by pop-up messages imploring her to upgrade. Another likened Microsoft's tactics to those used by high-street charity fundraisers (also known as 'chuggers').

But while marketing messages can be irritating, they are broadly accepted as being part of promoting a new

THE FACTS

- Microsoft is installing Windows 10 files on your PC even if you haven't reserved the upgrade
- It claims this makes installing Windows 10 easier should you decide to upgrade
- The only way to stop the downloads is by disabling automatic Windows updates

product. Secretly downloading files is different, particularly when it's in order to help you upgrade to a system you may not be interested in. Presumptuous? It certainly feels that way.

Perhaps what's most troubling is that Microsoft doesn't seem to understand why people are annoyed about this. We wouldn't expect the company to apologise because it doesn't think it's done anything wrong. But it should at least acknowledge the concerns of users, and be more transparent.

That's not Microsoft's style, though. We learnt that when it said it won't explain the details of most Windows 10 updates, bar the "significant" ones (see 'Question of the Fortnite', Issue 458). Some may see that as a confident decision taken by company that knows what's best for its customers. But others regard it as arrogant and out of touch. Microsoft needs to stop alienating those users, or Windows 10's success will be short lived.

“The files will be downloaded even if you've not reserved your Windows 10 upgrade”

chosen to receive automatic updates through Windows Update, we help customers prepare their devices for Windows 10 by downloading the files necessary for future installation”.

That's worth reading twice. Microsoft says the files will be downloaded if you have automatic updates switched on, whether or not you've reserved your Windows 10

downloading files is that having them on a PC "results in a better upgrade experience and ensures the customer's device has the latest software".

That may be true, but the upgrade to Windows 10 is no ordinary system update, and these files aren't small downloads – they're huge, sometimes between 3.5GB to 6GB. They clog up your hard drives, may slow your PC and

Letters

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'Happy as Larry' with Windows 10

 I thought Windows 10 could be my best chance yet of getting a system that I was happy with. I tried to get 8.1 working like XP but, despite all your magazine's useful suggestions, it remained very slow, dreary and cumbersome. So I set to work tidying up my fairly ordinary Asus laptop in preparation for the Windows 10 upgrade. I used CCleaner (thanks for the tip *Computeractive*) and got rid of programs I hadn't used for ages using Revo Uninstaller (thanks again). I backed up all my important bits, defragged my drives and made sure all updates were installed.

I then upgraded to Windows 10 on 29 July with no problems. So, what have I got now? I press the power button, fill in my password, and a picture of two flying F-15 Eagles pops up on my screen. I click my Thunderbird icon and in come my emails. From pressing the power button to reading my emails takes 35 seconds. Brilliant! Everything else is clean and tidy and works well, though there is no advert blocker for Edge, so I'm sticking with Firefox. I am nearer to 80 than I would like to be, and it takes a lot to get me excited. But I'm as happy as Larry with Windows 10.

Jim Adamson

Microsoft won't 'dragon' me into Windows 10


 On my Windows 7 machine, which I simply refuse to update to Windows 10, I now have the nagging irritation of finding that every time I boot up my PC the Windows 10 update tries to install itself. I now see an item called "Windows 10 upgrade" – which is classed as a failed update – on a daily basis.

Microsoft may want to upgrade all machines to Windows 10 but I do not wish to be dragooned into toeing the line. For this reason I bought an iMac and have found I can do all the things that I usually do quite well, even if sometimes the processes are hard to fathom. I am gradually drifting away from Microsoft's products, and this is based on my experiences with both Windows 8 and 10.

Alan Gilham



Windows 10 is the 'best of the worst'

 You state in your Cover Feature in Issue 456 that Microsoft claims that Windows 10 is the best operating system ever. How can they say that when it was released far too early and is still not finished? I would say that it's the "best of their worst". Better than Windows 8 and Vista, but certainly not better than Windows 7. If only they would concentrate on fixing real problems, and forget gimmicks like Cortana.

When I tried to update my main Windows 7 partition to Windows 10 it seemed to be OK, but on restart I saw an error message and there was no way to start the system. Fortunately, I always make a complete backup.

I restored Windows 7 and then in a separate partition loaded a clean copy of it with just basic drivers installed, then tried again. This worked fine. I then spent two weeks reloading all my software and


data into my system. Quite frankly it's difficult to see any benefits whatsoever. My Desktop now looks exactly like Windows 7, and my PC doesn't start or shut down any quicker.

There are other problems. If you deny Microsoft access to your personal details by unticking the security permission boxes, Cortana throws her toys out of the pram and refuses to work. My Norton antivirus software informed me that Edge wasn't finished yet and couldn't accommodate extensions. Norton then tried to get me to download another browser. There are far too many times when files or folders refuse to open because of access rights, and the mouse drag function is unreliable. Fortunately, I still have Windows 7 in a partition and will go back to using that.


Yes, Windows 10 is free. But as we say in Yorkshire, you don't get 'owt for nowt.

Tony Steele

Windows updates safe? Life's too short

 In Issue 458 ('Question of the Fortnight', page 9), you asked whether we can trust Windows updates. My first answer is no, I don't trust Microsoft's intentions. But then I thought, it doesn't bother me that I don't trust their intentions. If we stopped to consider the motives of every company

Misbehaving mouse left me with a broken toe

 In his column about 'misbehaving mice' (The Final Straw, Issue 458), Stuart Andrews said that cleaning inside old mice was a nightmare because the ball would roll away. I'm living proof of the damage this pesky ball can cause. Years ago while cleaning my mouse I dropped the ball under my desk. I reached down to get it, but banged my head on the desk on the way up. I hit it with such force that a mug fell from the desk and landed on my left foot (which was bare), fracturing a bone in my big toe! I was in considerable pain for several months just because of that damn ball. Needless to say, I swapped to a laser mouse as soon as possible.

Stan Higgins




before using its products, would we ever actually buy anything? This is especially true with websites that exist for no other reason than to steal your personal details (Google and Facebook step forward).


Basically, life is too short to worry that Microsoft might sneak something you won't like into an update. I'm not going to work myself into a frothing tizzy about it. I'll just deal with it, and continue using Windows 10, which seems like a pretty good operating system to me.

Jeremy Tennant

Make GPs work harder to embrace tech

 In the areas of health and education you can always tell when the Government has had a good idea: it's normally when doctors and teachers object because they think it means more work for them. You highlighted one such example in News, Issue 458: GPs' reluctance to make patients' medical records available on smartphones. I think their concerns about patient confidentiality disguise the truth, which is they don't want to embrace technology if it means them having to work harder. But you can't un-invent this technology, nor can you ignore it simply because it adds hours to your working day. Doctors should stop hiding behind false arguments, and instead work with the Government on providing a 24/7 service that's fit for the 21st century.

Edward Pike


 I've lost three phones in the past 10 years, which does make me worried about having medical records on my current phone. At the moment, any nosey parker finding my phone, then reading my text messages would see the occasional text from my wife asking me to pick her up after bingo, and that's it.

What happens if I lose my iPhone in a couple of years, when it's crammed with my medical data? A criminal finding the phone, and hacking my password, could find the information very useful. Yes, I should be more careful, but I can't be the only person worried about this.

Barry Henderson

STAR LETTER

Windows 7 will remain more popular than Windows 10

 I think you were right to add an edge of cynicism to reports that 75 million people have downloaded Windows 10 (News, Issue 458). You suggest that many downloaded it simply because it's free, and I'm sure that's right. That's certainly what I did. I had no burning desire to upgrade because I'm happy with Windows 7, but I'm interested in computing and was curious to know what Windows 10 could offer.

How could I *not* give Windows 10 a try? Microsoft has given us a risk-free option to try an operating system. In years gone by, there was always a risk – that we'd spend money on an OS we hated. There was no going back. But Windows 10 has been a different experience. I've used it every day since downloading, but always knowing that it hasn't cost me a penny, and that I could simply go back to



Windows 7 in an instant. And that means, from day one, I've treated it more as an experiment. Something to dabble with, rather than take too seriously. The question is: how many other users are doing the same? And how many of those are dipping their toes into Windows 10, only to find the waters too cold?

Microsoft won't tell us, of course. They will just count the downloads and pop the champagne as each milestone is passed.


But I've got a hunch that a significant minority of people will return to Windows 7 having spent an interesting but uninspiring month using Windows 10. And those people will contribute to the long-term survival of Windows 7, which – mark my words – will remain the world's favourite OS for longer than Microsoft desires.

Ian O'Sullivan

The Star Letter writer wins a Computeractive mug!



'Northern powerhouse'? We get 0.5Mbps broadband!


 Who remembers George Osborne's promise to create a "northern powerhouse"? To do that you need powerful broadband. I live in the village of Midgley just seven miles from the centre of Wakefield – a large northern city. Our exchange is just a mile away in the adjacent village of West Bretton, home of the famous Yorkshire Sculpture Park, where they have high-speed broadband. Yet BT states there are no plans to bring it to us, despite Midgley having a hotel, pub, golf course, large timber company and a special-needs school.

While we have open fields around the village, I'd hardly call us totally rural. Our broadband speed is a fairly respectable 5Mbps during the day, but in the evening it drops to 0.5Mbps, making it useless for live streaming iPlayer or Sky On Demand. I will not be holding my breath waiting

for superfast broadband despite all the Government's promises.

Peter Northrop

Am I alone in hating Solitaire?

 I normally enjoy your 'What's All the Fuss About?' page, so I'd like to suggest a subject you can cover: just what on earth is all the fuss about Solitaire? I refer to the many letters and news stories about the adverts it has in Windows 10. xI just don't understand the obsession with this game. It's not intellectually taxing like a cryptic crossword, nor does it require devilish tactics like other card games (Bridge etc). I can only conclude that its appeal lies in its name, and that people playing it subscribe to Jean-Paul Sartre's (often misunderstood) quotation: 'Hell is other people'. To me, hell is playing a tedious card game.

Arnold Whishaw

Consumeractive



Consumer law changes: what it means for you

On 1 October, the biggest changes in 40 years to your rights and responsibilities as a consumer will come into force. The new Consumer Rights Act (CRA, as explained on Gov.uk at www.snipca.com/17780) will scrap eight previous regulations that we often make reference to in Consumeractive, including the Sale of Goods Act (SOGA), Sale and Supply of Goods to Consumers Regulations (SSGCR), and Unfair Terms in Consumer Contracts Regulations.

The new law aims to consolidate previous laws to make them stronger, clearer and easier to enforce. But certain legal terms you'll be very familiar with will remain – including 'fit for purpose', 'of satisfactory quality' and 'as described'. Here we explain the most important changes.

You now have 30 days to demand a refund

The new law finally confirms that you have 30 days to return goods for a refund if they are inherently faulty, a period that begins the day after you receive the goods. Previously under SOGA you could return them within a 'reasonable' period of time. This was always generally agreed to be 30 days, but retailers could argue that it was never set in legal stone. As a result, many retailers set their own terms and conditions, which might restrict customers to returning items within the first seven or 14 days after purchase.

After 30 days, you lose the automatic right to a refund. Instead the retailer can offer to repair or replace the item. However, as we explain next, that will no longer mean you get stuck in a seemingly endless repair-replace cycle.

You don't have to put up with repeated repairs

This is one of the most significant and welcome changes. If you're a regular Consumeractive reader, you'll know that



we despair at how often companies subject customers to repeated repairs to faulty goods. But now the law is on *your* side because retailers have only one opportunity to repair an item. If that fails to fix the problem, and less than six months has passed since your purchase, you are entitled to a full refund. Beyond six months, you are entitled to a partial refund based on how much you've used the item.

Furthermore, even if the first repair is successful but a completely different inherent fault occurs, the retailer can't force you to have the device repaired – it must offer you a refund.

You won't be ripped off by guarantees

Readers often ask us when a guarantee begins. The CRA clarifies this by stating that it starts from the day you receive goods, not when you ordered them. It also forces the company issuing the guarantee to state more clearly how the law covers you. For example, if the company wants to charge you for a repair that isn't covered by the guarantee, it must now tell you that you can

alternatively seek a free repair, replacement or refund, as long as the item is inherently faulty.

Previously, companies would often withhold this information in the hope that you would automatically accept their repair charge.

You can get refunds for faulty downloads

For the first time you can get a refund, repair or replacement for digital content that isn't as described, fit for purpose, of satisfactory quality or doesn't work. This covers software, games, ebooks, TV shows, films and music you download from the internet.

It's a long-overdue change because previously downloads weren't covered at all. When SOGA was introduced in 1979, it didn't cover digital goods – due to the fact that they didn't actually exist. Finally, the law has caught up with the real world, albeit far too late.

However, there are some important differences in the laws relating to digital and physical ('tangible') goods. When you buy something tangible from the web, you have 14 days to reject it and seek a



✉ 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

refund, even if there's nothing wrong with it. This 'cooling off' period, previously part of the Distance Selling Regulations (DSR), allows you to inspect goods you didn't have the chance to check in person before buying. Exceptions include 'perishable' goods such as food and flowers, and items that can be copied, such as DVDs and CDs (including those containing software) if you have opened the seal.

The 14-day period *does* apply to downloads, but you aren't allowed to inspect them as you would some tangible goods. For example, if you buy a pair of shoes, you are allowed to try them on to see if they fit. If they don't, you can reject them. There's no equivalent for digital downloads. You aren't allowed to watch or use downloads, then claim a refund simply because you don't like the product. This means you can't demand a refund simply because you don't like an app or program – there *has* to be

something wrong with it.

The bottom line is you can only claim a refund for downloads within 14 days if you haven't used them – such as by having not activated the code to install a program. You can't simply 'try' a program then ask for a refund because it doesn't do what you thought it would.

The law for downloads also differs in terms of the 30-day period within which you can request a refund for faulty goods (as you can with tangible items). There is no such regulation for downloads, which means you have no automatic right to a refund, and from day one, retailers can offer you any number of repairs or replacements.

However, as with tangible goods, during the first six months the retailer must prove a download isn't faulty. If an inherent fault is proved, you can seek a refund for six years in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and five in Scotland.

CRA 2015: WEBSITES TO BOOKMARK

The entire bill on
legislation.gov.uk

www.snipca.com/17915

The bill as a PDF
www.snipca.com/17920

Citizens Advice's summary
www.snipca.com/17916

Wikipedia page
www.snipca.com/17917

The Complaining Cow's guide
www.snipca.com/17918

Advice for businesses on
dispute resolution
www.snipca.com/17919



LEGAL CHANGES WE'D STILL LIKE TO SEE

GET RID OF 'REASONABLE'

We're unhappy that the ambiguous phrase 'reasonable time' remains in relation to the period it takes to repair an item. We think a definite time limit should have been set, because this get-out clause lets retailers use a whole range of excuses that quite frankly are not your concern, such as 'we can't source the parts' or 'the parts come from overseas'.

In our opinion, keeping 'reasonable' as a legal term undermines any stipulation that a repair mustn't 'seriously inconvenience' you. For most people being without their PC, tablet or phone for just a week is a serious inconvenience, and yet retailers can still claim that this is a 'reasonable' period of time to wait for a repair.



CLARIFY GREY AREAS IN DIGITAL-DOWNLOAD LAW

It's great news that digital downloads are now covered, but this part of the law is incredibly complex. Many of the grey areas will only become clearer as legal cases set new precedents. For example, if you are unable to watch a downloaded film because your internet connection keeps going down, should you claim a refund from the website you bought it from

or from your ISP?

It's disappointing that retailers selling digital content are exempt from the new law that limits retailers of physical goods to one repair only. This means they can repeatedly send

you faulty replacements rather than refund you. What's more, there's no deadline for them to replace a faulty download. A company can wait for whatever is considered the 'industry norm', which is infuriatingly vague.

As with repairs for physical goods, you can try to get a refund rather than a repair by proving you're being 'seriously inconvenienced'. But this will test the patience of all but the most determined consumers.

INCLUDE DISPUTE-RESOLUTION BODY

Consumer groups wanted the CRA to contain compulsory dispute-resolution services to force retailers to work with a third party to resolve grievances if its own complaints procedure was unsuccessful. But facing resistance from retailers, the lawmakers kept the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) as a separate piece of legislation.

There is some good news – a retailer must now tell you that you can use ADR if it can't resolve your complaint. But this falls short of the initial proposal, which was to set up an independent body, much like the Financial Ombudsman and Communications Ombudsmen services. Visit the Citizens Advice website for more info: www.snipca.com/17909.

Protect Your Tech

Scams and threats to avoid, plus new security tools

WATCH OUT FOR...

Software with a fake 'digital signature'

What happened?

Security researchers said you're increasingly at risk of downloading malicious software that uses a fake digital signature to trick your antivirus (AV) defences.

Digital signatures are certificates of authenticity that software developers add to their programs. It's like a digital equivalent of a medieval wax seal and proves the software is genuine, and hasn't been tampered with. AV software interprets the signature as proof that the program you're installing is safe.

But in a blog post (www.snipca.com/17912), security firm McAfee said criminals are forging and stealing signatures to make unsafe programs seem legitimate. The company has detected 20 million examples, and says the software industry has been slow to



respond to the threat, despite acknowledging it for years.

McAfee's Matthew Rosenquist says that while new "tools and practices are being developed" to combat fake signatures, these haven't been implemented quickly enough, which "affords a huge opportunity for attackers".

He added: "Until effective and pervasive security measures are in place, this problem will grow in size and severity".

What should you do?

The usual common-sense advice applies: download programs only from a developer's official site or from reputable **mirror sites**. But ultimately there's not a lot you can do except make sure you use the best AV (currently Kaspersky – see page 68 for our new reader offer). As the risk continues to grow, keep checking the headlines for how AV companies are responding to it. McAfee says the problem of fake signatures has been "underestimated" by security companies. We need them to take it more seriously.

Thankfully, it's easy to check the legitimacy of digital signatures in emails, Word documents and Excel spreadsheets. Microsoft explains how at www.snipca.com/17914.

New tools

Adblock Browser for iOS
www.snipca.com/17910

As we explained in Issue 458's Protect Your Tech, the threat posed by malicious adverts ('malvertising') is rising. So we're delighted that German company Eyeo, which makes the Adblock Plus web **extension**, has launched the free Adblock Browser for

iOS. Once this app is installed on your device, it will remove adverts as you browse the web on your iPhone or iPad. Apple is planning to include a built-in ad-blocking tool in iOS 9, but until this arrives, it's worth using Adblock Browser.

The final version of the app is also available for Android devices from the Google Play store (www.snipca.com/17911), having been in **beta** since May. It looks like Google and Eyeo are friends again, after the former kicked Adblock Plus out of the Store in 2013 for "interfering" with its services (ie, harming its capacity to make money from adverts).

In both iOS and Android you have options to block other unwanted stuff, including social-media buttons and websites tracking you (see screenshot).



ScamWatch
READERS WARN READERS

Council Tax rebate? If only!

In August I was phoned by a fraudster who said I was entitled to a Council Tax rebate because I'd been placed in the wrong bracket. Apparently I was eligible for a £7,000 windfall. I feigned interest to keep him talking, thinking he would give himself away in the traditional way. Sure enough, he asked for a £350 "admin fee" to process the rebate. A lot of people may fall for this, but I'm a cynical old goat, so I guessed it was a scam. I later phoned my council to check, and they confirmed my suspicions. They also said the scam is on the rise – so beware everyone!

Ted Barlow



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

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What you need: Windows 2000, XP, Vista, 7, 8/8.1 or 10



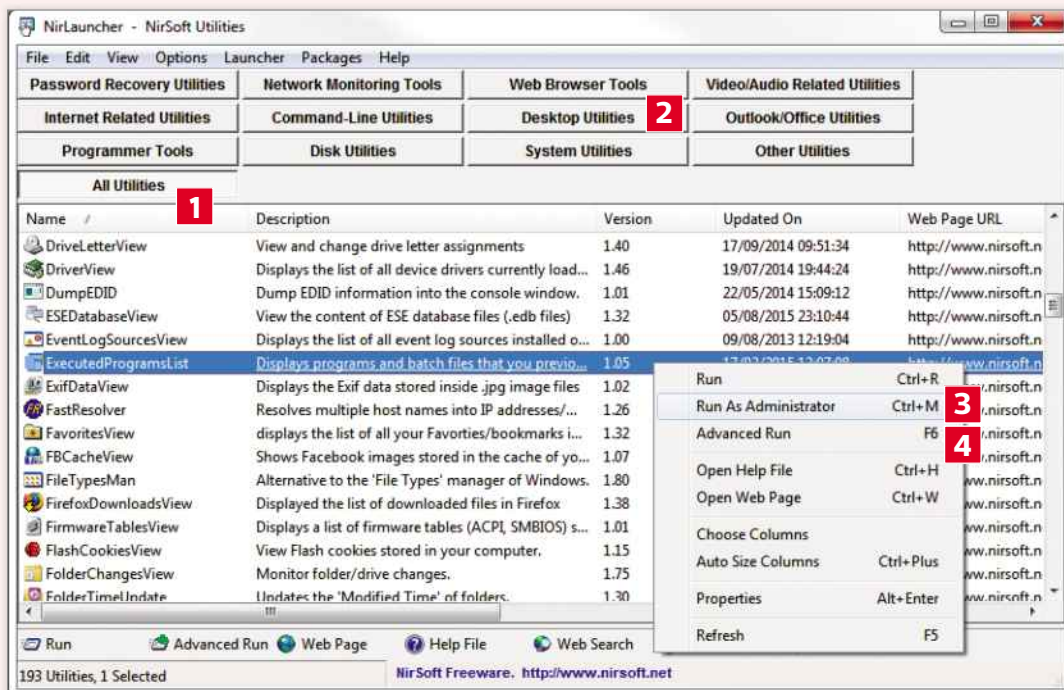
Software developer Nir Sofer is a one-man portable programs powerhouse. As if he's not already busy enough creating ingenious little system tools that you can download free from his site NirSoft (www.nirsoft.net), he has now bundled more than 100 of the best tools into this single, super-useful launcher program – and, shortly before we went to press, he updated it to work in Windows 10.

This new version includes all the NirSoft tools we've mentioned recently in Best Free Software, including SecuritySoftView (Issue 451, www.snipca.com/18004), which checks that your installed security tools are up to date, and ExecutedProgramsList (Issue 442, www.snipca.com/18005), which lists all the software your PC has run recently – including programs that ran without your knowledge or permission. There are also tools for finding your licence

numbers, seeing who's using your Wi-Fi, displaying all your PC's keyboard shortcuts – and dozens more. Think of a useful PC-related task, and there's a tool for it in NirLauncher.

To get the program, click Download (or use this shortened link to the Download page: www.snipca.com/17998) and then click the green Download button. Your antivirus (AV) or browser may try to block NirLauncher, possibly because it includes password-recovery tools, so be prepared to wait a few minutes while the file is scanned and allowed through. We didn't have any problems getting it past our tightly configured AV. When you've saved the ZIP, extract its contents and then click the program file ('NirLauncher.exe') to run it.

The launcher itself is portable too, so you can keep it on a USB stick and run it on any PC going right back to Windows 2000.



1 Run the program and click All Utilities to see every single program you can run from the launcher. Click Name to see the programs in alphabetical order.

2 Use the bold-text buttons across the top to narrow the list. For example, click Desktop Utilities for clipboard tools, file managers and uninstallers.

3 Double-click a program in the list to run it straight away. Alternatively, right-click it and click Run or Run As Administrator.

4 Choose Advanced Run from a program's right-click menu to set command-line parameters or conditions such as 'Run in full-screen mode'.

WINDOWS 10 APPS

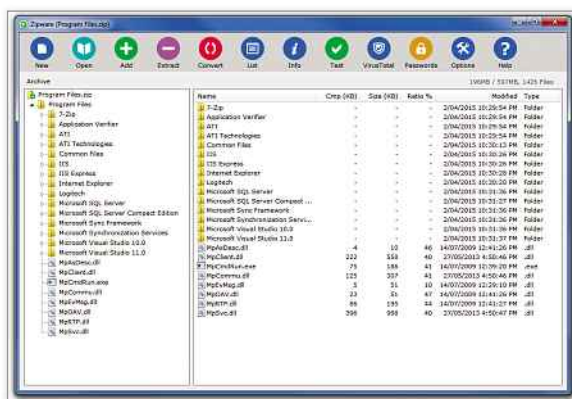
10AppsManager

www.snipca.com/18006

What you need: Windows 10

And so, 10AppsManager makes Best Free Software history: the first program that's only supported by Windows 10. That may seem unfair to all those who still use Windows 7 or 8/8.1 as their main operating system (OS), but it's part of a trend that suggests software-makers are already happier with Windows 10 than they ever were with Windows 8/8.1, and that bodes well.

The program aims to make it easy to uninstall and reinstall Windows Store apps that come pre-installed in Windows 10 – just as easy, in fact, as adding and removing third-party apps. It's a portable program, so there's no installation wizard to worry about. Just extract the program file from the ZIP and pin its shortcut to your Start menu. You should create a **system restore point** before running the tool, so you can roll back if anything goes wrong.



FILE-ARCHIVING TOOL

Zipware 1.1

www.zipware.org

What you need: Windows XP, Vista, 7, 8/8.1 or 10

This small, new file-zipping (and unzipping) program – which was launched in May – has already been updated to support Windows 10 and add new default saving options. It lets you create and open numerous archive formats besides ZIP, including **ISO files** and the popular ZIP alternative **RAR** (www.snipca.com/18008), as well as many Linux archive formats. For extra security, it lets you run a file through the online security database VirusTotal.com with one right-click before you open it. The program does need installing, but the process is quick and there are no **PUPs** to dodge in the installer.

WHAT SHOULD I DOWNLOAD?

We tell you what software to use

How can I watch UK TV from abroad?

Q In Issue 458's Cover Feature you said **VPN** tool Hola still may not be safe. I live in Spain (appropriately enough!) and used to use Hola's Chrome extension to watch BBC iPlayer programmes, but I uninstalled it after reading about its security problems. What should I use instead?

Sam Fowley

A At the time of writing we're still not convinced that Hola has ironed out its troubles, but we'll soon let you know when it's regained our trust.

Meanwhile, the best alternative tool for beating the web's geographical restrictions is ZenMate (<https://zenmate.com>). It makes security a priority, as you can see from its homepage (see screenshot), though it does seem to pretend that you have to pay to use it. You don't. Scroll right down the page and click Get ZenMate Free.



Like Hola, ZenMate also has a free Chrome extension (www.snipca.com/18014), as well as free tablet and phone apps (Android www.snipca.com/18015, iOS www.snipca.com/18016).

VPN and proxy tools are not just useful for watching the BBC from Spain, of course. They also let you access geo-blocked content on Netflix, Amazon Prime and other video-streaming services.

Bear in mind that the BBC is very strict about overseas access – it's not allowed, even if you pay your licence fee ("it isn't practicable": www.snipca.com/18009). It suggests you watch video clips on its News Channel (www.bbc.co.uk/news/video_and_audio) and the BBC Worldwide YouTube Channel (www.youtube.com/bbcworldwide) instead.

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

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Reviews

New products tested by our experts

PC | £700 from www.dinopc.com

Dino PC GS1

A complete desktop system at an attractive price

If you like your PCs solid and simple, you'll like the look of this one. The robust case (made by Cougar) is as plain as it's compact, but the bold, chiselled front panel stops it being boring. Thanks to a Mini-ITX motherboard, it's small enough to fit on a cluttered desk or hide away in a quiet corner.

That's all well and good, but isn't the point of a tower PC is that it has room inside for upgrades? This one has a single PCI-Express x16 slot, which is used by the included Nvidia GeForce GTX 950 graphics card. On the plus side, you won't need a spare slot for a network card because the motherboard has the latest 802.11ac Wi-Fi built in, as well as Gigabit Ethernet.

“A solid, likeable all-round PC, but don't expect to multi-task”

There are no fewer than five free SATA 3 connections for extra drives, above and beyond the 1TB hard drive already fitted. This drive is a hybrid model, with 8GB of flash memory to boost performance, although – as we'll come to – with underwhelming results. Four 2.5in SSDs and one regular 3.5in hard drive can be accommodated, which should be plenty for most people. You can always add drives externally, plugged into one of the six USB 3.0 ports. You can even squeeze in a DVD writer if you want by mounting a slimline slot-loading drive behind the

SPECIFICATIONS

3.2GHz Intel Pentium G3258 • 8GB memory • 1TB hybrid drive • Nvidia GeForce GTX 950 • 6x USB 3.0 ports • 2x USB 2.0 ports • 802.11ac Wi-Fi • Gigabit Ethernet port • DVI port • 2x HDMI port • 3x DisplayPort • Windows 10 Home • 291x178x384mm (HxWxD) • Three-year warranty www.snipca.com/17921



blank front fascia, with the disc dropping in vertically at the top. The two memory slots arrive full to make up the standard 8GB, so you'd have to replace them both if you wanted to increase it later. Upgrading to 16GB when ordering costs £46.

The GS1 is powered by a 3.2GHz Intel Pentium G3258 processor. As we know, 'Pentium' is Latin for 'bargain basement'. This chip has just two cores, and it's far from being 2015's fastest processor. Let's be honest: it wasn't even 2014's fastest Pentium. Still, at least it's not a Celeron. In our tests, it was fine for everyday tasks like web browsing, word processing and spreadsheets. Try anything clever, and things slow down a bit. Not surprisingly, multi-tasking is a weak point.

The GTX 950 graphics card is also slightly off the pace. Unlike systems with integrated graphics, however, it's quite happy running the latest 3D games at Full HD resolution. You'll have to turn down the quality settings a bit for the most demanding games, though. This will also help with multimedia tasks such as editing videos, but here again you'll feel the Pentium struggling somewhat. If that's likely to bother you, a more capable 3.7GHz Intel Core i3 adds £40, while a 3.4GHz i5 will cost you £103.

Without any customising, the PC costs a reasonable £549. Spend £700 and you'll get a mouse and keyboard, as well as a 25in LG UltraWide 25UM57 monitor, which would usually cost about £150 as a separate purchase. While its normal widescreen display offers a ratio of 16

wide to 9 tall, the UltraWide gives you 21:9. It's 1,080 pixels high, which is sufficient for Full HD; and at 2,560 wide, it gives you more space to put windows side by side. There's something rather satisfying about this.

The display is complemented by a slim bezel and a glossy black base, and has a small joystick to adjust settings (you might want to notch up the contrast). Its colour reproduction is excellent, covering 99.6 per cent of the sRGB range. The keyboard and mouse are Thermaltake's Commander set, aimed at gamers and illuminated with a blue glow. DinoPC would probably swap them if you asked nicely, but don't be too hasty, because the keyboard's mechanical switches give a traditional feel that typists will appreciate, and the adjustable repeat rate and mouse sensitivity are useful.

