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abc Average sales, Jan-Dec 2014, 88,274 copies per issue.

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From the Editor

Lists of 'worst ever' things can sometimes be more fun than 'best ever'. Savouring the awfulness of certain films, sitcoms, footballers, jokes and so on can be highly enjoyable. But there's no ironic pleasure to be taken from our list of the worst malware ever. In our Cover Feature we explain why 2015 is set to be the deadliest year on record, as cyber-criminals find lethal new ways to infect PCs, tablets and phones. Hackers always seem to be one step ahead of antivirus companies, so staying safe isn't easy. But following our advice is a good start. We'll never stop trying to protect you.

On a happier note, I'd like to thank the thousands of readers who have bought our



new book *The Definitive Guide to Windows 10*. It sold out within weeks, and has officially become the fastest selling book in *Computeractive's* 17-year history! Thanks to the overwhelming demand we ordered a reprint, and it's now back on sale at Amazon at www.snipca.com/17716.

Daniel Booth
editor@computeractive.co.uk



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Estimated number of online frauds in the UK in 2014 - **p11**



300Mbps

Broadband speed BT wants to deliver by 2020 - **p9**

200

Number of free texts FreedomPop gives you - **p49**

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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FOUR**

Windows 10 PROBLEMS FIXED



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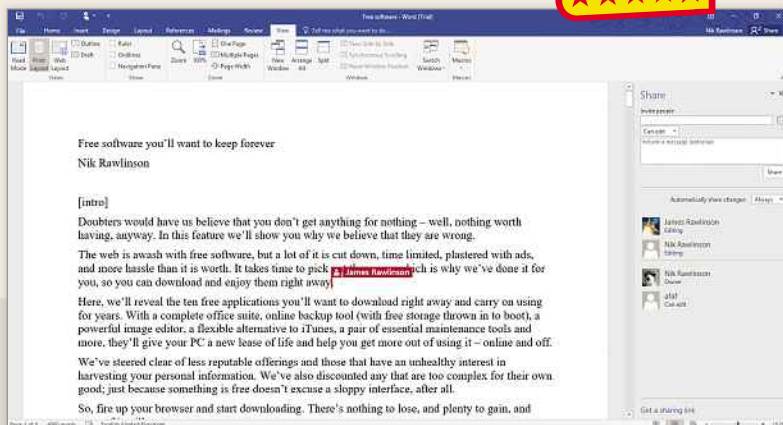
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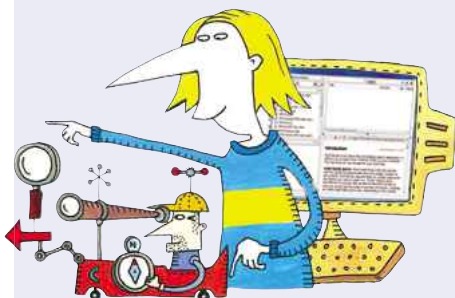
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Windows 10: now adverts invade your Start menu



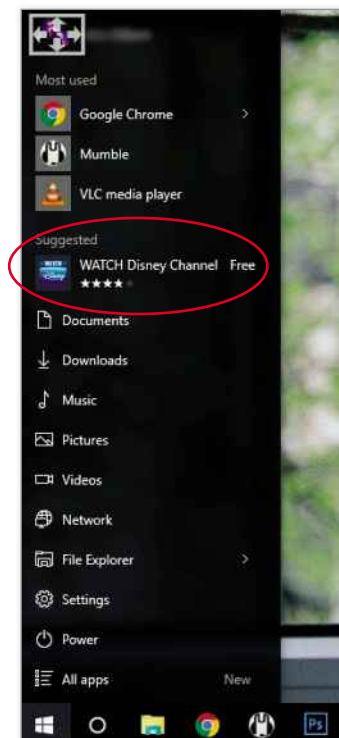
Microsoft has angered many Windows 10 users by adding adverts to the Start menu.

They are appearing in the Preview Build 10547, which was made available in mid-September to users signed up to the Windows 10 Insider Program (<http://insider.windows.com>).

Microsoft launches Preview Builds of Windows 10 to test new features. If the adverts are deemed a success, it seems likely they will soon appear in the mainstream version of Windows 10, which has now been downloaded 100 million times worldwide.

The adverts were first spotted by Bogdan Popa, a journalist on the website Softpedia (www.softpedia.com).

So far they are mostly recommendations for apps you can download from the Windows Store. They appear on the left-hand side of the Start menu under the heading



'Suggested'. One advert is a link to watch videos on the Disney Channel (see main screenshot).

The adverts aren't appearing on all PCs running Build

10547. Microsoft is probably testing the success of the adverts on selected computers before deciding upon its final strategy.

The option to show adverts is enabled by default in Windows. To partially turn it off, go to Settings, Personalization, Start, then click 'Occasionally show suggestions in Start' (see screenshot below left).

The word 'occasionally' implies that it's impossible to completely disable adverts and it's not known how often adverts will appear if you choose this option.

More adverts to come?

This development has raised concerns that Microsoft will rely heavily on adverts in Windows 10 to make money, recouping cash it's losing by making the operating system (OS) a free download to people running Windows 7 and 8.

To this end, Microsoft has built into Windows 10 a feature called Spotlight, which lets the company show "app and content suggestions" in the Start menu (such as the Disney Channel advert).

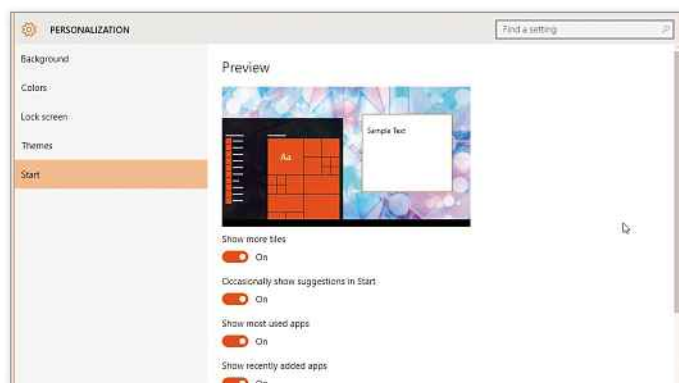
Microsoft has said that Spotlight is intended to help users find hidden features within the OS, and customise their Start menu. But it also lets the company place 'suggestions' for apps made by other companies.

COMMENT

Microsoft doesn't want to unsettle users, so your Start menu is unlikely to turn into a flashing billboard overnight. But more adverts in Windows 10 now seem inevitable: it's the price we'll have to pay for getting the OS free. What we don't know is how intrusive they will be. Our chief concern is that Microsoft's use of the word 'occasionally' is so vague as to be virtually meaningless. Is one advert an hour 'occasional'? One a day? One a week? We should find out within a few months.

Adverts have already appeared in the game Solitaire, infuriating many *Computeractive* readers. The only way to remove the ads is to pay for the Premium version of the game (£1.19 a month or £7.69 a year).

Microsoft has also been criticised for secretly downloading a 6GB Windows 10 file on to computers running Windows 7 and 8. The company says this is to "prepare" the PCs for Windows 10, but it has downloaded the file even on computers owned by users that haven't requested the free upgrade. We explain how to remove this massive file on page 42.



You'll like this...

Virgin has launched a 200Mbps broadband service called 'Vivid' (www.snipca.com/18167)



...but not this

The risk of cyber attacks on nuclear plants is growing (www.snipca.com/18166)

Huge Android bug returns deadlier than ever

The devastating Android bug Stagefright has returned in a new, deadlier form, security researchers say, leaving a billion phones at risk of being hacked.

Stagefright 2.0, as it's being called, exploits a weakness in Android's code, which means it potentially affects any phone that runs Google's mobile operating system.

Hackers can gain access to a device simply by luring the user into opening a link to an innocent-looking audio or video file. The links can be sent by email or text message.

If the victim clicks this link, the hacker can seize remote control of the 'mediaserver' process, which is the part of Android that deals with multimedia files such as photos, video and audio.



Security experts at US company Zimperium discovered the new flaw (read their blog at www.snipca.com/18154). They said that eventually the hacker can "take complete control" of a phone, though it's not known how many have been targeted.

Zimperium also exposed the original Stagefright, in July, which allowed hackers to take over phones simply by sending a text.

Its discovery led to Google introducing monthly security fixes for Nexus devices (read the announcement at www.snipca.com/17539). But the vulnerable code still hasn't been properly fixed, Zimperium claimed.

The company said it won't release any more details about Stagefright 2.0 until Google fixes it. Google said it would start issuing the fix to Nexus devices during the second week of October.

If your Android device isn't a Nexus, you'll have to wait until the manufacturer releases a fix. Keep an eye on the official Android blog for more information: <http://officialandroid.blogspot.co.uk>.
• **For more phone and tablet threats read The Worst Malware Ever on page 50**

IN BRIEF

STREAM MUSIC TO YOUR OLD HI-FI

Google has launched the Chromecast Audio (www.google.com/chromecast), a new version of its media-streaming device. It lets you stream music from a PC, laptop, phone, tablet or Chromebook to old hi-fi systems. You can buy it now for £30 from Currys: www.snipca.com/18150. Google has also launched new versions of its Nexus phone and tablet (www.google.com/nexus), running Android 6.0 Marshmallow, the successor to Lollipop. We'll review them soon.

CCLEANER LAUNCHES ONLINE VERSION

CCleaner has officially released the web version of its hugely popular PC-optimising software, letting you clean your computer over the internet using another machine. Now called CCleaner Cloud (www.ccleaner.com), it had been a private beta as Project Agomo for the past two years, meaning you had to register to try it. We'll explain how to use it in a Workshop in our next issue.

Paedophiles steal Facebook photos of kids

Photos posted by parents on social networks such as Facebook and Instagram account for over half of images found on some child-abuse websites, according to Australia's new Children's eSafety Commissioner.

Investigators in Australia found that paedophiles steal millions of photos of children innocently enjoying everyday activities, then group them into categories such as "kids at beach", "nice boys play in river" and "gymnasts".

These images had been posted by "over-sharing" parents, apparently unaware of how easily they could be downloaded by strangers.

Toby Dagg – senior investigator at the Office of the eSafety Commissioner – told



the *Sydney Morning Herald* that one child-abuse site had 45 million images with "about half the material sourced from social media".

The revelations come after a 2013 investigation uncovered one site with over 100 photos of children opening Christmas presents, all stolen from social-media sites. The commissioner, Alastair MacGibbon, told the *Herald* that while the images themselves didn't exploit children, paedophiles

"sexualised" them by adding "highly explicit and very disturbing comments".

He added: "Often, users exchange email addresses with invitations to connect outside the site to trade content".

All the content was hosted outside Australia.

Investigators managed to remove around 90 per cent of images within three days of uncovering them, resulting in 25,000 photos of children being taken down.

Facebook has repeatedly defended its safety and security settings, encouraging parents to set up private groups to share images with friends and family.

The site explains how to change the privacy settings of photo albums in its Help Center: www.snipca.com/18145.

Tomorrow's world

In the sci-fi film *Minority Report* Tom Cruise uses predictions from psychics to arrest criminals before they commit a crime. Hitachi's new Visualization Predictive Crime Analytics system relies on old-fashioned data, such as historical crime statistics and social-media messages, to forecast where crime will take place. The Japanese company says it's being tested in "about half a dozen" US cities.

IN BRIEF

BEWARE NEW XP EMAIL SCAM

Windows XP users have been warned about a new phishing scam that targets the ageing operating system. Emails with the subject line 'Attorney-client agreement' contain the Upatre Trojan, which steals personal details and downloads additional malware. The scam was spotted by US security firm AppRiver – read more on their blog: www.snipca.com/18131. Microsoft ended security support for XP in April 2014.

USE SKYPE TRANSLATOR IN WINDOWS 10

Microsoft has made its Skype Translator tool available to more people by releasing a desktop version that works in Windows 7, 8 and 10. Previously it existed only as a 'preview app' for Windows 8. It translates six languages as you speak, displaying words on screen and speaking them. Translator is available in the 'Skype for Windows desktop' program: www.snipca.com/18136. Discover how to use it on Skype's blog: www.snipca.com/18135.

NHS-approved apps 'leak your personal data'

Many health apps approved by the NHS may be leaking personal data that criminals could use for ID theft.

The apps cover a range of different subjects, including stopping smoking, losing weight, reducing alcohol intake and keeping fit.

A study by students at Imperial College London found that despite appearing to be vetted by the NHS, some apps didn't adhere to privacy standards. In the worst examples, some apps were even sending medical data across the internet without encrypting it.

Researchers examined 79 apps listed on NHS England's Health Apps Library (<http://apps.nhs.uk>, see screenshot), which tests apps to ensure they meet standards of clinical and data safety. They found that over a six-month period 70 apps sent personal data to online services, with 23 failing to encrypt it. Criminals would have found this data easy to exploit.

While more than half of the apps had a privacy policy,



these didn't clearly state what type of data was being shared.

PhD student Kit Huckvale, who led the research, said that most of the leaked data revealed a person's identity, or information about their phone. Only a handful of apps actually collected information about the health of users.

Mr Huckvale told the BBC that the NHS must improve how it tests apps, because in future they will be "used more often and become much

more complex".

He added: "The study is a signal and an opportunity to address this because the NHS would like to see strategic investment in apps to support people in the future".

The NHS responded to the study by saying it has removed the apps, or told developers to update them to make them safe. It also confirmed that it is testing a new "more thorough" system for approving apps.

BBC finally ditching unsafe Flash in iPlayer

The BBC is to make the iPlayer safer to use by replacing Adobe Flash with HTML5.

HTML5 is a web standard for displaying content, such as video, that works without you having to download a plug-in. This should make it much easier for you to watch online video across all browsers and devices.

The BBC has launched a beta version of an HTML5 iPlayer at www.bbc.co.uk/html5. To use it, click the 'Opt in to the HTML5 player' button at the top right.

Previously, the desktop

version of the iPlayer needed the Flash plug-in to work. Security experts have been calling for the BBC to ditch Flash because of its numerous flaws, which hackers are quick to exploit.

The BBC had stuck with Flash because it thought HTML5 couldn't match the plug-in's video quality.

But in a blog post (www.snipca.com/18111) James East,



a BBC product manager, said that he was "confident" Flash wasn't needed to maintain quality.

However East said the

iPlayer will still support Flash for the next few years "because playing video using HTML5 requires a more powerful computer... and we don't want to leave behind those users who cannot, or do not wish to, upgrade".

The world's gone mad!

The craze for taking selfie photos isn't just annoying – it's deadly too. A report from the website Mashable (www.snipca.com/18040) shows that more people have died this year taking selfies than from shark attacks. It seems that selfie-takers can't resist the temptation to grab a photo in dangerous situations. To see how people have died, visit the Wikipedia page listing the incidents: www.snipca.com/18039.

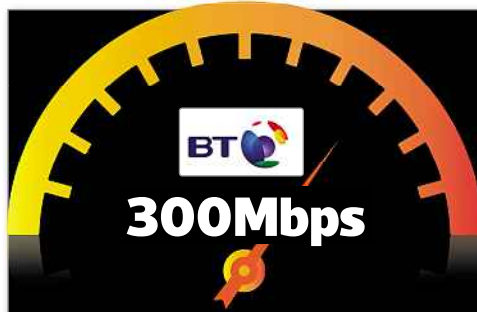
BT: We'll deliver 300Mbps broadband to 10 million homes

BT has laid out plans to boost its broadband coverage in the UK, including providing speeds of 300-500Mbps to around 10 million homes by 2020.

The company made the pledge as part of its ambition to "deliver Britain's digital future". It also wants to increase the universal minimum broadband speed from 2Mbps to somewhere between 5 and 10Mbps, and bring fibre broadband to more than 95 per cent of premises in the UK, which would surpass the Government's current target.

In addition, BT said it wants to offer a maximum speed of 1Gbps by 2020, but didn't elaborate on how many homes would be able to receive it.

It said that some of its goals,



such as increasing the universal minimum broadband speed, are dependent on Ofcom approval and government funding.

The company's plans have been seen as a response to calls from other Internet Service Providers (ISPs) for BT to be broken up.

Sky, Vodafone and TalkTalk want BT Openreach, which runs the company's telecoms infrastructure, to be separated from the rest of the company.

These ISPs pay BT to use

some of its network. They want Ofcom to request that the Competition and Markets Authority undertake a full market review of BT.

BT Group chief executive Gavin Patterson denied that the pledges were meant

to influence Ofcom by showing how much broadband investment the UK would miss out on if the company was broken up.

He said: "This is what you can get from us, this is the vision that we have for the future, this is what we can offer... if you give us stability and regulatory certainty for the next 10 years".

 Do you think BT will deliver 300Mbps to 10 million homes by 2020? Let us know: letters@computeractive.co.uk

IN BRIEF

BLOCK NUISANCE SENDERS IN GMAIL

Google has made it easier to block people in Gmail, on both the desktop version and in the Android app. In the PC version, open an email, click the down arrow at the top right, then click 'Block...'. You can see the same option in Android by tapping the three horizontal dots at the top right of an email. Once an email address has been blocked, all messages from it will go to your spam folder. Read more on Gmail's blog at www.snipca.com/18044.

SEND INSTANT MESSAGES IN FIREFOX



Mozilla has updated its Firefox browser to let you send instant messages. It works within the free video-chatting service Firefox Hello, which is Mozilla's rival to Skype (see our Workshop in Issue 443). To learn how to send messages, follow Mozilla's instructions at www.snipca.com/18055. You may need to update your version of Firefox.

FACEBOOK GIVES INTERNET TO REFUGEES

Refugees living in camps will be able to access the internet as part of a scheme led by Facebook and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). Facebook's boss Mark Zuckerberg said that having internet access would make it easier for refugees to get aid and to stay in touch with family. The measure was announced as part of a new five-year campaign, called The Connectivity Declaration (www.snipca.com/18058), to bring internet access to everyone in the world. Around 4.2 billion people still can't get online.

Get set for your phone bills to rocket

Your mobile-phone bills look set to rocket after Ofcom tripled the fees it charges mobile companies to rent spectrum space on the UK network.

It's feared that companies will pass on this increase by raising the tariffs they charge customers.

The fees, which are paid annually, have risen from £64.4 million to just under £200m.

The charges for Vodafone and O2 have increased from £15.6m each to nearly £50m. EE now has to pay £75m, up from £25m, while Three's bill has risen from £8.3m to £25m.

Ofcom spent two years reviewing the prices, after being ordered by the Government to bring them in

line with the rest of Europe.

Despite the likely increase in customers' bills, Ofcom stands behind the move, insisting that it reflects the true value of the spectrum.



PHONE BILLS

The regulator's group director of spectrum Philip Marnick said: "The mobile industry has not previously had to pay market value for access to this spectrum, which is a valuable and finite resource, and the new fees reflect that value".

Mobile networks responded cautiously to the increase. Vodafone said that it "will be reviewing Ofcom's proposed spectrum fees over the coming days", and that it represents "a significant increase".

O2 said it was "examining the decision in detail before deciding how best to proceed", while EE said Ofcom had "got it wrong".

The charges will be brought in gradually. Half will come into effect this month, with the rest due in October 2016.

Named & Shamed

Jane Hoskyn puts the boot into tech villains, jargon-spouting companies and software stuffed with junk

WARNING: Junk ahead

Junk offender: Skype

Skype's built-in Translator tool now "unveils the magic" in dozens more languages, according to the program's official blog (www.snipca.com/18157; see News, page 8). If the prospect of talking face-to-face to your Norwegian niece or your Klingon cousin (www.snipca.com/18158) has finally tempted you to install Microsoft's famed video-chat program, beware. Multi-lingual subtitles are not the only magic it's about to "unveil" in your PC.

Pack of PUPs

Skype's installer wants to take over your browser with all the Microsoft tools you don't want. The first thing you're offered is 'Skype Click to Call'. Actually, "offered" isn't the right word; you're given it, because it installs automatically as a toolbar in Internet Explorer (IE) unless

you untick it.