The GS1's performance is only fair, but as an all-round computer, there's much to like.

VERDICT: Consider a higher-specification PC if you want more than basic capabilities, but this system is adequate for most purposes and more attractive than your average

★★★★☆

ALTERNATIVE: CCL Nebula 200i £700 This rival Mini-ITX PC has an i5 processor and a faster graphics card, but its 24in Asus monitor is basic



LAPTOP-TABLET | £599 from Staples www.snipca.com/17922

HP Envy x360 15-w001na

A full-size laptop that doubles as a full-size tablet

Next month, Apple will start selling the iPad Pro, a tablet with a screen as big as a laptop. Not a full-size 15.6in laptop, because that would be crazy. It will have an optional keyboard, albeit a special flat, lightweight keyboard, not a full-size laptop keyboard that's permanently attached, because that would be crazy. And it's fairly heavy compared to a regular iPad, but not as heavy as a full-size laptop, because – yes, you guessed – that would be crazy.



“Think of it as a proper laptop that you use as a tablet only when it suits you”

Meanwhile, here's the HP Envy x360, a full-size 15.6in laptop with a full-size keyboard that folds back so you can carry the whole thing around and use it like a tablet. Although at 2.3kg, that's like carrying a bag of spanners.

Okay, on the face of it this might not sound like 2015's greatest concept for a portable computer. Think of it more as a proper laptop that you can use as a touchscreen device only when it suits you. That makes more sense – especially given Windows 10's Tablet mode (Windows 8.1 comes installed for now, making it eligible for the free upgrade).

The 360-degree hinge is easy to manipulate while sufficiently stiff to stay in place at your chosen angle. That might be in standard laptop mode (see photo below), 'tented' in an 'A' shape to stand it on a desk, folded under to hold the

screen the other way up (see main picture), or in the tablet configuration.

The screen is bright and with decent contrast, but it doesn't do much justice to deep colours, and the glossy touchscreen finish means reflections and fingerprints can be distracting. The keyboard is fine, as long as you can get used to the silver-on-silver styling, which makes individual keys quite hard to see. Our favourite feature is the touchpad: so many machines like this are spoiled by bad ones, but HP's is wonderfully responsive to both one-finger cursor movement and two-finger scrolling, so you needn't rely on the touchscreen in laptop mode.

Inside is a 1TB hard drive, bulkier than the **flash memory** in smaller mobile devices, but providing far more room for all your programs and files. It's also slower, but the 2.2GHz **quad-core** Intel i5 **processor** and 8GB of memory still make this a proper all-round Windows computer, ready for tasks like editing photos as well as the basics. The integrated Intel HD Graphics 5500 chip won't cope with serious 3D games, but that's the only major limitation. At a touch under five hours watching videos, battery life is acceptable.

Although not light, the Envy x360 is surprisingly slim, and it does work well. It's only the dull screen that stops us recommending it.

SPECIFICATIONS

2.2GHz Intel Core i5 5200U processor • 8GB memory • 1TB hard drive • 15.6in 1366x768-pixel touchscreen • Webcam • 802.11ac Wi-Fi • 2x USB 3.0 ports • USB 2.0 port • HDMI port • Ethernet • Windows 8.1 • 19.8x264x173mm (HxWxD) • 1.18kg • One-year warranty www.snipca.com/17924

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* and *Micro Mart* 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: It's not a bargain, given its specification, but this oversized hybrid feels less cumbersome than expected



ALTERNATIVE: Toshiba Satellite Radius 15 £699 It's £100 more, but the new Radius could be a serious rival. Look out for our review next issue



LAPTOP | £549 from www.snipca.com/17968

Dell Inspiron 15 5558

The latest thing in old-fashioned portables

We were beginning to wonder if it had been made illegal to release a normal, everyday laptop, and we'd missed it. By normal we mean not ultra-small or ultra-slim, not a MacBook, Chromebook or some hybrid convertible multi-touch fantabulet – just a conventional laptop. Well, here's one, and it's pretty good too.

Dell has been in the laptop-selling business for a long time now, and the Inspiron 15 is a well-established part of its range that gets upgraded from time to time as technology moves on. This year's edition looks rather sleek, with a metallic finish wrapped around its black plastic chassis. Because it's a normal laptop, there's a DVD writer built into the right-hand side, and a 1TB hard drive inside to accommodate all your apps, files, photos and media. Since the chassis hasn't been compressed to the depth of a sheet of paper, there's room for three **USB 3.0** ports, a full-size **HDMI** socket for an external monitor, and an **SD card** reader. There's no **Ethernet** port for old-school networking, but fast **802.11ac** Wi-Fi is built in.

“It looks sleek, with a metallic finish wrapped around its chassis”

The Intel Core i5 **processor** is only dual-core, but still delivers performance ahead of fancier, pricier machines, such as the HP Envy x360. That mechanical hard drive means Windows 10 will occasionally pause to catch up as you flick between apps, windows and web pages, but only for a fraction of a second. You may want to



uninstall the 12-month trial of McAfee LiveSafe that comes loaded: it offers a year's free protection from malware, but only by interrupting everything you're trying to do like a fractious toddler. You're better off using a free alternative.

Despite its modest price, the Inspiron 15 comes with a proper graphics card, Nvidia's new GeForce 920M. New? Yes. Top of the range? No. The latest 3D games won't run smoothly in Full HD, even on low-quality settings, so you'd need to turn the resolution down to play them. Older and less demanding titles will work fine, and tasks like basic video editing aren't beyond reach. The built-in speakers sound clear and go quite loud, too.

Full HD (1920x1080) is exactly the resolution of the 15.6in screen, and at this size it looks sharp without making everything hopelessly small. There's easily enough room to work in two windows side by side. You can pay extra for a touchscreen, but that just means fingerprints all over your work. The Inspiron 15's regular display has a matt finish to avoid annoying reflections, and the touchpad below the keyboard is very responsive, so it's not hard to control what you're doing. The keyboard itself has no backlighting and feels basic, without much sense of the keys actually pressing, although we've seen worse.

SPECIFICATIONS

2.2GHz Intel Core i5 5200U dual-core processor • 8GB memory • 1TB hard disk • Nvidia GeForce 920M graphics • 15.6in 1920x1080-pixel screen • Webcam • 802.11ac Wi-Fi • 3x USB 3 ports • HDMI port • Windows 10 Home • 23.8x380x260mm (HxWxD) • 2.32kg • One-year warranty www.snipca.com/17968

While there's plenty of detail in the display, colour is distinctly lacking. According to our tests, the LCD panel can only reproduce 58 per cent of the standard sRGB spectrum, so pictures that ought to pop look flat and dull. That's disappointing, and rules out this machine if you're seriously into photography or design. The maximum brightness is also less than impressive. On the other hand, good contrast and wide-viewing angles mean the display is by no means unpleasant to use for general tasks.

At 2.3kg and a full inch thick, the Inspiron 15 isn't a lightweight laptop by today's standards. Portability is also limited by the battery, which only lasted us just over three hours of video watching. That isn't even very good by yesterday's standards. For a normal laptop, though, it's tolerable. All round, the Inspiron 15 may not win any awards for innovation, but it's a complete Windows 10 system that you can pack in your bag when necessary, for £549. Who needs 360-degree hinges anyway?

VERDICT: This sensibly configured and reasonably priced machine proves there's life in laptops yet

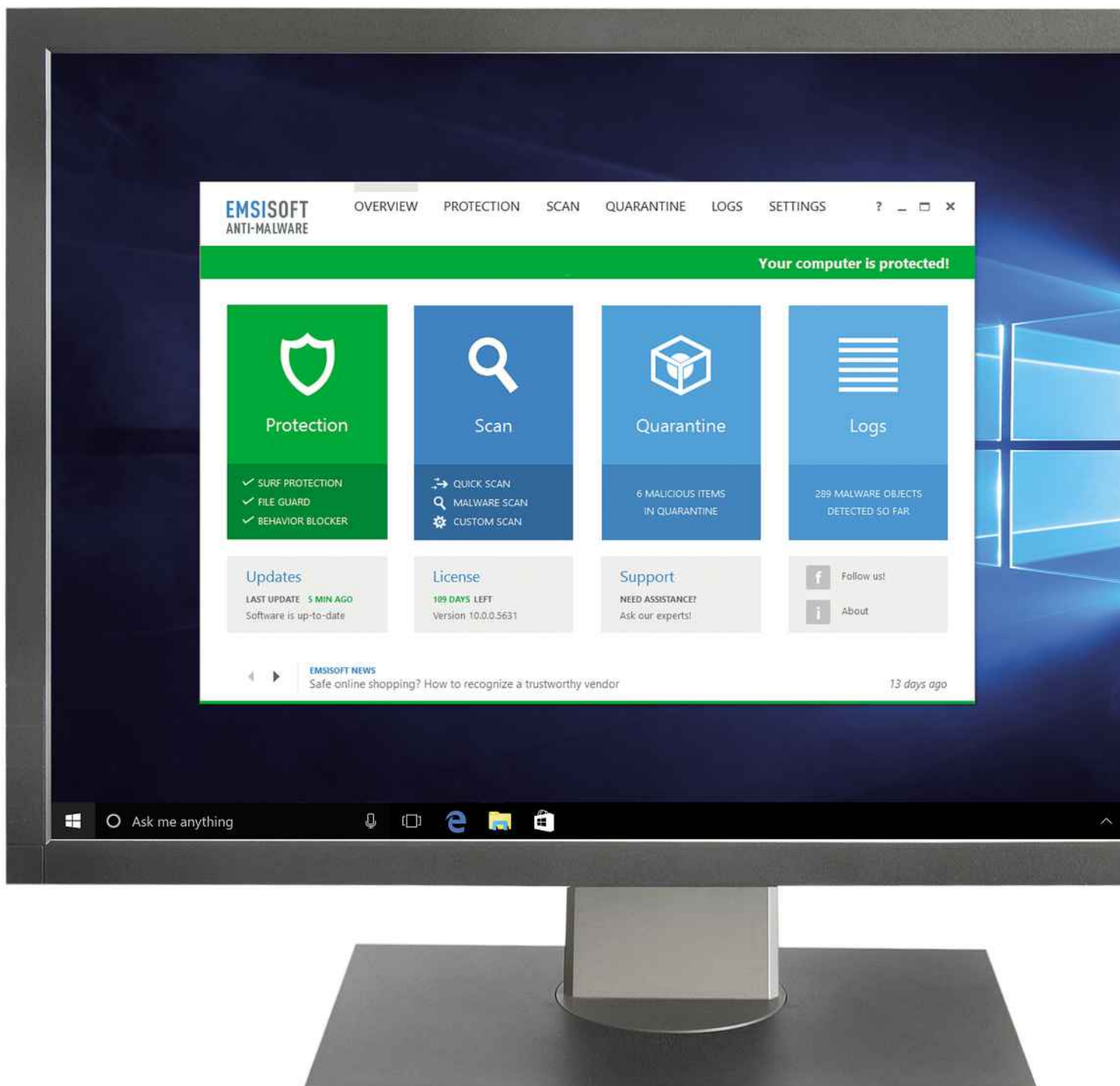
★★★★☆

ALTERNATIVE: Asus ZenBook UX305 £650 A bit pricier and not as fast, but the slim, silent, surprisingly capable ZenBook shows what traditional portables are up against



Emsisoft Anti-Malware 10

Maximum protection and efficiency, no slowdowns.



LAPTOP-TABLET | £600 from John Lewis www.snipca.com/17925

Asus Transformer Book T300 Chi

A fully detachable laptop-tablet

When we tested the T300's little brother, the T100 (see our review, Issue 453), we found it somewhat limited. But the idea of a laptop that doubles as a tablet has undeniable appeal. This model has a bigger screen, but it's more portable than the HP Envy x360 (see page 19) and, with a £70 discount from its launch price at the time of writing, costs the same. While using the HP as a tablet means folding the screen back on itself, the T300's keyboard detaches completely, leaving a more iPad-like touchscreen unit.

“Benefits from a vibrant screen and robust keyboard”

An Apple-style 'unibody' aluminium design (meaning no plastic panels, seams or screws) makes the T300 slim and solid. The keyboard and screen sections lock together magnetically, so attaching them is easy, and detaching is... well, maybe slightly too easy, but we didn't manage to drop either of them. The connection between the two sections is wireless, via Bluetooth. That means the keyboard has its own battery. If you want to charge it at the same time as the screen unit, Asus has bizarrely put their ports on opposite sides, so you have to run a cable across from one to the other, which feels daft.

There's no room for full-size USB sockets, but instead of the latest **USB Type-C** you get a single **Micro-B** port. No peripherals will come with the right cable for this, so to help you out, Asus has thrown in a little hub that gives you three **USB 3.0** ports. It's an awkward solution, but at least, unlike with the Apple MacBook, you don't have to pay extra for it.

Like the MacBook however, the T300 uses a **processor** from Intel's brand new power-efficient Core M series. With no need for a fan, the T300 is silent,

and it matched the performance we'd expect of a Core i3 machine. The built-in Intel HD Graphics 5300 is poor for 3D games or any task requiring a **graphics card**, but that's as you'd expect. Despite its lean processor and fanless operation, the T300 managed to wear out its battery in six hours 49 minutes of moderate use. Continuous video or web browsing will push this well under six hours. That's better than the Envy x360, but less than we'd expect from a Windows tablet.

Some of the juice is used by the screen, which packs 2560x1440 pixels into 12.5 inches. It's incredibly sharp, with plenty of contrast, and covered an excellent 99 per cent of **sRGB** in our tests, giving vibrant colours. Its one major flaw was the backlight showing through around the edges when displaying dark images. This could be quite distracting when watching a film.

The keyboard is broad enough not to feel cramped, and we found typing comfortable, although the absence of key lighting makes it harder in a dark room. The small touchpad worked smoothly.

While all the brains for the machine are behind the screen, the keyboard part is only 60g lighter, so the T300 doesn't tip backwards when used as a laptop.

As a tablet, this leaves you with a unit similar in size and weight to the forthcoming iPad Pro (www.snipca.com/17929), but

the T300's widescreen shape is harder to balance in your hand. The iPad Pro has an even sharper screen and an 8-megapixel camera, and its performance should be comparable. But even without a keyboard, it'll cost at least £150 more with the same 128GB of storage, and it won't run desktop programs. The T300 comes with Windows 8.1, upgradable free of charge to 10.

A closer rival to the T300 is Microsoft's Surface 3, which also has much longer battery life. The 10.8in version with 128GB and Type Cover (keyboard) costs about the same as the T300, but for a 12in screen you'd have to look at the Surface Pro, which is much more expensive.

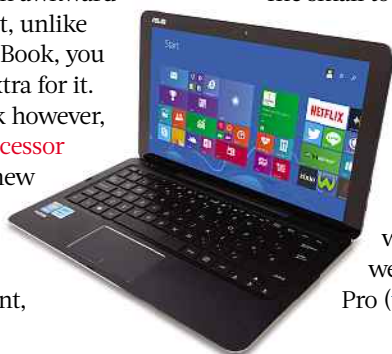
SPECIFICATIONS

1.2GHz Intel Core M-5Y71 processor • 4GB memory • 128GB SSD • 12.5in 2560x1440-pixel screen • Webcam • 802.11n Wi-Fi • MicroUSB port • Micro HDMI port • Windows 8.1 • 16.5x318x192mm (HxWxD) • 1.45kg • One-year warranty
www.snipca.com/17928

VERDICT: We like the T300 in many ways, but it still doesn't quite feel like a real contender as either a laptop or tablet

★★★★☆

ALTERNATIVE: Microsoft Surface 3 £499 With the optional keyboard, this 10.8in Windows device is similarly priced, and it feels better as a tablet



SMARTPHONE | £270 from www.snipca.com/17934

Motorola Moto X Play

A capable smartphone that won't break the bank

The Moto X was launched two years ago as an affordable mid-range smartphone. Last year it was reinvented as an upmarket metal option with a big screen. Now it's got an even bigger screen, but it's reasonably priced again. Oh, and there are two versions of it. Make your mind up, Motorola.

The alternative to the Moto X Play we're looking at here is the Moto X Style, which will cost about £360 and has the biggest screen of all, at 5.7in. Its camera adds 4K video, quadrupling the usual Full HD resolution. But the slightly smaller Moto X Play offers a specification that's nearly as good, for quite a bit less. The only catch is that the name sounds like something you'd feel awkward asking for in Boots.

“It almost feels as if it's already in a case, thanks to the rubbery back panel”

In general, phones have been getting thinner and thinner, but this year the tide seems to have turned and the focus is more on convenience and comfort. The Moto X Play measures 10.9mm at its thickest and almost feels as if it's already in a case, thanks to the rubbery back panel. You can swap this for different colours or customise the phone by ordering it direct from Motorola, with design tweaks starting at £9 extra (www.snipca.com/17935). Unlike the cheaper Moto G, which we reviewed last month, the Moto X Play isn't fully waterproof, but it will survive spills.

With an eight-core processor and 2GB of memory, Android 5.1.1 runs smoothly

SPECIFICATIONS

5.5in 1920x1080-pixel screen • 21-megapixel rear camera • 5-megapixel front camera • 16GB flash storage • microSD card slot • 802.11n Wi-Fi • Bluetooth 4.0 • G/4G • 148x75x8.9mm (HxWxD) • 169g • One-year warranty www.snipca.com/17936



and games aren't a problem, although some websites still judder. The handy Moto app makes everyday features more accessible. Battery life is good, too, lasting us just over 13 hours of video playback.

If you're not trying to save power, turning the screen brightness right up makes it easily visible in sunshine. It's a plain LCD rather than one of the vivid AMOLED panels Motorola sometimes uses, but the display showed good contrast and colour range in our tests and colours were well balanced, so photos and films looked lovely.

The 21-megapixel rear camera also handles colour well. Our test shots sometimes looked a bit dark, but we'll forgive that as an attempt to avoid over-exposing, which can often leave empty white areas in phone camera pictures. HDR mode brightened things up, and indoor shots with slightly softer light weren't too grainy.

The Moto X Play doesn't have the finest build quality or fancy extras like fingerprint recognition. But it feels good to use and its features go one better than many rivals, so at this price, we'd buy it.

VERDICT: There's strong competition in this price range, but the Moto X Play gets everything right



ALTERNATIVE: Sony Xperia M4 Aqua £210 It's a bit cheaper and waterproof, but the M4's screen and camera are outclassed by the Moto X Play



The best... Wi-Fi routers

TP-Link Archer C9

£100 from PC World www.snipca.com/17972

This router from TP-Link comes in two varieties, the C9 for cable and the D9 for ADSL. Although it doesn't have the most features, it beat some pricier routers in our speed tests. USB ports let you add a hard drive or printer, which can then be accessed wirelessly.



D-Link DSL-3590L

£154 from Dabs www.snipca.com/17973

This ADSL modem router can be configured as a cable modem. Its design takes up less space, and there are two USB ports for sharing wired devices. The settings page, which as usual is accessed from a web browser, is easy to use. It's not the fastest, but we found it gave a good speed boost to older 802.11n devices.



Asus DSL-AC68U

£143 from Amazon www.snipca.com/17974

This was originally an expensive example of 802.11ac routers. After price cuts, it's good value and provides good speed and range. Designed for ADSL, it has a fast USB 3.0 port for sharing storage or a printer, or you can plug a 3G dongle from a mobile-phone network to keep you online.



D-Link AC3200 DIR-890L

£224 from Amazon www.snipca.com/17975

You don't have to spend this much on a router, but D-Link's big red beast has two 5GHz bands plus the old 2.4GHz to ensure lots of devices can all connect at top speed. If you're paying for fast internet and have many devices, it could be a worthwhile investment.



Reviews

SMARTWATCH | £299 from www.snipca.com/17962

Vector Luna Contemporary

A smartwatch – in one sense, at least

Smartwatches still feel like a bit of a white elephant, but they're not going away. Apple has updated the software for its Watch, and more devices are coming from tech giants such as Motorola, Samsung and Huawei. This one is rather different: it's from an independent British company, looks like a real watch, and offers a stripped-down approach reminiscent of the popular Pebble.

For a start, while the Apple Watch battery just gets through a day, the Luna Contemporary lasts a month. That's six times longer than even the Pebble Time. Of course, this brings compromises. The display, though sharp and attractively

designed, is quite dim, so it's an effort to read in daylight. It does show the time constantly, though. Notifications appear only when you turn the screen towards yourself.

It's not a touchscreen: to scroll and cancel notifications, you use the side buttons. Texts, emails, calendar events and so on are streamed from your iOS, Android or Windows Phone device, and you can add information such as news and weather. Very few compatible apps are available, but from this month other developers can create their own, so we'll see if it takes off. A pedometer and heart-rate monitor are built in, and unlike with the Apple Watch, health data can be collected while you sleep.

Although quite thick, the Luna Contemporary isn't too big and feels great to wear. With its stitched leather strap or



link bracelet, it may be the most stylish smartwatch yet. The smart part, though, feels limited for the price.

VERDICT: Similarly priced watches do more, and Apple's build quality is unbeatable, but for sheer style this is worth considering

★★★★☆

ALTERNATIVE: Apple Watch £299 You only get a plastic strap, but more functionality and thousands of apps



SPECIFICATIONS

1.4in monochrome display • Stainless steel case
• 11x44x44mm (HxWxD) • 5 ATM water resistant
• Two-year warranty • Requires a device with iOS 8, Android 4.4, Windows Phone 8 or later
www.snipca.com/17962

WIRELESS ADAPTER | £25 from www.snipca.com/17964

Trendnet TEW-820AP

Speed up your Wi-Fi router

802.11ac is the latest Wi-Fi standard, and potentially offers both higher speeds and better reception than its predecessor, 802.11n. If you have an 802.11ac router connected to your broadband, new devices with 802.11ac built in can take full advantage, while older 802.11n devices can still connect too. But what if you have an 802.11n router – whether one that you bought yourself or was supplied by your broadband provider – and no particular inclination to spend around £100 replacing it?

Trendnet's answer is this 'Easy Upgrader' box. Plug it into the mains, connect it to your existing router with a

standard Ethernet cable (which you'll need to buy separately) and it creates a second Wi-Fi network for 802.11ac devices only. It's simple to set up, with settings accessed from your web browser. Alternatively, the same box can be used to connect a device that has Ethernet, but not Wi-Fi to your 802.11n or 802.11ac router.

In our tests, 802.11ac devices, and more recent 802.11n devices with support for the 5GHz band, did get faster connections with the TEW-820AP, especially when further than a few metres away; the 802.11n 2.4GHz signal tends to drop off pretty quickly. But speed is capped by the 100Mbps Ethernet interface, while full-blown 802.11ac routers can easily exceed 200Mbps. 802.11n devices will still connect directly to your existing router, so you'll have two networks. If



your printer is on the old one, an iPad connected to the new one won't be able to see it.

VERDICT: It's good value, but the TEW-820AP may give you extra complications for only a little benefit

★★★★☆

ALTERNATIVE: TP-Link Archer C9 £100 Connect an 802.11ac router like this to a modem, or the D9 to an ADSL2+ phone line, for fast performance



SPECIFICATIONS

802.11ac • Wi-Fi Protected Setup (WPS) button • WPA2-PSK/WPA2-AES security • 21x65x67mm (HxWxD) • One-year warranty
www.snipca.com/17963

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Reviews

SMARTPHONE | £600 from www.snipca.com/17938

Samsung Galaxy S6 Edge+

The most striking smartphone you'll see this year



When it first appeared as a variant of the Galaxy Note last year, Samsung's 'Edge' design brought something properly new, if arguably pointless, to mobile devices. Other phones have bigger or smaller or squarer or longer screens, but they're all flat. Here's a screen that goes all the way to the, well, edge, and wraps around. It may just be a few millimetres, but it's enough to feel startlingly futuristic.

The Galaxy Note Edge curved only at the right, where it had a special column of icons – a cross between a home screen and a totem pole. This screen, as with the smaller Galaxy S6 Edge announced earlier this year, has curves at both sides, though the software still focuses on the right. The S6 Edge+ is a big phone, or 'phablet', but while the 5.7in screen is wider than an iPhone 6 Plus, because it wraps around, the whole device is narrower. Maybe there's a practical benefit to this curve business after all.

Tap a tab at the top of the screen, and five icons pop out down the right-hand side for your favourite contacts, while the left edge does the same thing with apps.

SPECIFICATIONS

5.7in 2560x1440-pixel screen • 16-megapixel rear camera • 5-megapixel front camera • 32GB flash storage • 802.11ac Wi-Fi • Bluetooth 4.2 • 3G/4G • Android 5.1 • 154x75x6.9mm (HxWxD) • 153g • One-year warranty www.snipca.com/17937

Unfortunately, the curve actually makes them harder to use, not easier. A better idea is the Night Clock feature, which shows the date and time constantly along the edge, so when you look across from your pillow to where your phone is lying you can see it straight away. If you turn on Information Stream, notifications scroll along this strip too.

As befits a top-of-the-range phone, the S6 Edge+ has plenty of advanced features. The GPS, accelerometer, barometer and gyroscope tell apps where you are and which way up. A fingerprint scanner built into the Home button provides a quicker way to unlock than entering a passcode, and can also activate a contactless chip to pay at tills via Samsung Pay, although unlike Apple Pay you can't actually use Samsung's payment system in the UK yet.

A fast processor and 4GB of memory ensure the S6 Edge+ races through any task. Web pages and games are super-smooth. It's also energy-efficient, lasting us 13.5 hours of video – less than some phones these days – and it's compatible with wireless charging mats. The 16-megapixel rear camera produces well-balanced shots outside. Indoors, the flash can be a bit harsh, but unless it's really dark you don't really need it.

There's 32GB of storage as standard, but no slot for adding more, so you'll have to

pay £80 extra up front for the 64GB version if that's not enough. That comes to only £20 less than the 64GB iPhone 6s Plus, which has Apple's neater operating system, the new 3D Touch feature and an electronic payment system that works today. While Samsung's camera matches the 6s Plus's optical stabilisation, avoiding camera shake, it doesn't have Apple's 4K video resolution.

The S6 Edge+ doesn't add anything except size to the S6 Edge, which came out a few months ago, and is a lot more expensive than the plainer S6. But if you like phablets, Android and wraparound screens, it's a great pick.

VERDICT: We'd have like a memory card slot and more innovations, but the Edge+ is impressive



ALTERNATIVE: iPhone 6s Plus £619 Anything Samsung can do, Apple just keeps doing better – except curvy screens



WHAT SHOULD I BUY? We solve your buying dilemmas

Is there a PC setup my daughter could use?

Q My daughter has had a stroke and lost the use of her left arm. She can manage with her smartphone and tablet, but I would like her to have use of a full-size keyboard setup. She has a smart TV which I was hoping to use as a monitor, linked to a mini PC with a Bluetooth keyboard and mouse. Would this setup work and have you any recommendations as to what she could use?

John Corrigan

A That sounds practical. Any decent mini PC would work, perhaps a model such as the HP Pavilion Mini (reduced to £300 at John Lewis www.snipca.com/17978; see above right), or an almost invisible one like the silent Zotac Zbox Nano Ci321 (£130 from LambdaTek www.snipca.com/16967). A mouse could be tricky to use sitting at a distance from the TV, rather than at a desk. Try a cushioned lap tray, or a swing tray that clips to the chair arm.

But consider a wireless keyboard with

built-in trackball, such as the IOGear Multimedia Keyboard (£49 from Amazon www.snipca.com/17979, around £35 on eBay). Trackballs aren't so often seen these days, but they can be easier to use than trackpads, and having the pointing device built in simplifies the arrangement. The trackball on this model is on the right-hand side of the device.



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

SMOKE ALARM | £89 from www.snipca.com/17946

Nest Protect 2

Fire? There's an app for that

Nest, founded by the man who created the iPod at Apple but now owned by Google, is best known for its smart thermostat. That costs £249 and requires professional installation, but the Nest Protect, a smoke alarm that can similarly connect to your mobile devices, is much more straightforward. It costs £89 in battery or wired configurations (the latter to replace existing wired units), and you can install it yourself. The battery version uses no less than six AA cells, presumably because it draws power relatively fast.

The original Nest Protect had a feature called Wave that let you turn it off by wagging your hand, but this was

disabled after it was found to be too easily activated unintentionally. The new version looks the same and is turned off using the Nest app. The ceiling-mounted box indicates mild danger by changing the colour of its illuminated ring, then switches to a red light and siren in more serious situations. Besides smoke, it detects heat and deadly carbon monoxide, and it's supposedly much better at ignoring steam. Perhaps most importantly, it constantly tests itself and lets you know if it's not working.

The Nest Protect 2 is beautifully made, and controlling several Nest Protects in different rooms and a Thermostat from the app will feel like you're in the Jetsons. But at three times the price of a normal detector, it's likely to remain a fantasy.



VERDICT: Makes the most sense if you use more than one, but replacing multiple alarms is just too expensive

★★★★☆

ALTERNATIVE: Kidde Combined Smoke and Carbon Monoxide Alarm £30 From the smoke alarm company most recommended by Which?, this isn't as smart but provides peace of mind for less



SPECIFICATIONS

Split-spectrum smoke sensor • Electrochemical CO sensor • Heat, light, humidity and movement sensors • 802.11n Wi-Fi • Complies with EU/UK safety standards • 38.5x135x135mm (HxWxD) • Two-year warranty www.snipca.com/17946

HARD DRIVE | £80 from John Lewis www.snipca.com/17961

Toshiba Canvio Connect II 2TB

An affordable way to carry your files with you

Available in black, white, red, blue or 'satin gold', this shiny portable hard disk is designed to work equally well with Macs and Windows PCs. You'll need a modern computer to get the best from it, since it uses a **USB 3.0** connector (you can normally identify USB 3.0 ports by looking for a blue stripe inside the socket). Plug it into a **USB 2.0** port and it will still work, but files will copy across more slowly. No mains power is required.

A short USB 3.0 cable is included in the box, and plugging that into your PC is all you need to do to start using the Canvio Connect II. If you have a Mac, a software **driver** is included to make OS X read the NTFS file system used by Windows,

which the drive comes set up for. Unless you'll also need to use the drive with a Windows machine, though, you'd be better off using Apple's Disk Utility app to initialise the drive in the Mac's preferred Mac OS Extended (Journaled) format, also known as HFS+. It sounds complicated, but only takes a few clicks.