The next two horrors you're given without asking – Bing and MSN – will embed themselves in all your browsers unless you untick them (see screenshot). 'Make Bing my search engine' and 'Make MSN my homepage' are both pre-ticked and easy to miss. Next time they go online, they'll find themselves staring at an apparently hijacked browser.

So while Microsoft's pack of PUPs may not be malicious, they are uninvited and potentially scary. That's appalling behaviour from the company that owns your operating system. At best it's a clumsy abuse of a great program (Skype); at worst it's a money-grabbing abuse of your goodwill.

Where Microsoft leads...

It's also a horrendous example to set. By bundling unwanted rubbish in Skype's



Skype's installer wants to take over your browser with Microsoft tools

installer, Microsoft is all but inviting third-party software-makers to do the same: "oh well, if Microsoft is doing it, let's shove Conduit into our installer". If you're running Windows 10 or 8/8.1 you can sidestep this nonsense by using the Skype app, but why should you have to? You may prefer the traditional desktop program. And if you run Windows 7 you have no choice. It's completely safe, but make sure you untick the boxes at every stage to avoid a nasty surprise next time you open your browser.

What are they talking about?

What they say

Microsoft (www.snipca.com/18155): "gYxseNjwafVPfgsoHnzLbImmAxxZUiOnGcchqEAEwjyXwJUIfpXfJQcdLapTmFaqHGCFsdvpLarmPJLOZYMEILGNIPwNOgEazuBVJcyVjBRL".

What they mean

This isn't a new Klingon translation in Skype; it's a Windows test patch mistakenly distributed to Windows 7 users on 30 September. A new update was issued within hours to override the gobbledegook (www.snipca.com/18156).



Jane's villain of the fortnight

People

Have you ever wished there was an app that let your acquaintances and former partners rate your personality, post the review online without your consent – and then block you from deleting it? Of course you haven't. But Peeple (www.forthypeople.com) is real, and it's coming to a tablet and phone near you (and your ex) soon.



That baffles me. I sat through months of law lectures on defamation and slander in the early 1990s and still can't remember the difference, but I do know they're both punishable by jail. Doing it online has never made it okay – trolling and stalking are hard to

police, but they're certainly not legal. They destroy lives.

So how did this app get past lawyers? Its creators,

who call their branch "a positivity app for positive people" (another reason to loathe it), insist it's all fine because negative reviews will be "assessed" by moderators. Soon after Peeple's beta launch in September, its shares were valued at US\$7.6m (£5m – www.snipca.com/18163). I wouldn't dare imply that's why it got past lawyers. That'd be defamation, wouldn't it?



Want to nominate a villain of the fortnight? Email us at editor@computeractive.co.uk

Question of the Fortnight

Why do the police ignore online fraud?

Your case won't be investigated if the computer says 'no'

If you're unfortunate enough to become a victim of online fraud, what should you do? The answer would seem obvious: contact the police so they can investigate. But you could end up waiting a long time for a response. Research from *The Times* reveals that the police examine only one in 100 cases of online fraud, a rate that has been slammed as "an outrage".

Part of the reason for this shortfall is that the decision to investigate has been taken out of the hands of the police. Instead, a computer program decides whether an incident of fraud should be looked into. The police maintain that it's the only way they can cope with the vast number of cases that get reported. But this strategy leaves thousands of people in the lurch.



reporting centre for fraud and internet crime". Instead of contacting the police directly,

“Only a quarter of online fraud cases reported to Action Fraud are passed on to the police”

Older people are generally considered to be at greater risk from online fraudsters. Alan Higham, who campaigns against pension fraud (www.pensionschampion.com) told *The Times*: "Allowing fraudsters to get away with it only encourages more crime and leaves vulnerable people exposed to having their life savings stolen. It is nothing short of an outrage".

The controversial computer program is run by Action Fraud, which was set up in 2013 as "the UK's national

victims are encouraged to email or phone Action Fraud (www.actionfraud.police.uk/contact-us) with their case. This is advice we've given many times in *Computeractive*, confident that the organisation, which is managed by the Home Office and the City of London police, is fit for purpose.

However, *The Times* claimed that Action Fraud passed to the police only a quarter of the 230,000 cases it received in 2014. Clearly, the computer is saying 'no' to a lot of cases.

Worryingly, the 3.2 million estimated frauds over the past 12 months – most of which aren't reported – have led to fewer than 9,000 convictions.

Action Fraud says that it uses computers to assess cases because software can quickly analyse criminal trends. It claims that information given to the police helps to close around 4,000 fraudulent websites, telephone numbers and bank accounts each month.

But the public seem unconvinced. *The Times* said it has received complaints from victims who accused Action Fraud of not taking their case seriously. In August, retired teacher Philip Fryer, 70, told the *Mail On Sunday* that Action Fraud should be renamed "Inertia Fraud" after it failed to recover money he lost in a land-investment scam (www.snipca.com/18109).

THE FACTS

- A computer program assesses cases of online fraud to decide whether police should investigate
- Only one in 100 cases are followed up by the police
- There were 3.2m cases of online fraud in 2014, but fewer than 9,000 convictions

Confidence in Action Fraud had already been hit by the problems that have plagued it. In 2013, an IT failure wiped 2,500 cases from its system, while in June this year the company that answered its phone calls went bust. Average waiting times are now more than 20 minutes.

Nobody is claiming that it's easy to fight online fraud. Between 60 and 70 per cent of fraud can be traced to criminals overseas, where UK police have no jurisdiction. And the Action Fraud website doesn't hide the limitations of its operation, stating that "the police cannot investigate every report individually".


But critics of this scheme say it's a vicious spiral. As fewer cases get investigated, fraudsters will calculate that there's less chance of being caught, and will therefore target more victims. This will lead to even more cases for Action Fraud, greatly increasing the police's workload. It's clear that every time the computer says no, a criminal somewhere is saying 'yes!'.

Letters

Tell us what's on your mind


Email: letters@computeractive.co.uk
Facebook: www.facebook.com/computeractive
Twitter: [@ComputerActive](https://twitter.com/ComputerActive)
www.twitter.com/computeractive

Windows 10 is like a 'bad sports car'

 In his verdict on Windows 10 (Issue 459), Stuart Andrews has nailed it once again. His main point is that it doesn't matter how good an operating system's tools are if it keeps conking out every hour. Spot on. It's like buying a sports car that has enough gadgets to keep James Bond and Jeremy Clarkson happy, and goes from 0-60 in three seconds, but only lasts 30 minutes on each drive before breaking down. Until Windows 10 becomes more reliable, it's like a sports car that looks great, but performs badly.

Eric Bremner


Yes, Windows 7 is popular - but so what?

 Ian O'Sullivan may well be proved right ('Windows 7 will remain more popular than Windows 10', Issue 459), but he's overstating the importance of popularity. He seems to be saying that Windows 7 is better simply because more people use it than Windows 10. Firstly, this is hardly surprising given that the latter is only a few months old. And secondly - so what?

If anything, I'm a bit put off by Windows 7's enduring popularity. I'd like to think I know more about computing than the average person, and so I try to avoid the more mainstream products that are dumbed-down to appeal to the masses. That's why I've been using Windows 10 since the first Technical Preview, and why I love being part of the Insider Program (<https://insider.windows.com>). Let's be honest, most mainstream TV shows, books and films are rubbish. The same can be said for a lot of mass-market technology.

Gareth Watson

Microsoft has us by the short and curlies

 So it looks like Microsoft has got us exactly where it wants us - by the short and curlies. If it's putting Windows 10 folders on to all PCs ('Question of the Fortnight', Issue 459), and the only way to avoid receiving them is to opt out of Windows Updates, then what choice do we have? I'm not daft. I may be unhappy that Microsoft is doing this, but turning



off updates would be a mad overreaction. Microsoft realises that most people feel the same way. So we have to meekly accept that the company can do what it wants.


But think how different it would be if, for example, you installed a burglar-alarm system in your house, and then had to put up with sneaky changes to it in order for it to continue working. Consumers wouldn't put up with that, and rightly so. As always though, computer companies seem to be laws unto themselves. They behave like they can make the rules up as they go along. And I suppose they can. I'm sending this email on a Windows 7 PC, and I have no intention of swapping it for a Mac. Microsoft must love people like me,

who are too lazy to rebel against their tyrannical ways. Maybe in my more idealistic youth I would have made the leap to a Mac, but I'm 76 now, and have grown too cynical. I've seen enough in my life to know that you always get screwed over, so you may as well just sigh, keep calm and carry on.

Douglas Maynard

CA says We agree with Douglas that turning off Windows Update is not a good idea. But you can remove Microsoft's furtive Windows 10 folder - just follow our Workshop on page 42. It's worth doing if you have no intention of upgrading to Windows 10.

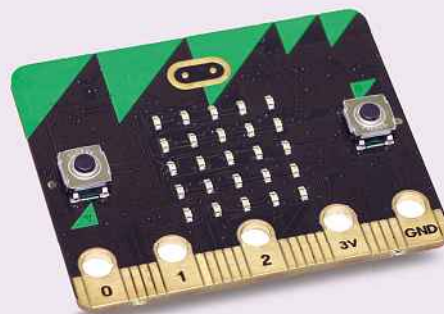
NHS needs to 'join the 21st century'

 I read with interest your news story on being able to access your health records on your phone (Issue 458). I wholly agree with the principle. I have had a conversation with my GP (who is totally switched on to using technology in a smart way) and we discussed the ability to upload personal information like blood-pressure readings, heart rate, temperature, weight, body measurements and so on. The smart thing would be to have personal internet-enabled monitors at home that could take some of these

BBC should abandon the micro:bit computer

 I had to chuckle when I read that the BBC's micro:bit computer scheme has been postponed (page 7, Issue 459) until after Christmas. It should be cancelled for good for two reasons. One, because it's a project that strays far beyond what the BBC's role is. The BBC's job is to make excellent radio and TV programmes, which it does - sometimes! It shouldn't give away free computers to school children. What if another computer manufacturer wanted to sell them to schools? How could it compete with the BBC's monopoly?

The second reason is that I doubt the



BBC has the technical expertise to lead this project, as this embarrassing delay indicates. Give the task to Google or Microsoft, or another company with relevant experience of making computers (real science) not *Doctor Who* (science fiction)!

Jonathan Buckland

readings and automatically upload them to your records. I'm sure it's well within the capabilities of developers to create alerts for your GP should a worrying pattern emerge from your information. I personally record my blood pressure and heart rate in an Android app.

In times when doctors are under stress this would help relieve some of their workload and enable them to start corrective procedures before more serious conditions appear, thereby possibly reducing NHS costs.

I have just joined a gym that has some fantastic machines which display many vital signs while you exercise. Some of them are internet enabled, so it would only be a small step to use that data. Come on NHS: join the 21st century like the rest of us!

Paul Handley

Forget AVG, pay for Kaspersky

✉ I don't use emoticons (or 'emoji' as they are now idiotically called), but if I did I would use a 'not surprised' face to react to the news that AVG is selling customers' data to other companies (page 7, Issue 459). Unless I'm convinced that a 'free' service doesn't make its money by selling my personal details, I choose to pay for services. I



realise that some paid-for services also earn money by flogging your data,

but they are less dependent on this course of action.

I can't say this strongly enough: some things are just worth paying for. Antivirus software is the best example. I've been using the paid-for version of Kaspersky for 18 months, and it's never let me down. I wasn't as lucky in the past when – naively – I thought free antivirus would offer good enough protection. It didn't. It was a false economy, because I eventually had to buy a new PC after being infected.

For some reason people seem happy to cut corners on their PC security in a way they wouldn't on home security and safety. You wouldn't trust a 'free' burglar alarm or smoke alarm. You'd think, rightly, that there must be a catch. So it is with PC safety. As with so many things in life, you get what you pay for.

Judith McClaren

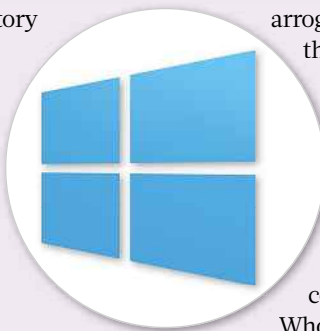
STAR LETTER

Windows 10: Microsoft 'ignorantly' overlooks our problems

✉ I think your news story in Issue 459 ('New version, but the same old problems') sums up my worries about Windows 10. It seems to me that the people who work at Microsoft are happier to introduce features that appeal to their geeky mindset, but overlook the more urgent problems that the majority of users want fixed.

Look at the evidence. As you say, in the new Preview Build of Windows 10 (10547) some apps still don't update automatically. I've found this to be the single most frustrating thing about Windows 10, and it stuns me that Microsoft don't appear to be taking it seriously. On their blog (www.snipca.com/18003). Microsoft seems nonchalant about it, simply saying: "Windows Store apps may not update automatically". That's it. There's no apology. No explanation. No promise of a fix. No acknowledgment that this is a problem that will force lots of people to revert to Windows 7 or 8 (something I am considering).

Is it too harsh to accuse Microsoft of



arrogance? Maybe. Instead, I think it could be a case of ignorance. Look again at that blog post. Right at the top they talk about "improvements to Start". What is this improvement? You can now add a fourth column to the Start menu.

Who cares if the apps never update, because now we have an extra column to put them on? That makes everything fine!

The reason I accuse Microsoft of ignorance is that it seems far too pleased with itself over pointless tweaks such as this extra column to the Start menu, and nowhere near as hard on itself as it should be for failing to fix more significant problems. And this goes back to the geeky mindset I referred to earlier. I reckon the people who update Windows 10 like to show off to one another about introducing little features that probably require some clever piece of software fiddling. It seems they'd prefer the praise of their colleagues than the gratitude of ordinary users.

Robert Corbett

The Star Letter writer wins a Computeractive mug!



You're not alone hating Solitaire

✉ In Issue 459, Arnold Whishaw asked whether he was alone in hating Solitaire. I can assure him that he's not. I also think it's a pointless game. But then I've never seen the appeal of any PC game. It's the lack of a human opponent that puts me off. If I play Monopoly, I want to see the misery on my victim's face when landing on a hotel-packed Mayfair bankrupts him.

What you lose in a PC game is the random human element. Basically, you're just playing software programmed to react in certain ways. It's no substitute for the unpredictability of human-versus-human duels. So give me a real game of tennis, poker, snooker or Cluedo over

Pac-Man, Space Invaders or Pong any day.
Ralph Sexton

Sorry love, just used up all our bandwidth

✉ In your reply to Sam Fowley's question about watching UK TV from abroad ('What Should I Download?', Issue 459), I read the BBC's suggestion for watching video clips on its News Channel with a wry smile. When we were recently on holiday in Austria, I tried to do just that, without realising how greedy for bandwidth those videos were. I failed to get a video clip to download at all, but in the process of trying I used up all our bandwidth for the rest of the month. My husband was less than pleased!

Susan Platter

Consumeractive

How long must a warranty last with a replacement device?

Q I bought a Beko dishwasher with a 12-month guarantee in December 2014 from the Currys website. Six months later it developed a fault and a replacement was delivered. I was told that despite this the guarantee has only six months left to run. Is this correct?

Clive Bonner



A Yes, it is correct. Most manufacturers offer a free 12-month guarantee because it's a way of saying 'we stand by the quality of our goods and if something goes wrong we'll put it right'. This 12-month period doesn't change, no matter how many replacements you receive.

Clive is worried that he will lose any rights to a refund once the guarantee ends, but this isn't the case. His rights are covered by statutory law and aren't affected by a guarantee.

Companies don't have to offer a guarantee, but must stick by it if they do. Guarantees represents a legally binding promise to carry out what is stated, such as repairs or replacements.



Can I demand a refund after one failed repair?

Q I bought a laptop in August 2014 from PC World and had to get it repaired in July this year. The repair seems to have done the job, but I'm worried about the fault recurring, and needing a second repair. I read your report in Issue 459 on the new Consumer Rights Act (CRA) in which you explain that retailers are now allowed to make just one repair before agreeing to a refund. Does the law apply to me, even though I bought my laptop last year?



Anthony Cornell

A Sadly, Anthony can't demand a refund because the new law isn't retrospective, so it applies only to purchases made after 1 October. We imagine that over the next few years many *Computeractive* readers will be stuck in the same position as Anthony - using a faulty device that predates CRA.

He is still covered by the Sale of Goods Act (SOGA), but that law has always been frustratingly vague on how many repairs a retailer is allowed to make. As a result, PC World isn't breaking the law by offering to repair the laptop, rather than a refund.

Your only protection against an

endless cycle of repairs under SOGA is to argue these are not completed within a 'reasonable time' and are a 'serious inconvenience' to you. And we think Anthony can justifiably claim this if the second repair doesn't fix the problem, although PC World can deduct some money from the refund to reflect the time he had already used the laptop. He'd have a particularly strong case if the second repair was for the same problem, which would show that the first fix wasn't 'fit for purpose'.

We asked PC World how flexible it would be with its policy. Would it, for example, treat 1 October as the definitive cut-off date? The company didn't comment on its policy regarding the new law, saying instead that it always examines claims for repairs and refunds on a "case-by-case basis because there are many different factors to consider".



Who do I contact - the retailer or manufacturer?

Q I bought two D-Link DCS 502-L security cameras from Ebayer in February, but one has already stopped working. Ebayer told me that it only offers a one-month warranty, and so I now have to deal with D-Link - whom I can't get hold of. Please help!

Garry Grant

A Ebayer may well only offer a one-month warranty for the cameras, but that doesn't mean it should wash its hands of the problem. Garry's contract is with Ebayer not D-Link.

We've told Garry to forget about the warranty, and instead tell Ebayer he's seeking a refund for inherently faulty goods, as SOGA entitles him to. But we'll also contact the company to explain that by law it has to deal with the problem. We'll explain that when Garry first contacted Ebayer less than six months had passed since he bought the cameras, which means he doesn't need to prove they are inherently faulty. The onus is on Ebayer to prove there is no inherent fault.

ebuyer.com





We stand up for your legal rights

✉ 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.

Google's update 'broke my tablet' - can I get a refund?

Q I wonder if you can help me and hundreds of other people with tablets that have been rendered useless because of Google's Lollipop update (Android 5.0). My Asus Nexus 7 tablet is only two years old, but ever since the automatic update it gets stuck on the Google logo and won't do anything. Asus says it's out of warranty and won't help. Can I get a repair or refund from Google instead?

Paul Spicer

A Paul should definitely contact Google (details at www.snipca.com/17926), but he's not entitled to a refund or repair from them because under SOGA you're not covered if **firmware** updates ruin a device. Thankfully the new Consumer Rights Act

(CRA) has changed that, entitling you to compensation or a free repair (for more details, see Issue 459).

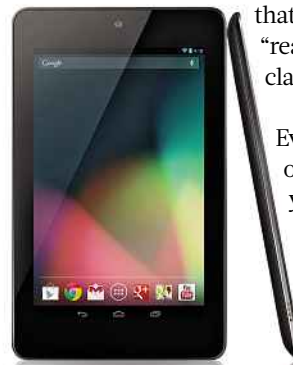
Legal experts hope the CRA will help consumers fight back against technology giants. Peter Dalton, who works in technology law at Kemp Little (www.kemplittle.com), told us: "People who find themselves in Paul's situation will have a clear right to a repair or appropriate compensation from a company (most likely Google in this case) if software, including firmware updates, damages a device". He added that for pre-CRA cases

"retailers and manufacturers are likely to continue to pass the buck".

However the new law, which was implemented on 1 October, isn't being applied to old cases, so it won't help Paul. There is another option open to him. He could argue that the update counts as a 'service' provided by Google. SOGA says that services must be provided with "reasonable care", which Paul could claim hasn't happened.

Paul's problem is not uncommon. Ever since Android Lollipop arrived on phones and tablets late last year, we've received many emails from readers who say it has broken their device.

We'll let you know should Paul decide to pursue Google.



CASE ONGOING

CASE UPDATE



Amazon closes customer account after 'extraordinary' problems

One of the most perplexing cases we've tackled recently was that of Hugh Miller, who was asked by Amazon why he'd returned a number of items that he'd bought on the site

(see page 12, Issue 455).

Hugh was concerned that Amazon had contacted him. He told us that he was simply exercising his legal rights as a customer because the returned goods were faulty, or not as described. He got in touch with us because he was worried Amazon would close his account.

Sadly, that's what Amazon has now done. The company emailed Hugh to explain why: "We took these actions because you have continued to request refunds for a significant number of your orders. In the normal course of business, the occasional problem is inevitable. The rate at which such problems have occurred on your account is extraordinary, however, and cannot continue".

Amazon outlines its policy in the Your Account section of its 'Conditions of Use & Sale' page: www.snipca.com/18106. It says: "We reserve the right to refuse service, terminate accounts or remove or edit content if you are in breach of applicable laws". Amazon can do this as long as it doesn't discriminate against you on grounds of gender, sexuality, religious belief, ethnicity, colour or nationality.

Amazon has told Hugh that if he has any questions he should email cis@amazon.co.uk. We'll let you know if he does, and what Amazon's response is.

THIS WILL COME IN USEFUL

Contacting the NHS (non emergency)

Dept of Health

Online form: www.snipca.com/18033

EHIC: renew/apply

www.snipca.com/18023

Freedom of information requests

www.snipca.com/18031

Give Blood 0300 123 23 23

www.blood.co.uk
Online form: www.snipca.com/18023
Twitter: @GiveBloodNHS

NHS Careers 0345 60 60 655

www.nhscareers.nhs.uk/contact

NHS Choices

www.snipca.com/18025
Twitter: @NHSChoices

NHS England 0300 311 22 33

www.england.nhs.uk/contact-us
Complaints: www.snipca.com/18029
Email: england.contactus@nhs.net
Twitter: @NHSEngland

NHS Northern Ireland

Contact form: www.snipca.com/18030

NHS Scotland
Complaints: www.snipca.com/18026
Email: nss.communications@nhs.net
Online form: www.snipca.com/18027

NHS Wales
www.wales.nhs.uk/contactus
Complaints: www.snipca.com/18028



Protect Your Tech

Scams and threats to avoid, plus new security tools

WATCH OUT FOR...

Facebook 'Dislike button' scams

What happened?

Facebook users were warned about scams claiming to offer an early look at the site's forthcoming 'Dislike' button.

In September, Facebook's founder Mark Zuckerberg revealed that the site was working on a button as an alternative to 'Like'. This was widely reported as a 'Dislike' button, though Zuckerberg said that it would actually be used to show sympathy or empathy with a post expressing sadness, such as "My cat has just died".

It hasn't taken long for scammers to exploit the huge interest in this news. They have plastered Facebook with posts



containing the heading: "Get newly introduced Facebook dislike button on your profile" below an upside-down version of the site's 'Like' thumbs-up icon (see screenshot left). The scammers appeal to users' egos by claiming the offer is

"invite only", suggesting you've been specially selected to take part.

At first glance the advert looks authentic, in part because underneath the thumbs-down image are the three icons that accompany legitimate Facebook posts: Like, Comment and Share. The fraudsters hope you'll spread the scam by sharing it with your friends.

It's not known whether liking

this fake offer infects your PC with malware. Currently the scammers' chief tactic is to ask you to complete a survey and reveal your email address. Scammers will then use this to bombard you with spam.

What should you do?

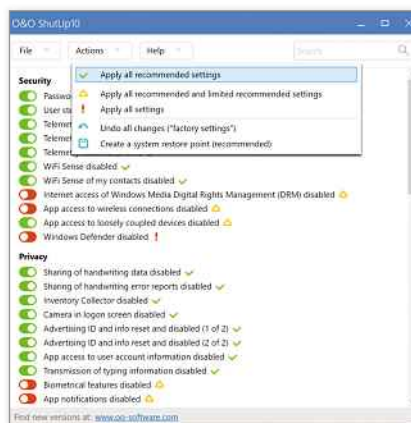
As always, keep your wits about you when using Facebook. For years scammers have tried to trick users into clicking dodgy links by promising new tools for the site, such as a way to find out who has 'unfriended' you. The 'Dislike button' scam is the latest con, but it won't be the last. Thankfully Facebook is used by so many people that scams are quickly spotted and reported online. A quick search on Google usually reveals whether an offer is genuine.

New tools

O&O ShutUp10
www.snipca.com/18018

In Issue 458's lead Workshop (page 35) we explained how to tweak your privacy settings in Windows 10. It's essential that you do so because Microsoft is tracking how you use Windows 10 more closely than it did Windows 7 and 8. The company says that this will help Windows 10 'learn' how you use your PC in order to display information personalised to your needs, but you don't have to be paranoid to wonder how else that data could be used.

Unsurprisingly, Microsoft doesn't make it easy to find these settings. The solution is to use the free program O&O ShutUp10, which shows you all the settings - around 50 - in categories that are easy to understand. Click a setting to discover what it does, then choose whether to disable it, or leave it



turned on. Once you've finished, click the Action tab at the top, then choose one of the 'Apply...' options (see screenshot above). We'll explain Windows 10's privacy settings in more detail in a forthcoming issue.



ScamWatch
READERS WARN READERS

Am I a 'homicide suspect'?

In mid-September, I received a very dodgy-looking email that claimed it was from the City of London Police. I can imagine many people will open it because the subject line is so eye-catching: 'Homicide Suspect'. But the use of the word 'homicide' (US) instead of 'murder' (UK) rang alarm bells. I live on the Isle of Wight, so I knew it wasn't relevant to me! There was no way I was going to open the attachment in the email. I researched the scam online, and Action Fraud reports that opening the attachment downloads malware on to your PC. Read more at www.snipca.com/18017.

Derek Jones



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

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

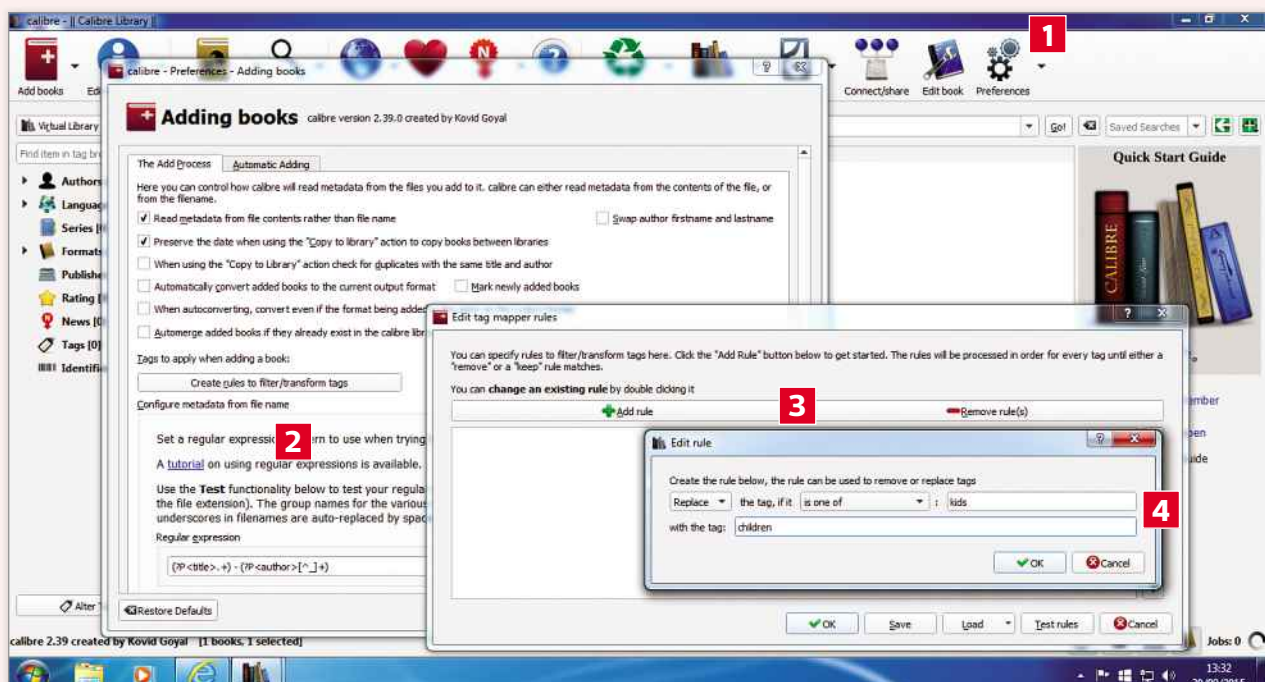


Whether or not you prefer 'real' books to their electronic counterparts, there's no doubt that ebooks have certain benefits. They're convenient, simple to manage and easy to share between devices – or at least they are if you use Calibre. For anyone with even a modest ebook library, Calibre is a must. Not only does it let you manage your entire ebook collection in one place, but it also converts ebook files from one format to another, and provides an astonishingly comprehensive set of tools for syncing, downloading, sharing and editing ebook files.

If you've never used it before, grab the latest version from the link above. There's no hidden junk to watch out for when you install Calibre, just a short welcome wizard when you first launch it (to set up a location for your Calibre library, choose which type of e-reader or mobile device you use and

so on). Even if you're a seasoned Calibre user, it's well worth updating to the new version, because it offers plenty of very useful new features, including ways to filter tags.

A large ebook library can soon get out of hand. And, in the absence of a dedicated ebook librarian to help you organise your virtual shelves, tags provide one of the best ways to stay on top of all your titles. Often, though, you don't have a say in the tags that are applied to the ebook files you import – these are applied elsewhere and may not correspond with the systems you use to categorise your collection. A clever feature in the new version of Calibre fixes this by providing you with the ability to set up your own rules and filters that can automatically remove, replace or keep tags applied to any books you import. Find out how below.

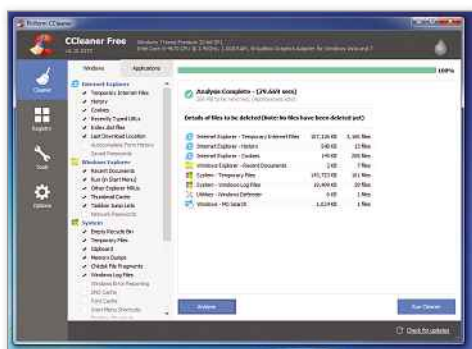


1 As an example, we're going to get Calibre to check ebooks we import for the tag 'kids' and replace it with the tag 'children'. To start, click Preferences in the top toolbar.

2 Click 'Adding books', then in the next window, make sure 'Read metadata from file contents rather than file name' is ticked, and click the 'Create rules to filter/transform tags' button.

3 Click the 'Add rule' button. In the 'Edit rule' window that opens, choose 'Replace' from the first dropdown menu and choose 'is one of' from the second.

4 Type the tag you want to replace (kids) in the top box and type the tag you want to use instead (children) in the bottom box, then click OK.



PC-CLEANING TOOL

CCleaner 5.10.5373

www.snipca.com/18096

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

A firm favourite here at *Computeractive*, CCleaner's back with a new version and some useful new tools and enhancements. If you're not already familiar with it, CCleaner is a brilliant tool for getting rid of junk files, de-cluttering your PC's registry and generally speeding up your computer. The latest version has improved support for scrubbing down Microsoft's new browser Edge, which is handy if you've already upgraded to Windows 10. Chrome and Firefox users get improved **cookie** cleaning too. What's more, CCleaner launches faster than ever. All in all, it's definitely worth updating if you already use CCleaner. And if you don't, there's no better time to install it. The CCleaner installer doesn't add any unwanted nasties to your PC, though you may wish to untick the Chrome and Google Toolbar options during setup.

PRIVACY TOOL

DisableWinTracking

www.snipca.com/18097

What you need: Windows 10

If you have concerns about Windows 10's somewhat lax attitude to your personal data, you could hunt through the OS for all the individual tracking settings. Or you could run DisableWinTracking, which provides access to all Windows 10's important data-collection and tracking settings in one place. Download the exe file from the link above, then right-click it

and select 'Run as administrator'. Tick the items you want to disable or block, then click Go. You can reverse this process by reselecting the items, clicking Revert, then Go. You might also want to consider O&O ShutUp10 (see page 16).



WHAT SHOULD I DOWNLOAD?

We tell you what software to use

What can I use to protect my daughter from attack?

Q Please can you tell me of any app that will help keep my daughter safe? She has to walk to and from the school bus alone along a path where someone was recently attacked and I am worried about her. Is there, for example, a panic button? Or any app that will track her course? I've tried to load Watch Over Me, but McAfee says it's 'unsafe' and won't let me use it.

Liz Jenkins

A To be honest, we're not sure why your McAfee app won't let you run Watch Over Me, as it's likely to be one of the best solutions to your problem. You can set it up to send an emergency warning to contacts via text message, email or Facebook in the event that the user doesn't check in safely at the end of a journey. Shaking the phone acts as an instant panic button, too.

Apps like these work by tracking the user's GPS location and by taking control of certain phone functions, such as messaging and email, which is possibly why your security tool is advising caution. Watch Over Me can even be configured to switch on the phone's camera and microphone in an emergency to record what's happening. In other situations, handing this level of control to an app could be unwise, but personal-safety apps require these permissions in order to work.

Watch Over Me is available for iOS (www.snipca.com/18101) and Android (www.snipca.com/18102). It's free, though premium features, such as unlimited text alerts, cost £4 per year. Alternatives include bSafe (www.snipca.com/18103 for iOS, www.snipca.com/18104 for Android).



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Reviews

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Microsoft Office 2016 for Windows

Cloudy upgrade to the perennial work suite



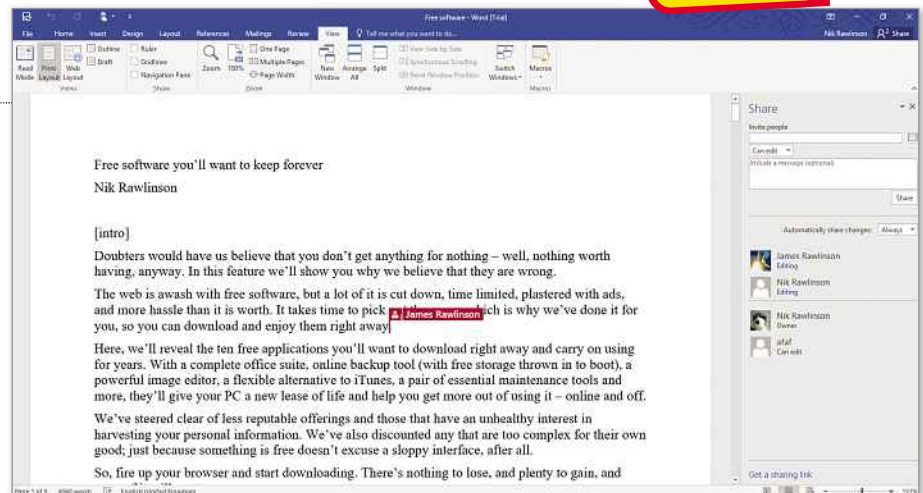
It's a big year for Microsoft. Windows has hit double digits with version 10 – just don't mention 9 – and now Office reaches sweet 16. It comprises Word, Excel, PowerPoint and OneNote (for jotting down ideas and to-do lists), plus Outlook, Access and Publisher if you take out a subscription. This bundle of Windows apps is still the standard choice for business, but buying it isn't the obvious choice it once was.

Cloud storage and collaboration

If you've used Office 2013, you'll recognise the user interface, although it's now more colourful. Each app still has its own separate 'Backstage' area for file management, a feature that was dropped from Office 2016 for Macs (see our review, Issue 457), but which has been merely simplified for Windows. A revamped folder list highlights Microsoft's OneDrive cloud service, encouraging you to store more of your work online. It lets you close a half-finished document on your PC, say, and pick it up later on your iPad or Android device.

By sharing links to files on OneDrive, you can also collaborate more easily with other users. There's less chance of confusion over which is the latest version, and Word now even lets several people edit the same document at the same time, so you can watch what changes others are making. This avoids a lot of back-and-forth editing, or and even prevents the end of some beautiful friendships.

If you prefer to email files, Outlook, Microsoft's fully featured email app, makes that quicker and more flexible too. The Attach File dropdown menu lists your most recent work, wherever you saved it. For files stored in the cloud, Outlook attaches a link rather than the file itself, so all you're sending is the text of the email. The recipient can click to download the document from Microsoft's server. A benefit of this is that if you've changed



Collaborate more easily on documents and see the edits other people make instantly

the file since you sent the email, they'll receive the latest version.

PowerPoint is used for all sorts of stuff, not just business presentations, so improvements are always welcome. When others propose changes, you can reject or accept each slide rather than go through individual edits. Alternatively, you can use Microsoft's Ink system with a

“Word now lets several people edit a document at the same time”

touchscreen to jot annotations directly on to slides. Like Windows 10, Office 2016 does more for users of touchscreen PCs all round – although you'll still get more done with a keyboard and mouse.

Getting help

Even if you're working alone, there are useful new features. Smart Lookup, which uses Microsoft's Bing search engine, lets you right-click a word and get definitions and related articles from the web. It's a handy shortcut for facts and background info. Using it on each instance of 'ink' in the sentence 'I need to buy some new ink for my printer because this squid ink isn't working', for example,

gave us hits both for inkjet consumables and squids.

Office is a big suite, and you may get the feeling you're missing most of it. New 'Tell me' boxes (previously only in the online Office apps) make it easier to find hidden features. Click one and type something in plain English for relevant menu options. So **align** pulls up commands to justify text and cell- alignment options for spreadsheet tables.

This should help new and even experienced users, as will the formatting previews, which show you what your document would look like as you hover over a theme or text style. This only works if you consistently apply styles for headings, body copy and so on in your documents (or work from templates that have these), rather than formatting bits and bobs individually. It's good practice to do so, and once you get into the swing of it, it soon becomes second nature.

Smarter spreadsheets

The improvements to Excel are mostly for advanced users, but if you're not one yet, there's never been a better time to do interesting things with spreadsheets. The Power Query function, previously an **add-in**, now comes as standard, letting you fetch data from web pages, other files on your PC, **servers**,

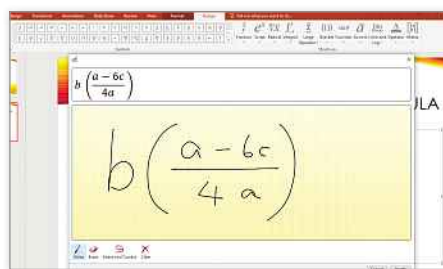
databases, Facebook and so on.

Six new chart types include Waterfall (which depicts changes from one cell to the next) and Sunburst (which combines 'parent' cells with the 'child' cells that contribute to their value). Again, touchscreen users get some extra, erm, touches, like recommended charts appearing in the Ribbon menus so you don't need to use fiddly floating controls. For maths, the new equation editor in Word, PowerPoint and Excel also works with Microsoft Ink, so you can draw the function you want, with your finger or a stylus, and the app will convert it to proper typesetting. If you don't have a touchscreen PC, you can build your functions from the Ribbon.

Only database specialists will need Access, Microsoft's database program, so we won't take up space with it here. As for Microsoft Publisher, if you need **DTP** software it's not a patch on Serif PagePlus, let alone Adobe InDesign.

How to buy it

There are various ways to get your hands on Office, partly depending on whether you want to pay once to own the current version or annually to keep it updated. **Office Home and Student 2016** costs £120 to buy and lets you use Word, Excel, PowerPoint and OneNote on a single PC for as long as they keep working. Or you can subscribe to an **Office 365 Personal** or **Home** plan for £60 or £80 respectively for the year, and get Outlook, Publisher and Access on top of those core apps, plus Office 2016 on Macs, tablets and phones as well as PCs: one of each or five of each, respectively. That's very good value if you can make use of it.