In our tests, the Canvio Connect II **2TB** (other capacities are available) was able to read and wrote both small and large files consistently at speeds between 98 and 113 megabytes per second, which is what we'd expect from a USB 3.0 portable drive. Backup software is included, plus a service called PogoPlug, which lets you access your files over the internet provided your PC is switched on. Overall, the £80 asking price is good value for a 2TB drive.



VERDICT: A fast and very reasonably priced external hard disk in a handy portable format

★★★★☆

ALTERNATIVE: Seagate Backup Plus Slim 2TB £71 If you prefer a square metallic look, this drive is similarly specified but slightly smaller



SPECIFICATIONS

5400rpm 2.5in hard disk • 12ms seek time • 2TB capacity • USB 3.0 port • USB powered • 19.5x78x109mm • 230g www.snipca.com/17967

Reviews

PRINTER | £81 from Printerland www.snipca.com/17941

Brother MFC-J5320DW

An A3 multifunction printer for less

It's no secret why printers are cheap to buy. When you add up what you've spent over the years, the price you paid for the machine itself represents a drop in the ocean. The real money's in the consumables. A litre of petrol, one of the Earth's most precious and fastest-dwindling resources, will cost you a bit more than a pound, including tax. The same quantity of inkjet refills, however, would come to about £1,000.

Accordingly, we tend to take a printer's apparent value for money with a pinch of salt so big it would have Jamie Oliver organising a petition. All the same, using this Brother will only cost you about 3.4 pence for a standard colour page, or 0.8p for black only, which is about as low as you can get. And despite its original price of over £150, many dealers are selling it for under £90.

“It's bulky for an A4 inkjet, but more compact than A3 printers we've seen”

That includes a built-in scanner with an automatic document feeder (ADF), so you can digitise or photocopy up to 35 pages at once. And not only can the printer print on both sides of each page, it can take up to A3-size paper, which is twice as big as A4, and still print right to the edge.

Brother hasn't wasted much money on the J5320DW's design. It looks

inoffensive, in a clattery black plastic way, but the paper tray feels flimsy and fiddly, and the touchscreen is the kind you have to prod.

There's no **SD card** slot to print from your camera, and the socket for USB sticks only recognises images, not Word documents or PDFs. Then again, it does have both **USB** and **Ethernet** ports to connect to your PC, Mac or router, plus Wi-Fi that works with Android and iOS too. There's even fax capability if you need that.

In our speed tests, text didn't come out particularly fast, but just under 13 pages per minute is acceptable as long as you're not looking to churn out reams of documents. Adding colour graphics only slowed that down to 7.1ppm, which is pretty good. Five double-sided graphics pages took two-and-a-half minutes, and we scanned an A4 page at print-quality 300dpi resolution in just 12 seconds.

Print quality was more suitable for home office than creative use, with colours tending to look slightly drab – this isn't the kind of photo printer that will make every image pop with brilliant detail. But text looks fine on plain paper, and graphics are legible.

As usual, the ink cartridges supplied with the printer are extra-small. Well, the actual cartridges are the normal size, they just contain less ink – enough for 550 standard pages, or more like a few dozen if you're printing big areas of colour. Make sure you replace them with the XL versions, rated at 2400 black pages or 1200 colour, to get the lowest running



costs, as we quoted above.

The MFC-J5320DW is fairly bulky for an A4 inkjet, but more compact than other A3 printers we've seen. Loading large paper involves unlatching the 250-sheet tray and extending it out at the front, a process that feels awkward enough to put you off leaving A3 paper loaded all the time, but it's still good to have the option. Thankfully, nothing else protrudes inconveniently, and the document feeder on the top clicks neatly shut to keep dust out.

If printing photos is a large part of why you want a colour inkjet, there are cheaper machines that give better results. For general documents, however, the MFC-J5320DW is a capable and compact printer, and you won't regret the bargain price tag when you come to refill it.

SPECIFICATIONS

6000x1200dpi maximum print resolution • 1200x2400dpi maximum scan resolution • **USB** • **Ethernet** • 802.11n **Wi-Fi** • **USB** memory drive slot • 240x490x290mm (HxWxD) • 10.8kg • One-year warranty www.snipca.com/17942

VERDICT: Reasonable price and running costs make this a sensible all-rounder



ALTERNATIVE: Canon Pixma MG6650
£79 This A4 Wi-Fi MFP is also quick and it prints better photos, but ink costs are two to three times higher



Sinclair ZX Spectrum Vega

The classic home computer returns

In the early 1980s, Sir Clive Sinclair masterminded Britain's home-computing revolution. Eschewing the American big-business thinking of the Apples and Commodores of the day, he unleashed a tiny plastic DIY microcomputer, the ZX80, followed by the ZX81 and then his breakthrough: the ZX Spectrum.

This rubber-keyed wonder, with its eye-searing colours (courtesy of your parents' TV) and burping speaker, introduced a generation to programming and became a powerhouse of the video-games industry, unleashing thousands of titles from bedroom coders. Among the fondly remembered results were platform games such as Manic Miner, isometric adventures such as Ant Attack and the seat-of-the-pants, shoot-'em-up 3D Deathchase.



seen in the picture, which shows an earlier version) don't help much. Two huge leads trail from the small box, one to take video and sound to the analogue jacks on your TV, the other for power from a smart TV's USB port or a USB mains adapter.

More impressively, 1,000 classic games are included. If you have a favourite that isn't here, and can find it on retro game emulation sites, you can play it from a microSD card, but the default control setup may not work well; the makers have said they're working on improved key mapping.

The built-in titles have been configured to suit the limited number of buttons available, but the absence of a full keyboard makes games such as Back to Skool a chore rather than a nostalgic treat. An on-screen keyboard is cleverly implemented, but it's just not usable enough for typing commands in text adventures.

While the software may get updates, you're stuck with the hardware. At a lower price, we'd be kinder, but the Vega feels cheap and not especially cheerful.

VERDICT: A plug-and-play Spectrum emulator is a lovely idea, but even an excellent list of built-in generic games can't rescue this one

★★★★☆

ALTERNATIVE: Recreated ZX Spectrum £100 About to appear at the time of writing, this full-size Spectrum keyboard plugs into an iPad, PC or Mac to play games available online



“The Spectrum-style action buttons on the right are awkwardly positioned”

And now we can relive it all with this crowdfunded replica, produced with help from Sir Clive. Today, the electronics that filled the Speccie's black box would fit in a thimble, so the Vega looks more like one of those retro TV plug-in games you used to get for 20 quid in Argos – but with a £100 price tag.

The unit seems hostile to ergonomics, its hard, rectangular form battling against your hands. The directional buttons are fairly responsive, but don't hold a candle to even a 1980s game controller. The Spectrum-style action buttons on the right are awkwardly positioned, and the four tiny menu buttons below these (not

SPECIFICATIONS

Composite/RCA video output • microSD card slot
• USB power input • www.snipca.com/17976

COMING SOON



AUTUMN 2015

Apple has unveiled a new version of its Apple TV box, available towards the end of October. It's now more like a



screenless iPad, with 32GB of storage and the ability to run apps. TV services such as Netflix are included.

AUTUMN 2015

Toshiba's Satellite Radius 12 is the first small laptop available with a 4K screen. Not only is it ultra-sharp, but it's colour-calibrated for photo and video editing – although video editors might prefer a more powerful PC. Priced at around £1,000.



2016

Nokia's N1 tablet is already out, but only in China so far. Similar in size to an iPad mini, the N1 runs a custom version of Android. With good performance and battery life, it comes with 32GB of storage for about £200 – but when is it coming to the UK, Nokia?



2016

Sony's recently announced Wena (pronounced 'wennah'), smartwatch continues the theme. It looks great, and will be available next year in Japan, but there's no word on the rest of the world.



NEXT ISSUE

ON SALE
14 Oct

Microsoft Office 2016
New upgrade for the essential Windows suite



Acer Aspire V3-574G
Do-it-all Windows 10-ready laptop



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Buy our **Back Issue CD** (now only £11.60*):
www.snipca.com/14981 *At time of press



Our pick of products that have won the Buy It award

LAPTOP

Asus X555LA-XX290H
£300 from www.snipca.com/16158
Tested: Issue 446



Asus has made all the right choices with this budget Windows 8.1 laptop. Its comfortable keyboard, fast performance, respectably lengthy battery life and bright screen are all the more impressive given its low price.

ALTERNATIVE **Asus Chromebook C200**
A cheap Chrome OS ultra-portable laptop with a bright screen, lengthy battery life and a great keyboard. £218 from www.snipca.com/17296

DESKTOP PC

PC Specialist Trion 960
£650 from www.snipca.com/17254
Tested: Issue 454

You could spend less on a usable PC, but this solid tower system has great all-round performance, including a decent Nvidia GTX 960 graphics card. A 120GB SSD and 1TB hard drive offers speed and space, but Wi-Fi costs £15 extra.



ALTERNATIVE: Palicomp Intel i5 Elite
For £50 less, this is a similar PC in many respects, but compromises on graphics with the cheaper GTX 750 card. £600 from www.snipca.com/17297

TABLET

Apple iPad Mini 2
£219 from www.snipca.com/14467
Tested: Issue 416



Apple's mini tablet from 2013 is now available at an even lower price. The only thing it lacks compared with the Mini 4 is a fingerprint sensor and the option of lots of built-in storage. Otherwise, it's an absolute bargain.

ALTERNATIVE: Apple iPad Air 2 A
thin and lightweight 10in tablet with a fingerprint reader, an excellent screen and peerless selection of apps. £399 from www.snipca.com/16717

PHONE

Motorola Moto X Play
£270 from www.snipca.com/17934
Tested: Issue 459



This chunky 5.5in phone, with its coloured rubber back, has a bright, well-balanced screen and a decent 21-megapixel camera. It's powerful enough to run Android 5.1.1 smoothly, and battery life is good.

ALTERNATIVE: Samsung Galaxy A3 Now even cheaper, this iPhone 6-sized Android phone has all the basics neatly packaged. £180 from www.snipca.com/17193

DIGITAL CAMERA

Panasonic Lumix DMC-GF6
£284 from www.snipca.com/17548
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: Sony A5000 A rival CSC with better low-light performance, although its controls and range of available lenses aren't quite as good. £240 from www.snipca.com/15854

E-READER

Amazon Kindle Paperwhite
£109 from www.snipca.com/17776
Tested: Issue 458



With a new high-resolution screen, the affordable Kindle lacks only automatic brightness adjustment and page-turn buttons (you have to swipe the screen). It's great value as long as you're happy to buy your books from Amazon.

ALTERNATIVE: Kobo Glo HD As good as the Paperwhite, but with more storage, and slightly more compact, this is the independent e-reader to pick. £110 from www.snipca.com/17889

HOMEPLUGS

D-Link PowerLine AV2 1000HD Gigabit Starter Kit
£42 from www.snipca.com/17836
Tested: Issue 458



These fast adaptors connect one Ethernet-ready computer or device to your router via the mains wiring, without cables or Wi-Fi. Check you have a power socket free – multi-adaptors aren't recommended.

ALTERNATIVE: Devolo dLAN 1200+ Wifi ac Starter Kit If you need to connect Wi-Fi devices where Wi-Fi won't reach, get this instead. £160 from www.snipca.com/17890

SMART TV

Samsung UE40H5500
£328 from www.snipca.com/17715
Tested: Issue 446



A 40in 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, 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. £420 from www.snipca.com/17550

COMPETITION

WIN 1 OF 5 £50 vouchers for Choice Stationery

Formed in 1998, Taunton-based Choice Stationery (www.choicestationery.com) is a family business selling quality inkjet printer cartridges at some of the best prices you'll find online. They cover all major printer manufacturers, including Epson, Dell, HP, Brother and Canon. As well as printer supplies, Choice sells stationery, PC hardware and office equipment. In this exclusive competition, Choice is giving away five £50 vouchers to spend on its site. To enter, email your address to acomp@dennis.co.uk with 'choice' in the subject line by midnight 13 October.

Visit www.choicestationery.com for more info, or call them direct on 01823 250060. You can also follow on Twitter @choiceink, and 'like' Choice on Facebook: www.facebook.com/choicestationery.



MULTIFUNCTION PRINTER

Canon Pixma MG6650
£78 from www.snipca.com/17334
Tested: Issue 455



It may look like something that James Bond would have to defuse, but this low-cost, all-in-one printer is an excellent choice. Running costs are reasonable too.

ALTERNATIVE: Canon Pixma MX495 It's slow, and black ink is pricey, but this cheaper MFP has a paper feeder and fax too. £40 from www.snipca.com/17174

SOLID-STATE DRIVE

Crucial BX100 1TB
£230 from www.snipca.com/16017
Tested: Issue 445



A blindingly fast, high-capacity SSD at a lower price than ever before. If you've been put off buying a SSD because of the cost, then now is finally the time to take the plunge.

ALTERNATIVE: Samsung 850 Pro 256GB An even faster SSD, but it is much more expensive per gigabyte. £110 from www.snipca.com/16498

SECURITY CAMERA

Y-cam HomeMonitor HD
£134 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. £94 from www.snipca.com/15275

Crafting PCs the Scan way: Specification. Service. Satisfaction.

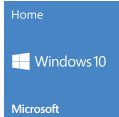


Scan V1 Value System Home / Office PC

- Intel® Pentium® G3240 processor
- 4GB Corsair DDR3 1333MHz memory
- 500GB SATA 6Gb/sec hard drive
- Windows 10

£299 Inc VAT

The V1 is a very capable entry-level system perfect from basic home/office tasks. It's based around the dual-core Intel® Pentium® G3240 processor, 4GB of RAM plus a 500GB hard disk.



Scan V15 Value System Home / Office PC

- Intel® Core™ i5 4460 processor
- 8GB Corsair DDR3 1600MHz memory
- 1TB SATA 6Gb/sec hard drive
- Windows 10

£479 Inc VAT

The V15 ups the ante by including a quad-core Intel® Core™ i5 4460 processor, so it makes light work of office and multimedia applications.

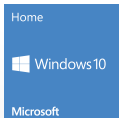


Scan G20 Value System Gaming PC

- Intel® Pentium® G3240 processor
- 8GB Corsair DDR3 1600MHz memory
- 2GB NVIDIA GeForce GTX 750 Ti SSC
- 1TB SATA 6Gb/sec hard drive
- Windows 10

£479 Inc VAT

Thanks to its dual-core Intel® Pentium® G3240 processor and NVIDIA GTX 750 Ti SSC graphics card the G20i is our most affordable gaming PC. It even includes surround sound!

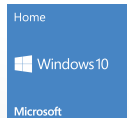


Scan G30i Value System Gaming PC

- Intel® Core™ i5 4460 processor
- 8GB Corsair DDR3 1600MHz memory
- 2GB NVIDIA GeForce GTX 960 SSC ACX
- 1TB SATA 6Gb/sec hard drive
- Windows 10

£675 Inc VAT

The combination of quad-core Intel® Core™ i5 4460 processor and NVIDIA GeForce GTX 960 SSC ACX graphics card ensures that the G30i can play any game you throw at it.



Windows 10. Do great things.



Scan Value PCs

A range of computers perfectly suited for the home/office. These affordable PCs are very flexible workhorses, capable of every task, from email/web surfing to high-end applications such as photo editing, video encoding and gaming. All of our Value Systems are pre-built and soak-tested so are ready to ship for next-day delivery.



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PCs above £300



Built by award
winning 3XS team



Fully soak tested



Fully 3XS
compatible



Ready to ship



2 Year Warranty
Part + Labour



The most awarded PCs and Laptops Period.

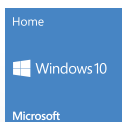


Scan 3XS Gamer 20i Gaming PC

- Intel® Core™ i7 4790 processor
- 8GB Corsair DDR3 2133MHz memory
- 4GB NVIDIA GeForce GTX 970 SC ACX
- 1TB Seagate HDD
- Windows 10
- 3 Year Premium Warranty

£999 Inc VAT

The 3XS Gamer 20i is a super-fast gaming PC thanks to its combination of quad-core Intel Core i7 4790 CPU running at 3.6GHz with added Hyper-Threading plus a 4GB NVIDIA GeForce GTX 970 graphics card. These components are installed in an Asus Z97-K motherboard along with a 1TB hard disk.

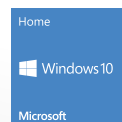


Scan 3XS Vengeance Gaming PC

- Intel® Core™ i7 6700K processor overclocked up to 4.7GHz
- 8GB Corsair DDR3 2133MHz memory
- 4GB NVIDIA GeForce GTX 980 SC
- 250GB Samsung 850 SSD & 2TB HDD
- Windows 10
- 3 Year Premium Warranty

£1525 Inc VAT

This high-end gaming system includes a Intel Core i7 6700K CPU which has Hyper-Threading and is overclocked up to 4.7GHz plus a 4GB NVIDIA GeForce GTX 980 graphics card, 8GB of 3000MHz Corsair Vengeance DDR4, an Asus Z170 Pro Gaming motherboard, 256GB PCI-E SSD and a 2TB hard disk.

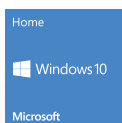


3XS Graphite LG157 Gaming Laptop

- Intel® Core™ i7 4720HQ processor
- 8GB Corsair DDR3 1600MHz memory
- 2GB NVIDIA GeForce GTX 960M
- 15.6in 1,920 x 1,080 screen
- 1TB SATA 6Gb/sec hard drive
- Windows 10

£889 Inc VAT

The LG157 is a 15.6" mid-range gaming laptop that includes a NVIDIA GeForce GTX 960M graphics card plus an Intel Core i7 4720HQ CPU, up to 16GB of RAM and multiple hard disks and SSDs. The LG157 is ready for next-day delivery and is protected by a 2 Year Premium Warranty.

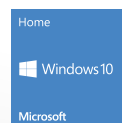


3XS Graphite LG1720 Gaming Laptop

- Intel® Core™ i7 4720HQ processor
- 8GB Corsair DDR3 1600MHz memory
- 3GB NVIDIA GeForce GTX 970M
- 17.3in 1,920 x 1,080 screen
- 1TB SATA 6Gb/sec hard drive
- Windows 10

£1075 Inc VAT

The LG1720 is a 17.3" high-end gaming laptop that includes a choice of powerful NVIDIA GeForce GTX 970M or 980M graphics card, ensuring silky smooth frame rates in all games. The LG1720 is ready for next-day delivery and has a 2 Year Warranty.



Scan Computers recommends Windows.

3XS Custom Series

Our 3XS Custom Series is a range of computers designed to offer the best performance for a variety of applications, with a particular focus on games. We build Custom Series PCs to order, so we can configure and tailor make an individual PC just the way you want it. We can also overclock the processor, so you get a faster PC without a substantial increase in price. All 3XS Custom Series PCs are covered by a three year warranty as standard with the first year on-site.



Scan 3XS Overclocked



Built by award winning 3XS team



3 Year Warranty

3XS SYSTEMS

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Bethers2603 ★★★★★

I would recommend this product to anyone who enjoys this magazine as much as I do

Dave ★★★★★

I have the full set apart from No 2, and they just sit on a shelf till I want them. Very good for reference

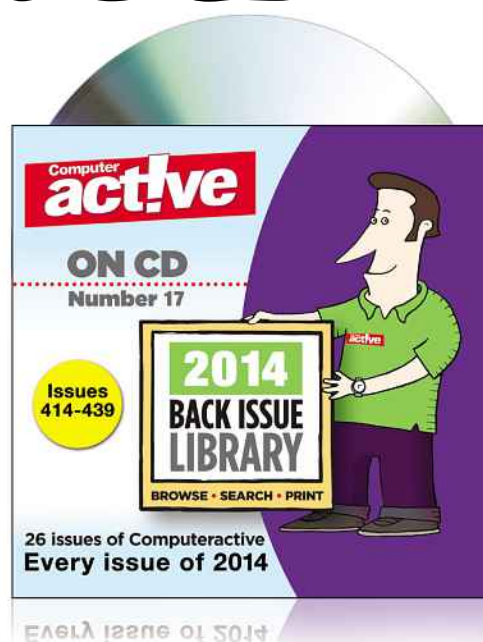
Sproggit ★★★★★

I can now recycle all the mags I've collected over the past 12 months

Col Chris ★★★★★

Very good. I would like a Back Issues CD for every year in the future

Mr Pimlott ★★★★★



Due to my own fault, I thought the disk was faulty. I contacted Computeractive, they contacted me immediately, established my error, and then later checked with me that all was well. Excellent customer service not often seen today

David ★★★★★

I always get these, as they save storage space and make searching easy

Nephron8 ★★★★★

Easy to use, does what it says on the tin!

Allan Feeney ★★★★★

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All quotes taken from reviews left by customers on Amazon. Visit www.snipca.com/14981 to read more.

PLUS



Workshops & Tips

PULL OUT
& KEEP
Issue 459

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

35 Unlock Kaspersky
2016's hidden protection
38 Sync passwords
across devices for free

40 Use Stephen
Hawking's voice software
42 Make your PC
remember what you type

PLUS

43 Readers' Tips
44 Phone & Tablet Tips
46 Make Windows Better

47 Make Office Better
48 Secret Tips For...
Dropbox

Unlock Kaspersky 2016's hidden protection

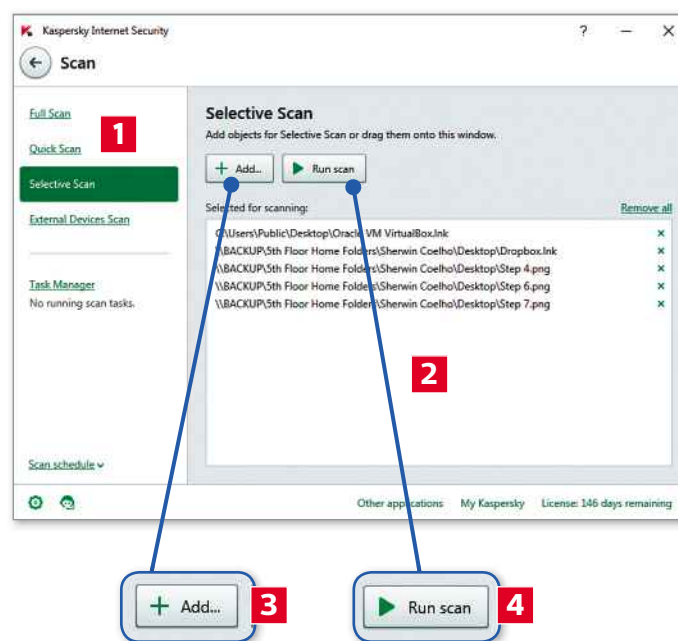
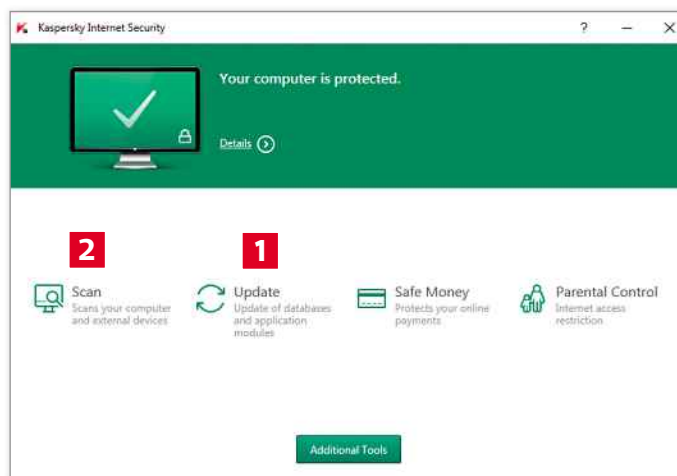
What you need: Kaspersky Internet Security 2016; Any version of Windows (XP to 10) **Time required:** 45 minutes

The latest version of Kaspersky Internet Security (2016) is the best antivirus program we've ever used and it's compatible with every version of Windows, including Windows 10. You can now download it from our Software Store (www.snipca.com/17874) at half price.

We'll show you how to use its powerful scan functions and activate its hidden protection and security features. You can also monitor the program remotely and use its enhanced browser tools to safeguard your sensitive information from cybercriminals.

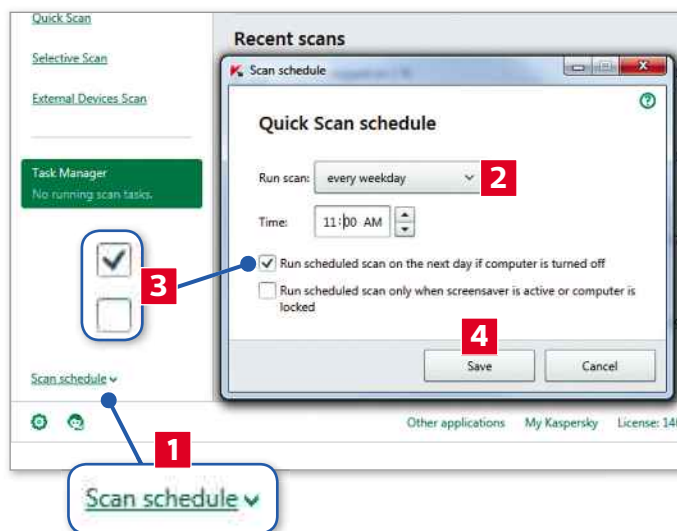


STEP 1 If you're using an antivirus program other than Kaspersky, uninstall it before installing Kaspersky Internet Security (KIS) because you can't run two antivirus programs simultaneously. If you're using an older version of KIS (2014 or 2015, for example), that version will automatically be uninstalled when you install KIS 2016. As soon as the program installs, you should update its **virus definitions**. Click Update **1**, then the 'Run update' button. Once that's done, click the top-left Back button to return to the main screen, then click Scan **2**.

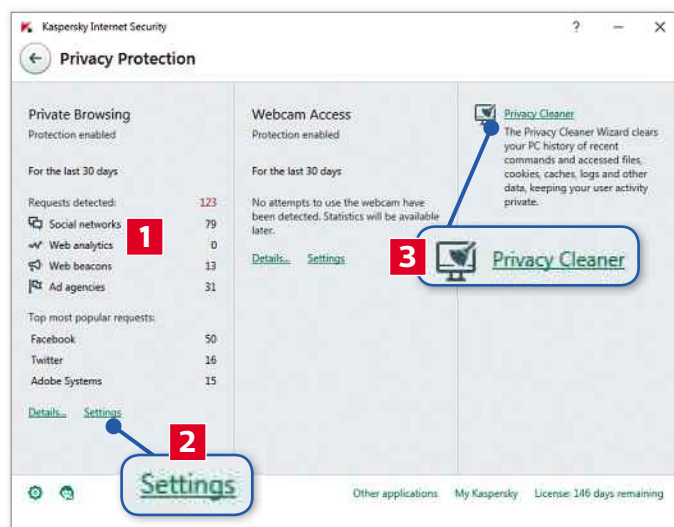


STEP 2 You'll see a list of four scan types **1**. Full Scan checks your entire PC and can take up to an hour or more, while Quick Scan checks your PC's most important areas (including system files) and takes only a few minutes. Selective Scan lets you scan specific files or folders. You can either drag and drop them into the Selective Scan's main section **2** or click the Add button **3**, navigate to the item, then click Select. Click 'Run scan' **4** to begin.

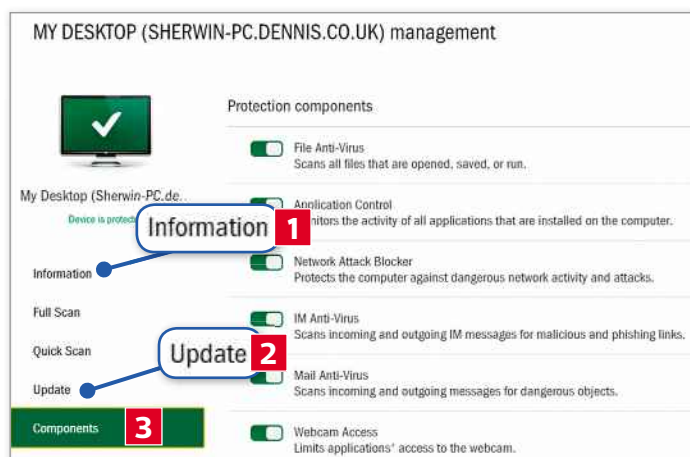
Workshops



STEP 3 To schedule a scan, click the 'Scan schedule' dropdown menu **1**, which contains two options – Full Scan and Quick Scan. Click either to see the 'Run scan' dropdown menu, which is set to 'manually' by default. Change this to another value, such as 'every day' or 'every weekday' **2**, and the window will expand to reveal more options. Set a specific time to run your scan, then tick the relevant box(es) **3** to run your scan the next day if your PC is switched off at the time you scheduled and/or run the scan only when your PC is locked. Click Save **4** after making your changes.

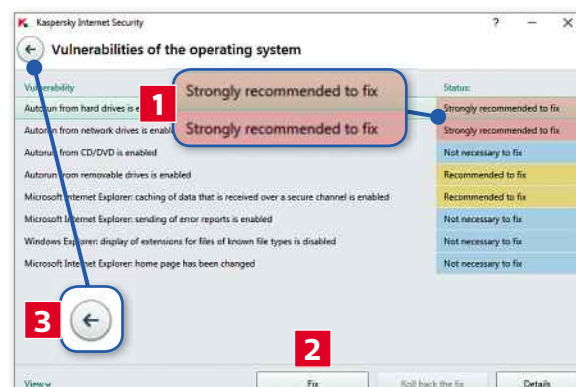


STEP 4 We'll now delve deeper into KIS 2016's settings. Go to the program's main screen (by clicking the top-left Back button), click the Additional Tools button, then click Privacy Protection at the top left. You'll see how your browsing habits are exposing you to various tracking services **1**. To block these, click the Settings link **2**, then select 'Block detected requests'. Now click the Back button. To delete PC data that can be used to track you (including cache, logs and cookies), click the Privacy Cleaner link **3**, click Next to begin the scan, then Next again to delete any identified items. Tick 'Reboot the computer', then click Finish.