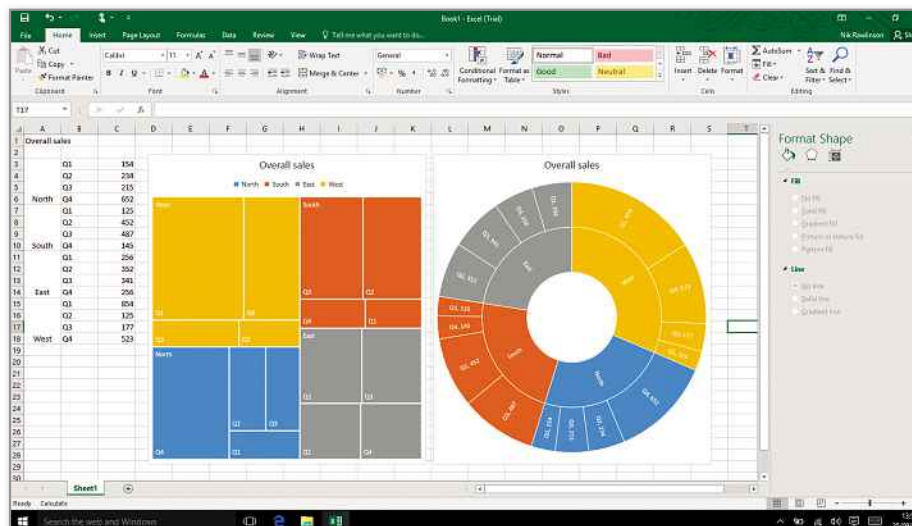
Use the new equation editor to write complex mathematical formulas easily

If you don't need the extra apps, don't plan to upgrade again in the next two years (other than applying Microsoft's free security patches) and only use one device, buying outright could be a better deal, but you'll miss out on the cloud features, including an extra 985GB of free OneDrive storage and 60 minutes a month of Skype calls. Existing Office 365 subscribers can feel smug, because they get Office 2016 automatically.

There are perfectly good word processors, spreadsheets and presentation programs that cost less than this (or nothing at all), and if you're already using them, there may not be enough here to change your mind. Macs and iPads come with Apple's Pages, Numbers and Keynote, matching Word, Excel and PowerPoint; they may not have as many features, but they're simple and help you make neat-looking documents. LibreOffice (www.snipca.com/18049), which works on Windows, Mac and Linux, is a very good **open-source** alternative.

SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS

Windows 8 or later (PC) • iOS 7 or later (iPad/iPhone)
• KitKat 4.4 or later on an ARM or Intel x86 processor (Android) • Any modern web browser (online Office apps) • Also available for Mac
www.snipca.com/18047



Excel now comes with six new chart types to display your data more effectively

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.

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PRICES

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

VERDICT: A good upgrade with more reasons to buy Microsoft's do-it-all suite – but don't feel you have to



ALTERNATIVES:

LibreOffice 5 is free to install on Windows, Mac and Linux computers, while Google Docs and Spreadsheets (see www.snipca.com/18052) are free for online use.



Reviews

TABLET | £203 from BT Shop www.snipca.com/17931

Asus ZenPad S 8.0

A promising mini tablet at a low price

When Apple first launched the iPad in 2010, it was years ahead of the competition, and it's managed to stay ahead of the pack not just at the high end, but at the low end of the price range too. Every year, a new crop of iPads arrive with hugely improved specifications, and still-capable older models are reduced to a budget price.

“The ZenPad doesn't feel slow and can handle most games”

When Asus stepped back into the ring with the ZenPad S 8.0, it must have hoped Apple would finally put the iPad mini 2 out to pasture in its autumn product refresh. Instead, Apple has cut its price again, to just £219. Even so, the ZenPad is still a few pounds cheaper. So can it fight back?

Yes and no. The screen is the same size, shape and resolution as Apple's, which is a plus point: it's lovely and sharp, and more comfortable to hold than widescreen tablets. Its colour reproduction is far from great, but then neither is the iPad mini's. Apple gets the

points, though, for its more accurate colour balance, with our pictures on the ZenPad looking far from impressive.

Nor can Asus match Apple's aluminium 'unibody' design. The ZenPad is a fraction lighter than the iPad mini 2, but it's plastic. A leather-effect strip along the back makes it look a bit like a handbag, which not everyone will appreciate, and contradicts the design of the front, which leaves little room for your fingers to grip its edge. The front and back cameras have more megapixels than Apple's but, as we've often mentioned, that doesn't always make for better pictures.

Inside, the Atom processor may be newer than the iPad mini 2's A7, but it's from the bottom of Intel's range and isn't as capable. The PowerVR G6430 graphics processor, on the other hand, is the same chip Apple incorporated into the A7 – the ZenPad doesn't feel slow and can handle most games. While the iPad mini 2 claims to have a 10-hour battery life, the ZenPad played nearly 14 hours of videos in our tests before needing to be plugged in, though that was partly thanks to the screen's trick of turning off its backlighting during dark scenes. Browsing the web, you'll get less time between charges than with an iPad.

The ZenPad does score hits elsewhere, however. Its modern USB Type-C socket supports a wider range of peripherals than Apple's Lightning, though both require adaptors.

While the cheapest iPad mini 2 only has 16GB of storage, the ZenPad comes with 32GB and has a microSD slot that lets you double that for under a tenner. And it has 802.11ac Wi-Fi and Bluetooth 4.1 on board, compared to the iPad mini 2's slower 802.11n and Bluetooth 4.0. There's no mistaking that this is the more up-to-date device.

Confusingly, there are two different tablets both called the ZenPad S 8.0, so you'll need to confirm the model number to tell the difference: the one we tested was the Z580CA, with 2GB of memory,



32GB of storage, an 8-megapixel rear camera and 5-megapixel webcam. For around £170 you can get the Z580C, with 1GB, 16GB, five and two megapixels respectively. The cheaper model might in fact be the better deal: less memory will mean delays when switching between apps and web pages, but the iPad mini 2 does fine with only 1GB.

To get a better Android tablet, you'd have to look at something like the Samsung Galaxy Tab S 8.4, at around £270 with 16GB. But the iPad mini 2 is sturdier, has Apple's superior operating system and beautiful apps instead of the slew of rubbish Asus installs. The ZenPad S 8.0 is undeniably good value. It just isn't an iPad.

SPECIFICATIONS

1.83GHz Intel Atom Z3560 processor • 32GB flash storage • 7.9in 2048x1536-pixel screen • 8-megapixel rear camera • 5-megapixel webcam • microSD slot • 802.11n Wi-Fi • Bluetooth 4.1 • Android 5.0 • 203x135x6.6mm (HxWxD) • 298g • One-year warranty www.snipca.com/17933

VERDICT: An excellent low-cost Android tablet, but the competition prevents it being the class of the field



ALTERNATIVE: iPad mini 2 £219 A little better in almost every way. It may be worth paying an extra £40 for the 32GB model



TABLET | £319 from Apple www.snipca.com/18100

Apple iPad mini 4

Now definitively the best small tablet

The iPad mini is basically a scaled-down iPad. It doesn't do anything different – and that's the point. Its 7.9in **Retina** display packs in the same amount of detail as the 9.7in iPad Air, making its 2048x1536-pixel **resolution** even sharper, and it's now even easier to hold.

To this point, the iPad mini had just one flaw: put it next to the Air, and you'd see straight away that its smaller screen was also duller. Well, Apple's gone and fixed that. The new iPad mini 4 has an **LCD** panel that's not only vibrantly colourful when images demand it (pale and dark colours remain appropriately understated), but is wedged right up against the glass, so you really feel as if you're touching what's on screen. The main camera also gets improved image quality, and it's still more practical taking photos and videos with the mini than a full-size iPad.

Inside, the A8 chip from the iPhone 6 provides processing power not far off the iPad Air 2's A8X. That's more than enough for web browsing, apps, 3D games and even advanced creative software like iMovie and GarageBand, which are included. Everything works as smoothly as even the most advanced Android tablets – and sometimes even better.

iOS 9, the latest version of Apple's mobile operating system, looks great on the mini, and has some useful new features while still feeling completely familiar (see page 48 for iOS 9 tips). Touch ID is built in, as with the iPad mini 3, so you can just hold your finger on the Home button to unlock the device or authorise payments online or at tills using Apple Pay, if your bank card supports it (most do).

SPECIFICATIONS

Apple A8 processor • 16GB flash storage • 7.9in 2048x1536-pixel touchscreen • 8-megapixel rear camera • 1.2-megapixel webcam • 802.11ac Wi-Fi • Touch ID fingerprint sensor • iOS 9 • 203.2x135x6.1mm (HxWxD) • 299g • One-year warranty www.snipca.com/18099



At 437g, today's iPad Air 2 is much lighter than the original iPad (released in 2010), but the mini 4's 299g is noticeably less. Both are an incredibly slim 6.1mm, down from the iPad mini 3's 7.5mm. This is thinner than any iPhone, and the fact that the iPad doesn't feel bendy is a testament to its solid aluminium construction. A case is still a good idea though, and unfortunately existing ones won't fit. Apple's expensive Silicone Case (£49 from www.snipca.com/18107) mainly protects the back from scratches, while the Smart Cover (£29 from www.snipca.com/18108) only protects the front. We'd ignore them and keep an eye out for new designs from other companies (we'll round up the best soon).

The 16GB iPad mini 4 is excellent value at £319, but 16GB really isn't enough storage. Because it can't be expanded, we'd recommend the 64GB option at £399. Unless you really need to get on the internet when you're away and there's no Wi-Fi, you won't need to pay the extra £100 for cellular (3G/4G).

VERDICT: There are much cheaper small tablets, but they're not in this league – this is almost the perfect tablet

★★★★★

ALTERNATIVE: iPad mini 2 £219
Even with its relatively dull screen and significantly lower performance, the older model is now enticingly cheap and runs iOS 9



The best... Tablet stands

Twelve South Compass 2
£35 from Amazon www.snipca.com/18110

While some cases double as stands, it can make more sense to separate the two jobs. This beautifully neat little easel works with a tablet by itself or in a case, and folds up into a cloth bag just 18cm long. It weighs 232g and can hold almost any tablet (from seven to 10 inches) safely.



Just Mobile Encore
£50 from Amazon www.snipca.com/18117

It's frustrating if you can't get your tablet at exactly the right angle. This high-quality stand solves that problem with its stiff hinge, which reminds us of the stand on an iMac. Just push it to your preferred position. The solid aluminium base, available in silver or gold, keeps it steady. At 210g, it's reasonably portable when folded down.



Anker Multi-Angle Portable Stand
£9 from Amazon www.snipca.com/18122

Aluminium accessories don't always have to come at designer prices. This adjustable stand is sturdy and serviceable. Rubber pads protect the edge and back of your tablet, and you can choose between 11 angles. It weighs 104g and fits all sizes of tablet.



Lap & Bed Stand by iProp
£25 from Amazon www.snipca.com/18120

Most stands require a flat surface, so they're not much help when you only have your knees to support your iPad, or want to watch TV in bed. Here's the answer: an iPad rest attached to a bean bag. It squishes to fit the shape of whatever you're resting it on, and holds any tablet up to 18mm thick.



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Reviews

WI-FI MUSIC PLAYER | £44 from
gramofon.com www.snipca.com/18086

Fon Gramofon

Music all around



Described as a 'modern cloud jukebox', this beautifully made little cuboid has a simple purpose: it gets music from the internet and plays it in your house. There's no screen or buttons to press because everything is controlled from your iOS or Android smartphone or tablet.

Spotify is the world's most popular music-streaming service, giving you access to millions of tracks old and new with a £10-a-month Premium subscription (the free version contains adverts). Gramofon comes with Spotify Connect, a feature that sends music straight from Spotify's servers to any compatible device. You plug Gramofon into the mains and connect its stereo jack (no fancy hi-fi sockets here) to an amplifier or a set of powered speakers.

Using the Gramofon app on your device, you connect the box to your router over Wi-Fi or via an Ethernet cable – and you're ready to play. Whenever you want music, simply select it on Spotify or Gramofon on your touchscreen and it'll play through your speakers. You can play from multiple devices, and if they're on the same Spotify account they can all add tracks to the queue to play next. You can also play music stored on a Mac or PC using the standard DLNA protocol, or listen to free internet radio stations via AllPlay Radio, which also supports Napster, TuneIn and more. SoundCloud, Tidal and others are due to be added.

It all works over Wi-Fi, which gives better sound quality than Bluetooth. The Gramofon's attractive LED ring tells you what it's doing at any time, and you can tap within it to shush the music if necessary. Buy more than one Gramofon then sync them, so you can play the same music on each or control what you hear in different parts of your house. This 'multi-room' capability is usually more expensive.

As a bonus, each Gramofon can extend your Wi-Fi coverage, helping to reach rooms with poor reception. It can also share your broadband with passers-by as part of Fon, the global free Wi-Fi network. This public-spirited act is entirely optional and won't compromise your own security.

SPECIFICATIONS

802.11n Wi-Fi • 2x Ethernet ports • 3.5mm stereo output (RCA phono adapter incl) • 43x80x80mm (HxWxD) • Two-year warranty www.snipca.com/18080

VERDICT: Not everyone needs a music-streaming box, but this is a particularly neat one with multi-room and useful extra functions. If you have speakers to use, it's an excellent buy

★★★★★

ALTERNATIVE: Crystal Acoustics Wi-Daptor **£50**

This Wi-Fi music box works well as a DLNA streamer from Windows, Mac or Android, but didn't work for us with iOS and isn't as flexible



SMARTPHONE | £129 from Amazon www.snipca.com/18035

Wileyfox Swift

A rare example of a home-grown smartphone



Settle down children and Grandad will tell you a story. Once upon a time, all over the United Kingdom there were these things called 'factories'. Every day, British people would 'clock in' to them and operate machines that made things. Not things such as 'financial services' and 'marketing communications' but real things, that you could buy in shops, made of steel and glass and wood.

Like in China, Grandad? (Grandad sighs a faraway sigh.) Yes, my darling. Like in China.

“You can tinker with the settings more than other Android smartphones allow”

This new smartphone is, of course, made in China. Dream on. But it's a product of Wileyfox, a new company based in London.

Apart from the embossed fox logo on the back of the phone, not much looks distinctive: it's a basic budget handset. The matt stone-like texture feels pleasant to hold. Colours don't pop out of the five-inch screen as with more expensive panels, but you get decent brightness and contrast, and a feature that adjusts the colour balance according to the time of day. You can also adjust the colour yourself, as well as the scaling, letting you fit in more or fewer icons. It's protected by Gorilla Glass 3.

Inside, everything is pretty average, including 802.11n Wi-Fi rather than the faster 802.11ac, no NFC chip to pay at tills, and a modest 16GB of storage,

to which you can add up to 32GB on a microSD card. The 13-megapixel camera gave us rather dingy pictures.

More notable is the software. Android – Google's mobile operating system – is open-source, which means anyone can make their own software based on it. Wileyfox Swift uses the Android 5.1-based Cyanogen operating system (OS). Cyanogen – a community of programmers backed by its own Silicon Valley company – offers an OS that's highly customisable and helps users to protect their privacy and security.

That contrasts with Google's much-discussed exploitation of personal data and the way Android devices often come with pointless add-ons. The emphasis on giving you control also differs from Apple's ethos of keeping things simple, and safe, by imposing restrictions. If you like tinkering with things to get them spot-on, Cyanogen may appeal. If you just want them to work, an iPhone might suit you better – but it'll cost you a lot more.

The difference between Cyanogen and regular Android is very noticeable: you really can customise almost everything, and there are extra security options, including encrypting your whole phone. You have control over whether apps such as Facebook can access your data, and unknown phone numbers can be checked against a database to identify spam callers – not a feature unique to this phone, but a useful one.

Wileyfox has apparently developed its two handsets (the Storm costs £199, with slightly higher specifications) in just a few months at a cost of less than a million pounds. Given the complexity of a modern smartphone, it's a remarkable achievement. It has proved possible because the Swift uses existing technology that's available to other companies, such as Motorola, where one of Wileyfox's founders used to



work. The Swift falls between the prices of the Moto E (see Issue 446) and the recently updated Moto G (Issue 458), and has no particular advantages over them. Battery life was disappointing – less than nine hours of continuous video playback.

Some buyers will be swayed by Cyanogen, but Wileyfox really needs to offer something more to compete with the big brands. If all goes well, it will at least have proved there's room for smaller players and more variety in mobile devices.

SPECIFICATIONS

5in 1280x720-pixel screen • 13-megapixel rear camera • 5-megapixel front camera • 16GB flash storage • microSD card slot • 802.11n Wi-Fi • Bluetooth 4.0 • 3G/4G • 41x72x9.4mm (HxWxD) • 135g • One-year warranty www.snipca.com/18036

VERDICT: We're being slightly generous in recommending it, but the Swift is good value and a refreshing change



ALTERNATIVE: Vodafone Smart Ultra 6 £125 It's Vodafone-only, but this phone shows that you can get better hardware at the Swift's price



LAPTOP | £350 from Ebuyer www.snipca.com/18144

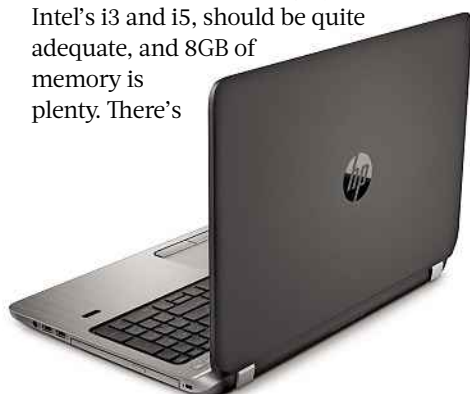
HP Probook 455 G3 Ubuntu

A low-cost laptop that runs Linux

If you want a really cheap PC, every penny counts. The companies that make them are keenly aware of that. Although what they pay Microsoft to install Windows 10 is only a fraction of the £80-odd that it would cost you in a shop, it all adds up. One way to shave a bit more off the price is to install a free operating system (OS) instead.

A couple of months ago (see Issue 455) we looked at Chromebooks, which come with Google's OS. An alternative is Linux, an **open-source** OS based on Unix, which dates all the way back to 1969 and is also the basis of Apple's OS X and iOS. This HP laptop is available with Ubuntu, the version of Linux that's easiest to use.

The quad-core AMD A10-8700P **processor**, which sits roughly between Intel's i3 and i5, should be quite adequate, and 8GB of memory is plenty. There's



little to slow down everyday tasks except the hard drive, which provides a full terabyte of storage but, being a mechanical drive, can't keep up with the other components. A lower-spec model, the Probook 355, is available for as little as £249, and well worth considering if your needs are modest, although it was out of stock at the time of writing.

The 15.6in screen makes this a full-size laptop, but its 1366x768 resolution is no higher than smaller displays. While text and icons come out big the LCD panel is dull and looks clear only from straight on. The keyboard is fine, the trackpad just average. At 2.2kg, the Probook is no MacBook Air, but it's not too heavy, and the battery lasted seven-and-a-half hours of light use. Watching videos or using the internet can halve this, though. You do get a DVD writer and a full set of ports.

Ubuntu is currently in version 15, but the Probook comes with version 12, which is guaranteed to have security updates until early 2017. You could

SPECIFICATIONS

AMD quad-core A10-8700P processor • 8GB memory • 1TB hard drive • 15.6in 1366x768-pixel display • 720p webcam • 802.11n Wi-Fi • Ubuntu OS • 25.5x375x263mm (HxWxD) • 2.26kg • One-year warranty www.snipca.com/18044



upgrade it yourself. The user interface is familiar enough, resembling a cross between Mac and Windows.

LibreOffice is also pre-installed. The Ubuntu Software Centre offers more programs, but the choice isn't inspiring and the 'paid' section has effectively been discontinued.

The Probook 455 G3 is a good basic laptop at a very reasonable price. Just be aware that doing without Windows will severely limit your choice of software.

VERDICT: An attractive laptop at a low price, but not without compromises



ALTERNATIVE: Toshiba Chromebook 2 Full HD £250 If you don't mind working via the web, look out for the updated version of this much slimmer, lighter machine



WHAT SHOULD I BUY? We solve your buying dilemmas

Which printer should I choose?

Q As a retired IT teacher, I get asked all the questions and I'm supposed to know everything. I usually look up the answer in my back copies of *Computeractive*, but since I don't have them to hand now, here's one for you. The question is about choosing a printer. It needs to be wireless, capable of good-quality photo reproduction – so probably a six-cartridge model – and with a straight-through feed so that stiff card can be used.