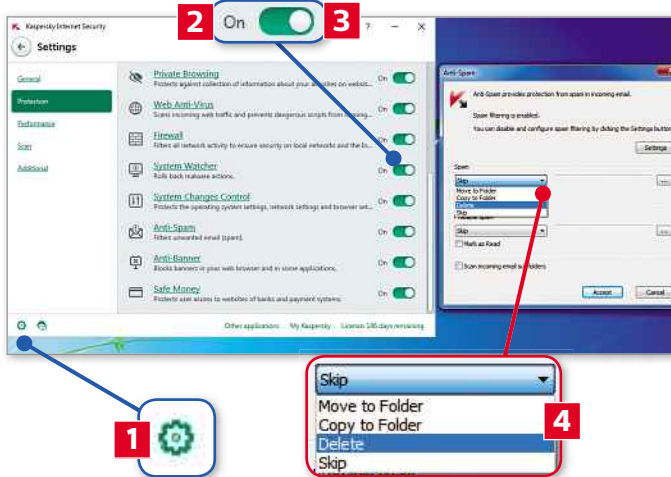


STEP 5 KIS 2016 is the first version to let you manage your device's security remotely from any browser. To activate this feature, open KIS, click Additional Tools, Management Console, then click 'Connect the computer to My Kaspersky'. Click 'Register now', enter your email address and a password, tick to accept the privacy statement, then click Register. Now go to the email Kaspersky sends you and click the link within it to activate your account. In your browser, enter your password when prompted, click 'Activate and sign in', then Done. Now, as long as your PC is switched on, you can go to <https://center.kaspersky.com> on any browser on any PC, log into your account and click the Manage button below your listed device. You can now check whether any threats have been detected on your PC **1**, monitor Kaspersky's update status **2** and even change its settings remotely **3**.

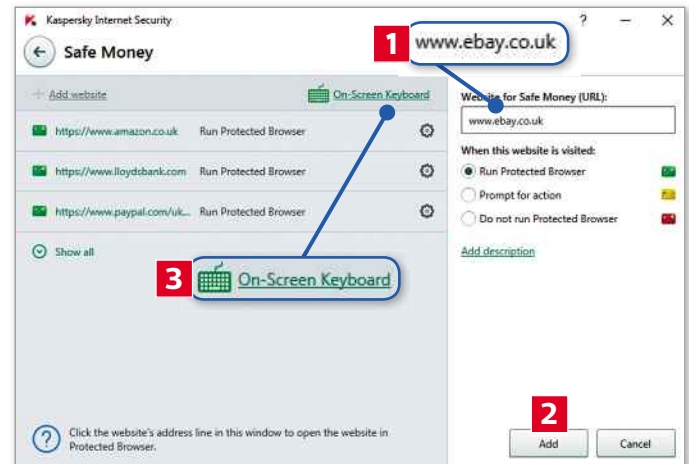
STEP 6 Another useful feature, which is hidden away, lets you scan your PC for any settings that could be potentially exploited by hackers. Go to the Additional Tools section, click Vulnerability Scan, then click 'Run scan'. Any detected vulnerabilities will be highlighted at the bottom. Click it to see a list highlighting which ones need fixing **1**. Now simply click those items, then click Fix **2**. Next, click the back button **3** twice to return to the Tools section, click Microsoft Windows Troubleshooting at the bottom left, then click Next. KIS will now run a scan for any PC damage caused by malware activity. Follow the steps to fix any problems, if found.



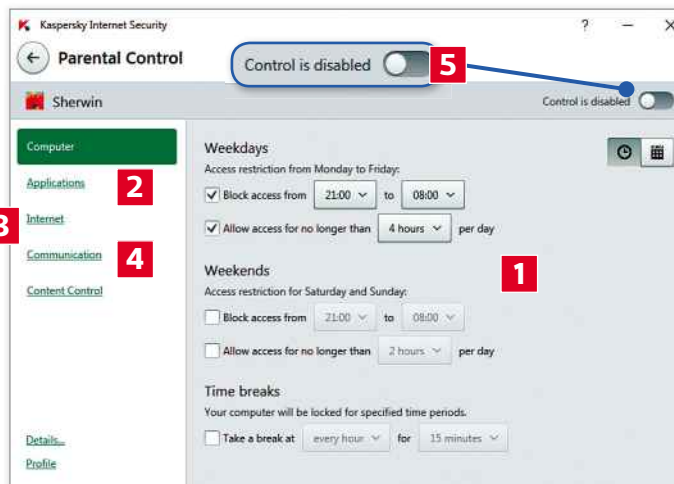
Unlock Kaspersky 2016's hidden protection



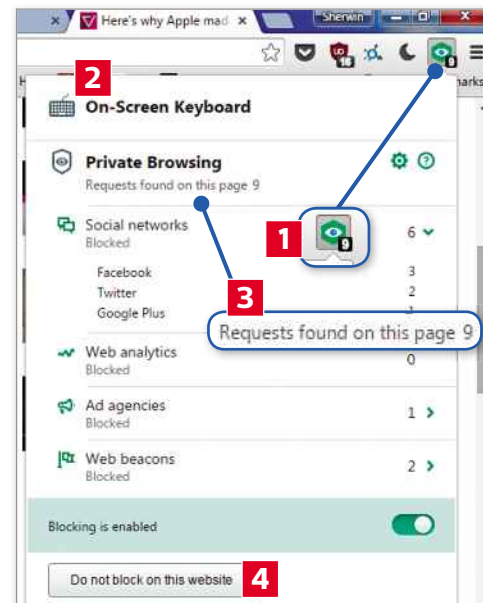
STEP 7 Now go to the main KIS screen, click the Settings (cog) icon **1**, click Protection in the left-hand pane, then scroll to the bottom. All sliders, except for three, are turned on by default. Turn on System Changes Control **2** to stop others making changes to your system and network settings. Kaspersky Internet Security 2016 has one of the most secure anti-spam filters of any antivirus program we've used, so click the Anti-Spam slider **3** to turn it on. You can then decide what you want to do with spam emails by selecting an option from the Spam dropdown menu **4**, then clicking Accept. Finally, click the Anti-Banner slider to turn that on.



STEP 8 We'll now show you how to use Safe Money, which protects your online transactions. Return to the main screen and click Safe Money. Now type your bank website's URL or any that requires your credit-card details (such as Amazon or eBay **1**), then click Add **2**. In future, whenever you open that website, it'll run in a separate browser window with an orange border, indicating that Kaspersky is protecting any information you enter. Click On-Screen Keyboard **3** and use it to enter sensitive data (such as bank details or passwords) into any website. This prevents **keyloggers** from detecting what you type.



STEP 9 Return to the main screen and click Parental Control. Here, you can tick various options to stop other users performing certain actions (such as removing or exiting Kaspersky). Tick the boxes you want, click Create Password, type a password, then click Enter. Now click the 'Configure restrictions' link below the PC user whose access you want to restrict. You'll see various options, including blocking access between certain hours on weekdays and weekends **1**, stopping access to certain programs **2**, restricting access to particular websites **3** and even blocking messaging programs **4**. Turn on the slider **5** to activate your settings.



STEP 10 Kaspersky automatically installs its security **extension** for Chrome and Firefox browsers. When you open your browser, click Allow and Continue to accept this. The green hexagonal-shaped Kaspersky extension **1** gives you easy access to the on-screen keyboard **2**. It also tells you how many trackers it's blocked on the website you're currently on **3**. Only click the button below **4** if you trust the website. Whenever any unrecognised program tries to launch in the background on your PC, Kaspersky will block it and you'll see a pop-up in your PC's notification area. Only click 'Allow startup' if you're sure that program is safe. ●

Sync passwords across devices for free

What you need: Android (phones and tablets); iOS devices and Windows Phones

Time required: 25 minutes

While the popular password manager LastPass was always free to use on your PC, previously you had to pay £10 a year to use its mobile apps. Now, however, you can install and use LastPass' excellent features on any phone or tablet (Android and iOS) for free.

Install it on a second mobile device of the

same type (phone or tablet) and your account details will automatically sync to that device. Install it on a second mobile device of the same type (phone or tablet) and your account details will automatically sync to that device. You can't sync your account between a phone and tablet unless you upgrade to the £10 yearly plan.

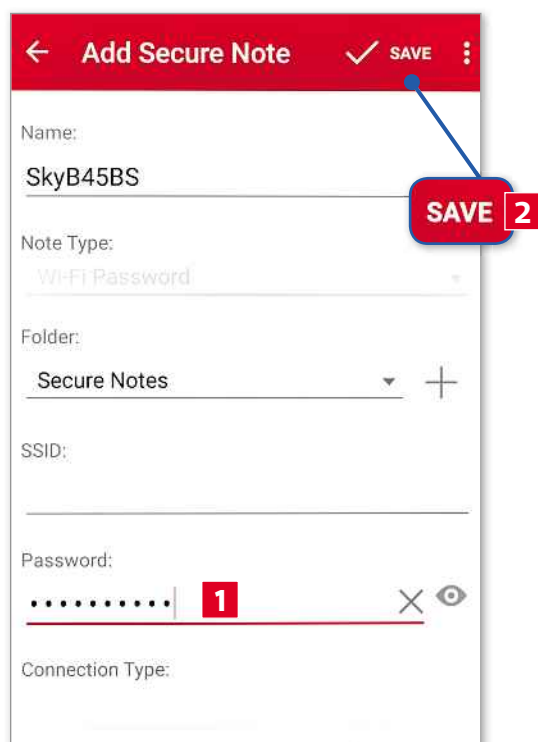
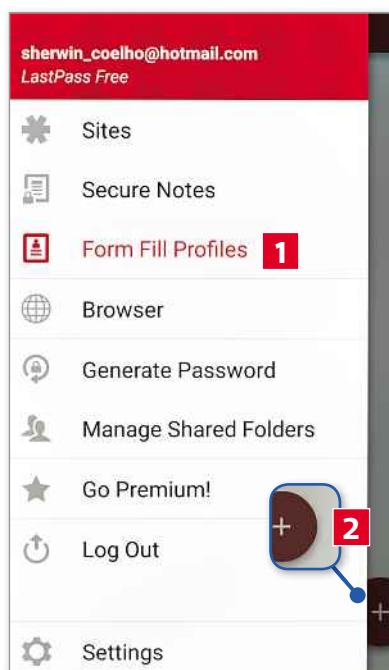


STEP 1 We'll be using the Android phone app for this Workshop, but the process is pretty much the same on all mobile operating systems. Go to www.snipca.com/17913, tap the Mobile tab at the top right, then the Download link beside the type of device you want to install LastPass on. Open the app, tap Sign Up (or Log In if you already have an account). Now enter your email address, tap Next, enter and confirm a master password **1**, type a Password reminder (optional) **2**, tap Create Account **3**, Log In, then Now. The LastPass menu will slide in from the left.

STEP 2 We'll first show you how to save your password for any website that requires you to log in. Tap Browser in the menu to open LastPass' secure browser, where you'll see a Google search box. Now type the name of a website you need to log into (for example, Yahoo Mail), open it and enter your login details **1**. Before tapping 'Sign in', tap the grey LastPass icon (an asterisk) beside a login field **2** (username, password etc). You'll see a message asking you if LastPass should save your password. Tap Yes to confirm.

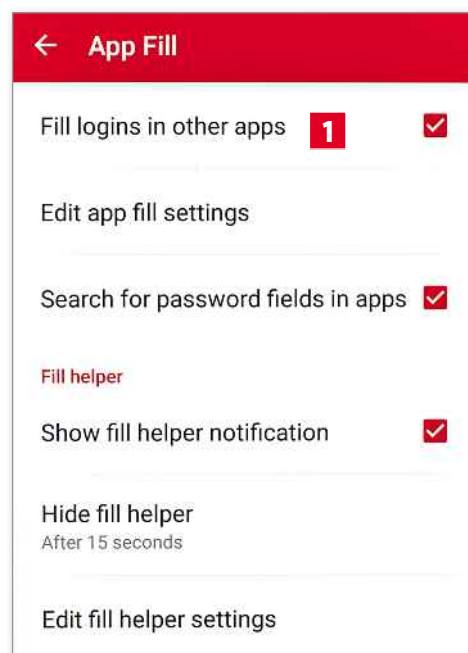
STEP 3 To reveal and confirm your password, tap the eye icon beside the password field **1**. From now on, whenever you try to access that website, your login fields will be automatically filled out. However, you can tick the Require Password RePrompt and Never AutoFill boxes **2** if you don't want that to happen. On the other hand, if you want to automatically log into that website, tick AutoLogin **3**.

STEP 4 LastPass also lets you create a 'form profile' in which you save your personal information. When filling out online forms, you simply select the profile that's relevant to the information required and LastPass automatically enters this data. To create a form profile, tap the three lines at the top left to open the LastPass menu, then tap Form Fill Profiles **1**. Tap the red '+' symbol **2**, then Add Form Fill Profile. You'll see different categories for personal info, contact info and credit-card info. Fill in the required fields for your first profile, then tap the Save icon at the top right. Repeat this process to create as many profiles as you need.



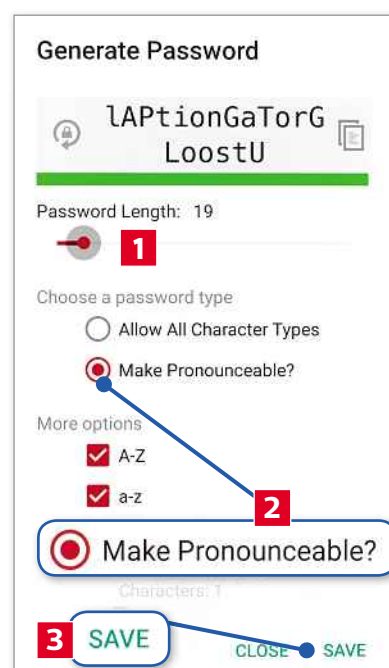
STEP 6 You can also create 'secure notes' in LastPass – useful for storing sensitive information, such as your bank account details, passport info, software licence codes and Wi-Fi password. To create a secure note, tap the red '+' symbol at the bottom right, Add Secure Note, then tap to select a note category (there are 16 categories, including the four mentioned above). Fill out the fields you need **1**, then tap Save **2** at the top right. You can tap the red '+' symbol and add more notes.

STEP 5 Now whenever you want to fill a form on your mobile device, simply tap the profile icon/LastPass icon, select the appropriate profile, and all the fields in your form will be filled based on the information you provided. By default, LastPass doesn't autofill login and form fields in other apps on your device, but it's easy to enable this option. Open the LastPass menu, tap Settings, App File, tick 'Fill logins in other apps' **1**, tap OK, LastPass, tap the slider to turn it on, then OK to confirm.



STEP 7 Finally, we'll show you how to create strong passwords that are impossible to crack. Open the LastPass menu and tap Generate Password. You'll see a random password. Tap Settings to see options to strengthen it. You can now increase the length of the password **1** or make it possible to pronounce **2**. Tap Save **3** when you've finished. Now enter the URL of the website, your username login, then tap Save at the top right.

In future, whenever you install and log into the app on a second phone, you'll see all your saved details. To sync your changes across all your devices (PCs, phones and tablets), you need to upgrade to the £10 yearly plan. To do that, open the LastPass menu, tap Go Premium, Upgrade Now, then Buy to confirm the payment via your Google account. ●



Use Stephen Hawking's voice software

What you need: Windows (XP to 10) Desktop PC, webcam and speakers

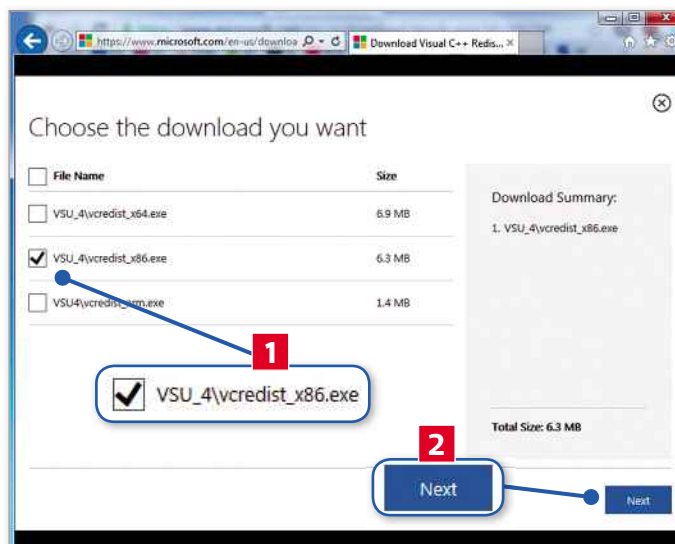
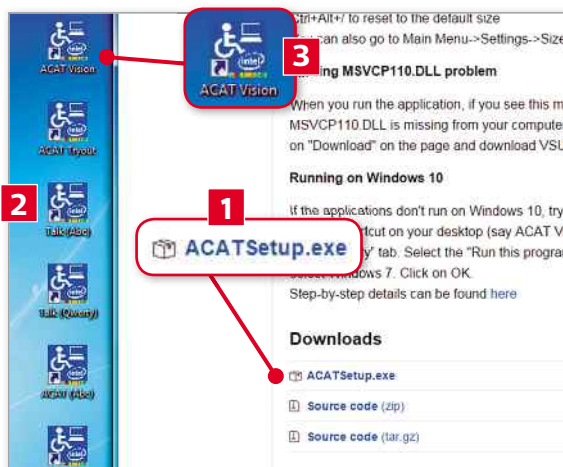
Time required: 40 minutes

Intel is best known for making PC processors. However, they also make the software that helps Professor Stephen Hawking communicate and they've now made this available as a free download. Called ACAT (Assistive Context-Aware Toolkit), the program

lets you form words and sentences by simply moving your cheeks. It does take a little getting used to, but after a few minutes we were able to construct sentences and hear them spoken in the familiar computerised tone associated with Britain's esteemed physicist.

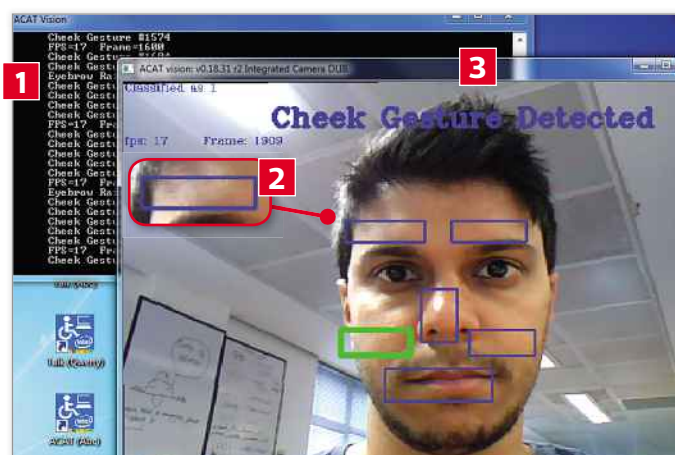


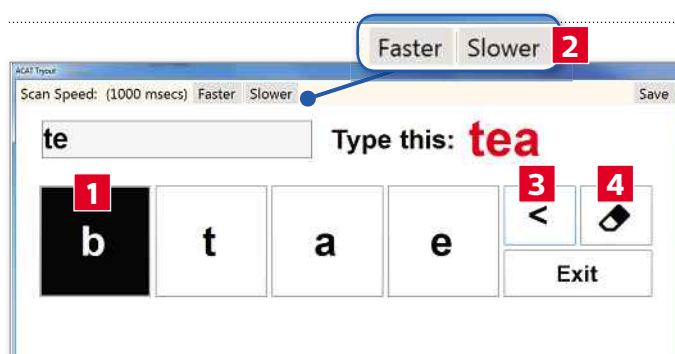
STEP 1 To download the program, go to www.snipa.com/17966, scroll to the bottom of the page and click the ACAT setup file. **1** It's quite large (253MB) so may take a few minutes to download. Run the setup file, then click Next twice, then Install. Click Yes to accept any prompts during installation, then Finish when it's done. You'll see six ACAT Desktops icons. **2** Double-click ACAT Vision to open it. **3** If you see the error message 'The program can't start because MSVCP110.dll is missing from your computer', click OK, the 'Close program' and move on to Step 2. If you don't see the error, skip to Step 3.



STEP 2 To install the missing DLL file, open Internet Explorer (feel free to try other browsers, but we could only get it to work in IE), go to www.snipca.com/17966, scroll down to the 'Missing MSVCP110.DLL Problem' section at the bottom and click the link to go to Microsoft's website. Now click the Download button, tick the file named 'vcredist_x86.exe', **1** click Next, **2** then Run. Tick to accept the T&Cs, then click Install, Yes, then Close after that's done.

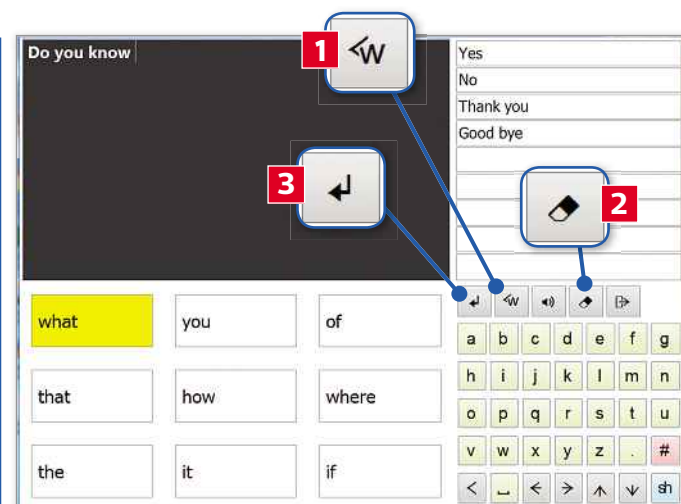
STEP 3 Ensure your webcam is connected to your PC, then launch ACAT Vision. Your webcam will turn on and you'll see your face displayed in a window, along with a Command Prompt-like screen **1**. Look at your camera and a message will pop up on screen saying 'Calibration in Progress'. This means ACAT is identifying your facial structure, which can take a few seconds. Once this is done, you'll see blue rectangular boxes appear on screen near your eyebrows, nose, cheeks and mouth **2**. If you don't see the boxes, move your webcam closer and try again. Now try moving either of your cheeks and you should see the Cheek Gesture Detected message **3** on your screen. This means ACAT has successfully recognised your facial movements.





STEP 4 Repeat the gesture a few times to make sure it registers. Now, moving your face as little as possible (this will undo your face calibration) open ACAT Tryout on your Desktop. A window will pop up containing four boxes each containing a letter, and they'll be highlighted one by one for a few moments, **1** the idea being that you gesture when you get to the letter you want to use. Select Faster or Slower **2** to change how long each letter is highlighted for. Click the backspace button **3** if you select the wrong letter by mistake, or the eraser button **4** to restart.

STEP 5 You'll then be prompted to type certain words to help you get used to the process. If you notice letters are being added when you didn't gesture to select them, it means you've moved and your face is no longer calibrated, in which case click Exit, then Yes and repeat from Step 3. When you've managed to form a few words and feel ready to move to the next level, click Exit, then Yes, and open Talk (ABC) on your Desktop. This tool uses the same facial movements but to form longer sentences that you can then hear spoken out loud. It contains three sections – basic words, **1** alphabets **2** and predictive words (ones ACAT thinks you're likely to use next). **3**



STEP 6 Similarly to Step 4, each of these three main sections will be highlighted for a short time, and you select the one you want by moving your cheek. Next, each row in the section you've chosen will be highlighted until you gesture to choose one, and finally each item in that row (the latter only applies to the alphabet or basic words section). The three sections respond to each other: selecting a particular letter, for example, brings up common words on the bottom left. These, in turn, bring up predictive words. Use the backspace button **1** to delete the previous word and the eraser button **2** to clear the window. To hear what you've entered in a similar robotic voice to Professor Hawking, simply click the Enter button **3**.



STEP 7 It does take some getting used to, but we were easily able to construct long sentences after only a few minutes of using ACAT (although the version Professor Hawking uses is far more advanced than the one we're working with here). For an alternative way of constructing words, open Talk (Qwerty) on your Desktop. The layout is different to Talk (ABC), but you use it in the same way: move your cheek to select a section, then a row **1**, then an individual item in that row to add it to your text **2**. Click the Enter button **3** to hear your text spoken out loud. You can read the elaborate user guide for all the ACAT programs on your PC here www.snipca.com/17969. ●

Make your PC remember what you type

What you need: PhraseExpress; Windows 7, 8 or 10 **Time required:** 25 minutes

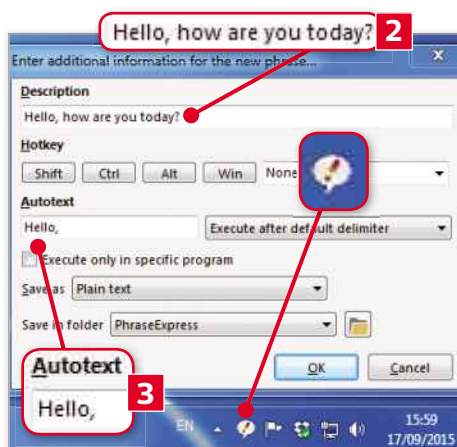
If you find yourself regularly having to type the same sentence or paragraph, PhraseExpress can save you precious time. This free program lets you set a specific word or keyboard shortcut that adds a longer block of text in one go.

These shortcuts work in all Windows programs (including Office and Notepad) as well as in any web browser. It saves any text you copy to its clipboard, so you can still access it even if you've copied something else in the meantime.

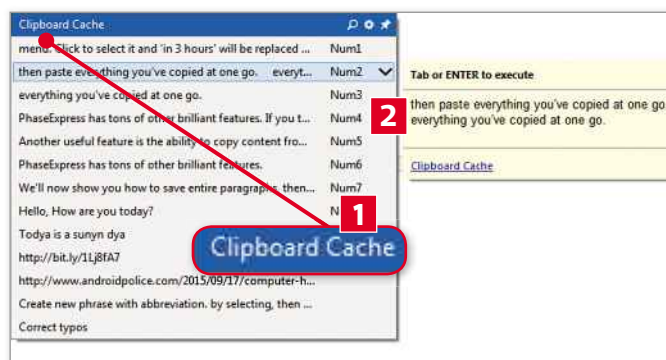


STEP 1 To install Phrase Express, go to www.snipca.com/17982, click the Download Now button and run the downloaded setup file. We'll first show you how to set a single word to add to a longer string of text.

First, open Word and type the phrase you want to make a shortcut for, such as 'Hello, how are you today?'. Now highlight this text, open PhraseExpress **1**, and click 'New phrase' at the bottom. You'll see your highlighted text in the Description field **2**. Type the word you want to use as a shortcut in the Autotext field (we used Hello, see highlight **3**), then click OK. Now whenever you type Hello, into a program or website, PhraseExpress will fill in the rest for you. Add as many phrases as you want this way.



STEP 2 We'll now look at how to add entire paragraphs using just a keyboard shortcut. First, type a paragraph of text you want to create a shortcut for, then highlight it, open PhraseExpress in your PC's notification area and click New Phrase, as in Step 1. Now select which of the four **modifier keys** you want to use **1**, then click the dropdown menu and select a number or letter key **2** to use with your modifier keys. Next, click the Autotext dropdown menu, select 'Execute immediately' **3**, then click OK. Now you can magically make text appear in any program or browser by doing nothing more than pressing your keyboard shortcut.



STEP 3 PhraseExpress has some useful extras, too. Type a phrase such as 'See you in 3 hours' and a pop-up menu will give you the option to replace '3 hours', with the actual time it'll be in three hours. It also improves on Windows' copy and paste abilities, which only let you paste whatever you've copied most recently. With PhraseExpress running, everything you copy is saved to a Clipboard Cache, which you can access by pressing Ctrl+Alt+V. For example, if you select and copy three multiple sentences in succession without pasting in between, then bring up the Clipboard Cache **1**, you'll see all of them in a list **2**. Simply scroll to the text you want and press Enter to paste it.

NEXT ISSUE

ON SALE
14 Oct

- Find any PC file faster
- Test how uninstalling software affects your PC
- Move all your data from Apple to Android
- Remove the hidden Windows 10 download

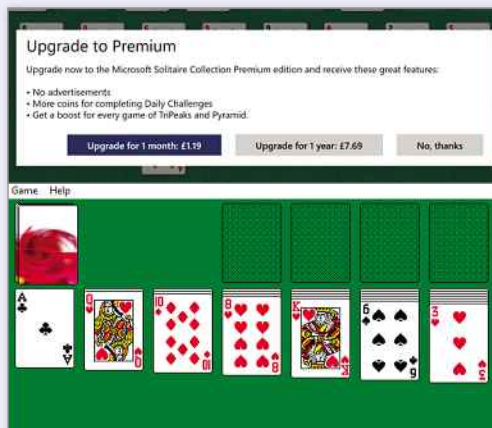
Subscribe to Computeractive at getcomputeractive.co.uk

TIP OF THE FORTNIGHT

Play the ad-free XP version of Solitaire in Windows 10

With a faithful old Windows XP PC gathering dust by my bedside, I upgraded my Windows 7 PC to Windows 10 and immediately felt the difference. Microsoft's latest operating system is smooth and stable, combining the best features of Windows 7 with some brilliant new features, in a way that isn't confusing like Windows 8.

I loved playing Solitaire on XP and was happy to find it's still there in Windows 10. However, after each game I kept seeing ads, including long video clips. You can remove them, but Microsoft charges £1.19 a month for that (or £7.69 per year), which I find ridiculous. It wouldn't be so bad if it was a one-off charge for perpetual use, but even so I wouldn't



want to pay more than 50p. I mean, come on, 50p across the number of Windows 10 licences around the world is still a lot of money.

So I got to thinking and looking

around. I couldn't find the Solitaire executable file in Windows 7, but an unlikely saviour emerged in Windows XP. If you have an XP machine lying around, open the Windows/System32 folder and copy the files 'sol.exe' and 'cards.dll' to a USB stick. Now transfer these to your Windows 10 machine. Open and run 'cards.dll' first, then 'sol.exe'.

The XP version of Solitaire will now run on your PC without any problems, ads or payment requests (see the bottom half of the screenshot, left). Who would have imagined that an operating system released in 2001 would come to the rescue of one succeeding it 14 years later?

Mark Young

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



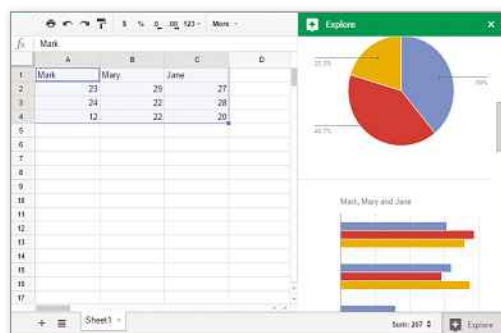
SPREADSHEET TABLES

Use Google Sheets' new automatic charts

I need to create charts in Excel on a regular basis, but it's the least favourite part of my job. It usually takes me a couple of tries to select an appropriate chart from the Insert tab, then customise it to my liking.

You can imagine my elation, then, when I read about the new Explore tool in Google Sheets that generates automatic charts for you based on the data you highlight.

Open Google Sheets, fill in your data, highlight it, then click the new Explore option at the bottom right. A panel will now slide in from the left with charts of various types and colours that best represent your data (see screenshot



below). Simply drag the one you want from the panel into your spreadsheet. I'm happy to have finally found an easier, yet effective, way to do something I dislike.

Kevin Keaton

WI-FI

Fix iOS devices not connecting to your network

My iPhone 5s refused to connect to my home Wi-Fi network when I returned from holiday. It was strange because it usually remembers the network without any prompt. My husband's iPhone and iPad and our PC connected without any problem, so there was obviously nothing wrong with the network.

He looked online and read that this is a discrepancy that can sometimes affect older devices. To resolve it, open Settings, tap Wi-Fi, then click the blue 'i' icon beside your selected Wi-Fi network. Now tap the Renew Lease button at the bottom, then Renew. Restart your device and it should connect as usual.

If this doesn't work, then you should try resetting your network settings. To do this, open Settings, tap General, scroll to the bottom, tap Reset, then tap Reset Network

Settings. Now wait for a few minutes, then navigate to WiFi within Settings and reconnect to your network.

Tracy Stunbridge

EMAIL

Rename folders to organise emails faster

I have a habit of segregating my Yahoo Mail messages into different folders. It's an easy enough process – just tick to select the emails you want to move, click the Move dropdown menu at the top, then select your folder.

However, after clicking the dropdown menu, you see keyboard shortcuts which you can click to move emails (D + a number key, for the first nine folders). By default, these are alphabetically set according to your folder names and there's no way to change that.

But I figured that you can simply rename the folder by prefixing it with a number (for example, '1 - Accounts'). This serves a dual purpose – not only will the folder appear as the first on the list, it also means that it's easy to remember the keyboard shortcut to move it to: press D, followed by the folder number. To rename a folder, simply right-click it in the left column, then click Rename Folder.

Sophie Wheeler

Phone and Tablet Tips

Brilliant things to do on your device

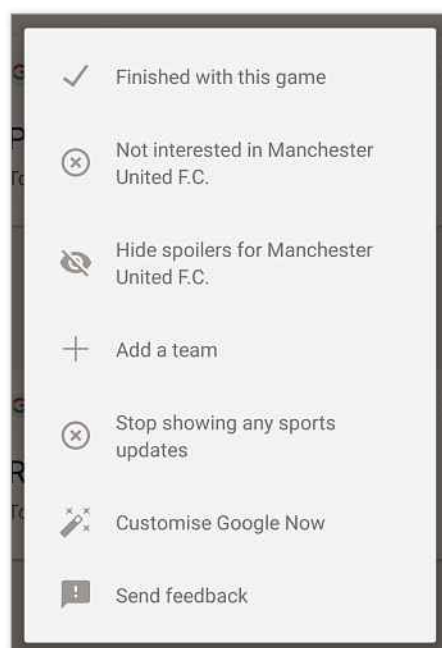
ANDROID

Use the new Google Now



Google has updated its brilliant Google Now app, making it easier to use. It even has a new icon. Gone is the square blue icon with a white 'g' logo, and in its place has arrived a circular white icon, with a multi-coloured 'G' inside it. The app comes pre-installed on Android devices.

If you were following any sports teams on Google Now, you'll now find their recent results listed as 'cards' when you scroll. Tap the three dots at the top right of the card to see options to hide spoilers



or add further teams you want to keep track of (see screenshot below left).

Below the sports scores, you'll see a list of article cards on topics Google thinks you're likely to be interested in (based on movies, TV shows, and sports and TV personalities you've searched for). Tap the three dots at the top right of any card to see options for further tweaking it to your tastes. Google Now will then remember these settings in future.

IOS/WINDOWS PHONE

Reply to WhatsApp messages from your PC



In Issue 445, we showed you how to send WhatsApp messages from your PC using the new WhatsApp Web feature. At the time, it was only possible using an Android phone and the Chrome web browser on your PC. Now you can use an iPhone (www.snipca.com/17950) or Windows Phone (www.snipca.com/17951) too, while the Firefox, Opera and Safari browsers are also now supported on your PC.

First, go to www.web.whatsapp.com on one of these browsers on your PC. You'll see a QR code on the screen. If you use an iPhone, open WhatsApp on your phone, tap Settings, then WhatsApp Web. On a Windows Phone, tap the three dots at the bottom-right, then 'whatsapp web'.

Your phone's camera will now switch on and you'll see a square border overlaid on the screen. Point it to your PC,

ensuring the border overlaps with the QR code, then wait for the browser on your PC to show your WhatsApp conversations on the left. Now click any conversation to read or reply to it just as you would on your phone.

IOS/ANDROID

Download Amazon Prime videos to watch offline



If you have an Amazon Prime account (which costs £79 a year), you can now download some Amazon videos and movies to watch offline. The Amazon Video app is available for free for iOS devices (www.snipca.com/17949).

To install the Amazon Video app on Android, you first need the Amazon App Store app. While both these apps are free, neither is available directly from the Play Store so the process of getting them is a little more complicated. Open your device's Settings, tap Security then swipe the 'Unknown sources' slider to the On position and tap OK to confirm. Now open any web browser app (such as Chrome), type www.amazon.co.uk/getappstore, then tap OK.

Next, tap the Download Amazon Underground button at the bottom, then OK to confirm the download. A file named Amazon_App.apk will start downloading. When that's done, tap to open it, select 'Package installer', then Always. Now tap Next twice, followed by Install, then Open. Finally, tap 'Sign in'

Best New Apps

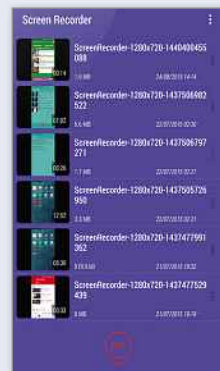
What you should install this fortnight

Screen Recorder

Free

Android: www.snipca.com/17952

This is a great app for describing a mobile problem in detail because it lets you record whatever you're doing on your device as a video. You can set a time delay before it starts recording, and even set the recording quality depending on whether video quality or a smaller file size is the higher priority.



Lumia Storyteller

Free

Windows Phone: www.snipca.com/17953

Created by Microsoft, this app automatically groups photos and videos taken at the same time and place as 'stories' on a timeline. It's easy to add or edit items to your story, and you can search them by location or by tapping their option on a world map.



VHS Camcorder

£2.99

iOS: www.snipca.com/17954

VHS camcorders maybe a thing of the past but this app lets you simulate video recordings from a bygone era using your phone or tablet, complete with static and distortion noises. You can even change the recording date to fool people.

and log into your Amazon account.

To install the Amazon Video app, type **amazon video** into the search bar at the top, tap the first option that appears, followed by the Free button, then 'Get app'. Now tap Next, Install, then Open. Both apps will now appear on your homescreen.

If you're not an Amazon Prime member, you'll see the option to get a month's free membership when you first launch Amazon Video. Tap 'Get started' and follow the steps to sign up (remember to cancel your membership within a month if you don't want to start paying). You can now tap to browse through the list of titles available through Amazon Prime.

In addition to 'Watch with Prime' and 'Add to Wishlist', some titles will have the Download option. Tap it and choose from Good, Better or Best video quality – the higher the quality, the larger the file and the longer it'll take to download. Click the 'Set as default' box to avoid being asked again in future.

ANDROID

Set a custom ringtone for Skype contacts



The Skype Android app (www.snipca.com/17948) now lets you set custom ringtones for specific contacts. Open the free app and log into your account. Now tap the (middle) Contacts tab at the top to see a list of all your Skype contacts and navigate to the

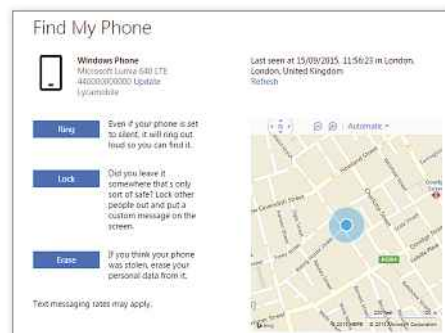
one you want to set a ringtone for. Next, tap the three dots at the top right followed by 'Ringtone options', then tap 'Set a custom ringtone'. Tap one of the ringtone options (see screenshot below left) to listen to it, then tap OK to set it as a ringtone for that contact.

WINDOWS PHONE

Locate and lock your lost Windows Phone



Just as Android has Android Device Manager and Apple has 'Find my iPhone', Windows Phone has 'find my phone'. But while the former two are apps, on Windows Phones it's a built-in setting. Scroll down from the top of your phone and tap All Settings. Now scroll to the 'privacy' section, tap 'find my phone' and ensure 'Save my phone's location periodically...' is ticked.



Now if you misplace your phone, go to www.account.microsoft.com/devices, click 'Sign in', log into the Microsoft account you use on your phone, then click the 'Find my phone' link beside your device. You'll see its approximate location on a map, with options to ring it, lock the phone or remotely erase your data (see screenshot above).

Games With Kids

What to play together on your phone and tablet

AGES 0-5

Fishing With Grandpa

£2.29 www.snipca.com/17955 (iOS)

This app features activities aimed at helping your toddler identify fishing objects, such as a life vest, anchor and oar. They'll also learn how to measure their catch, and how to count up to six. It even has simple mazes and puzzle games.



AGES 6-10

Alphabear

Free www.snipca.com/17956 (Android)

Free www.snipca.com/17957 (iOS)

In this spelling game, your child needs to form words using the letters provided at the bottom. The bigger the words, the bigger their bear gets and the more points they earn. They need to collect bears, which can then be used to extend their timer or double the points they earn.



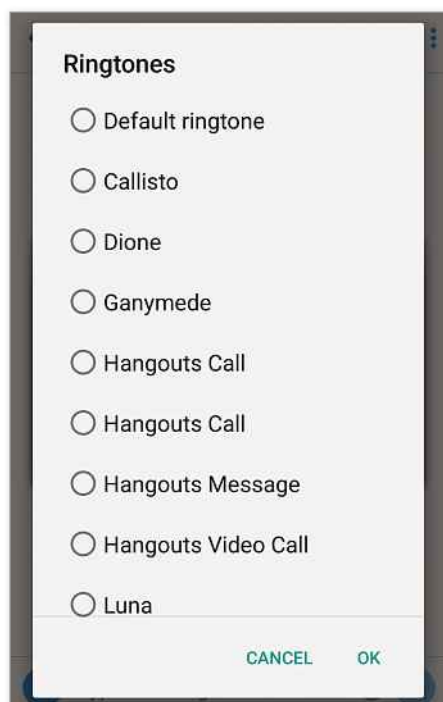
AGES 11-16

Stick Cricket Partnerships

Free www.snipca.com/17958 (Android)

Free www.snipca.com/17959 (iOS)

You can enjoy this brilliant cricket game with your child by creating a free Stick Sports account. Select your 'dream team' then walk out to face the opposition. Now simply tap the right or left side of the screen at the correct time to score runs and create a record-breaking partnership.



WINDOWS 8

Get directions with traffic estimates



The Maps app in Windows 8 not only provides accurate directions to places you need to travel to, but it also gives you an indication of how much traffic you can expect along the way.

Open the app, then click Allow to let it access your location. To get directions, click the search box at the top right, then the Directions tab. Now click inside the 'A' field and select 'My location', then click inside the 'B' field, type the location/postcode of your destination and click the correct autosuggest option.

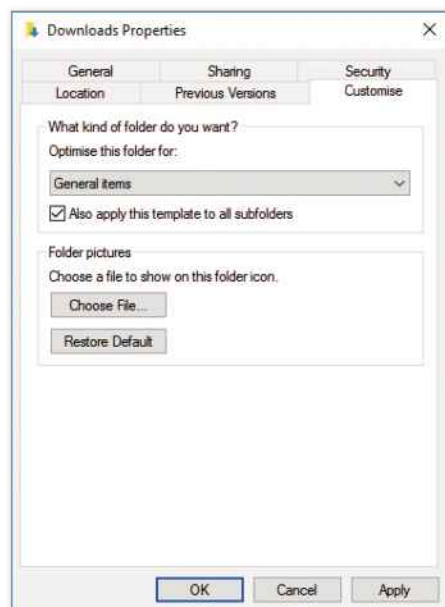
You'll see an outline of the fastest route on the map, with alternative route options listed below. The icons at the top let you switch between different modes of transport (car for driving, bus for public transport and the man icon for walking). To see traffic info for your route, click the three small dots at the bottom right of your screen, then click Traffic. The roads on the map will now be coloured red, yellow, white or green – in decreasing order of traffic severity.

WINDOWS 8, 10

Make your Downloads folder open faster



If your Downloads folder always takes a frustratingly long time to open, there's usually an easy way to speed it up. The likely cause of the delay is that the Downloads folder is categorised as a Pictures folder, so your PC has to generate thumbnail images for



WINDOWS 10

Find out how components on your Windows 10 PC are performing

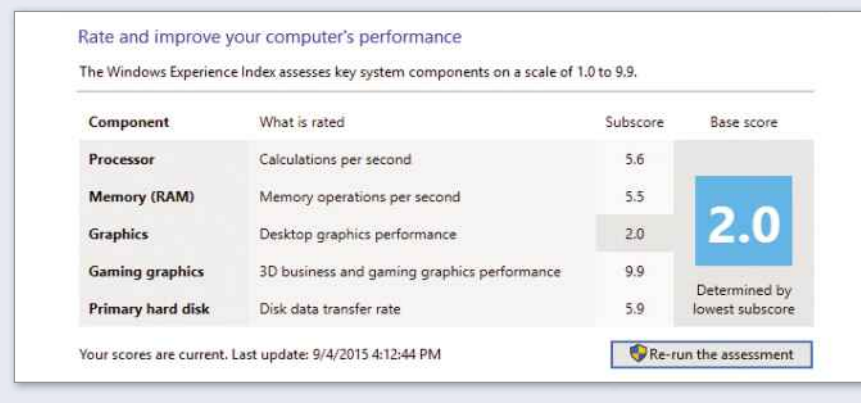


We started our lead Workshop in Issue 456 ('Make Windows 7 and 8 hardware faster than ever') by showing you how to find out your PC's Windows Experience Index. This gives you an indication of how your PC's **processor**, **RAM**, **graphics card** and hard drive are performing as subscores on a rating scale.

Windows 10 doesn't have this tool built in, but there is a free program you can turn to called ChrisPC Win Experience Index that will give you the same information. To install it, go to www.snipca.com/17999, click the

green Download Now! button, then run the downloaded setup file. At the end of the installation you'll see a short survey – to avoid going through it click Next, No, then Yes. Finally, click Finish to launch the program.

You'll see your Experience Index subscores on a rating scale from 1.0 (the lowest score) to 9.9 (the highest). As we mentioned in the Workshop, the 'Base score' on the right (see screenshot below) is not an average of the subscores of each of your components. Instead, it's the subscore of the lowest-performing item.



every file in the folder every time you open it (whether those files are pictures or not). Therefore, the blue progress bar at the top can take a while to reach the end as Windows has to process each thumbnail one by one.

To make the folder open faster, open Computer, right-click the Downloads folder on the right, click Properties, then click the Customize tab. Now click the 'Optimize this folder for' dropdown menu and select 'General items'. Tick the 'Also apply this template to all subfolders' box below, click Apply, then OK (see screenshot left). You'll notice that the folder will now load much faster.

WINDOWS 7, 8

Retrieve your Windows and Office 2010 product keys



The best way to give a sluggish PC a new lease of life is to reinstall your operating system (OS). To do that you'll

need the 25-character product key on your Windows 7 or 8 installation CD. If you need to reinstall Office 2010 after installing Windows, you'll need a separate product key for that. However, if you've misplaced any of the two installation discs, there's an easy way to retrieve the keys using a free program called Magical Jelly Bean Keyfinder.

To download it, go to www.snipca.com/18002, scroll to the Download buttons in the middle, then click the blue one below Free. Open the setup file, click Run followed by Yes, then Next. Accept the T&Cs, then click Next twice and tick 'Create a desktop icon'. Click Next, then select Custom and untick Install Results Hub. Finally, click Next, Install, then Finish. You'll see two options at the top left, stating your Windows version and your Office version. Click each one to see its product key. We'd suggest writing down these keys for whenever you need to reinstall your OS.

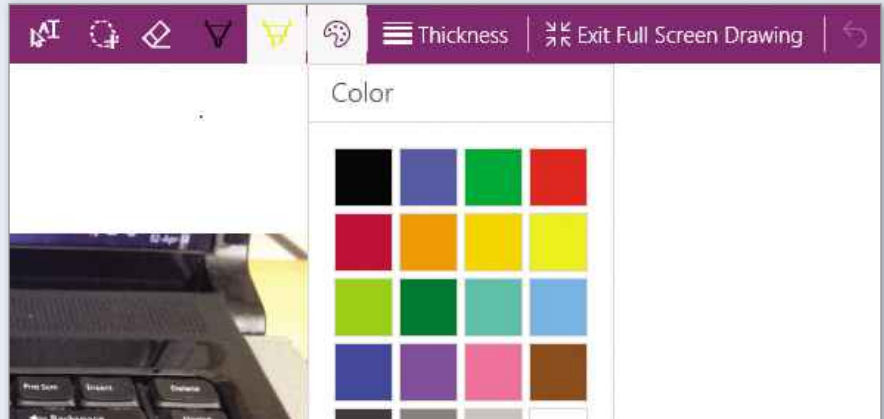
ONENOTE

Use Windows 10's brilliant OneNote app



The default OneNote app in Windows 10 is much better than in previous versions of Windows. Search for the app by typing in the search bar at the bottom left, open it, swipe through the introductory screens then click 'Start using OneNote'. You'll see your notes arranged neatly, with your pages on the left and your notes as multi-coloured tabs at the top.

If you like to draw on your notes, you'll find the Windows 10 app particularly useful because for the first time it offers a full-screen drawing mode. To use it, click the Draw tab at the top left, then click Full Screen Drawing at the top. You'll see your drawing tools arranged in sections at the top right (see screenshot above right). Clicking the eraser icon, the paintbrush icon or the Thickness option displays a menu with further options.



The circular Share icon at the top right lets you share your note using compatible apps or via email, and you can return to the standard view by clicking Exit Full Screen Drawing.

If you have multiple notebooks and want to change which one OneNote

opens in by default, click the three lines at the top left, then Settings at the bottom. Now click Options, scroll to the bottom, click 'Choose a notebook for Quick Notes', select the notebook you want from the dropdown menu, then click OK.

WORD

Remove the password on documents you've secured



In Issue 458, we showed you how to password-protect Word documents to keep sensitive information away from prying eyes. However, should you no longer need the password-protection, removing it is a simple task.

With the document open, click File at the top left, followed by Info, then click the Protect Document button at the top, followed by 'Encrypt with Password'. You'll see dots representing the characters

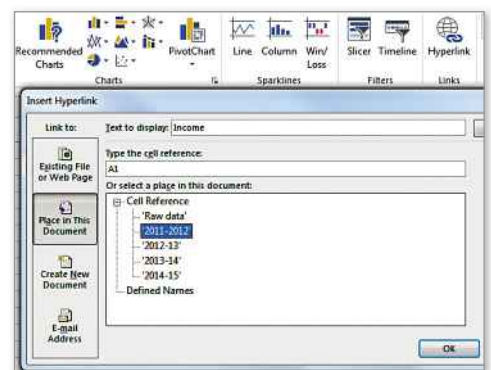
of your password in the Password field (see screenshot below left). Simply delete these dots, click OK, then save the document as you normally would. The next time you open it, you won't be prompted for your password.

EXCEL

Hyperlink data in a cell to another sheet

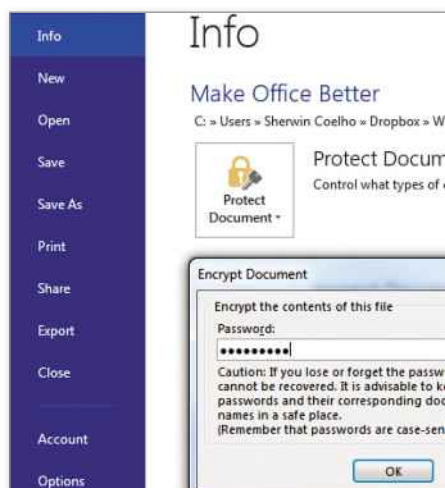


There's an easy (albeit little-known) way to **hyperlink** data from one cell to another sheet in your Excel document. First, click the cell you want to use as a hyperlink, then click the Insert tab at the top followed by the Hyperlink option at the top right. By default, it's set to 'Existing File or Web Page' at the top left. However, select 'Place in This Document' and you'll see all your other sheets within the same file listed (see screenshot above right). Simply select the one you want to hyperlink to, then click OK.



checking the preview pane (in the middle) within that folder that no such unread message exists, it's likely Outlook has made an error. Thankfully, there's an easy way to resolve this annoyance.

First, right-click to select the Inbox folder (or whichever folder Outlook says the mysterious unread email is in), on the left pane, click Properties, then the Clear Offline Items button at the bottom. All the messages in your middle preview pane will disappear and you'll see a pop-up saying there aren't any items to display. Don't be alarmed. Click OK, then restart Outlook and click the folders on the left. Now either the unread message beside your folder will disappear or you'll actually find the unread message Outlook has been referring to.



OUTLOOK

Fix Outlook's 'unread message' error



If you've ever been infuriated by an unread message showing beside your Outlook inbox (or a particular folder) only to discover when



Dropbox

Get new features before anyone else, recover deleted files and make your Dropbox super-secure

Drag and drop web addresses

Dropbox has a brand new feature for saving and sharing website addresses (or URLs) with a simple drag and drop. Double-click your web browser's address bar to highlight the URL you want to save and then drag and drop it into your Dropbox. You can even drop links via the Dropbox web interface at www.dropbox.com, as long as you open it in a separate browser window.

Sync selectively

Not every device needs every file, so use the Selective Sync feature to save both syncing time and storage space. Right-click the Dropbox icon in the

notification area, click the cog then choose Settings, followed by Account. Now click Selective Sync and tick or clear the relevant folders. Click OK to apply.

Recover old or deleted files

Deleted a file by mistake? Or need an older version? Get it back by logging in at www.dropbox.com. Go to the folder where your deleted file was or new-version file is, then right-click at the bottom of the file list and choose 'Show deleted files'. To recover the last version of a file right-click it and choose Restore; otherwise choose 'Previous versions' then select the relevant button before clicking Restore. Old files are stored for 30 days, although Pro users pay \$39 (around £25) per year for a feature called Extended Version History that keeps old files for a year.

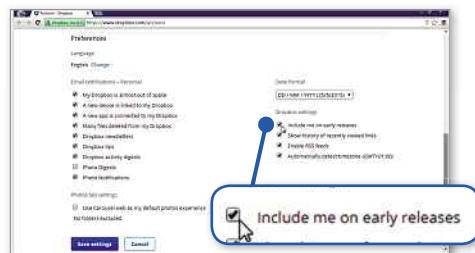
Access files offline on phones and tablets

Dropbox might seem useless on smartphones and tablets when there's no mobile signal or you're out of Wi-Fi range, but you can make important files accessible even when you're offline. On Android devices, tap the down arrow next to a file and then tap Favorite (or open the file for viewing and then tap the star icon). On iOS devices, just tap the star icon. Files marked as favourites will be

downloaded and stored on your device, ready for offline viewing or editing.

Get new features before anyone else

Updates to the Dropbox app are added automatically, but you can jump the queue by logging in at www.dropbox.com, clicking your username followed by Settings, ticking the 'Include me on early releases' box then clicking 'Save settings'.



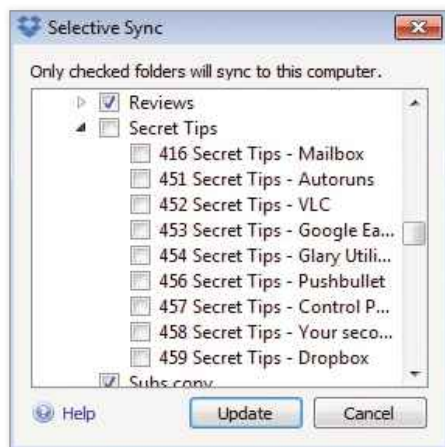
Tick this hidden box to get the latest Dropbox features before anyone else

Enable two-step verification

Two-step verification makes online accounts virtually impregnable, so use it to stop hackers breaking in to your Dropbox. Log in at www.dropbox.com, click your username at the top right and then Settings. Next, click Security followed by the Enable link, under 'Two-step verification'. Click 'Get started', then follow the prompts to add your mobile-phone number or alternative email address. Now when Dropbox detects a new or unusual attempt to access your account, it'll send a one-time code to your chosen number or email address: there's no way for someone to access your account without typing this second security code.

Right-click to share

There's a quick way to create download links to Dropbox files you want to share: simply right-click the file in your Dropbox folder, then choose 'Share Dropbox link'. The sharing link is automatically copied to the Windows Clipboard, so all you have to do is press Control (Ctrl)+V to paste it into an email, WhatsApp message or anywhere else.



Enabling Selective Sync will save both time and storage space

Speed up syncing - and your broadband!

Dropbox tends to gobble up bandwidth, so you might notice that your other internet apps slow right down when you're doing a lot of syncing.

You can fix this by limiting Dropbox's bandwidth. Right-click the Dropbox icon in the Taskbar's notification area, then click the cog icon and choose Settings from the menu. Next, click Bandwidth and select 'Limit to' alongside 'Download rate' and/or 'Upload rate'. Uploading impacts overall **ADSL** speed more

than downloading does, so start with 'Upload rate'. Dropbox suggests limits based on your connection speed, but you can make these even lower if you want.

In fact, while you're here, tick 'Enable LAN sync'. If you've got computers or devices connected to the same network, Dropbox will now sync everything via your router - dramatically speeding up transfers, and freeing up your internet bandwidth for other apps.

Intel Skylake

Prepare for faster PCs that consume less power - but do you really need them?

What is it?

Self-explanatory, we'd have thought. Intel has built a giant lake in the sky. The company has invited everyone in the world for a dip.

Very funny.

What is it really?

Spoilsport. The reality, which is only slightly less exciting, is that Skylake is the sixth generation of Intel's Core processor, succeeding Broadwell. One of its main benefits, Intel says, is that it consumes less power than before, which will make PCs run smoother and extend the battery life of laptops.

How can this be achieved?

Using a technology called 'Speed Shift'. Intel says this allows the processors to "shift gears" faster than before, cutting the amount of time they are kept running when not required.

What else can Skylake do?

Play 4K videos on your PC without sapping your power. It's been designed to work with the new H.265 video codec, which compresses 4K video files so they can be streamed without having to compromise on picture quality.

The Skylake range also includes a laptop processor that can be overlocked, a trick PC users have been performing for years, typically to make games run faster.

Combine these abilities with Intel's claim that Skylake can display graphics 30 times faster, and it's clear the processor has been built especially for the current age of 'consumption'. Millions of people now use PCs primarily for playing games and watching films - 'consuming' entertainment, in other words. Intel hopes the ever-increasing popularity of both will help drive sales of Skylake PCs.



excepted. But if your PC is older than that, you'll see a significant boost by buying a Skylake PC, even when performing tasks that don't involve games and videos.

This raises another important point related to the launch of Windows 10. In the past, you would often buy a new PC when you wanted to upgrade your operating system. That's not the case with Windows 10 because it's a free upgrade for Windows 7 and 8 users. That could thwart Intel's ambition of seeing millions of new computers sold.

Does Skylake make Windows 10 better?

It should because it's

been built with the new operating system in mind. For example, the processors will work with Intel's RealSense depth cameras (www.snipca.com/17885), which recognise faces. Microsoft is using this technology in Windows Hello (www.snipca.com/17887), a security feature in

Windows 10 that lets people sign into their PCs using their faces - much safer than passwords.

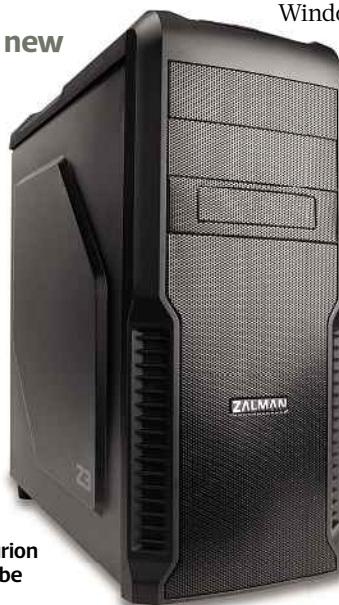
What if I don't play games or watch videos?

Then you may not appreciate the boost in performance Skylake brings. If you use your PC for less power-intensive tasks, such as browsing the web, editing photos and compiling spreadsheets, you won't really notice Skylake's extra oomph.

So should I buy a new PC powered by Skylake?

That depends on how old your current PC is. If you bought one in the past two years, it's probably powered by a Broadwell or Haswell processor (which launched in 2013). These should be fast enough for many PC users - frustrated gamers

Chillblast's Fusion Centurion is one of the first PCs to be powered by Skylake



Are any Skylake PCs available already?

Yes, such as the excellent Chillblast Fusion Centurion, which won a four-star 'Great Pick' award when we reviewed it in Issue 456. It doesn't have a RealSense camera though, unlike some of the Skylake laptops in Lenovo's new range, which will be available soon. There should also be Skylake computers from Dell, Acer, Asus and Toshiba within the next few months.

Windows 10

Upgraded to Windows 10? Then you'll want to know how it's better than Windows 7 and 8. **Jonathan Parkyn and Daniel Booth** reveal the best things you can do in the new OS that you couldn't do in its predecessors

>>> The 19 Best NEW Things You Should Do

It's now two months since Windows 10 launched, and the general reaction among *Computeractive* readers has been: 'Yes, it's good, but...'. Every user has their own 'but', whether it's updates not working, software mysteriously vanishing or hardware packing up.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Pin the settings you use most often to the Start menu
- Analyse how programs use your laptop's battery
- Copy and paste into Command Prompt using keyboard shortcuts
- Disable background apps that slow your PC down

As promised, we are continuing to fix your problems (see page 57) – no buts!