Terry Holmes

A Canon's new Pixma MG7750 (www.snipca.com/18123, pictured), replacing the MG7550, uses six inks and delivers particularly excellent colour output at good speeds. Although it doesn't have a straight feed, it accepts photo paper up to 300gsm – thicker than stationers' A4 'card' – but doesn't recommend plain paper as thick as this. It can also print on DVDs. Like many printers nowadays, it has a scanner built in. This doesn't come cheap, at a recommended price of £169, but it'll soon



get discounted if you can wait.

Straight paper paths are rarer than they used to be. Epson's Stylus Photo R2000 has a manual feed for media up to A3 size and 1.3mm thick, but costs £455 (www.snipca.com/18124). The A4 Expression Photo XP-760 (£126 from www.snipca.com/18125) uses six Claria Photo HD inks, includes a scanner and takes media up to 0.6mm (450gsm).



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PC | £189 from Dell www.snipca.com/18126

Dell Inspiron Micro 3050

A Windows 10 desktop PC... for *how much?*

If you want a really small, really cheap desktop computer, Google would like you to consider a Chromebox, such as the Asus M031U (see our review, Issue 455). For under £200, you get a compact system and a sprightly performer. The snag being it doesn't have Windows. In fact, it barely has an operating system at all: Chrome OS is pretty much a glorified web browser. So you have to do almost everything online, and the range of programs available (assuming you're generous enough to even call them programs) is very limited.

“A cheap, space-saving PC but it performs moderately and has little storage”

If only you could get a proper Windows 10 PC for that price. Well, you can: it's the new Dell Inspiron Micro. In about a CD case's worth of desk space, this black plastic monolith, with a glossy top and matt sides, contains a proper computer with all the bits and bobs you'd expect. It comes with Windows 8.1, but can be upgraded free of charge to Windows 10. You'll just need a monitor to plug into the **HDMI** or **DisplayPort** socket at the rear. The BenQ GL2450 (£110 from www.snipca.com/18128) is quite a nice fit, taking the total price to around £300.

On the right-hand side are two USB ports, one of which supports the much faster **USB 3.0** – we'll come back to why that's important. There are two more **USB 2.0** connectors at the back, so you can plug in the supplied keyboard and mouse

SPECIFICATIONS

2.41GHz dual-core Intel Celeron J1800 processor • 2GB memory • 32GB **SSD** • Intel HD Graphics • Windows 8.1 (free upgrade to Windows 10) • **USB 3.0** port • 3x **USB 2.0** ports • **SD** card reader • Ethernet port • **802.11ac** Wi-Fi • **Bluetooth 4.0** • **HDMI** port • **DisplayPort** • **SD** card slot • 48x130x130mm • One-year warranty www.snipca.com/18126

(wireless versions are an optional extra) and still have room for other accessories. To get online, there's an Ethernet port to cable up to your broadband router, or built-in **802.11ac** Wi-Fi (the latest and fastest version).

It's certainly a practical PC, but is it a powerful one? Nope. The **processor** is a Celeron, which ironically is Latin for 'swift'. It's not very ably assisted by the meagre 2GB of **RAM**, the bare minimum Windows will accept. Trying to run more than one thing at a time is pushing your luck. But it's happy enough with everyday programs and web pages, and while they may take longer to load or complete operations than you'd expect on a desktop system, Windows feels quite responsive most of the time.

HD films play without a hitch, too, making the Inspiron Micro a credible media centre to sit next to your TV. Don't picture yourself editing videos, tweaking thousands of high-res photos and blasting through the latest 3D games, though: only the most limited creative and entertainment software will run on the Micro.

Its weakest link of all is storage: the 32GB **SSD** is much faster than a hard drive, but has much less room for programs and files, especially considering that Windows 10 already hogs several

gigabytes. You could double the capacity for under a tenner by sticking a 32GB **SD card** in the slot on the left-hand side, but this will be much slower. So unless you keep most of your stuff 'in the cloud' (stored online), you'll need to think about buying an external **USB 3.0** hard drive. A 1TB (1,000GB) drive costs about £40-50.

Dell really didn't need to throw in a decent keyboard and mouse at this price, but it has. The chunky keys give you lots of feedback, and there's a number pad and dedicated media buttons. The mouse is perfectly usable too.

While its mediocre performance and paltry storage prevent it from rivalling more expensive machines, the Dell Inspiron Micro is a good basic system to meet modest needs at a fair price.

VERDICT: A proper PC for under £200 is nothing to be sniffed at, as long as you don't choke on its slow performance

★★★★☆

ALTERNATIVE: HP Pavilion Mini £300
Running a Core i3 processor, this stylish system is good value, though still a lot pricier than the Micro



LAPTOP-TABLET | £749 from PC World www.snipca.com/18064

Toshiba Satellite Radius 15 P50W-C-10E

Sleek laptop with an orbiting touchscreen

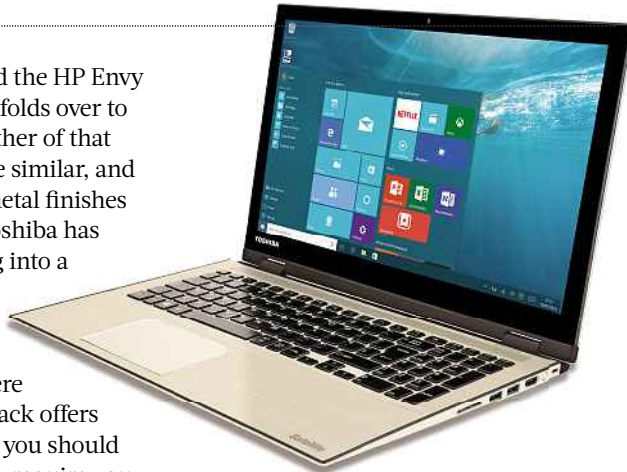
In our last issue we reviewed the HP Envy x360, a full-size laptop that folds over to work as a tablet. Here's another of that type. Their specifications are similar, and that includes the brushed metal finishes over a plastic chassis. But Toshiba has managed to pack everything into a slimmer, lighter case, and topped it off with a crisp Full HD screen.

At the time of writing, there were some tempting cash-back offers knocking around. However, you should read the small print as many require you to pay up front then reclaim the cash-back amount. We'd rather see straightforward pricing so customers can pick the best deal with the least pressure.

So what will you be getting for your money? Not exactly the most portable PC around (at 2.24kg), but it is a reasonably thin one (a fraction over 2cm at its thickest and tapering away to the front). Rubber edges give away that this isn't an Apple-quality laptop, but it feels classy and robust.

The 1920x1080-pixel screen isn't exceptional for a full-size laptop, but shows much more detail than the 1366x768 Envy x360, and with better contrast and a wider range of colours. It's unapologetically glossy, so reflections can be distracting – but of course it's a touchscreen, so don't worry, it'll soon be covered in fingerprints anyway. You can use the touchpad when the keyboard is folded out in laptop mode, but it's quite cramped, weirdly placed over to the left, and is excruciatingly poor – so swiping the screen may be your preferred approach.

Rotating the keyboard all the way round, to sandwich backwards against the screen, gives you something less like



a tablet and more like, well, a folded-up laptop. But it's usable, and when you do want to type, you've got a proper keyboard, with a numeric keypad, that feels much more convincing than most tablet add-ons.

As with the Envy x360, the i5 processor provides adequate performance for tasks including basic photo- and video-editing, and the integrated Intel HD Graphics chip just about manages older 3D games. In our video-playback tests, the battery ran down 56 per cent in two-and-a-half hours, so you'd struggle to get six hours out of it, which is acceptable but not great for such a heavy machine.

As something that mostly sits on a desk but has tablet capability, the Radius is quite appealing – more so than HP's Envy – thanks to the screen. But it's not cheap for the so-so processing power you get.

VERDICT: We're still not convinced by the hybrid format, but Toshiba has done a neat job here, but at a price

★★★★☆

ALTERNATIVE: HP Envy x360 £599

For £150 less at the time of writing, the Envy x360 offers nearly as much, but with a little more bulk and a coarser screen



SPECIFICATIONS

2.2GHz Intel Core i5 5200U processor • 8GB memory • 1TB hybrid hard drive • 15.6in 1920x1080-pixel touchscreen • Webcam • 802.11ac Wi-Fi • Bluetooth 4.0 • 2x USB 3.0 ports • USB 2.0 port • 4K HDMI port • Windows 8.1 Home (upgradable free to Windows 10) • 20.1x379.5x244.9mm (HxWxD) • 2.24kg • One-year warranty www.snipca.com/18064

COMING SOON

AUTUMN 2015

Due to arrive this month, Acer's Revo Build lets you put together your own PC without any technical skills. You start with a base unit (under £200), and add features (storage, speakers, etc). Just 125mm square, the base unit even has memory that can be upgraded by undoing one screw.



AUTUMN 2015

Apple's iPad Pro will go on sale in November for around £650. With a big 12.9in screen, split-screen multitasking and an optional keyboard, it's a tablet with laptop aspirations. The Pencil accessory should make writing on the screen feel nearly as precise as on paper.



WINTER 2015

Google has already announced a potential rival to the iPad Pro, the 10.2in Pixel C. It looks promising (it also has an optional keyboard), but the Android operating system doesn't yet have features like split-screen or as many advanced apps as Apple's iOS.



WINTER 2015

Asus has unveiled the Zen AiO S, an all-in-one desktop PC. Available soon from about £800, it looks similar to an iMac, but has more specifications and the choice of a 4K screen.



NEXT ISSUE

ON SALE
28 Oct



Amazon Fire HD 10
Big-screen tablet for under £200



Vibox Exile
A desktop PC with excellent specifications

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www.snipca.com/14981 *At time of press



LAPTOP

Asus X555LA-XX290H
£300 from www.snipca.com/18151
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. £208 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: **Palcomp 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 4
£319 from www.snipca.com/18100
Tested: Issue 460



The 2015 update to Apple's 7.9in tablet greatly improves the screen and camera, boosts performance, and makes it worth the £100 extra over the iPad mini 2 (still a good budget buy). Go for the £399 64GB version if you can, though.

ALTERNATIVE: **Apple iPad Air 2** The 9.7in option is still slim and light, also has Touch ID and Apple Pay, and the range of apps beats Android. £399 from www.snipca.com/18139

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. £170 from www.snipca.com/17193

DIGITAL CAMERA

Panasonic Lumix DMC-GF6
£285 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. £249 from www.snipca.com/15854

E-READER

Amazon Kindle Paperwhite
£110 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

Our pick of products that have
won the Buy It award

HOMEPLUGS

Devolo dLAN 1200 Triple+ Starter Kit

£119 from www.snipca.com/15369

Tested: Issue 444



Devolo's latest HomePlug adapters are the fastest we've ever seen. They're also well designed too, with a passthrough socket so you can still power another device and the design should avoid skirting boards and other obstacles.

ALTERNATIVE: D-Link PowerLine AV2 1000HD Gigabit Starter Kit Fast (speeds of up to 1000Mbps), much cheaper and very easy to set up, but the lack of a passthrough socket is frustrating. £43 from www.snipca.com/17836

MULTIFUNCTION PRINTER

Canon Pixma MG6650

£76 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 – buy the XL cartridges and running costs work out at 7.7p per colour page or 2.4p for black and white. This makes it very affordable to run.

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

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WEB DESIGN

Xara Web Designer Premium 11

£70 from www.snipca.com/16955

Tested: Issue 453



This visual web-design program makes creating sites more like laying out a document than writing **HTML** code, and sites can be 'responsive', meaning they look right on both big and small screens without extra work. A basic version is also available for half the price.

ALTERNATIVE: Serif WebPlus X8

Comes with lots of templates, but creates separate desktop and mobile versions instead of responsive sites, and can be slow to use. £90 from www.snipca.com/14964

SMART TV

Samsung UE40H5500

£389 from www.snipca.com/18152

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.

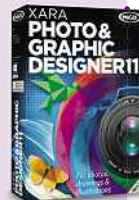
ALTERNATIVE: Sony KDL-43W755C

Excellent image quality, stylish looks and a 43in screen. £479 from www.snipca.com/18153

COMPETITION

Win 1 of 5 Xara Photo & Graphic Designer 11

The 11th version of Xara Photo & Graphic Designer includes new tools that make the image-editing software better than ever. The most significant improvement is in the Brush Tool, which now has a new type of Art Brush and more sophisticated Scatter Brushes. Other new features include a text-background colour option so you can highlight words easily; syncing with Dropbox and Google Drive; and the automatic creation of clickable links when you type a URL. To enter, email your address to acomp@dennis.co.uk with 'xara' in the subject line, by midnight 27 October.



Xara Photo & Graphic Designer 11

is available to buy for £43.87 from Amazon (www.snipca.com/18081). For more info visit www.xara.com/uk and follow on Twitter @xargroup.

PC MONITOR

Dell UltraSharp U2412M

£195 from www.snipca.com/15271

Tested: Issue 378



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

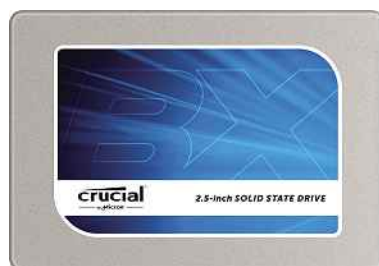
ALTERNATIVE: AOC i2360PHU A good quality budget 23in monitor that's easily adjustable and has a built-in **USB 2.0** hub too. £134 from www.snipca.com/16706

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

£140 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

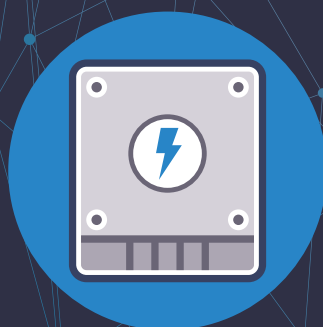


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Thank You!



We want to say a special thank you to everyone who has given our 2014 Back Issue CD a five-star review on Amazon. That includes...

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★ Dave Harper ★ Sproggit ★ Mr K Meyler ★ Enid ★ MalcolmW ★
A Watt ★ John B ★ Sidlev ★ Artie G Artie ★ John Smith
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Ali252 ★ P Matthew ★ Stewart Awbery
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Broom ★ Leslie John Bell ★ Clive Reynolds ★ Andreos Greco



Thanks for all your kind words – we really appreciate it.
And thanks in advance to everyone who posts a review.

Our 2014 Back Issue CD is still on sale on Amazon:

www.snipca.com/14981 (or search for 'computeractive cd').
It costs £15, but Amazon often discounts this to around £12.

You can also buy the 2013 CD at www.snipca.com/16010.

Workshops & Tips

PULL OUT
& KEEP
Issue 460

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

35 Find any PC file faster
38 See files left over after uninstalling software

40 Move all your data from Android to iOS
42 Remove Microsoft's sneaky Windows 10 download

PLUS

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

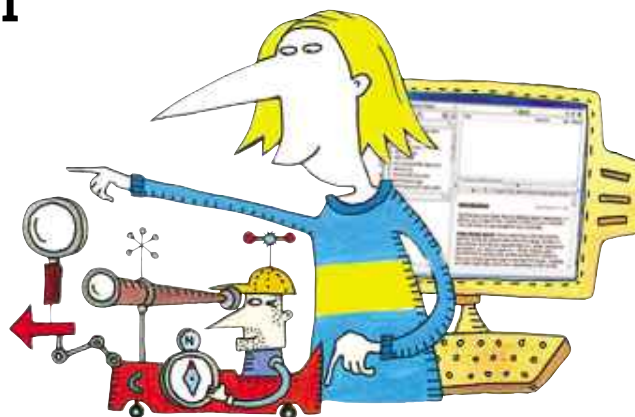
47 Make Office Better
48 Secret Tips For... iOS 9

Find any PC file faster

What you need: Windows XP, Vista, 7 or 8 **Time required:** 30 minutes

After we included Java in our 'Software you must Uninstall Now' Cover Feature in Issue 458, a lot of readers emailed us to say they are happy to install the latest version of the **plug-in** (and live with the security risks) if they can continue to use some of the brilliant programs that require

Java. One such program is DocFetcher, which searches your PC much faster than Windows. Advanced tools include the option to search for content within zipped, Outlook, PDF and Notepad files, and the ability to use refined search criteria to get more accurate results.



STEP 1 One of our main gripes with Java is the way it installs new versions *alongside* existing versions. Most other programs (like CCleaner, for example) simply update older versions to bring the program up to speed. When an older version of Java is running on your PC, it makes it more vulnerable to attacks. You should therefore uninstall any existing versions of Java (via the Control Panel) then install the latest version from www.snipca.com/18021. Be careful to untick any boxes for optional extras during setup. Now download DocFetcher by going to www.snipca.com/18020 and clicking its setup file **1** (click the zipped file **2** if you want the portable version). Run the setup file and open the program.

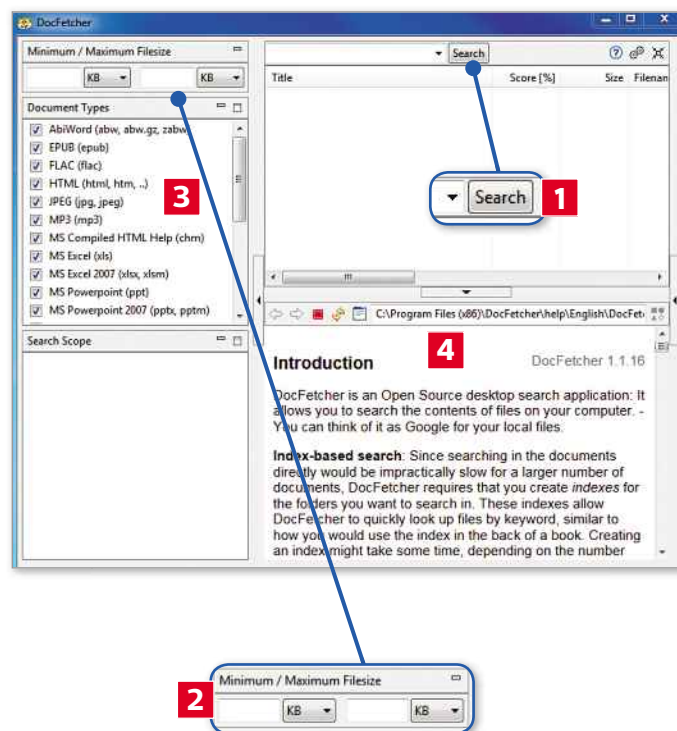
2 [docfetcher-1.1.16-portable.zip](#)

1 [docfetcher_1.1.16_win32_setup.exe](#)

All downloads below support both 32-bit and 64-bit operating systems.