And yet there is still much that's fantastic about Windows 10. As with previous versions of the operating system (OS), many of the best tools are hidden. Often these are functions that Microsoft thinks you won't want to use much, which just goes to show how little the company knows about how most people use their PCs. Memo to Microsoft: the majority of people don't use Windows in the way you make out in your expensive adverts. They just want a smooth OS that does the simple things well, and doesn't try to be gimmicky.

So here are our favourite new things in Windows 10. Some of these features have never previously appeared in Windows;

others improve those that did. But they all do one key thing: make your computer easier to use.

1 Access the secret Start menu

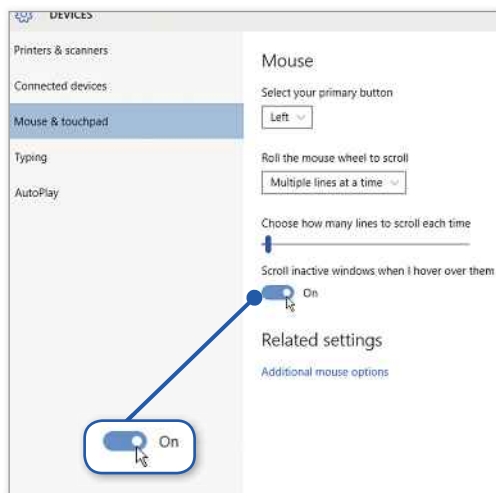
Isn't it just typical? You wait ages for Microsoft to bring back the Start menu, then two arrive at once. As well as the main Start menu in Windows 10, there's a hidden one just waiting to be discovered. Right-click Start and you'll find a three-tiered list of tasks and options, including shortcuts to some of the operating system's most essential tools. You can head straight to the old Control Panel from here, for example, as well as Device Manager, Power Options, Event Viewer, Disk Management and more. It's also the quickest way to

Does Stuart Andrews Love Windows 10?
Turn to page 56 to find out

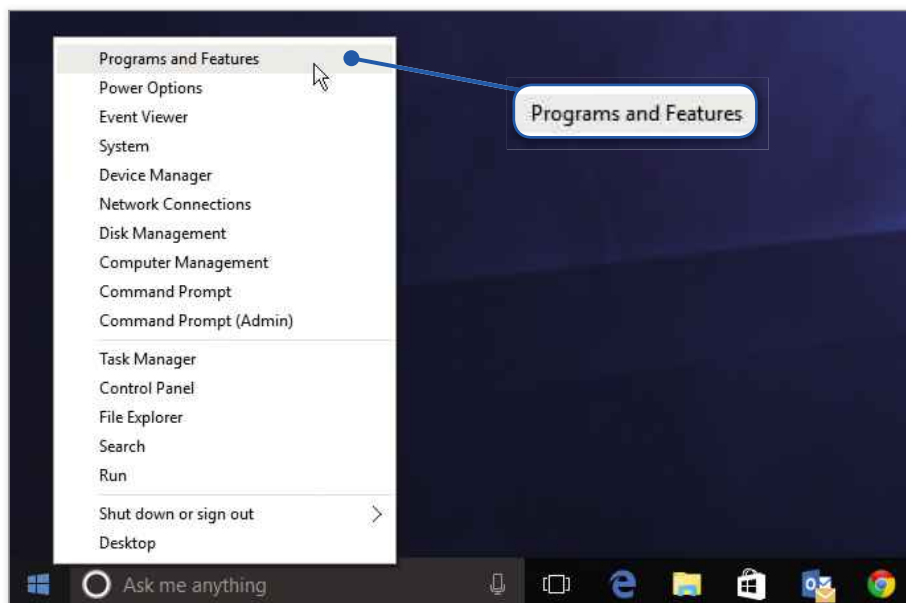
uninstall an application – just right-click Start and select 'Programs and Features' (see screenshot right). Command Prompt (Admin), meanwhile, lets you open a cmd window with administrator privileges. A similar menu was available in Windows 8.1, but if you're coming to Windows 10 from Windows 7, this will be completely new.

2 Pin your most used settings to the Start menu

Between them Windows 7 and 8 let you pin apps, programs, shortcuts and files to your Start menu/screen. Windows 10 goes one better by letting you pin almost any item in the Settings app with a simple right-click. So if you're regularly running low on drive space, say, and you find yourself frequently checking your storage, you could navigate to Start,



Switch on the 'Scroll inactive windows when I hover over them' slider to multi-task effectively



Select 'Programs and Features' in the hidden Start menu to uninstall programs

Settings, System, then right-click Storage on the left and select 'Pin to Start'.

3 Scroll any open window

In previous versions of Windows, you could only ever scroll the active window. If you had more than one program running – a word processor and a web browser, say – you first had to click or press Alt+Tab to go to the other program. This made multitasking very frustrating.

Thankfully, Windows 10 addresses this. Click Start, Settings, Devices and select 'Mouse & touchpad'. Here, make sure the option to 'Scroll inactive windows when I hover over them' is switched on (see screenshot left). With this enabled, you can have two (or more)

programs open on screen and scroll through any of them by moving your cursor over them.

4 See what's open using Task View

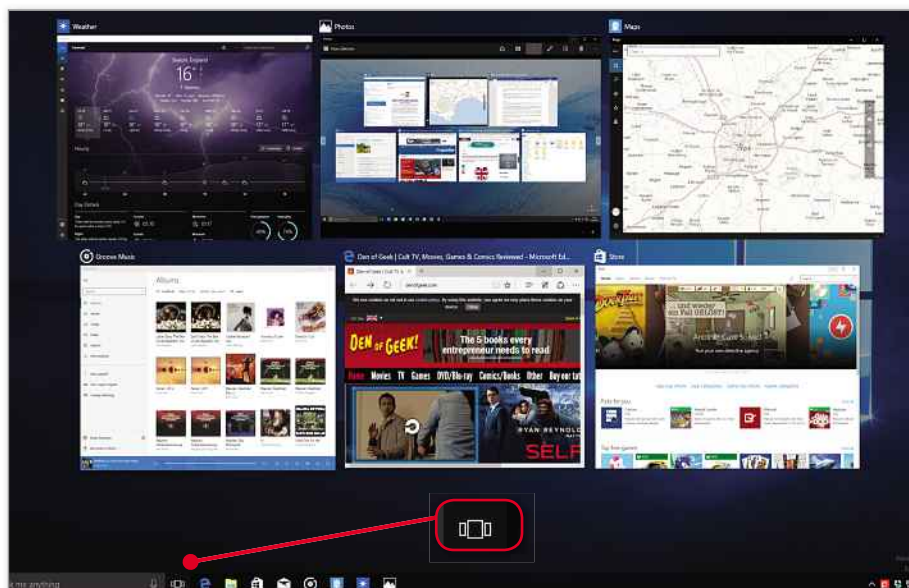
Task View supersedes the old Alt+Tab task switcher (though this still works), giving you a broader, at-a-glance snapshot of open documents and programs. Open Task View by clicking its button in the Taskbar (see screenshot below left), or by pressing Windows key+Tab. Your Desktop will then be dimmed and you'll see a preview of the programs and documents you have open.

5 Click through virtual desktops

Don't abandon the Alt+Tab shortcut just yet, though. It has been given a new lease of life by the arrival of Windows 10's **virtual desktops**. By default, Alt+Tab only shows windows open on the current Desktop, not any others you may have running. But you can change this in the Multitasking section of the Settings app. Type **Settings** in the Taskbar search field to open the app, click System then Multitasking.

6 Find out what's hogging storage space

We've been using Windows 10 for only a few weeks and we're already looking back in amazement at how awkward it was to carry out certain tasks in Windows 7 and 8. Even something as simple as finding out what was taking up the most space on your hard drive was an incredible chore, unless you installed a



Click Task View to see all the programs and documents you've got open

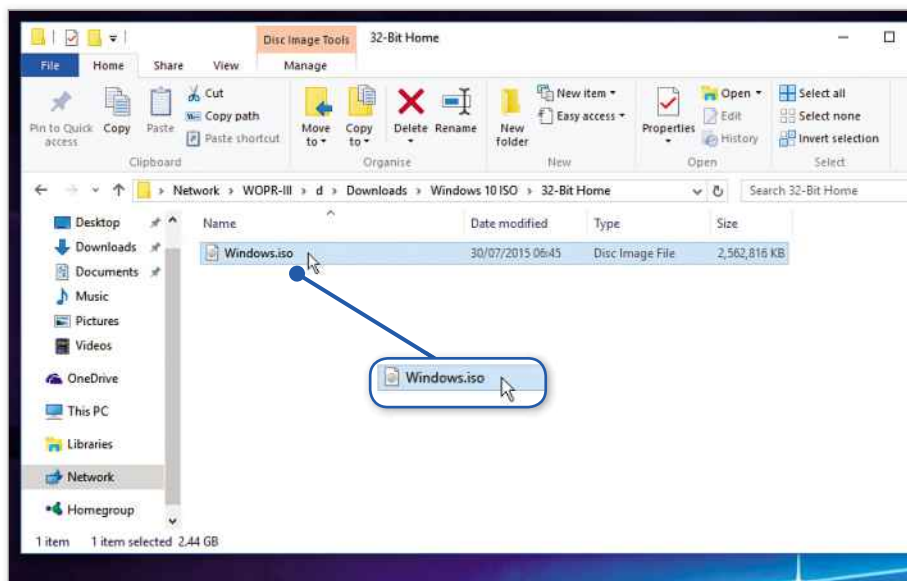
third-party program like WinDirStat (free from <http://windirstat.info>), which is great, if also somewhat complicated.

In Windows 10, though, it's fantastically easy to find out exactly what's eating into your hard-drive space. Click Start, Settings, System, Storage, then select the drive you want to analyse. You'll be presented with a graphical view of how much space is currently being consumed, colour-coded by category.

7 Open any ISO file

Another thing that's unduly complicated in Windows 7 and 8 is the way they handle ISO files. ISOs are disc-image files – data contained in special files that are formatted for CDs or DVDs. Let's say you have an ISO that contains a file you need. Sadly, Windows 7 has precious little support for ISO files. To open one and view its contents you either need to physically burn the ISO to a disc or install a separate tool (such as Virtual CloneDrive – free from www.snipca.com/17892).

Windows 8 and 8.1 were slightly better because they allowed you to right-click an ISO file and select Mount to temporarily turn it into a virtual DVD-ROM drive, which lets you browse the ISO's contents as if it were a real disc. But Windows 10 demonstrates just how unnecessary any of this was. Want to view, copy or extract any of the files contained in an ISO? Simply double-click it, like you would any other folder (see screenshot above right).



Double-click a file in an ISO to view, copy or extract it

8 Get Cortana to use Chrome, not Edge

Dismissed as a gimmick by many users, the voice-activated app Cortana is actually one of Windows 10's most innovative new tools. But annoyingly by default it opens on a page of Bing search results in Microsoft's new Edge browser. This just won't do if you prefer Google to Bing, and Chrome to Edge. If that sounds like you, simply change Windows 10's default browser to Chrome.

Click Start, Settings, System, then 'Default apps'. Scroll down to 'Web browser' and, if Chrome isn't listed here, click Edge, then select Chrome from the list that pops up. Next, you need to install

a Chrome extension that diverts all Bing searches to Google. There are a couple of good ones, including Chrometana (www.snipca.com/17901) and Bing2Google (www.snipca.com/17902). Next, ask Cortana to search the web for something. You should now see a list of Google search results open in Chrome.

10 Instantly access old versions of files

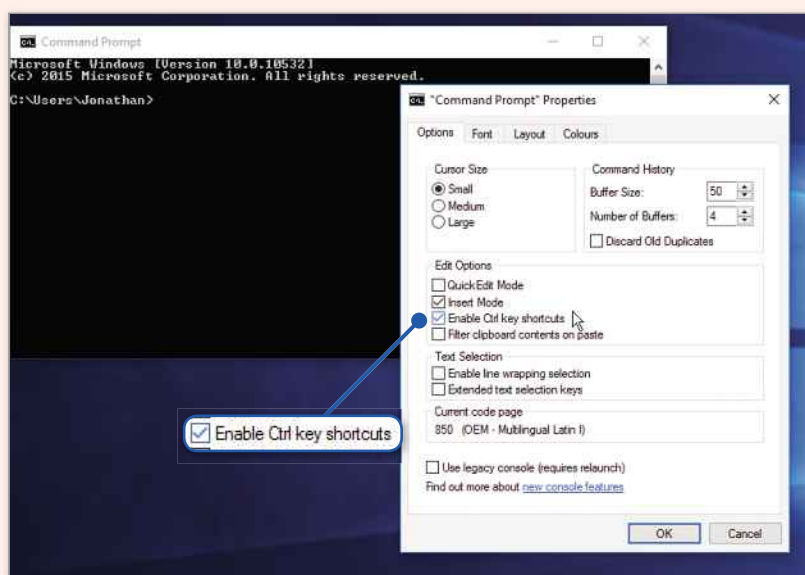
Technically speaking, File History is nothing new – it first saw the light of day in Windows 8. It continuously backs up your personal files and folders, so all you need to do is keep a large external hard drive attached.

9 Copy and paste command prompt

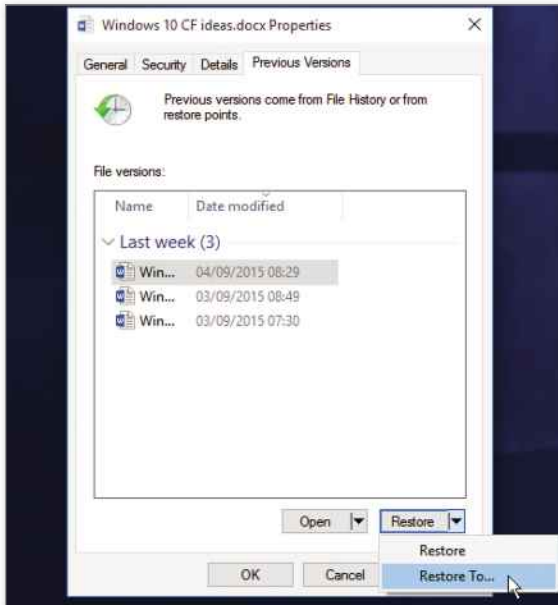
There are dozens of slight but significant improvements in Windows 10 that may not grab the headlines, but do make it much easier to use your PC.

One of these is the ability to copy and paste into the Command Prompt window using keyboard shortcuts. If you've ever tried using Ctrl+C and Ctrl+V to copy and paste a complicated text string from, say, a web page into the Command Prompt in Windows 7 or 8, you'll have been met with the annoying ^V character instead of the command line you copied.

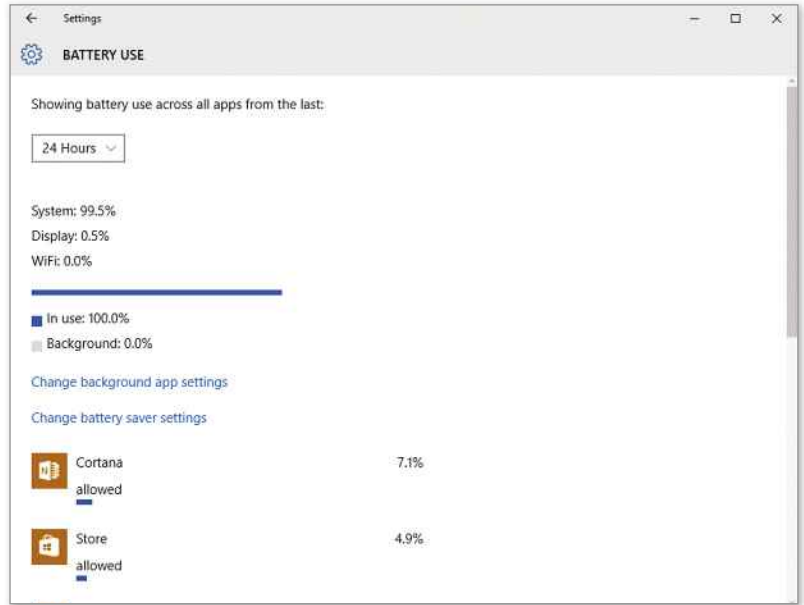
That's not the case in Windows 10. Click Start, type **cmd** and press Enter, then right-click the program header bar at the top of the window and select Properties. In the Options tab, make sure there's a tick next to 'Enable Ctrl key shortcuts' (see screenshot) and click OK. Now you can copy and paste freely.



To copy and paste into Command Prompt tick 'Enable Ctrl key shortcuts' in Properties



Use the Previous Versions tab to open old versions of files



Windows 10's Battery Use tool shows you what's sapping your power

To enable it, click Start, Settings, 'Update & security', then Backup, switch File History on and let it do its thing. It keeps previous versions of your files, so that you can restore them if you lose them, and even revert to an earlier incarnation if, say, the file has been changed and you want to go back to how it was before.

But what's unique to Windows 10 is the ability to roll back a file merely by right-clicking it, selecting Properties, then clicking the Previous Versions tab. Simply select the earlier version you want

from the list and you can then click Open to view it or Restore to roll it back. Click the down arrow next to Restore then select Restore To (see screenshot above left) to save this earlier version in another location, so that you can compare the two versions.

11 Find out what's draining your battery

Windows 10's Battery Saver mode has received more attention, but the new Battery Use tool is arguably more useful.

On a laptop or tablet, click Start, Settings, System, 'Battery saver'. Then click 'Battery use' on the right, under Overview. Similar to the battery-usage setting in Android, this tool displays lots of useful information about what's sapping your battery power. You can then make appropriate adjustments, such as lowering brightness, switching off Wi-Fi and so on. It's astonishing that Windows hasn't had a tool like this before now.

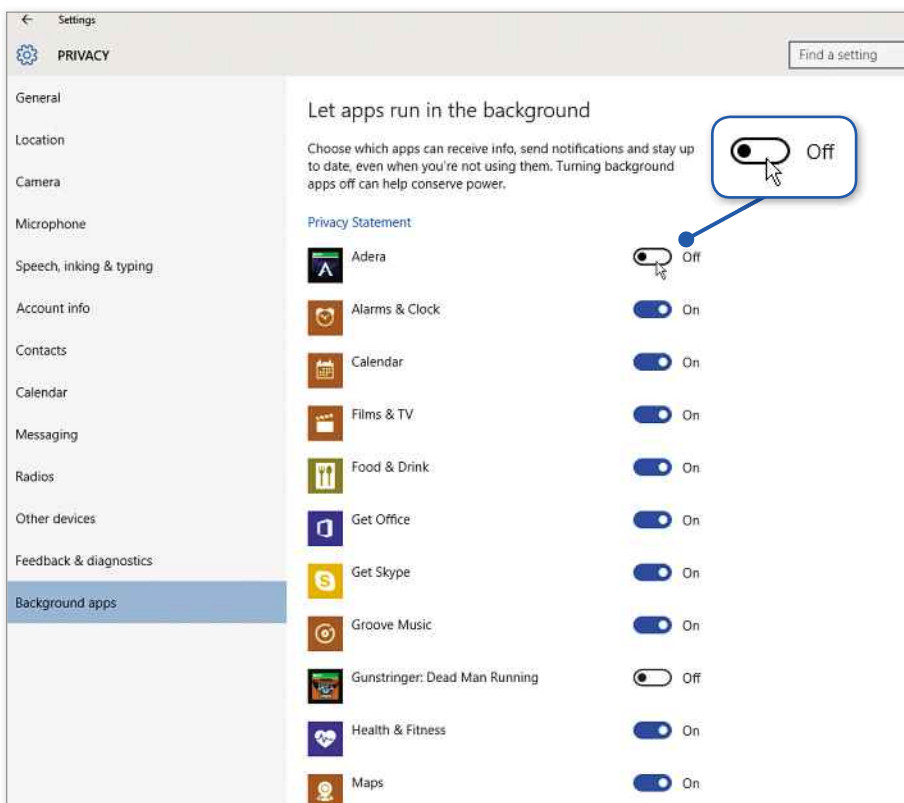
12 Go faster by disabling background apps

Also useful for preserving battery life, and for giving overall performance a shot in the arm, is Windows 10's ability to disable (or enable) apps that run in the background. You can access the settings that control these via the Battery Use options if you're using a laptop or tablet (see previous tip).

On a desktop PC, you'll need to click Start, Settings, Privacy, then 'Background apps'. Either way, you'll be presented with a long list of apps that have on/off switches next to them (see screenshot left). See one you don't need? Simply switch it off to conserve power and other resources. Some apps, such as Alarms & Clock, Calendar and Settings, are better left switched on.

13 Open storage devices instantly

There's a new way to make Windows perform a particular task whenever you connect an external hard drive, an SD card, or an iPhone to your PC. You do this by setting up AutoPlay commands. Open Settings, click the Devices group of



Turn off background apps to boost performance and save your battery

settings then click the AutoPlay tab. Select what you want to do in the relevant dropdown menu.

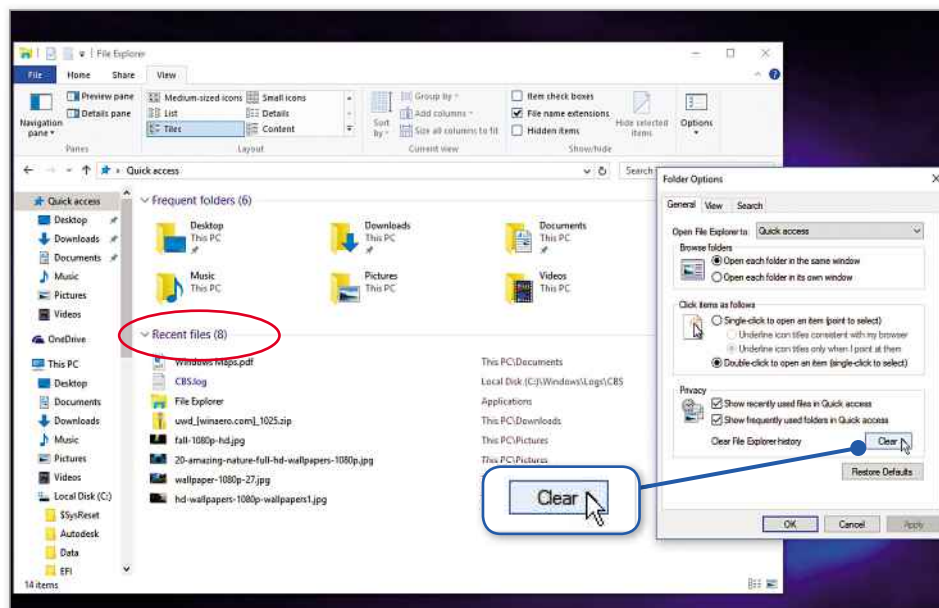
14 Find favourite files and folders faster

Windows 7 and 8 have a useful Recent Places section in their respective versions of Windows/File Explorer, which takes you to folders you've recently visited. What's more, you can also add permanent shortcuts to specific locations to a Favorites list in the left-hand pane.

While both of these are great, Windows 10 goes a step further by providing you with a 'Quick access' section that combines both concepts. As with Recent Places, by default the 'Quick access' area displays links to recently and frequently visited folders. But you can add a permanent link to any folder by right-clicking it and selecting 'Pin to Quick access'. Better still, 'Quick access' is now the default view when you open File Explorer, letting you get to your favourite folders fast. And, in the main area of the Explorer window just below your 'Frequent folders', you'll also find an automatically populated list of 'Recent files' (see screenshot above right).

15 Clear files and folders from 'Quick access'

So, having automatic lists of all the files and folders you've recently opened in



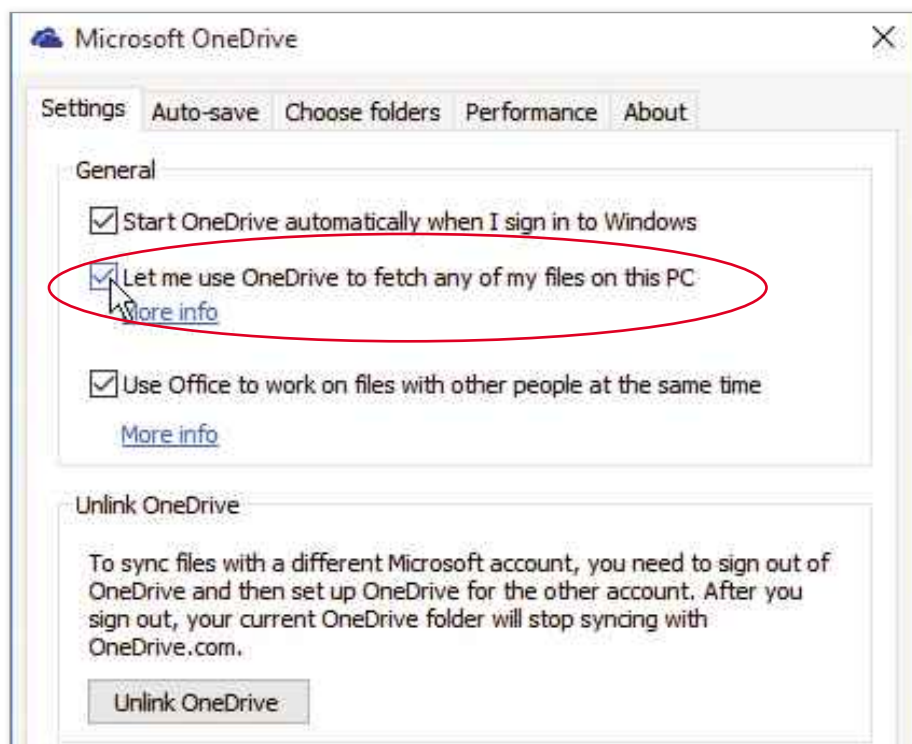
Click 'Clear' in the Privacy box of your Folder Options to hide what you've been using recently

'Quick access' is very convenient. But what if you're worried about privacy? Perhaps you use a shared PC. Or maybe you don't want your husband or wife to stumble upon that Surprise_Birthday_Party.doc you've been working on.

Whatever you need to hide from prying eyes, Windows 10 makes it easy to remove or clear recent files and folders from Explorer's 'Quick access' menu. To get rid of a single file from the 'Recent files' list, right-click it then select 'Remove from Quick access' – this won't delete the file itself, just the shortcut in 'Recent files'. Alternatively, click the View

tab in File Explorer and select Options. In the Privacy box at the bottom of the General tab, you can click Clear to remove all current recent files and frequent folders in one fell swoop (see screenshot), or untick the two boxes here to turn off both features permanently.

If you're a traditionalist and prefer to see the old My Computer-style list of drives (instead of the 'Quick access' menu), whenever you open File Explorer click the dropdown menu next to the 'Open File Explorer to' option at the top of the General tab and select This PC. Click OK when you've finished.



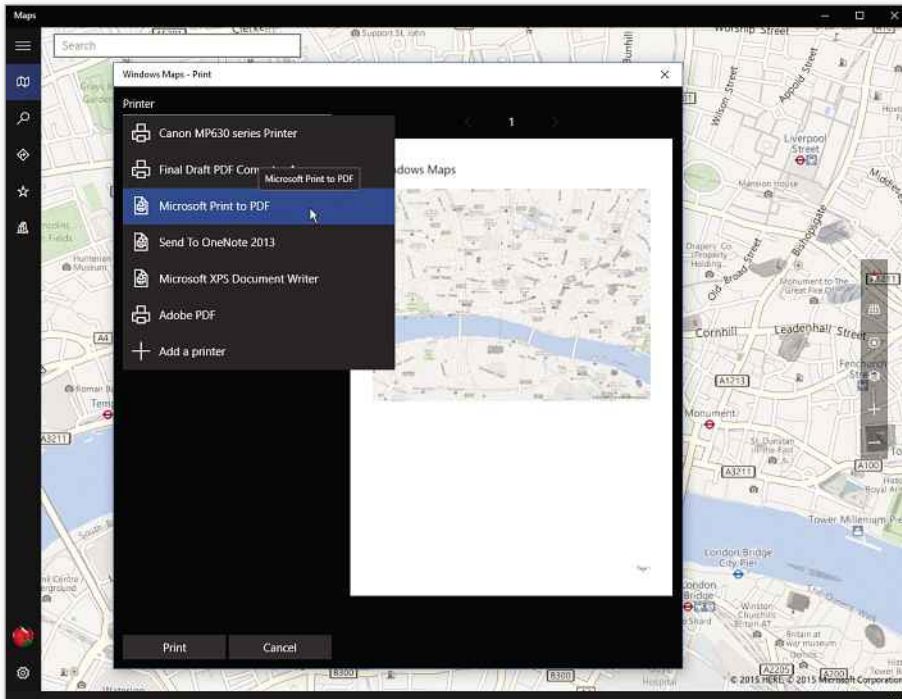
In Windows 10, you can use OneDrive to access any file on any PC

16 Apply filters to your photos

Windows 10's Photos program will never rival Photoshop, but then it doesn't cost £100. It doesn't cost anything, in fact, because it's built in. It's also easily the best photo-editing tool Microsoft has ever produced, offering new filters, effects and fixes. To see how a photo will look with a filter applied, open Photos, click the Filters button on the left, then click the preview thumbnails on the right.

17 Open any file from any PC using OneDrive

By using OneDrive in Windows 10, you can now access not only those files you've stored online (in the 'cloud'), but also those that are stored on another PC's hard drive – wherever it happens to be. You used to be able to do this with the old OneDrive app but, oddly, Microsoft dumped this in Windows 8.1. Thankfully, this brilliant ability has been restored in Windows 10.



In the print dialogue box, click 'Microsoft Print to PDF' to save a PDF of a route in the Maps app

To enable this feature, right-click on the OneDrive icon in your notification area (you may have to click the up arrow first to reveal the icon) and select Settings. In the window that opens, tick the box next to 'Let me use OneDrive to fetch any of my files on this PC' and click OK (see screenshot on previous page). Restart OneDrive by right-clicking the notification area icon again and selecting Exit, then clicking Start, typing **onedrive** and pressing Enter. Leaving that PC switched on, log into onedrive.live.com on another PC (it doesn't have to be a Windows 10 one) and look for your

computer's name – it will be listed under PCs on the left. Click this to browse the files on your other computer remotely.

18 Convert anything to PDF

Creating your own PDF files is very handy, letting you convert files to documents that are easy to share or transfer to mobile devices, for example. Previously, if you wanted to make PDF files you needed either a very expensive professional PDF-creation program or a free third-party tool that let you print to a **virtual printer**. Some of these free tools, such as CutePDF Writer (www.cutepdf.com), are even fairly good. But others are difficult to use, and come with adware.

We were delighted to see therefore that Windows 10 has its own built-in PDF printer, letting you create or convert to a PDF from within almost any program or app. Want to save a PDF of a route in the Maps app, for instance? Press Ctrl+P to open the print dialogue box, click the dropdown menu under Printer, select 'Microsoft Print to PDF' (see screenshot above left), then click Print. This saves the PDF to your Documents folder. This works for web pages, Office documents and any program that lets you print.

The side effect of this is that, in most cases, you can no longer bash the F8 key during startup to access the Safe Mode menu. But if your PC won't start, you can get to these recovery tools by booting from either a Windows 10 DVD, or from a Recovery Drive – it's well worth making one of these and keeping it safe in case of emergency.

ON SALE NOW!

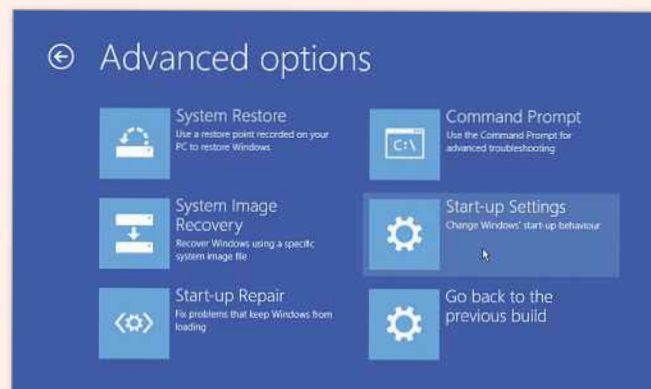
The Definitive Guide To Windows 10

Buy it now for £9.99 from www.snipca.com/17716

19 Boot to hidden recovery tools

When things went pear-shaped in Windows 7 or 8, the tools required to fix the problems were often scattered all over the place. Helpfully, Windows 10 gathers **Safe Mode**, System Restore and other troubleshooting tools together in a useful alternative boot menu.

Click Start, Settings, 'Update & Security', Recovery, then click 'Restart now' under the 'Advanced start-up' heading. Or, better still, just click Start, Power then hold down the Shift key and click Restart. Both



Make your computer boot into Safe Mode via 'Start-up Settings'

methods will boot you to a recovery boot menu – click Troubleshoot, then 'Advanced options'. From here you can

restore from a system image backup, roll back to an earlier **system restore point**, run an automated Start-up Repair tool or click Start-up Settings to boot into Safe Mode (see screenshot).

The side effect of this is that, in most cases, you can no longer bash the F8 key during startup to access the Safe Mode menu. But if your PC won't start, you can get to these recovery tools by booting from either a Windows 10 DVD, or

from a Recovery Drive – it's well worth making one of these and keeping it safe in case of emergency.

My love-hate relationship with Windows 10

We've given Stuart Andrews day release from The Final Straw so he can give his verdict on the new OS

What do I think of Windows 10? Predictably, it's a love/hate relationship. On the love side, I think it has the potential to become not just the final Windows version, but the best. I'm not sure whether it's a brilliant strategy or lucky coincidence, but just as people are falling out of love with tablets, Windows reincarnates with the Desktop interface centre stage. From the reappearance of the Start button to a more usable Start menu and the ability to put Windows Store apps in the traditional floating windows, it's an operating system (OS) that combines the best of Windows 7 and Windows 8.

I also like Windows 10's adaptability. It all makes sense on a desktop PC, but it also works well on my laptop and on the tablet I use when travelling. I switch to Tablet Mode in the latter, then connect a wireless mouse and keyboard and kid myself it's a tiny all-in-one PC.

Windows 8 always felt like the product of a company that had missed the tablet bandwagon, then over-compensated by going ludicrously gung-ho. The result? An OS that did its best to alienate existing Windows users while failing miserably to grab the iPad crowd. Windows 10 seems confident about who and what it's for. It's a Windows for people who like Windows.

I'm also a fan of its new features. Having a dodgy memory and a tragic tendency to leave my email unchecked, pop-up notifications for events and emails are a lifesaver. The Edge browser is clean, fast and the first Microsoft browser I've used

seriously in years. I even use Cortana for reminders, search and news. With Windows 10, Microsoft finally has a family of devices that works in harmony, like the Nolans, rather than the Ewings or the Borgias.

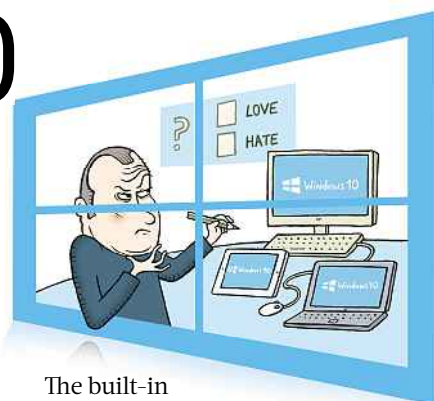
So why does Windows 10 still infuriate me? Well, while I see the need for fully automatic updates, I find Microsoft's approach bumptious and inflexible. I've experienced several occasions when



It's the least stable version of Windows since Vista, and that's something I hoped I'd never write



Windows failed to update overnight as requested, then kicks one off when I'm doing something urgent. There's also that weird disconnect between the dumbed-down, new-style Settings menus and the over-complex Windows 7 control panels. Why have one good way to install a Wi-Fi printer when you can have three ineffective ways to cock it up?



The built-in email and calendar apps are bland, space-hogging mediocrities, without any of the clever features seen in Google or Dropbox's mobile apps. And while I like Tablet Mode up to a point, I'm still not sure that it actually has one. Sure, Windows 10 works with touch, but why am I always so relieved to use a mouse and keyboard?

Most seriously of all, I don't trust it. I've been running Windows 10 full-time across two desktop PCs, a laptop and a tablet for the past four months. As we crept nearer to its launch on 29 July, I kept thinking: surely they can't release it in this state. Everything seemed in flux. Updates might or might not update, programs might or might not launch. I hoped the final release would prove me wrong, but no.

Microsoft's own core programs still refuse to launch until I restart, and last week my laptop wouldn't open the Start menu until I did a full reset. It's just my experience, but this has been the least stable Windows since Vista, and that's something I hoped I'd never write. I know Microsoft will fix this – after all, it fixed Vista – but Windows 10's unruly behaviour has left me loving it less. After all, it's no good being the best Windows ever if you can't rely on it. **ca**

Turn to page 74 for Stuart's normal Final Straw column

NEXT ISSUE On sale Wednesday 14 October

**ON SALE
14 Oct**

The Worst Malware Ever

Why it's never been more dangerous to turn on your PC – and what you must do now to stay safe



Plus • Hack your PC with a USB
• Windows 10: problems fixed
• Is Thunderbird still FAB?

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Windows 10 PROBLEMS FIXED

PART
THREE

The problems just keep on coming – but happily so do the solutions...

Can I remove files from an old PC after upgrading?

Q My previous PC was a nine-year-old Dell. It had served us well but had become tired. I recently bought a new Lenovo PC which came with Windows 8.1. Before upgrading to Windows 10, I used the Windows Easy Transfer (WET) tool (www.snipca.com/17906) to move files from my old PC to my new one. When doing this, would it have transferred unnecessary files that only relate to my old computer? And if so, is there any easy way to identify and remove these? And would the update to Windows 10 have automatically removed unnecessary files relating to Windows 8.1?

Mike Kennedy

A Windows Easy Transfer focuses on personal files and folders – your documents, photos, music and so on. At your request it will also



Use Windows Easy Transfer to move content and settings from your old PC to your new one

transfer some personal settings, including user accounts, preferences and configurations for some programs. It will only import these elements to Windows 8.1 from Windows Vista or 7: it offers no export option to Windows 10, which doesn't include WET in any form.

However, by upgrading your Windows 8.1 PC to Windows 10 it will automatically inherit whatever you pulled across with WET originally.

There's no single trick to identifying everything that was imported, but you'll know where your personal documents, photos and music are, so delete them if you want. That just leaves the settings. The storage space these take up depends on the associated programs, but it will be pretty negligible. Again, there's no one way to show all

transferred settings, but if they worked well in Windows 8.1, then they should be fine in Windows 10, so there's really nothing to worry about.

And yes, Windows 10 removes lots of redundant Windows 8.1 files, folders, programs and tools.

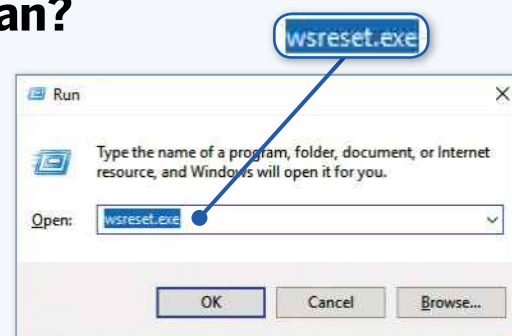
What does error code '080072ee7' mean?

Q When trying to open the Windows Store I get the error code '080072ee7'. I can't find the answer online. Can you help?

Paul Wells

A Windows Store errors are usually the result of corrupted settings. We can't say how or why this occurred but, for example, it can be caused by switching off a PC at

the mains (rather than using the Power option on Windows 10's Start menu). Microsoft includes a tool for resetting the Windows Store, which fixes most of these problems, but it's hard to find. Press Windows key+R, type **wsreset.exe** in the Run box (see screenshot) and hit Enter. Windows Store's settings will reset and it should now launch automatically.



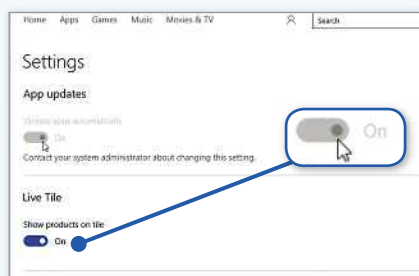
Fix most Windows Store error messages with this Run command

Why can't I download apps from the Windows Store?

Q Windows 10 won't update no matter how long I leave my PC on, and I have 21 downloads that are always pending in the Windows Store. Also, when I first upgraded I had Task View, but this has since disappeared. Oh, and my Kaspersky was wiped after I upgraded. I would be grateful if you could help, as I am beginning to lose the will to live.

Elaine Scott

A Windows 10 has recently been updated to put control of Windows Store app updates back into the hands of users, so we think the cause of your first problem is that you have the automatic-update option switched off (greyed-out in our screenshot). Launch the Windows Store app, click the head-and-shoulders icon next to the Search box then click Settings. Now slide the 'App updates' switch to On. For the benefit of other readers, if this switch is greyed-out then you'll need to wait for Windows 10 to update itself – then it will become available.



Make sure the automatic-update option is switched on in your Windows Store settings

As for the Task View button, we're not sure why this has vanished but an inadvertent right-click may have caused it. To restore it, right-click a blank part of the Taskbar then tick 'Show Task View button'.

We're guessing Kaspersky disappeared because you're using a 2014 or 2013 edition, which were not initially compatible with Windows 10. That's recently been fixed with issued patches. Read Kaspersky's post at www.snipca.com/17886 for more info.

How have I got Windows Media Player in Windows 10?

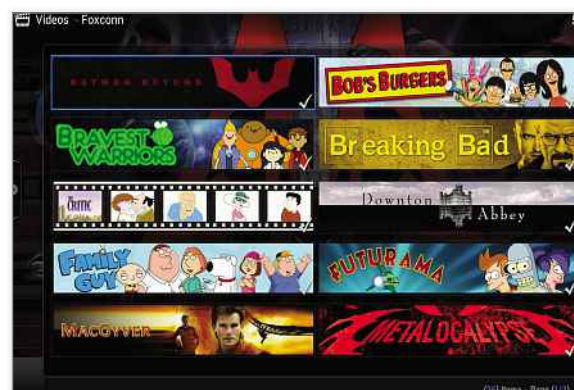
Q I read that Windows 10 doesn't come with Windows Media Player, but when I click on 'All apps', there it is in the list of Windows programs. Have I got lucky, or has Microsoft sneaked it in on one of the many updates I've had?

Reg Black

A We think you may have misunderstood what you read, or what you read was incorrect.

Windows 10 still comes with Windows Media Player (WMP), but Microsoft has removed Windows Media Center (WMC). WMP as the name suggests is a media player, whereas WMC is (or was) a more general home-entertainment tool that included integration with TV tuner cards for recording live television.

However, if you've installed Windows 10 afresh or upgraded a Windows 7 or 8.1



If you're unimpressed with Windows 10's new DVD Player, try the free tool Kodi instead

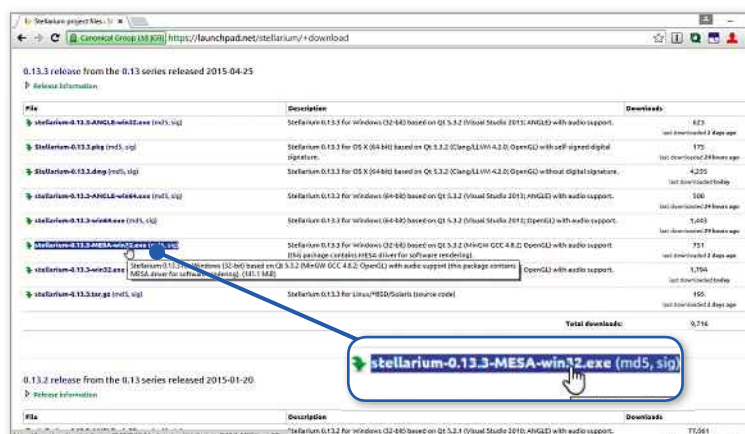
PC to Windows 10, you'll have lost WMC – and there's no way to get it back. In its place, Microsoft is offering the free, but much more basic Windows DVD Player (www.snipca.com/17907), which downloads automatically if you upgrade a Windows PC (with WMC) to Windows 10 – though if you perform a clean install it costs £11.59. The DVD player has not been well received by Windows 10 users. Try the free Kodi instead (<http://kodi.tv>).

Why won't Stellarium work on my Windows 10 laptop?

Q I've recently upgraded to Windows 10 on both my desktop PC and laptop. I had the astronomy program Stellarium (www.stellarium.org) installed on both. It works perfectly on the desktop computer, but not on the laptop, where I always get an error message. Is there a fix for this? I have tried uninstalling and reinstalling.

Colin Rout

A We're not sure if you upgraded your laptop with Stellarium installed, or re-installed it after upgrading to Windows 10, but the latest version of Stellarium is incompatible with your laptop's Windows 10 graphics drivers. The solution is to use an older version of Stellarium. Visit the program's download page at www.snipca.com/17881 and grab the most recent 'MESA' version (see screenshot).



Download an older version of Stellarium if your existing version doesn't work in Windows 10

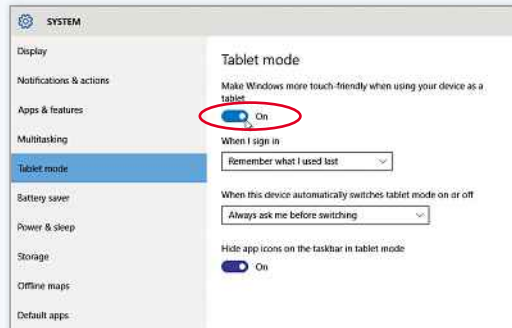
Can I adapt the Windows 8.1 Start Screen to work in Windows 10?

Q I find the Start menu in Windows 10 a mess. Is there any way I can adapt the Windows 8.1 Start screen to work in Windows 10, or can you suggest an alternative?
Tony Steadman

A It's possible to resurrect the full-screen Start by enabling Tablet mode, though this does have at least one significant side effect, which we'll explain as we go along.

First, click Start, Settings, then System, followed by 'Tablet mode' in the left-hand navigation pane. Slide the 'Tablet mode' switch to its On position (see screenshot), and your Start menu will once again be a Start screen.

However, launch an app and you'll see everything now launches in full-screen mode, including traditional Windows programs. If you don't like this, simply reverse the above changes in settings (click Start, then the three top-left



If you prefer a full-screen Start screen to Windows 10's Start menu, try enabling Tablet mode

horizontal lines).

An alternative idea is simply to expand Windows 10's new Start menu so that it virtually fills the screen: this gives you loads of room for extra tiles while retaining the freedom to run apps in full-screen or in windows. To do this, click Start, position your cursor over the top or right-hand side of the menu until it changes to a double-headed arrow, then just click, drag and release at the size you want.

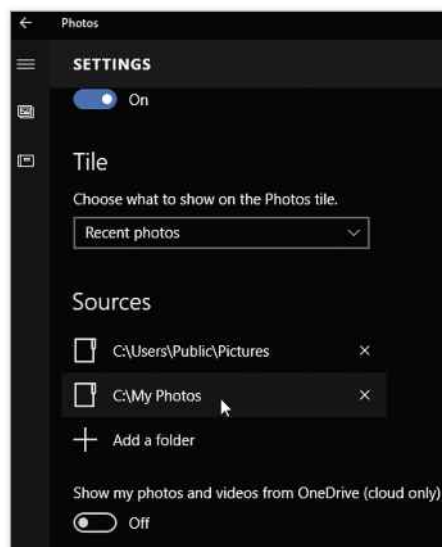
How can I sync emails with my calendar?

Q I have tried to use the Mail program in Windows 10 on my PC and set up synchronisation with my Windows Phone. I'd like to be able to synchronise emails with my calendar. But Mail seems to have frozen, showing a 'Not synced yet' message. It's been like that for about a fortnight. Can you suggest a solution?
Craig Chamberlain

A Have you checked that Mail is set to sync with your calendar, as well as your emails? Click the cog icon at the bottom of the Mail window, then click Accounts, followed by the relevant account name. Now click 'Change mailbox sync settings'. Open the dropdown menu under 'Download new content' and choose 'As items arrive'. Now scroll down to the bottom to find the 'Sync options' heading, then check that the Email and Calendar switches are set to On (as well as Contacts, if you also want these synced).

Can I store photos under a name in Windows 10?

Q In Windows 7, I stored my photo albums and collections under group names. It meant I only



In the Windows Photos program find where your photos are stored then add these folders to Windows Photo Gallery so it can find them

needed to recall the group name to see the relevant photos. But after installing Windows 10, these photos are now shown according to time and date. How do I store them by name, as in Windows 7?

David Bowdler

A Your photos remain stored in the same place. What's changed is that you're using Windows 10's new Photos program to view them, which sorts and displays photos by date – as you've discovered. We think you previously used Windows Photo Gallery (WPG), which was part of the free Microsoft Windows Essentials suite used by millions of Windows 7 and 8.1 users.

WPG offered numerous ways to view photos, including by folder (which is what we think you mean by a 'group name'). Windows 10 doesn't remove WPG, so it should still be installed on your PC: just type **photo gallery** into the Start menu or Cortana, then click the

program name to launch it. If it's not there, you can download it from www.snipca.com/17888.

WPG should remember the names of your photo folders, but if not, first launch Windows 10's Photos program then click the cog icon at the bottom left and scroll down to Sources. Make a note of the folders listed here, then close Photos. Switch back to WPG, click File, followed by 'Include folder' and then Add. Navigate to a noted folder, click to select it and then click 'Include folder'. Repeat for other folders. **ca**

NEXT ISSUE

ON SALE
14 Oct

- Can I set Edge to print just my emails?
- Would my old PC handle Windows 10 updates?
- Why have the tiles vanished from my screen? ...And many more

We'll keep the 'Windows 10: Problems Solved' series running for as long as you keep our inbox overflowing with questions (email them to noproblem@computeractive.co.uk). Look out for Part 4 in Issue 460, on sale Wednesday 14 October.

Are hackers reading **YOUR** TEXT MESSAGES?



Think malware can't affect Android or iOS? Think again. Jonathan Parkyn reveals how to find out if your phone or tablet is under attack and how to stop it

A flaw was recently discovered in the Android operating system (OS) that could allow hackers to take control of your phone or tablet simply by sending you an infected multimedia message (MMS) – essentially a text message with a malicious video file attached.

As we reported in Issue 456 (News page 8), this so-called Stagefright bug is very serious indeed. In most cases you don't even have to play the video or even open the message for the hacker to be able to get into your device. This is because the Android OS automatically processes most video attachments in the background.

On the upside, this means they're ready to play when you tap them. On the

downside, it means hackers can take advantage of the flaw without you needing to do anything at all.

Here we'll answer the crucial questions about how the bug works, how to find out whether you've been affected, and what you can do to make your device safe.

How serious is the Stagefright flaw?

If a hacker is able to gain access to your Android device using Stagefright they could, in theory, gain system-level permissions – which more or less amounts to full control of your phone or tablet. That means they'd have unfettered access to whatever data is stored on it, including text messages, emails, photos and more. In



addition, the hacker could take control of your camera and microphone, effectively turning your phone or tablet into a surveillance device to spy on you and listen in to your private conversations.

And once the vulnerability has been exploited, a hacker could cover their tracks by deleting the infected message so you'll never even know you've been hacked in the first place.

Are your phone and tablet affected?

Simply put, if you're an Android user, it's very likely that your phone or tablet is among the vulnerable devices.

US security company Zimperium – the firm that discovered Stagefright in the first place – says up to 95 per cent of Android devices could be affected by the flaw. That's an estimated 950 million phones and tablets worldwide.

Basically, if you've got an Android device running any version of the OS between 2.2 (Froyo) and 5.1 (Lollipop), it could be vulnerable.

A patch has been issued to fix the Stagefright flaw but, due to the way Android updates work, your device may not necessarily have received it yet.

Google only issues updates directly to its own Nexus-branded devices, so it's up to individual device makers and mobile networks to issue updates to their users. Some manufacturers, such as Samsung, Sony, LG and HTC, have been quick to respond, but older, discontinued models may not receive this vital update at all.

To find out whether your device still suffers from the flaw, download

DO YOU NEED MOBILE ANTIVIRUS?

There are dozens of antivirus (AV) and other security apps available for Android, iOS and Windows Phone, including free tools from big brands like McAfee, Norton, AVG and Avast.

Unfortunately, they have limited abilities, because mobile operating systems don't allow any apps to have system-level permissions. In the case of Stagefright, for example, none of the current security apps available would be able to prevent such a hack from occurring.

However, security apps can provide



useful hubs for backing up, tracking lost devices and so on. Just don't rely on them to block malware in the same way as their PC counterparts.

WORST MOBILE THREATS - AND HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

1 Viruses

Mobile viruses are real, despite what you may have heard. However, your chance of being infected by one are very small, due to the way that Google, Apple and Microsoft regulate apps sold through their official app stores. To stay safe, stick to these official sources.

2 Hackers

As Stagefright shows, hackers are constantly looking for new ways to gain control of your mobile devices without your knowledge. Check regularly for OS updates (see screenshot right) and accept updates as soon as they're available.

3 Phishing

Fake websites, spam emails, texts and adverts that try to get you to part with personal

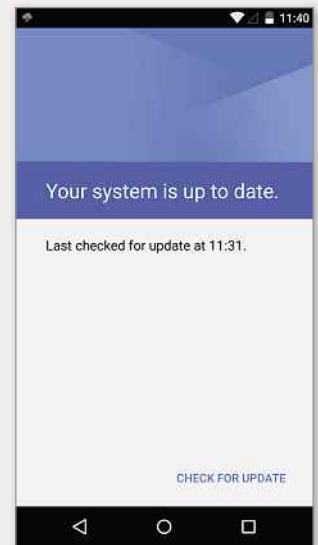
information are as much a problem on mobile devices as they are on your PC. Use dedicated apps for banking and other sensitive transactions, rather than using your mobile browser.

4 Snooping

Unsecured Wi-Fi hotspots aren't safe, whatever device you're using. It's easy for someone to snoop on your activity, so never use free Wi-Fi to carry out sensitive tasks, such as banking.

5 Lost or stolen device

By far the biggest threat to your security is physical loss or theft. Your phone and tablet contains loads of personal information that could be exploited very easily. Lock your device, keep it safe and use Google and Apple's built-in tools to remotely locate or wipe lost devices.



Zimperium's free Stagefright Detector app for Android (www.snipca.com/17945). Run the app and tap Begin Analysis. The app will check your device and tell you whether your phone or tablet is vulnerable to the attack.

What the tool doesn't do is check whether you've already been hacked or patch the vulnerability for you.

Now here's some good news: there's currently no evidence to suggest that any hacker has actually managed to successfully exploit the flaw, other than the security experts who uncovered it. But given how stealthy the exploit can be, it's very hard to know for sure.

What can you do to stay safe?

First of all, check for the latest Android updates as your device manufacturer might have issued a fix. Tap Settings, 'About phone', 'System updates' and then 'Check for update'. Then switch off auto-fetching in your MMS settings, to prevent attachments from being download automatically to your device.

Instructions for doing so vary between messaging apps, but the process is similar. For example, to do this in Google Hangouts, open the app and tap the menu icon (three horizontal lines), Settings and then SMS. Scroll down to 'Auto retrieve MMS' and untick the box.

The Stagefright bug affects many other messaging apps, including the original Android Messaging app, plus Samsung Messenger, WhatsApp and more, so make sure to disable auto-fetching in whichever messaging app you use.


Bear in mind that if you manually open a malicious MMS or accidentally download an infected video, you could still end up being hacked, so treat any multimedia message with extreme caution – even those from friends and family, as it's possible their device has been hijacked to spread the infection.

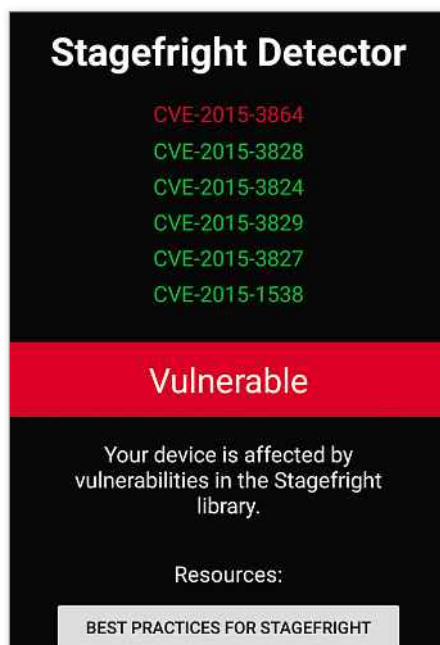
What about iOS devices?

Stagefright is an Android vulnerability; iPads and iPhones aren't affected by it. But that doesn't mean they're immune to malicious attacks in general.

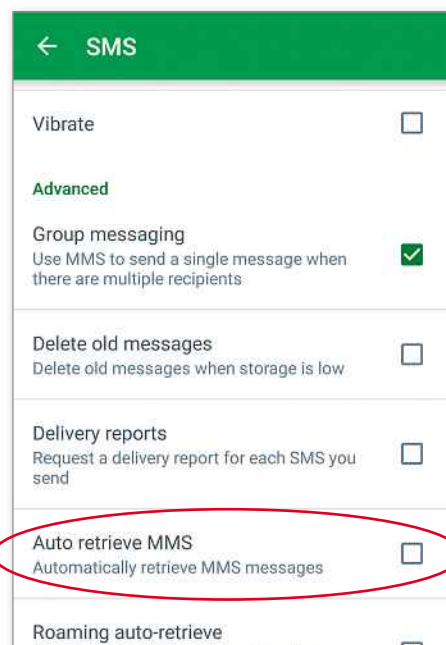
Earlier this year, researchers uncovered a number of security flaws in iOS and Mac OS X. Both systems are vulnerable to XARA attacks (short for 'unauthorized cross-app resource access'), which involve a hacker getting a malicious app listed in the iTunes or Mac App Store. If you install the app, the hacker could exploit any weaknesses they find, and gain access to personal data.

Fortunately, there have been no reported examples of any Apple users falling victim to a XARA attack, but it does serve to illustrate that you should never assume your device is invulnerable. And you should always watch out for dodgy apps.

For more practical tips on how to keep your device safe from mobile threats, see the box above. 



Use the free Stagefright Detector app to check whether your device is vulnerable



Disable MMS auto-retrieving to block hackers from secretly gaining control of your device

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Problems Solved

PROBLEM OF THE FORTNIGHT

Why can't I send emails in France?

Q I have a holiday home in France and take my laptop with me when I visit. I have a Virgin Media email address in the UK, and in France an Orange email address. When in France I cannot send emails from my laptop using my Virgin address. However, I can send emails using my Orange email address from my iPad. Why is this? I would prefer to send emails from my laptop in France using my Virgin email address. How do I do this?

Mike Ward

A Almost all internet service providers (ISPs) apply restrictions on the use of their outgoing email servers, known as **SMTP servers**. This prevents abuse by spammers, because any SMTP server left 'open' to all-comers would be quickly swamped by the world's digital miscreants.

Some ISPs allow emails to be sent via their SMTP servers only if the user's computer is connected directly to their network, as you would be in the UK when receiving Virgin broadband via your Virgin Super Hub router.

Other ISPs let registered users (their customers) connect to their SMTP servers from other networks, but only with an 'authenticated' login (more about this later). But some SMTP servers will flatly refuse all attempts to send emails by those not connected directly to the relevant ISP's network.

When you're in the UK and using your laptop, you're directly connected to Virgin's network – so its SMTP server lets you send emails. But when you go to France, Virgin's server detects that you're not directly connected to the Virgin network and therefore stops your laptop's attempts to send emails, just as it would any other unauthenticated attempt.

For similar reasons, when in France your iPad uses an internet connection that we assume is provided by Orange



Set up an authenticated login in your email's settings to use it while abroad

France, so it's able to send emails from your Orange email address, via Orange's SMTP server.

So that's the 'why' answered. How do you fix it? By logging in with your Virgin account credentials to identify yourself to Virgin's SMTP server (in other words, an authenticated login). Not all SMTP servers allow this but Virgin's does, so you're in luck.

You'll need to do this in your email software's settings. You didn't tell us which email program you use on your laptop but the method is similar in most tools. In Windows Live Mail, for example, click the down arrow to open the main menu, point your cursor to Options, then click 'Email accounts'. Click to select your Virgin account then click Properties. Choose the Servers tab, tick 'My server requires authentication' in the Outgoing Mail Server section, then click the Settings button in the same section. Select the 'Log on using' button, type your username and password, then click OK twice to save your changes, followed by Close.

You should now be able to send via your Virgin email address when in France.

Why won't some videos play in Windows 8.1?