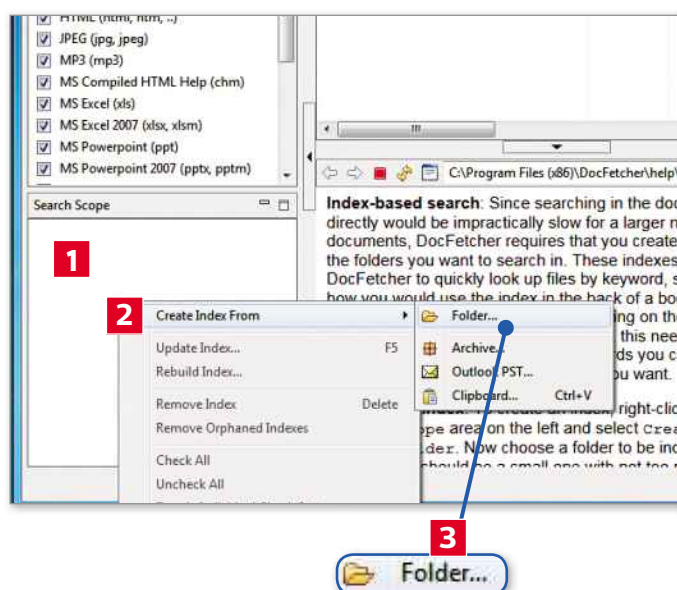
Download & Release Notes	Supported Platforms
docfetcher_1.1.16_win32_setup.exe Run the installer and follow the instructions.	Windows XP/Vista/7/8
docfetcher-1.1.16-portable.zip This is the portable version that runs on all supported platforms. Installation: Unpack the archive into a folder of your choice, then launch DocFetcher with the respective launcher for your platform. Make sure you have write permissions for the destination folder (i.e. don't unpack into a folder like "C:\Program Files").	Windows XP/Vista/7/8; Linux; Mac OS X 10.5 and newer
DocFetcher-1.1.16.dmg Launch DocFetcher by double-clicking on the application bundle.	Mac OS X 10.5 and newer

Other Downloads

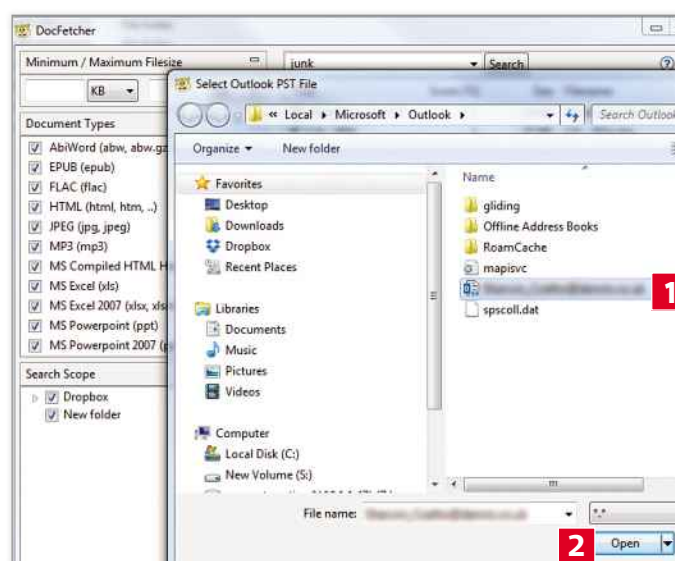


STEP 2 DocFetcher consists of a search field **1** and three main sections – file size **2**, file type **3** and a preview pane **4**. Before using the program to search, you need to create a 'search index' for those folders you're likely to search in. DocFetcher then indexes each file (and its contents) within your chosen folders.

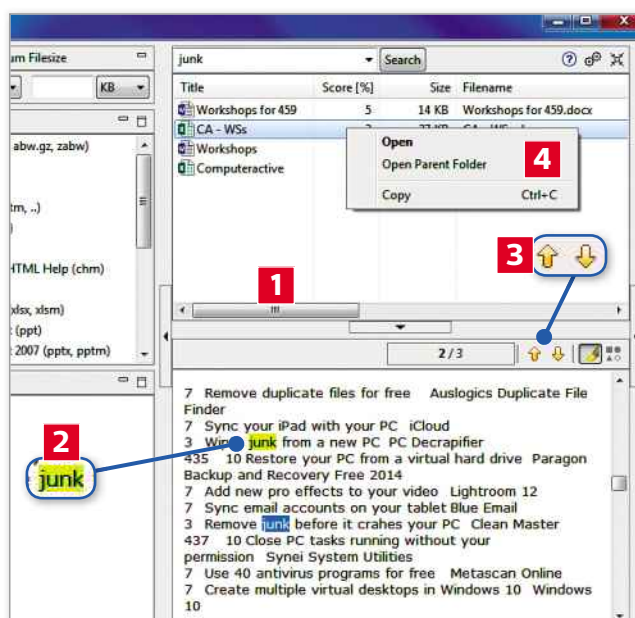
Workshops



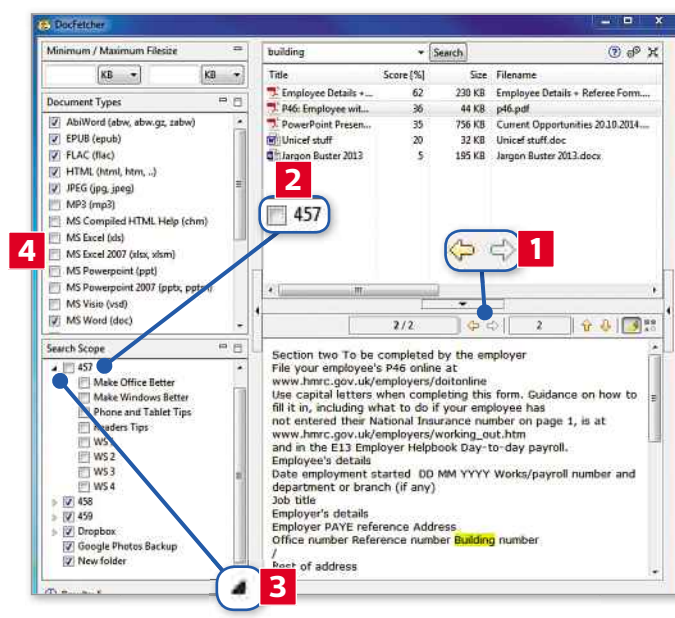
STEP 3 To index a folder, right-click in the Search Scope pane **1**, move your cursor to Create Index From **2**, then click Folder **3**. Navigate to the folder you want to index, then click OK. In the Indexing Queue window that appears, you'll see five boxes, three of which will be ticked. Tick the remaining two ('Detect executable zip and 7z archives' and 'Store relative paths if possible'), then click Run. Your folder will now appear in the Search Scope section, meaning its files are now searchable. Repeat this step to index other folders that you regularly search.



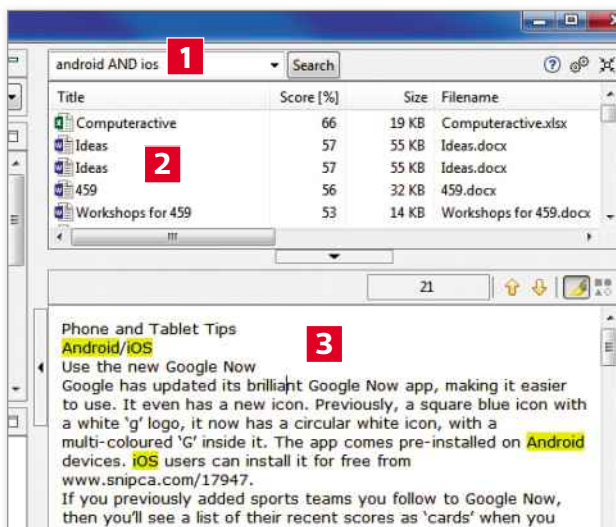
STEP 4 If you use Outlook within Office, DocFetcher can also search for terms within your emails. To do this, you first need to index your inbox. Right-click the Search Scope section, click Create Index Form, then click Outlook PST. In the 'File name' field below, type `%localappdata%\Microsoft\Outlook\`, then click Open. Select your email address **1**, then scroll to the right to confirm its file type. DocFetcher only supports PST files, though Outlook also saves ODT (Outlook Data) files. If you see PST next to your email address, click Open **2**. Now tick 'Store relative paths if possible', then click Run to begin indexing your inbox.



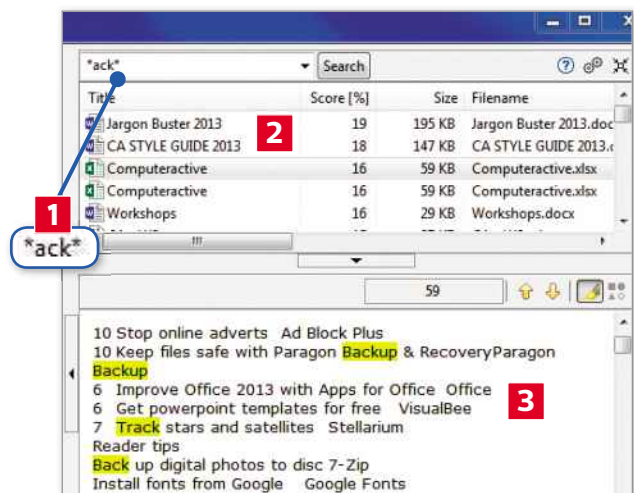
STEP 5 Next, type your search term/phrase in the search field at the top and press Enter. Instantly, you'll see a list of files containing your search term/phrase. Scroll right **1** to see the file type and when it was last modified. Select a file to see instances of your search term highlighted in the preview pane **2**. Click the up or down arrows **3** to jump to other instances of that term within the pane. Right-click any file to see more options **4**.



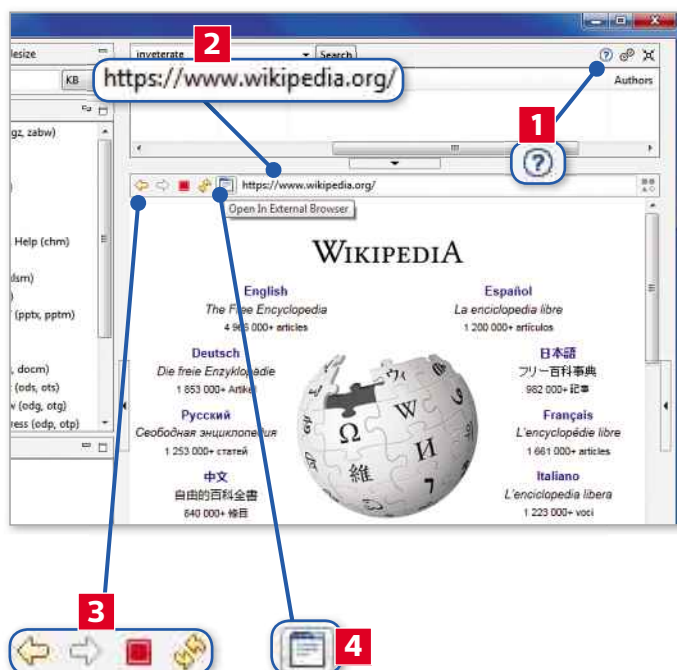
STEP 6 Unlike Windows, DocFetcher also lets you search for specific words in zipped, PDF and Notepad files. Enter the word/phrase you want to find, then press Enter. If it's a PDF file, then click the right and left arrows **1** to see further instances of that word/phrase. You can untick the folders you want to exclude from your search **2** and also click the folder dropdown menus **3** to select subfolders. You can even narrow your search to certain file types by unticking options in the Document Types panes **4**.



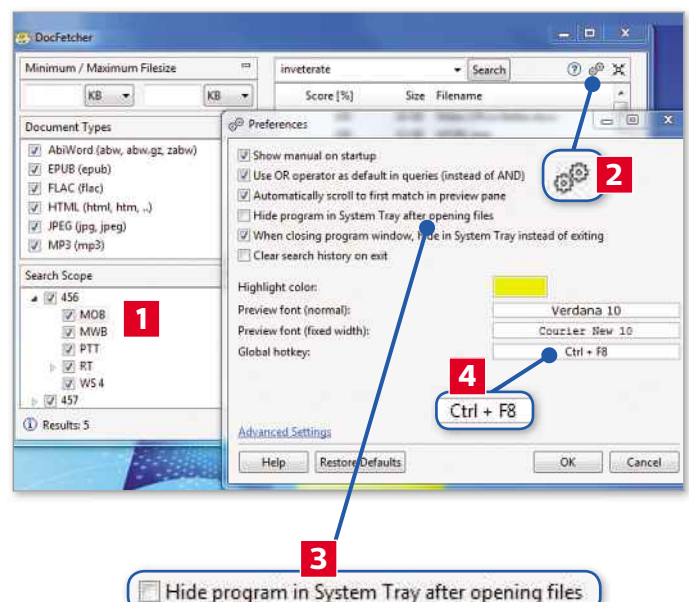
STEP 7 Searches are not case sensitive, so you don't need to worry about capitalising letters. DocFetcher also lets you use so-called 'Boolean operators' (words used in your search term to refine your search – these *do* need capitalising). For example, typing **android AND ios** in the search field 1 will only display files 2 containing both the terms 'Android' and 'iOS' 3. To find files that contain either term or both, type **android OR ios**. Likewise, you can search for **android NOT ios** (or vice versa) to only see files containing the first term.



STEP 8 The 'wildcards' feature lets you search your files for parts of a word. To do this, type an asterisk before and after the series of letters you want to find. For example, type ***ack*** 1 and you'll see all files 2 with words that contain this arrangement of letters 3. You can also run what's known as 'fuzzy searches', which locate words/phrases in your files that are almost identical to your search term – useful for finding words you may have misspelt. To run a fuzzy search, type a tilde (~) immediately after the search term. For example, search for **more~** and you'll see results for files containing the words move, mode, core, tore and mole.



STEP 9 All your previous search terms are saved and you can access them via the search bar dropdown menu. DocFetcher even has its own web browser, which is handy for quick searches. To use this, click the '?' icon 1 to reset the preview pane. Next, type the website address in the search field 2 and press Enter to open it. You can go back, forward, stop and refresh 3 your web page and even open the page you're on in your default browser (Chrome, Firefox, etc) 4.



STEP 10 Right-click any folder or sub-folder 1 to see options to open it, update its index, see a list of its files or remove it from the list of indexed folders. Closing DocFetcher exits the program by default, but there's a way to minimise it to the System Tray in your notification area instead. To do that, click the Preferences button (two cogs) 2 and tick 'When closing program, hide in System Tray instead of exiting' 3. From this window, you can also change the highlight colour for text in the preview pane and customise the **hotkey** to launch DocFetcher on your PC 4. Click OK to save your changes. ●

See files left over after uninstalling software

What you need: BCUninstaller; All versions of Windows (XP to 10)

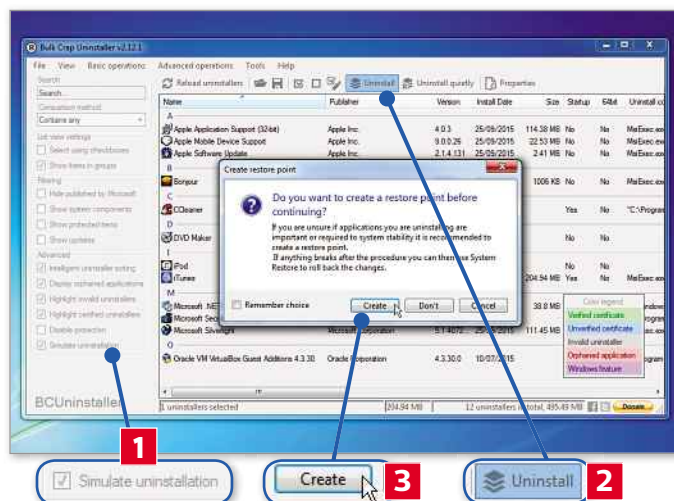
Time required: 20 minutes

You should regularly uninstall any unwanted programs and junk to free up space and keep your PC from slowing. However, it can be a chore to uninstall these programs one at a time. Even when they are uninstalled, some programs leave traces behind that clog

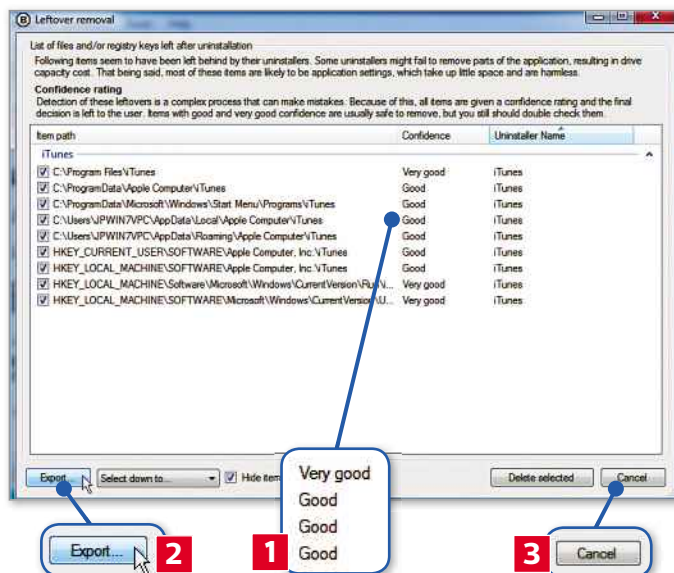
up your PC. BCUninstaller is a free tool that lets you batch-uninstall programs, and simulate the removal of a program to show you which junk files an uninstalled program leaves behind. It can then also remove these leftover items.



STEP 1 Go to www.snipca.com/18041. Click Download **1**, save the file, then double-click it to install. Select the Standard Installation option **2**, then follow the steps – there are no unwanted extras to worry about. After installation, launch the program and follow the configuration wizard. Keep clicking Continue until you reach the Network screen. Here, you can untick 'Automatically send anonymous usage statistics' if you like.



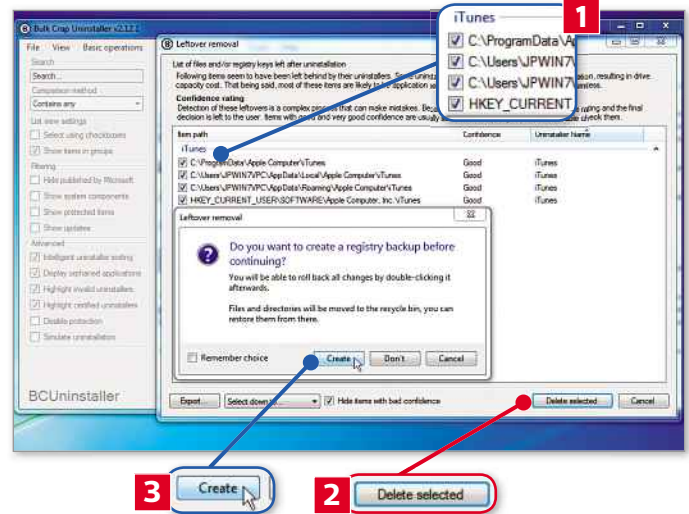
STEP 2 To find out what a program leaves behind, we'll simulate uninstalling the latest version of iTunes (one of the programs we recommended removing in Issue 458's Cover Feature). In the left-hand pane of the BCUninstaller window, tick the 'Simulate uninstallation' box **1**. Now click iTunes in the main pane and click Uninstall **2**. If you see a 'Waiting for processes to exit' message, click 'Kill all', then OK. You'll be asked if you want to create a **restore point** – click Create **3**. When you see 'Task finished', click Close. When asked whether you want to look for leftovers from the uninstallation, click Yes.



STEP 3 The window that opens displays a list of files, folders and registry entries that will be left behind if you uninstall iTunes. Each item is given a Confidence rating **1**, which indicates how safe it is to remove it following uninstallation. As you can see, iTunes leaves behind quite a number of items, all of which earn a 'Good' or 'Very good' rating – meaning they can be safely uninstalled. But don't delete anything yet. You can click Export **2** to save this list as a text file (optional), then click Cancel **3**.