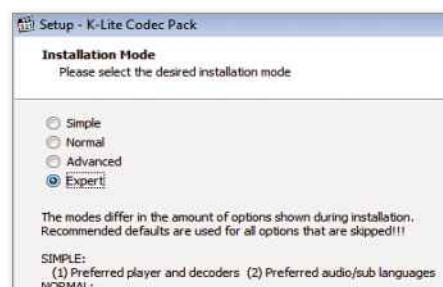
Q When using Windows Media Player (WMP) on my new Windows 8.1 laptop it won't show images when playing MPEG movie files, so all I get is the sound. Searching online suggested that this is a known defect with Windows 8.1 and can be resolved by downloading **codecs** from the web. However, I'm worried about doing this as I understand there's a risk that unwanted software will be downloaded as well. Are codecs what I need? If so, which ones and where's a safe source to download them from?

James Donlon

A Yes, this is a problem for the standard version of Windows 8.1. The Pro edition includes Windows Media Center (WMC), which has the necessary codecs – so Pro users won't experience the same problem. It's possible to add WMC to Windows 8.1 by buying the Windows 8.1 Media Center Pack for £6.99 (www.snipca.com/17748), but this really is a needless cost.

To fix your problem you could grab the free K-Lite Basic codec pack from www.snipca.com/17749. To avoid installing unwanted software, choose the Expert installation mode, then remove ticks from anything you don't want installed.

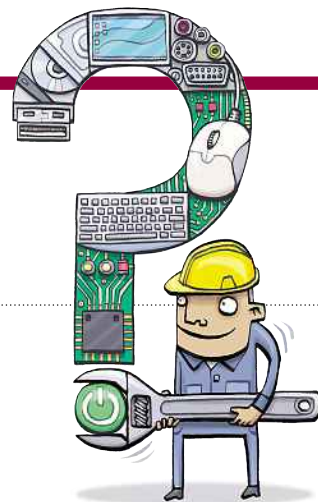
Alternatively, if you want to keep things really simple and safe, ditch WMP and use the VLC media player instead: it's slicker, faster, more reliable and comes with all the codecs needed to play pretty much anything. It's a free download from www.videolan.org.



Install K-Lite Basic codec pack in Expert installation mode to avoid unwanted add-ons

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How do I digitise my old magazines?

Q I have a load of old magazines that have been declared by the who must be obeyed as 'no longer required'. I don't want to lose them as they're full of useful stuff, so I thought I'd scan them and then burn them to DVD or save them to my NAS. Is there software that will allow me to save the scanned files, and perhaps even create a database that will let me search the files? I'd like these files to contain the text, photographs and line art.

John Walters

A Windows actually has a little-known scanning tool built in, called Windows Fax and Scan – but it's very basic and won't let you create



In free scanning software NAPS2, download the relevant language dictionary

searchable files. To achieve that you'll need scanning software that can perform **optical character recognition** (OCR), to turn the scanned passages into editable and searchable text.

The best tool for your job is probably Adobe's Acrobat Document Cloud (www.snipca.com/17744), which lets you scan documents, perform OCR, and save the results as PDFs. It has loads of tweaking tools for the perfect job, but it costs a preposterous £453 to buy outright – or an equally eye-watering £20 per month rolling subscription.

We doubt you'd want to pay £453 and while you might be prepared to stump up the subscription fee for the month or two it might take to complete your mission, we reckon you'd be able to make do with a basic but brilliant free tool called Not Another PDF Scanner 2 (www.naps2.com).

NAPS2 is pretty easy to figure out, but first you'll need to download the relevant dictionary to perform the OCR part of the process. Click the OCR button, tick 'Make PDFs searchable using OCR' then tick 'English' (or whatever language – see screenshot far

left) and click Download.

From here, it's mainly a question of putting in the time. The first time you click Scan you'll have to set up the scanning profile (such as whether you want to store the pages in colour or black and white, and the resolution). Now scan all pages in one magazine, clicking Scan for each new page. Then click the down-pointing arrow next to Save PDF and choose All then type a name for the PDF.

Expect to wait many minute or hours for the OCR process to complete on all pages. When finished, double-click the saved PDF to open it. To search the text, press Control(Ctrl)+F.

There's a far superior option to this expensive and laborious process: buy our 2014 Back Issue CD! You can perform keyboard searches on all 26 issues from last year. It was recently as cheap as £11.16 on Amazon: www.snipca.com/14981

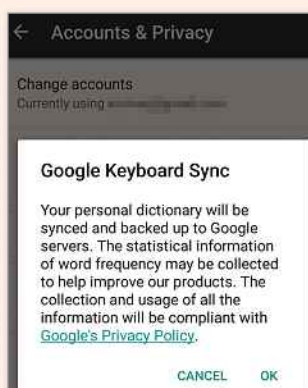
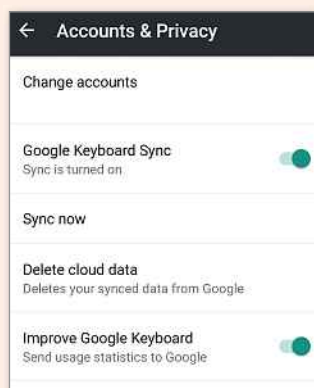
How do I back up my Android autocorrect dictionary?

Q I want to upgrade my Nexus 5 phone to a Nexus 6. I work in a specialist field so I've added loads of niche words to my Nexus 5's dictionary. Will these be carried over if I switch to a Nexus 6? If not, is there a way I can back up my dictionary and install it on my new smartphone?

Terence Hall

A If you use the standard Google keyboard and have a Google account that you use to synchronise your Nexus 5's data with Google's **servers** then yes, words added to your personal dictionary will be carried over – but you do need to turn on the synchronisation option.

From your Nexus 5's home screen, tap Settings, followed by 'Language & input' and then Google Keyboard under



Sync your Android phone's keyboard to Google's server to save any words you add to the dictionary

'Keyboard & input methods'. Now tap 'Accounts & privacy' and slide the Google Keyboard Sync switch to its On position. Tap OK to agree to the privacy statement and, if you have more than one Google account set up, tap the one to be used for syncing followed by OK. Repeat on the

Nexus 6, when you get it.

If you'd prefer to keep Google out of the loop, use a free app like User Dictionary Manager (www.snipca.com/17750) to export your dictionary as a text file, which you can then import on your Nexus 6 using the same app.

Problems Solved

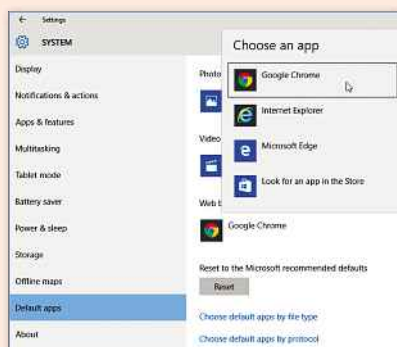
How do I stop Edge launching instead of Chrome?

Q I'm one of the doubtless millions who've recently upgraded to Windows 10. Other than getting a bit lost at first I've not had any major difficulties. However, it seems Microsoft Edge has usurped Chrome as my system's default browser. It's not a huge problem because I can still launch Chrome, but any links I click in other programs now open in Edge – and that's really inconvenient. Has Microsoft done this intentionally to promote Edge? Is any way to make it so that clicked links open in Chrome?

Charlotte Walker

A Microsoft didn't do this intentionally. Installing Windows 10 shouldn't have changed your PC's default browser, but with millions of different PC configurations to deal with, it's really impossible for Microsoft to guarantee that every single upgrade will go smoothly. In your case, what's your default browser has been switched – but this is easily rectified.

First, click Start, Settings, then System. Now click 'Default apps' on the left and, in the right-hand pane, scroll down to 'Web browser'. Click here and choose Google Chrome from the menu. Close the window. You might need to restart your PC for the change to take effect.



In Windows 10 select your default programs in your System settings

Why won't my PC shut down?

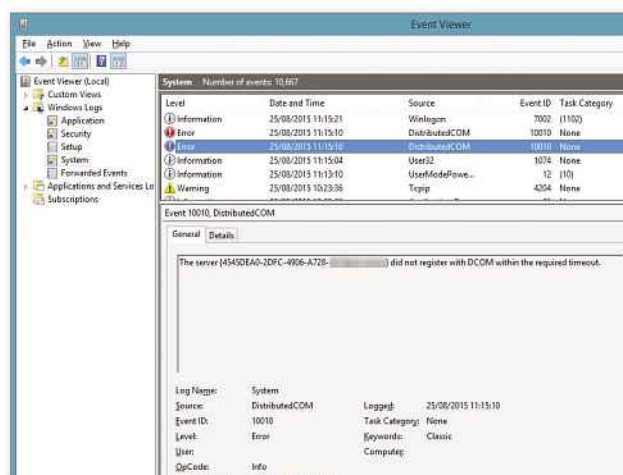
Q My Windows 8.1 computer shows the 'Shutting Down' screen, but it never actually does. Eventually I have to switch it off at the mains plug, having to make sure there are no programs running. So what's causing this?

Brenda Howe

A This common problem is often frustratingly difficult to resolve. Has the problem only recently begun? If so, then it's probably related to a program you've installed, so try

uninstalling it.

If not, try using Windows' event logs. From the Windows 8.1 Start screen, type **event viewer**, then click 'View event logs'. Now open the System category under the Windows Logs heading and scroll through to find events around the time you last initiated the shut-down process. Click any with red or yellow exclamation marks, and then make a note of the information in the General tab in the pane below (see screenshot). Now carry out a Google search to try to narrow down the culprits.



Use Windows Event Viewer to identify likely culprits if your PC is not shutting down properly

You can also use Microsoft's System Configuration utility to selectively disable non-Microsoft services. Click Start, type **msconfig** then click **msconfig.exe**. Tick 'Hide all Microsoft services' on the Services tab, then click 'Disable all' and shut down your PC. If this works, restart your PC, re-enable one service then shut down, and repeat until you find the culprit.

How do I connect my Samsung phone to my Wi-Fi?

Q I have a Samsung GT-S5230 mobile phone that I'd like to connect to the internet using my home Wi-Fi network, which is provided by a Thompson Gateway TG585V8 router. How do I do this?

John Lambert

A You don't, is the very short and disappointing answer. Unfortunately, your phone – which was released in 2009 and is best described as a 'feature phone' – is very limited by modern standards. It not only lacks the hardware required to make Wi-Fi connections, it doesn't even have a 3G antenna – so it's reliant on old GSM (or 2G) mobile-phone networks, which offer incredibly slow data connections.



The Samsung GT-S5230 lacks the necessary hardware to connect to the internet

There's nothing you can do about either of these things. Your phone will keep working for voice and basic data services while the UK's 2G networks remain in business, but we're sorry to say that you'll never be able to connect this model to Wi-Fi, 3G or 4G networks.

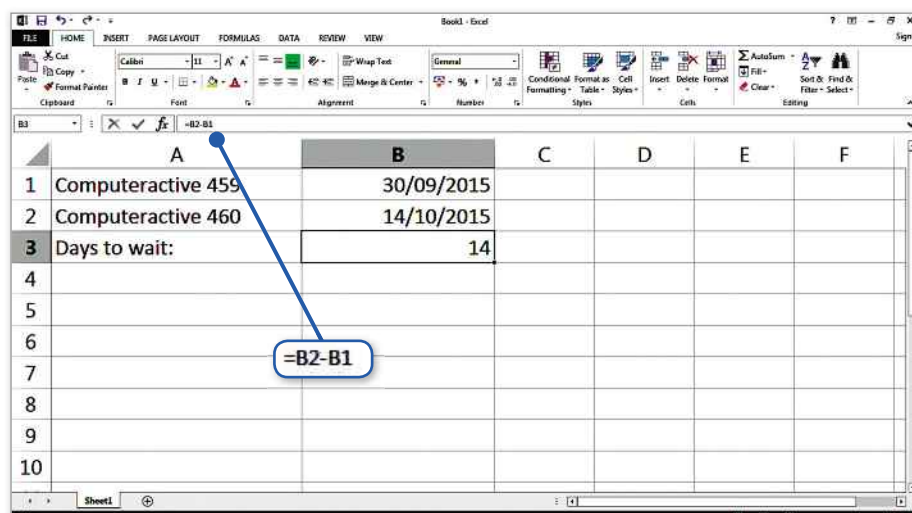
How do I count days in Excel?

Q Surely there must be a more accurate formula for calculating the number of days between two dates than Excel's tool 'DAYS360'? The days worked out by the Excel calculation never agree with my utility bills. It cannot be beyond the capability of this amazing box of tricks to realise that different months have varying numbers of days – particularly February!

Roger Woolley

A Yes, Excel knows that calendar months have between 28 and 31 days, the function you've been using is designed for an accounting process used in some organizations, which sees the financial year divided into 12 months, each of 30 days. Clearly, this is practically useless in the real world where most of us reside.

The solution depends on what you want to achieve. If you simply want to calculate the number of days between two dates then no special formula is needed – you can just subtract one date from the other. For example, if you put today's date in cell B1 and a future date in B2, then typing the formula `=B2-B1` into



Calculate the number of days between two dates by typing a formula into the third cell

cell B3 would count the number of days and put the result in B3. Note that if the result in B3 isn't what you expect, then right-click the cell, choose Format Cells, then select the Number tab, click General in the Category list then click OK.

If you want to calculate the number of complete months or years, then there's another function you could use, called DATEDIF. This takes a slightly different

format, and requires you to specify the unit required. To calculate the number of months that separate B1 and B2, for example, the formula in B3 would be `=DATEDIF(B1,B2,"m")` – where the "m" (in double quotes) tells Excel to provide the answer in months. If you want the years, use "y" as the unit. For more on how DATEDIF works, see Microsoft's explanation at www.snipca.com/17745.

Is Microsoft closing my account?

Q I received a message from Microsoft telling me that my account was being terminated, which I hope is a scam – although the English isn't bad. In accordance with your magazine's advice I did not click any of the links, but I did try to check this out via Microsoft's website, but with no resolution. Is there any way of

checking if such a message is legitimate, or does one just have to wait and see if anything happens?

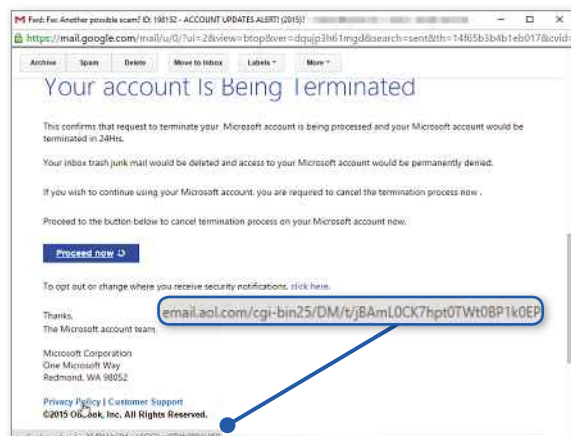
Rosa Postance

A There's no sure-fire way to identify every scam email, but caution is always the best policy, and you were right not to click the links contained in this message.

However, in many cases it's pretty easy to figure out if a message is fake – if you know what to look for. The early warning signs are poor spelling, grammar and presentation: fraudsters might be good at sending out millions of messages, but they're not so great at writing and design. If you look closely at the particular message sent to you, the clues are there: odd spacing between some words; and the strange phrase "Your

inbox trash junk mail would be deleted".

Another handy – and secure – way to spot scams is to hover the cursor over links without clicking. Now look at the status bar at the foot of your web browser (see screenshot) – here you'll see where the links actually go. While many spammers are good at making even these status-bar messages look legitimate, in this case the links connected to a random AOL email address and a Bit.ly (www.bit.ly) page – so were very clearly fake Microsoft links.



Hover your cursor over a suspect email link and check the destination of the link in the status bar at the bottom

NEXT ISSUE

ON SALE
14 Oct

- Why is Yahoo hijacking my search?
- How do I delete a file with a long name?
- Why won't clicked links work?
- ...And many more

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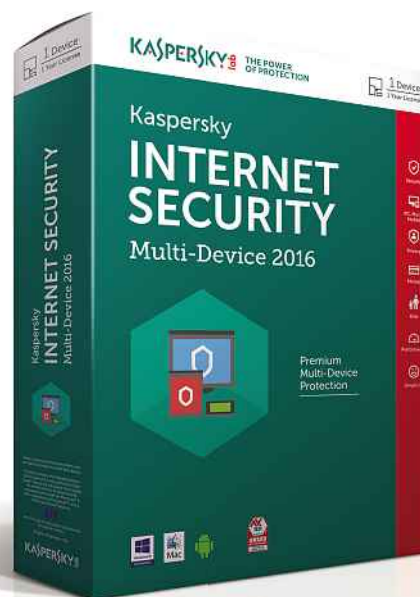
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Uninstalling software

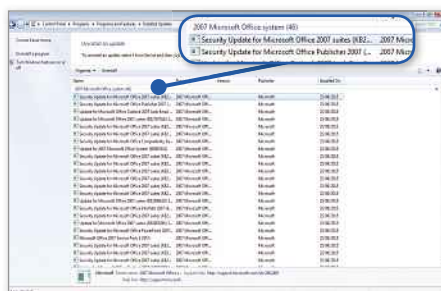
Remove browser toolbars that won't shift, repair corrupted Registry entries and find missing uninstall options

No uninstall option available

If an unwanted application doesn't have an entry in Control Panel's 'Uninstall a program' window, first check the tool's Start menu program group. In Windows 7 and earlier, click Start followed by the program's name, then look to see if an uninstall option exists in the chosen folder. If not, it might be that the program isn't installed in the technical sense but has instead added a shortcut to itself in the Startup program group – because that makes it launch automatically with Windows. In any Windows version, press Windows key+E to launch Windows Explorer (or File Explorer), navigate to C:\ProgramData\Microsoft\Windows\Start Menu\Programs\Startup. Right-click an unwanted entry's shortcut and choose Properties then note the program's storage location in the Target field. Click OK. Now click the shortcut and hit Delete (Del) to remove it, then visit the location just noted to delete the program's actual executable file (with .exe extension).

Uninstall faulty Windows updates

Sometimes Windows updates can cause problems, in which case uninstall faulty ones until Microsoft fixes them. In Control Panel, click Programs then 'Programs and Features' and 'View installed updates'. Click to highlight the troublesome update, click Uninstall, then Yes. In Windows 10 even unwanted updates will automatically download and reinstall, but you can stop this. Click Start followed by Settings, then 'Network & internet' followed by WiFi.

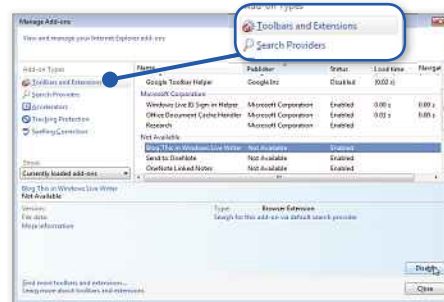


Remove troublesome Windows Updates using this page in Control Panel

Scroll to the bottom and click 'Advanced settings', then slide the 'Metered connection' switch to the On position. Windows won't now download updates until you switch off the metered-connection mode.

Can't uninstall unwanted browser toolbars

Browsers are quickly blighted by invasive toolbars, and it's not obvious how to remove them. In Internet Explorer, click the cog icon at the top-right then choose 'Manage add-ons'.



Open the Manage Add-ons panel to uninstall unwanted Internet Explorer toolbars

Now click 'Toolbars and Extensions' on the left, select the unwanted item in the right-hand pane and click Disable. In Chrome, click the menu button (three horizontal lines, top right) then choose Settings followed by Extensions. Remove ticks to disable, or click the dustbin icon to delete. In Firefox, click the menu button (three horizontal lines), then Add-ons. Click Disable or Remove as appropriate.

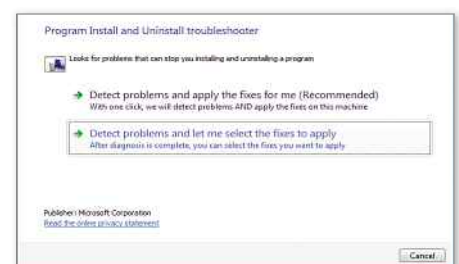
Uninstall option doesn't work

There are lots of reasons why an uninstall option might fail. First, temporarily disable your antivirus (AV) software and try again (don't forget to re-enable your AV later). Next, try running Disk Cleanup: just type this into the Start menu or Cortana, then click Disk Cleanup. Tick anything you don't specifically need to keep then click 'Clean up system files'. If it still doesn't work, start your PC in Safe Mode and try

again. In Windows 7 and earlier, tap F8 after switching on then choose Safe Mode and press Enter. In Windows 8.1/10, restart while holding down the Shift key. Now click Troubleshoot followed by 'Advanced options' then Startup Settings. Click Restart, then, when the Startup Settings menu appears, tap F4 to start in Safe Mode.

Corrupted Registry key reported

If uninstalling displays an error suggesting a corrupted Registry key, cancel the attempt and visit www.snipca.com/17811. Here you'll find one of Microsoft's automated 'Fix it' tools that's able to repair many known problems that cause these messages. Just click 'Run now' then, if necessary, double-click the downloaded executable file (with a .exe extension). The wizard has both automated and manual modes: for better information and control, try clicking 'Detect problems and let me select the fixes to apply'.



A special Microsoft 'Fix it' tool will scan, detect and fix corrupted Registry entries

If all else fails...

It sounds counter-intuitive but if a program won't uninstall and nothing else has worked, try reinstalling it. Often this will reset or repair settings or Registry entries that are causing the problem, so you'll then be able to uninstall. If even that fails, turn to System Restore. From Control Panel click 'System and Security' followed by System and then 'System protection'. Click System Restore then follow the wizard to choose a Restore Point prior to when the relevant program was installed.

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Jargon Buster

4G A set of technologies that delivers faster mobile broadband, so called because it is the fourth generation of mobile data networking standards.

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 standard for wireless networks that allows for high transfer speeds.

Accelerometer A sensor that detects movement. Used in smartphones to decide whether or not to display a portrait or landscape screen, control games or even work as a spirit level.

Beta A version of software that's being tested. Beta versions are often released so problems can be ironed out.

Cache A temporary space for storing information. Can be memory used on a computer processor, or space on a hard drive used by a web browser.

Codec Short for Compressor/Decompressor. A file that tells a computer how to record or play a type of media file.

Cookie A small text file stored on your computer by a website. Used to store browsing preferences, website log-in details and so on.

DLL Dynamic Link Library. DLL resources can be made use of by one or more Windows programs.

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

Ethernet A standard used for almost all wired computer networks.

Extension A program that adds extra features to your browser.

Flash memory A type of memory that can retain information without a power source. Used in memory cards, USB sticks and other storage devices.

Gigabit Ethernet A very fast networking standard that can transfer data at up to 1,000Mbps.

Graphics card A component in a computer that produces the image shown on the monitor.

H.265 (aka HEVC, High Efficiency Video Coding) The successor to Advanced Video Coding (AVC). It offers the same level of picture quality as AVC, but with better compression, so there's less data to deal with.

HDMI High-definition media interface. A type of connection that transmits high-definition video and audio signals. It is found on many new TVs, media PCs and high-definition products such as Blu-ray disc players and the PlayStation 3 and Xbox 360 games consoles.

Hyperlink A link from a hypertext document to another location, activated by clicking on a highlighted word or image. To create a hyperlink between documents or parts of a document.

ISO file A type of image file that contains all the data from a CD or DVD.

Keylogger A piece of malicious software that records all the letters and numbers typed on a PC in an effort to steal passwords or other valuable information.

Mbps Megabits per second. A measure of data transfer speed, often used to measure the maximum speed of broadband connections.

Megapixel A measure of the amount of detail that can be recorded by a digital image. A one-megapixel image is made up of a million dots (pixels).

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

Micro-B The very small USB port found on phones and other portable devices. It is half the thickness of the Mini-B socket found on digital cameras.

MicroSD A small type of memory card. Can be converted to SD size using an adapter.

Micro SIM A smaller version of SIM cards used in mobile phones. Commonly found in smartphones.

Mirror site A website that contains the same downloadable software as others, so it's available from more than one place.

Modifier key A special key (or combination) on a computer keyboard that temporarily changes the normal action of another key when pressed together.

Motherboard The main circuit board inside every PC into which all other parts connect.

NAS Network-attached storage. A hard drive attached to a network that can be shared by other PCs.

Optical character recognition Software that converts a picture of text into editable text.

Overclocking Making a processor work faster to improve performance at the cost of it getting hotter and requiring more power.

Partition A large hard drive can be split into two or more partitions or 'virtual' drives. Once partitioned, each section is treated by Windows as though it were a completely separate, smaller hard drive.

PCI Express A faster version of PCI, used by modern graphics cards.

Processor The processor – or central processing unit (CPU) – is the brain of a computer. Processors now are tiny and are capable of carrying out millions of calculations every second.

PSU Power supply unit. The box that supplies power to the rest of your computer.

PUP Potentially Unwanted Program. A program that may not be desired, despite the user consenting to it being downloaded. Examples include unnecessary plug-ins, toolbars and browser hijackers.

Quad core A computer that has four processors on a single chip, which allows it to operate faster than standard (single-core) computers.

RAR Roshal Archive. A format for storing compressed files.

Resolution The amount of detail shown in an image, whether on screen or printed.

SD card Secure Digital card. A popular type of memory card.

Server A computer on a network, such as the internet, that distributes information to other PCs.

SMTP Simple Mail Transfer Protocol. A standard for sending email messages.

sRGB A standard RGB colour space for use on monitors, printers and the internet.

SSD Solid-state drive. Storage that, unlike a hard drive, uses no moving parts. Faster but more expensive than conventional hard drives.

System restore point The collection of system files stored by System Restore on a given date and time to which Windows can revert if a problem occurs.

Two-step verification A system that uses two different means to identify the user. For example, a PIN in addition to a password.

USB Universal Serial Bus. A standard that allows quick and easy connection of external peripherals such as storage devices to your PC. Devices can be added or removed while your PC is switched on.

USB 3.0 An even faster version of the USB standard used to connect devices to a computer.

USB Type-C A specification for a reversible-plug connector for USB devices and USB cabling.

VGA Video Graphics Array. A standard socket for connecting a monitor to a computer.

Virus definitions A database of known viruses and other malware used by an antivirus program when scanning your computer.

VPN Virtual Private Network. A technology for keeping all internet communication private even on unsafe networks.

The Final Straw



STUART ANDREWS is
Computeractive's Mr Angry

This issue Stuart Andrews wonders why anyone would want...

Internet immortality

Death used to be the end, at least as far as socialising was concerned. Not any more. I recently came across Eter9 (www.eter9.com), a new social network that promises a form of internet immortality for its users. From what I understand, it works much like Facebook, at least while you're alive, connecting you to friends, family and others who share your interests.

However, it has one extra, magic ingredient – artificial intelligence (AI). This analyses what you post and what you respond to; what you 'like'; what you comment on; and what you say. The site's creator, Henrique Jorge, is even working to create an AI system that can learn from other networks, including Facebook. All this data is then used to create a profile that can act for you when you're not online.

And if you happen to be offline permanently, for the reason that, say, you're dead? Well, that's no problem. The AI will carry on posting and responding for you, 'smiling' at family news or a funny cat video, and interacting cheerfully with both the living and the not-so-living, long after you're gone.

Blimey. Let's think about this a little.

If it's not bad enough that some people can't go out for a nice walk or a meal without documenting the whole event on Facebook, we may have to put up with these bores rattling on after they've kicked the bucket. True, at least they won't actually be communicating from the afterlife – 'I've just seen Johnny Cash duetting with Elvis, and Elizabeth I was in the audience' – but all the same, what the hell is going on here? Welcome to the world of the digital undead.

“

We may have to put up with Facebook bores rattling on after they've kicked the bucket

”

It turns out that 'internet immortality' could be the next big thing. The mega-brained boffins at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) are working on another prototype service, Eterni.me, which will collect your thoughts and memories, then create an intelligent avatar that looks like you. Hundreds of years later, your descendents will still be able to interact with this avatar to get a sense of who you were.

Meanwhile, researchers at universities in Orlando and Chicago are exploring how

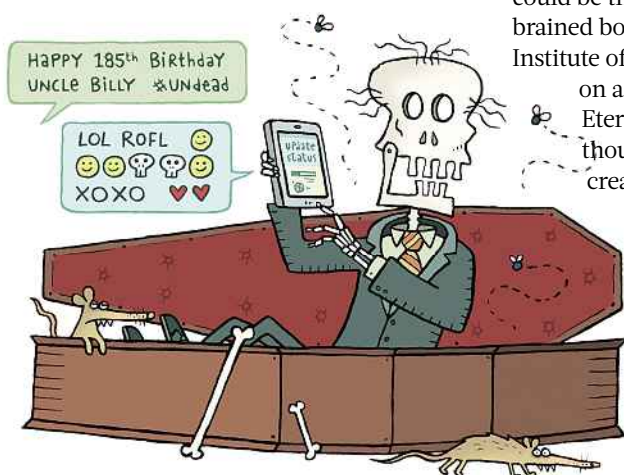
we might use AI, archiving and computer imaging to create digital versions of ourselves that might go on thinking and talking for us after we've shuffled off this mortal coil. Leaders in the field actually talk about 'backup brains'; AI that learns who we are then, effectively, takes over should the original self fail.

This is both creepy and entirely daft. As human beings, we're so wired into our bodies and our own bizarre, shifting consciousnesses that the very idea that a machine could sift through your various online interactions and recreate your mind is bonkers. I'm sure there are people – some long gone – who I'd love to have a chat with now, but AI could only approximate them. More to the point these artificially created personalities would be unbearable. Think about how people talk about themselves on social networks; the endless posts that exaggerate how much fun they had at every weekend adventure, every family event, every social gathering. Now imagine what people will post knowing this stuff could define them for posterity. It makes me shudder.

In case you haven't noticed, social networks seem to make us more stupid, behaving like the most self-obsessed, ego-driven versions of ourselves. Is that the version you really want preserved, or the people you want to network with after they've passed on? A digital 'you' would capture all your thoughts, all your feelings, all your best hopes and dreams and all your dullest, darkest and downright nastiest thoughts.

All that stuff happens in the brain, not on a social network and, frankly, I'd rather not have any AI digging around in there.

Turn to page 56 for Stuart's troubled take on Windows 10



✉ Do you agree with Stuart?
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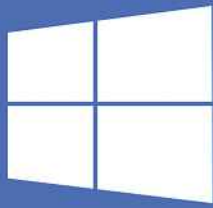
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