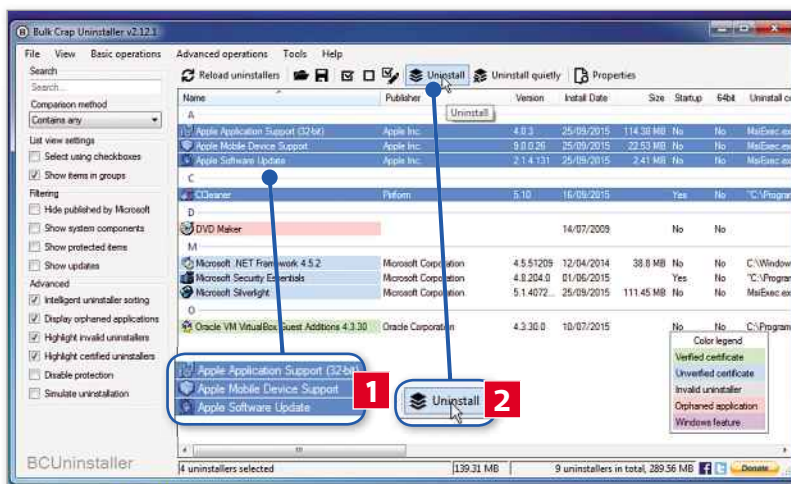
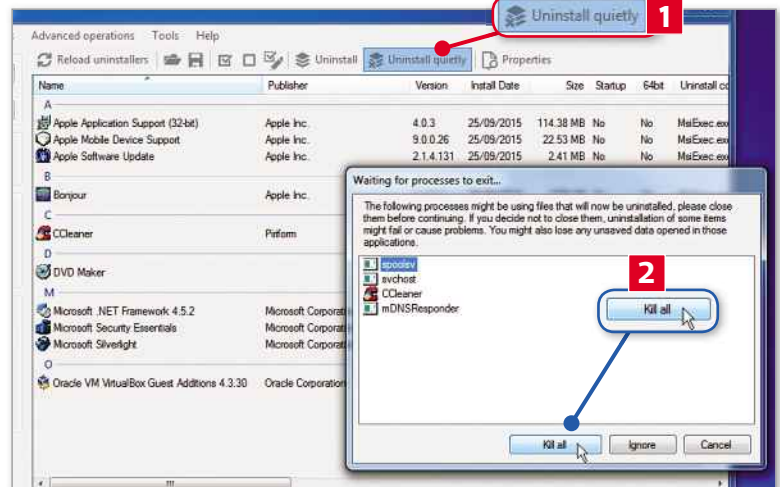


STEP 4 If you subsequently decide to uninstall the program, run BCUninstaller again and untick the 'Simulate uninstallation' option on the left. Click iTunes in the main pane and click Uninstall and follow the steps. When iTunes prompts you to choose whether you want to repair or remove the program, select the latter, wait until the program is uninstalled, then click Finish. When the Uninstall progress window says 'Task finished' **1**, click Close **2**.



STEP 5 Again, you'll see the message prompting you to look for leftover files. Click Yes. Make sure all items listed with a Good or 'Very good' confidence rating are ticked **1**, then click 'Delete selected' **2**. You will then be prompted to create a registry backup before continuing. This is a good idea, especially if the junk includes any registry keys, so click Create **3**, browse for a location for your backup, then click Save.

STEP 6 You can also use BCUninstaller to uninstall a program in the background without the need for further action on your behalf. To do this, highlight the program in BCUninstaller's main section, then click 'Uninstall quietly' **1**. Click 'Kill all' **2**, then OK if prompted to close any running processes. Create a restore point when prompted, then click OK. Not all programs can be uninstalled in this way – BCUninstaller will prompt you to switch to a 'loud' uninstall if that's the case.



STEP 7 To uninstall programs in a batch, run BCUninstaller as normal, then scroll through the list, selecting multiple programs by holding down the Ctrl key and clicking those you want to remove **1**. Click Uninstall **2** or 'Uninstall quietly'. Click 'Kill all', then OK to close any running processes. Create a restore point when prompted, then follow any prompts required by 'loud' uninstallers. Click Close once you see the 'Task finished' message. As with uninstalling a single program, you'll be prompted to review and remove leftover files (refer to Step 5 to do that).

Move all your data from Android to iOS

What you need: New or formatted iPhone or iPad; Android phone or tablet

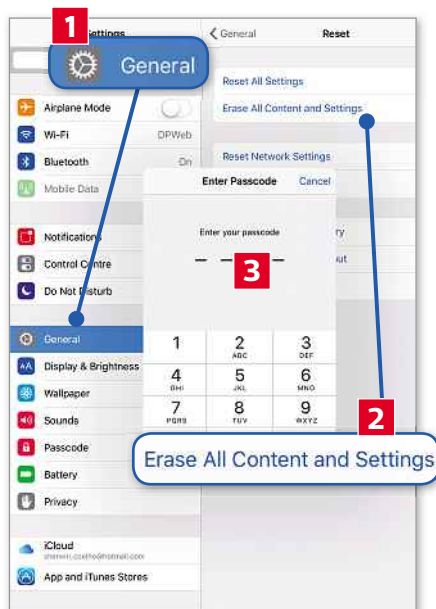
Time required: 45 minutes

Moving your data from your old device to a new one can be cumbersome, especially if you're switching mobile operating systems. Apple has now made this process much easier by releasing its first Android app 'Move to iOS'. The free app helps you

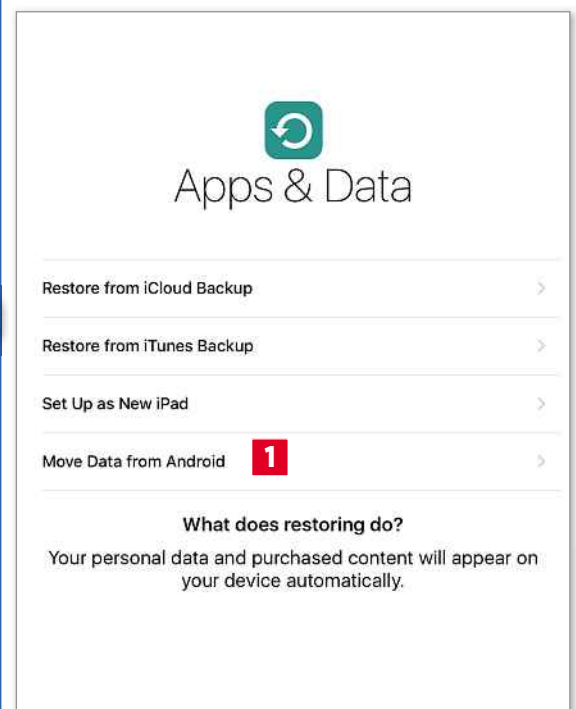
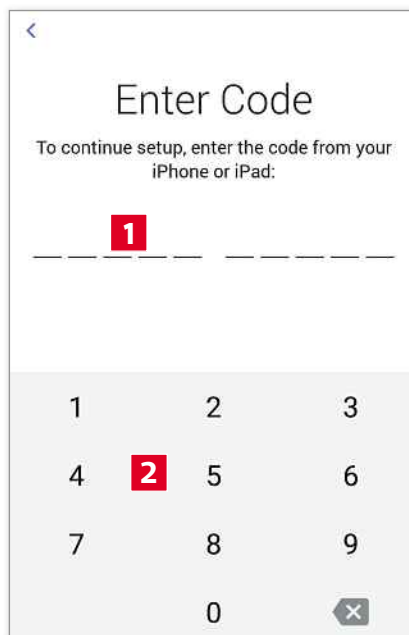
move all your Android data (Gmail messages, Chrome bookmarks, Google calendar events and all the photos, videos and contacts stored on your device) seamlessly to iOS. At the end we'll show you how to get the data from your other free Android apps on to iOS.



STEP 1 If you have a brand new iOS device that you haven't set up yet go to Step 2, then Step 3. To transfer Android data to an existing (second-hand or inherited) iOS device, you first need to erase all data on this iOS device. This gives you a clean start and can speed up a slow device – you can reinstall any apps when you set it up again. To re-set your device, tap Settings, General **1**, scroll to the bottom and tap Reset. Next, tap 'Erase All Content and Settings' **2**. Now, type your passcode **3**, tap Erase (twice), then type your Apple password and wait for the device to delete all your data and reboot.

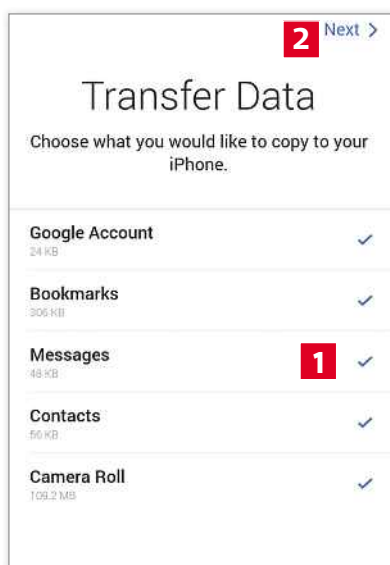


STEP 2 Ensure your Android and iOS devices are connected to a power source and your Android device is connected to a Wi-Fi network. You need to update your Android apps to ensure you have the latest versions. To do this, open the Play Store, tap the three lines at the top left, My Apps, then Update All. Now install 'Move to iOS' from www.snipca.com/18043 (don't be worried by the negative reviews – many of them have been written by disgruntled Android fans unhappy with Apple's new app). Open the app, tap Continue, Agree, then Next. You'll now see the Enter Code screen with 10 blank spaces **1** and a numeric keypad **2**.

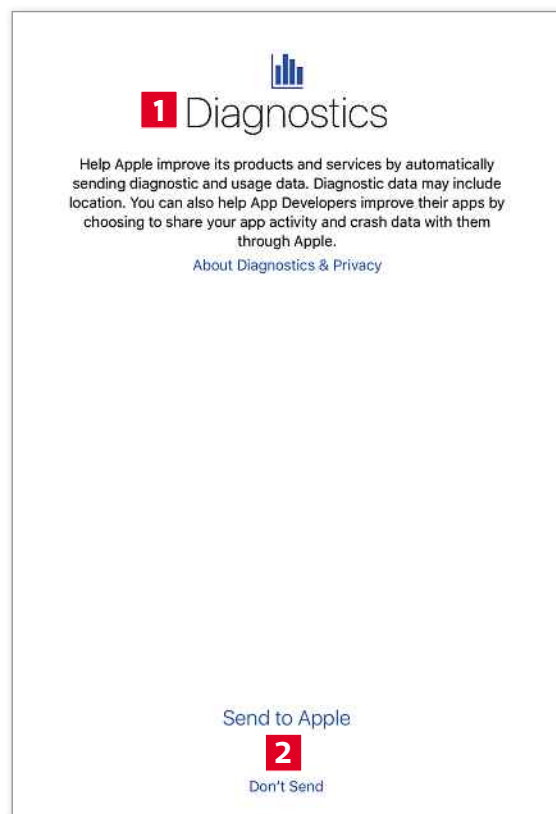
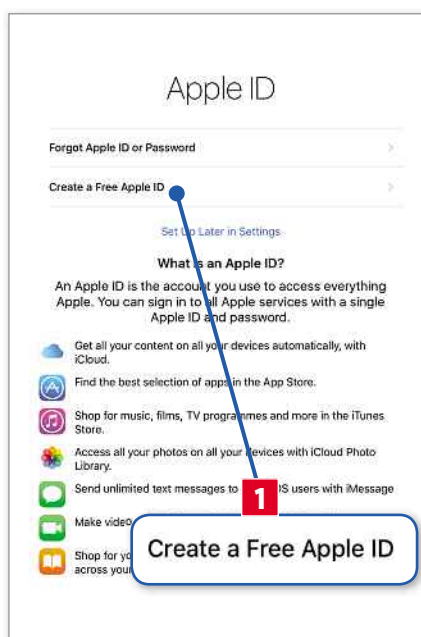


STEP 3 At this point, switch on your new/reset iOS device. Swipe the Hello 'slide to set up' screen, then tap English (to set your language) and United Kingdom (to set your country). Now tap to select your home Wi-Fi network, enter its password, then tap Join. Next, tap Continue, Enable Location Services, then tap the digits to create a four-digit passcode, which will be used to unlock your device. Re-enter this to confirm. On the Apps & Data screen, you'll see different ways in which you can restore your data. Tap the new option – 'Move Data from Android' **1**, then tap Continue. You'll now see a 10-digit code on your screen.

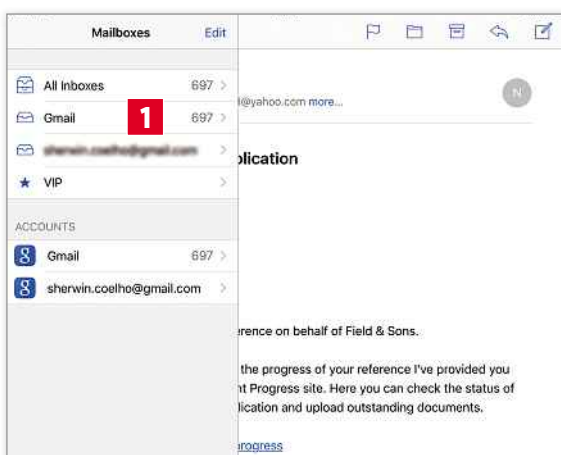
STEP 4 Now enter the code shown on your iOS device into your Android device, where you'll see a 'Connecting to iOS' message. By default all your data is selected **1**, but you can tap to untick any you don't want. Tap Next **2** to see the progress of your transfer on both devices. This can take a while, depending on how much data you're transferring and your Wi-Fi speed. When that's done, you'll see a Transfer Complete screen on your Android device. It will mention that 'media saved within apps' were not copied. But don't worry, we'll show you how to achieve the same result at the end of Step 7. Tap Done to proceed.



STEP 5 On your iOS device, tap Continue Setting Up iPad/iPhone. You now need to sign in using your Apple ID. If you don't have one, tap 'Don't have an Apple ID or forgot it?', 'Create a Free Apple ID' **1** and follow the steps. As with your Google Play account, your Apple ID lets you install apps and other media (books, movies and music) from the App Store. It also lets you sync your content across devices using Apple's cloud storage service iCloud (which comes with 5GB of free space). After logging in using your Apple ID, tap Continue, then tap Agree twice.



STEP 6 Tap Merge to confirm you want to transfer your bookmarks from Chrome to Safari and your Android contacts to your iCloud account. Next, tap Continue and enter your mobile number. This will be used to verify your account in future, if required. Now tap Next, then tap Turn On Siri to activate Apple's voice-activated personal assistant. On the next two screens – Diagnostics **1** and App Analytics – there are options to share your app usage with Apple **2** and app developers. Finally, tap Get Started to see your home screen with the default Apple apps.



STEP 7 In order to sync your email, bookmarks, contacts and calendar info, you'll need to log in using your Gmail account. You'll be prompted to do this shortly after your device boots or when you first open the Mail, Safari, Photos or Contacts apps. Enter your login details and tap Allow. All your data will now begin syncing to your iOS device. Now open any of the aforementioned apps and you'll see that your Android data has been transferred **1**. If you reset an existing iOS device, open the Apple App Store and tap Purchased at the bottom to see a list of the apps you previously installed. Simply tap the icons beside them to reinstall these. If you moved from an Android device, search in the App Store for iOS versions of the apps that were on it. All the popular free Android apps (including Google Photos, YouTube, Google Maps, Dropbox, WhatsApp Messenger, Spotify and BBC iPlayer) are also free in iOS. Install the apps and log into your accounts to see all your data on iOS. You'll need to buy paid-for apps again in the Apple App Store. ●

Remove Microsoft's sneaky Windows 10 download

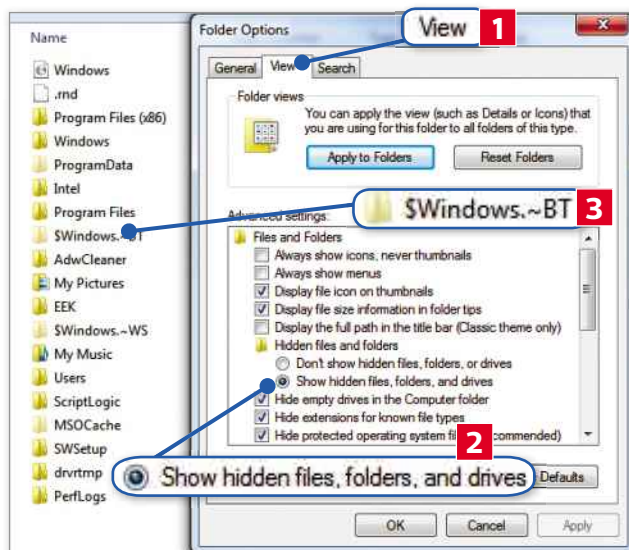
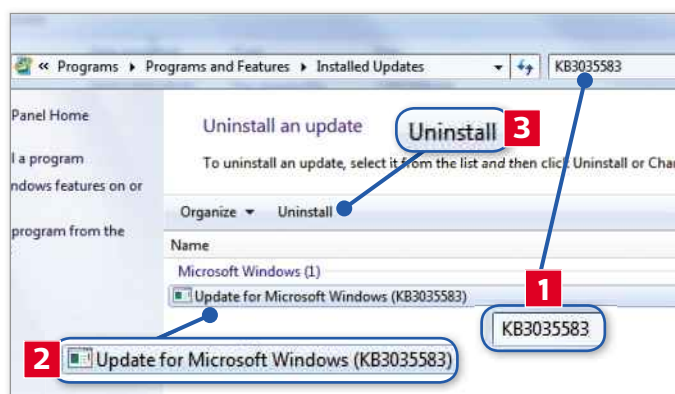
What you need: Windows 7 or 8 **Time required:** 15 minutes

Microsoft has sneakily downloaded a massive folder (around 6GB) on to millions of PCs running Windows 7 and 8. It contains installation files for Windows 10 and is downloaded whether or not you 'reserved' your copy of the new operating system. Its

main purpose is to make the process smooth should you decide to upgrade. If you have no plans of doing that in the near future, then we'll show you how to stop the folder automatically downloading to your PC, letting you reclaim valuable storage space.

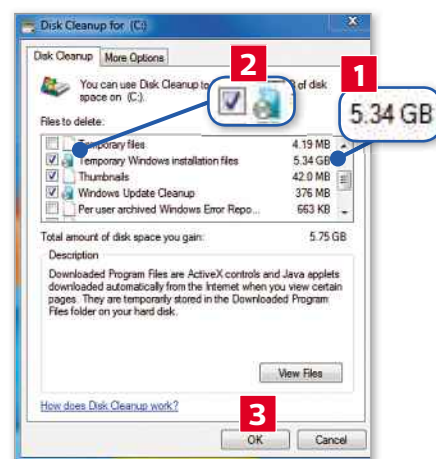


STEP 1 Deleting the folder is futile because it'll automatically re-download the next time your PC runs a Windows Update. You first need to uninstall the specific Windows Update that's responsible for the download. To do that, press the Windows key and type **windows update**. Now right-click that option, click 'Run as administrator', then Yes to confirm. Next, click Installed Updates at the bottom left, then type **KB3035583** in the search field **1** to locate the notorious update. Click the update **2**, click Uninstall **3**, then Yes to confirm. After that's done, click the top-left back button, then 'Change settings'. Next, untick the 'Give me recommended updates...' box in the 'Recommended updates' section. This will stop that specific update automatically downloading with future Windows updates.



STEP 2 It's now safe to delete the folder. Even though it's on your C drive, you won't be able to see it because it's hidden. To access it, first open your C drive, click the Organize dropdown menu at the top left, then 'Folder and search options'. Now click the View tab **1**, select 'Show hidden files, folders and drives' **2**, then click Apply and OK. You'll now see the folder in question: '\$Windows~BT' **3**. To permanently get rid of it, click it, press Shift+Delete, click Yes, Continue and wait until that's done. Click Yes if you get any prompts to confirm deletion during the process.

STEP 3 Because the folder is massive, it's likely that it won't get completely deleted using this method. Instead use your PC's Disk Cleanup tool. Press the Windows key, type **disk cleanup**, then press Enter. Now click OK, click the 'Clean up system files' button at the bottom left, then click OK again. You should now see a 'Temporary Windows installation files' option, which will be a few GBs worth **1** (depending on how effectively you were able to delete the folder in Step 2). Tick to select it **2**, click OK **3**, then 'Clean up' to delete it.



NEXT ISSUE

- Control CCleaner from the web
- Add tabs to Windows Explorer
- Make Google Earth work in Windows 10
- Find out what's crashing your PC

Subscribe to Computeractive at getcomputeractive.co.uk

ON SALE
28 Oct

TIP OF THE FORTNIGHT

Use Chromecast's new features

Following Google's announcement about changes to Chromecast on September 29, I noticed that the Chromecast app on my Android (www.snipca.com/18112) and iOS (www.snipca.com/18113) devices had received a significant update, with a redesigned interface and new options.

Connect the app to your TV, then tap 'Browse your Cast Apps'. You'll be taken to the new What's On tab,



where you'll see a list of apps installed on your device that work with your Chromecast. Tap the Get Apps tab to

bring up a list of other Chromecast-compatible apps you can install.

You can now customise Chromecast's background images on your TV screen, using photos from your Google Photos and Facebook account. To do that, tap the Devices tab, then Customise Backdrop (or the cog icon, see screenshot), then Allow.

In this new Backdrop section, you'll see a list of options for apps, including Google Photos, Facebook and Flickr. Simply select the one you want, tap the slider at the top to turn it on, accept requests for permissions (for Facebook and Flickr), then tick to select the albums containing photos you want to use as your backdrop images.

To change how fast or slowly the images in your albums change, return to the Backdrop section, scroll down, tap 'Customise speed', tap the slider to turn it on, then choose from the three speeds on offer – Slow, Normal or Fast.

Brett Singleton



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

ONLINE SHOPPING

Tweak Amazon's settings to see only items you're interested in

✓ My wife recently bought a few items using my Amazon account. Unfortunately, it completely messed up my Amazon recommendations. After a little research, I realised I could tweak my recommendations so that they better reflect *my* interests again.

Go to www.amazon.co.uk, click 'Sign in' at the top right and log into your account. Move your cursor to the Your Account dropdown menu (at the top right) and click Your Recommendations. You'll see a list of categories based on items you've searched for. Click the Recommended For You tab at the top to see a list of all the items you've recently searched for. At the bottom left of each item, you'll see two boxes – 'I own it' and 'Not interested'. Tick the most relevant box for each item on the page. Next, click the Improve Your Recommendations tab at the top to see a list of items you've bought. Simply tick 'Don't use for recommendations' in the box next to those items.

I don't want my wife seeing what birthday present I have in mind for her whenever she accesses Amazon. Thankfully, there's a way to stop certain items from appearing in your browsing history. Click Your Browsing

History at the top, then click the 'Delete this item' link beside those items you want to hide.

Lawrence Ford

BROWSER EXTENSION

Use the new Pocket extension in Firefox

✓ If you use Firefox as your main browser, you may have noticed that a small pocket-shaped icon has appeared in a recent version, which lets you use Pocket within the browser. Pocket is a brilliant free service that lets you sync long articles across all your devices so that you can read them later at your convenience.

Simply click the Firefox extension, then 'Log in' (if you have a Pocket account) or 'Sign up with email' (to create one), then log into your account. In future, whenever you come across an interesting article that you'd rather save offline to read on your phone or tablet when it's more convenient (when you're commuting, for example), simply

click the extension (see screenshot below left). You can also read these saved articles by logging into www.getpocket.com.

Richard Stevens

WINDOWS 10

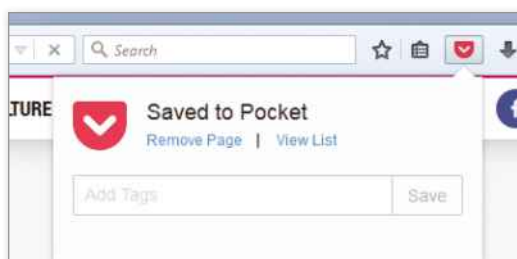
Fix Windows 10 printer error message

✓ Thanks for your excellent feature 'Windows 10 Problems Fixed' in Issue 457. One problem that immediately resonated with me was 'Why has my trusty printer stopped working?' because I had a similar problem with my KODAK 3250 printer.

Basically, after upgrading to Windows 10, I kept seeing the printer error message: '100-8200 UI - file is missing'. I followed the advice in your feature (which suggested manually re-installing the printer software), but it didn't fix the problem. I knew my ink cartridges were empty, so I decided to replace them and then tried the fix again.

Doing this immediately solved the problem and Windows 10 detected my printer. Many online forums warn users against paying heed to Windows 10's vague printer errors. In most cases, the fix is a simple one which people tend to overlook – such as empty cartridges or a faulty connection.

Dean Stockton



Phone and Tablet Tips

Brilliant things to do on your device

ANDROID

Quickly find any app on your device



If you have a lot of apps on your device, then searching for the one you want can be fiddly.

Thankfully, there are a few simple ways to speed up your search. The quickest method is to swipe up from the bottom of your device to activate Google Now. Next, tap the mic icon, then simply speak the name of the app you want to open. For example, say 'Open Evernote'.

Another method – which works on Nexus and some other Android devices – is to press the app drawer icon (the circle with six dots at the bottom of your screen). Your cursor will now appear in the search field on your app drawer screen. Start typing the name of the app you want to see it as an autosuggest option. The apps in your app drawer are arranged alphabetically, so you can also scroll down the list to locate the one you want.

ANDROID

Use Firefox's handy choice of search options



The latest version of Firefox for Android (www.snipca.com/18066) now gives you a choice of search platforms (Google, Yahoo, Bing, Amazon, DuckDuckGo, Twitter and Wikipedia), so you can run a search using any of those options from the same page. This is useful if, say, your default search engine is



Google but you often search for information in Wikipedia and for items to buy using Amazon.

Google is the default search engine in Firefox, but it's easy to change that. Simply tap the three dots at the top right, Settings, Customise, then Search. Now tap the search engine you

want, then tap 'Set as default'.

Next, tap the top-left Back button three times to return to the main page and type your search term into the URL bar at the top. Your default search engine will be listed at the top, but you'll see a row of icons below (see screenshot above). Tap the platform option you want to carry out your search.

IOS

Change the default swipe actions in Mail

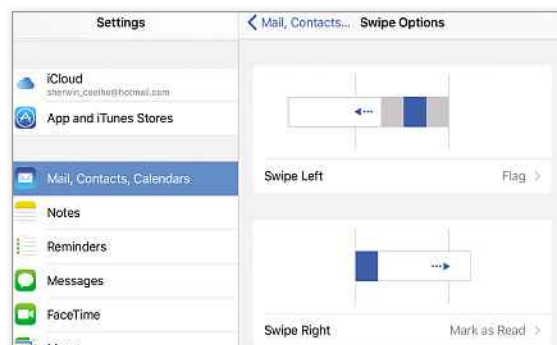


The Mail app lists all your emails on the left, with a preview pane on the right. By default, swiping right across an email within the list gives you the option to mark it as read.

Similarly, swiping an email to the left gives you options to flag or archive it. It's easy to change these default swipe actions if you want.

To do that, open Settings, tap 'Mail, Contacts, Calendars', then tap Swipe Options. Now tap Flag or 'Mark and Read' beside the

swipe gestures you want to customise (see screenshot below) and select your desired action. Besides the three mentioned above, you can also select None and Move Message. If you select Move Message, you'll see a list of destination folders whenever you swipe an email.



Best New Apps

What you should install this fortnight

Google Keep Free

Android: www.snipca.com/18068

iOS: www.snipca.com/18069

Google's brilliant note-taking app has finally made it to iOS, bringing with it all the great features found on its Android

and web-based version (www.keep.google.com). These include the ability to create list-type notes, dictated notes, and set time- and location-based reminders. Your data is synced across every version.



Khan Academy Free

Android: www.snipca.com/18070

iOS: www.snipca.com/18071

It's never too late to learn a new topic and this free app (new to Android) is a great teacher. It has over 10,000 videos covering

almost any topic imaginable – from history and art to economics and astronomy. Each is accompanied by practical examples, video tutorials and revision lessons.



Photoroom Free

Windows Phone:

www.snipca.com/18072

Windows Phones' built-in photo editor doesn't do justice to your photos. Those familiar with Photoshop will see the free app Photoroom provides similar advanced editing tools, including options to remove red eye, and modify brightness, hue, saturation and noise.

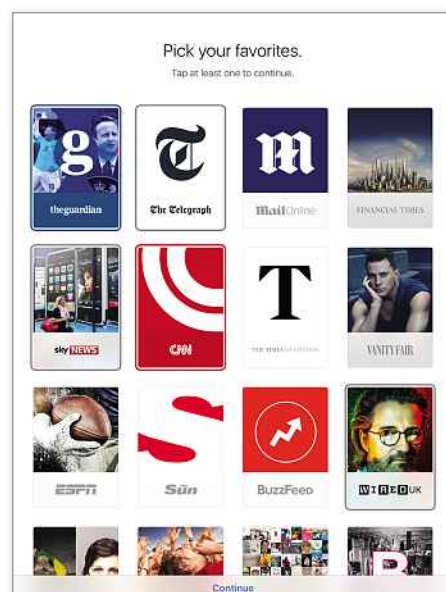


iOS

Hack your device to use iOS 9's News app



Apple's News app was supposed to be installed automatically when you updated your device to iOS 9. The free app lets you subscribe to a variety of news sources (including *The Guardian*, *Sky News*, *The Telegraph*, *The Financial Times* and *Mail Online*), but strangely the app failed to appear on devices in the UK



It will certainly be available with a future iOS update but if you want to give it a go now, there's an easy way you can hack your device to get it. This does involve changing your device to US settings, but in our experience this didn't affect anything we use our iPhone and iPad for.

First, ensure you're using the latest version of iOS (9.0.1, at the time of writing). Open Settings, tap General, then Software Update. If there are any updates pending, tap Install and wait for your device to restart. To access the News app, open Settings, General, 'Language and Region'. Now tap Region, select United States, tap Done, then tap 'Change to English (United States)'.

Now restart your device and you'll see the red News app icon. Open it and tap to select the News sources you want (see screenshot above), then tap Continue to see a selection of top stories from them. The app has tabs at the bottom, which let you further customise your news feed preferences by topics (including UK Politics, Jeremy Corbyn and Stephen Hawking) and categories (including

Business, Politics, Sports, Entertainment and Technology).

•Turn to page 48 for more iOS tips

WINDOWS PHONE

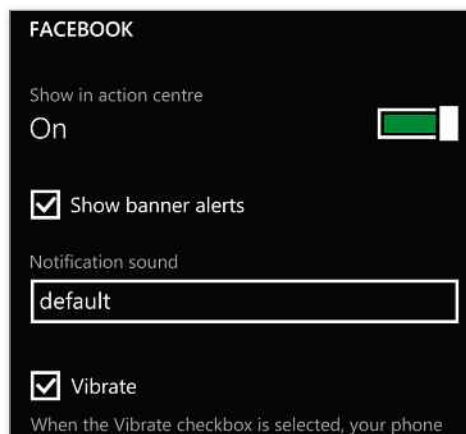
Stop Facebook's annoying notifications



If you have the Facebook app installed on your Windows Phone (www.snipca.com/18067), you're probably familiar with (and frustrated by) its constant barrage of birthday, event and other notifications. Thankfully, there's an easy way to turn these off.

First, swipe down from the top of your device, then tap All Settings at the top right. Next, scroll to the 'personalisation' section, tap 'notifications+actions', then Facebook. Untick 'Show banner alerts' (see screenshot above right) to disable

pop-up messages. Likewise, you can untick Vibrate to stop your phone buzzing every time you receive a notification. If you want to turn off Facebook notifications completely, simply move the On slider to Off.



Games With Kids

What to play together on your phone and tablet

AGES 0-5

Alfie's Alphabet

Free www.snipca.com/18073 (iOS)

Your toddler will learn word and letter associations in this fun game. Each letter is accompanied by a word, which the app speaks out loud. Your child then needs to complete a puzzle based on that word. They'll learn to identify and pronounce letters and words, as well as the alphabet.



AGES 6-10

The Path To Luma

Free www.snipca.com/18074 (Android)

Free www.snipca.com/18075 (iOS)

This is a brilliant puzzle game with a social conscience. You play as Sam – the android trying to save the galaxy from the harmful effects of climate change. Solve puzzles on each of the planets to unlock sources of clean energy and save the Chroma civilisation from extinction.



AGES 11-16

FIFA 16 Ultimate Team

Free www.snipca.com/18076 (Android)

Free www.snipca.com/18077 (iOS)

This football game is a great testament to the ever-evolving graphical capabilities found on current phones and tablets. Build your dream team, choose your formation and kit, then compete in matches to win money, which you can use to buy players.



Make Windows Better

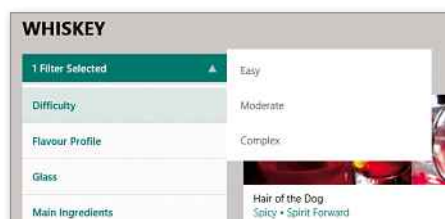
Clever tips for every version

WINDOWS 8

Learn how to mix the perfect cocktails



The Food & Drink app in Windows 8 has a selection of cocktail recipes that can help you give any bartender a run for his money. Open the app and scroll to the Cocktails section. In the Browse Cocktails area on the left, you'll see a list of five spirits – Vodka, Gin, Whiskey, Rum and Tequila. Select the spirit you want as your basis to see relevant cocktail recipes as tiles.



If you've never mixed cocktails before, you might find some of the recipes quite challenging, but there's an easy way to change the level of difficulty. Click Difficulty at the top left to see three options – Easy, Moderate and Complex (see screenshot above). Start with the easy recipes and work your way up as you become more adept.

Easy recipes usually feature ingredients you're most likely to have in your cupboards and can be made in under five minutes (provided you have everything you need). Complex recipes, on the other hand, require a little more planning and can contain up to 10 ingredients, including some rarities like 'Maraschino cherries' and 'Angostura bitters'.

WINDOWS 7, 8

Sort your photos according to where they were taken



If you like to travel far and wide, you probably have a lot of photos taken in various places. Thankfully, Windows Photo Viewer's **geotag** function lets you sort all your photos according to where they were taken.

The program is available as part of Microsoft's free Windows Essentials package www.snipca.com/18127. When you open Photo Gallery, it'll automatically load all your images on to your C Drive. To add photo folders stored on other drives, click the blue dropdown menu at the top left, click 'Include folder', Add, then navigate to the folder you want and click OK.

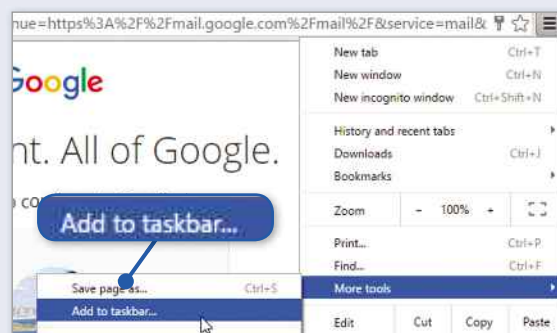
WINDOWS 10

Turn your favourite websites into Windows 10 tiles



As more people turn to Windows 10, they are finding a whole new set of tricks hidden away in Microsoft's latest operating system. One such involves converting your favourite websites into tiles that you can launch from the Start menu. This is a much quicker way to access websites than using your browser.

You can only create these tiles using Chrome, so download and install the browser if you need to. Now go to the website you want to turn into a tile (for this example, we'll use Gmail – www.gmail.com). Next, click the three horizontal lines at the top right of Chrome, move your cursor to 'More tools', then click 'Add to taskbar' (see screenshot). In the small pop-up window that opens, rename the tile (optional), tick the 'Open as window' box, then click Add.



Now open the Start menu and you'll notice that Gmail (or whatever you named your tile) appears as a tile under the 'Recently added' column on the left. You can drag and drop this to the live tiles menu on the right. Click the app tile to open it. You'll notice that it doesn't open within Chrome, but in an independent window – as with other apps. By following this method, you can create apps for all your favourite websites so you can access them with a single click from within your Start menu.

Click Pictures at the top left to see all your photos as thumbnails in the main (middle) section. You now need to select all photos taken at a particular location. To do that, simply move your cursor over each photo's thumbnail, then tick the box in the top-left corner. Now in the Geotag field on the right (see screenshot below), type the name of the location where the photos were taken, then click the relevant autosuggest option. Do this



for all the photos you want to arrange according to location, then close Photo Gallery. The next time you open it, your photos will be ordered alphabetically based on the locations you added.

WINDOWS 7, 8

Get Chrome's 'Paste and go' function in Internet Explorer



If you copy a URL from one tab in Chrome (www.snipca.com/18118), then open a new tab and right-click inside the blank URL field, you'll see an option called 'Paste and go'. This lets you paste your copied URL and navigate to that site in one go.

This feature doesn't exist in Internet Explorer (IE). However, there is a little-known keyboard shortcut that lets you achieve the same result. To use it, first copy the URL you want to navigate to, now open a new IE tab, click inside its URL field, then press Ctrl+Shift+L. The website will open immediately.

WORD

Create attractive tables with shading and borders

We usually associate tables with Excel, but Word – rather surprisingly – has some very good tools to help you create better-looking tables. To do that, you first need to select how many rows and columns you want, so click Word's Insert tab, then click the Table dropdown menu (at the top left) and select your cells and columns by clicking them. Now click inside the table and you'll see many different styles you can apply to it courtesy of the Design tab that's selected by default. Because Excel's primary purpose is creating table-based data, it doesn't have a similar tab.

Now expand the Table Styles menu by clicking the arrow at the bottom right



(see screenshot) to see more styles, then click to select the one you want. You'll notice that the first row is highlighted because, by default, it's set as the table header. Untick Header Row at the top left if you don't want this style. If you're doing calculations in your table and want the final row to be in a different format (to denote totals, for example),

then simply tick Total Row at the top left.

You can also shade certain cells, which helps differentiate them. To do that, select the cells you want to shade, click the Shading dropdown menu at the top and select the colour you want. To add a border, click the Border Styles dropdown menu at the top right and select the one you want.

SWAY

Quickly resize items within your sway



By default whenever you insert charts or images into your sway, they appear as small options.

There's an easy way to modify your item size while creating a sway. We'll show you how to do this using a chart, but you can also use this for some images – for example, those in a stack or a group.

Go to www.sway.com and log in using your Microsoft account. Click Create New to begin creating a new sway. Give your sway a title, then click the 'Chart (Preview)' option on the left. You'll notice that a small chart is added to your preview pane (you can see it in the background). To resize your chart, simply click the

Options button. A panel will slide in from the left with three sizes – Subtle (the selected default), Moderate and Intense (see screenshot bottom left).

Select Moderate or Intense and you'll notice your chart (in the background) will change size accordingly. Click the Preview button at the top right to see it, then Storyline at the top left to return to editing your sway.

OUTLOOK.COM

Import contacts from Google and Yahoo to Outlook.com



If you use Outlook.com as your primary email account, then it's a good idea to import your contact details from any current or former Gmail or Yahoo Mail account. To do this, first go

to www.outlook.com and log in using your Microsoft account.

Now click the icon with nine dots at the top left, then click the People tile. You'll now see options for Google and Yahoo at the top. Both import options work in a similar way, but we'll show you how to use Google.

Click Google, then click Connect and log into your Google account. Click Allow to let Microsoft import your contact info. After that's finished, click Done. Repeat the process for Yahoo Mail. Now, whenever you compose a new email in Outlook, you'll automatically get suggestions of all the email addresses from your Gmail and Yahoo accounts.

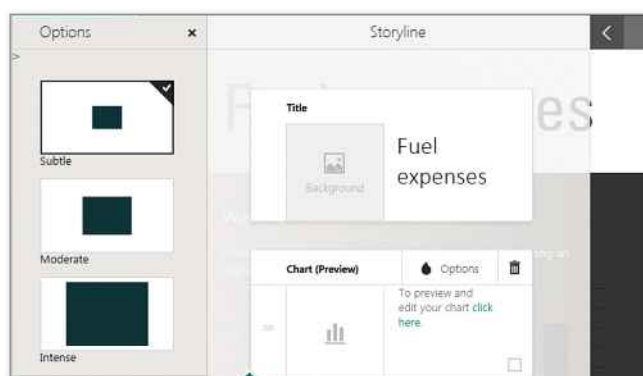
POWERPOINT

Black out your screen during a presentation



While a great presentation can make for a captivating experience, a slide with many pictures or a lot of data can distract the audience from the person delivering it. There's an easy way to temporarily black out (or white out) your slide during a presentation. This is useful to bring the audience's focus back to the speaker.

Start a presentation as you normally would – by clicking the Slide Show tab, then From Beginning at the top left. Use the right and left arrow keys to move through your slides. Now whenever you want to black out your screen, simply press the B key. Press the same key to resume your slide. Similarly, pressing the W key makes your entire screen white.





iOS 9

Convert web pages to PDF, draw on photo attachments and boost the battery life of your iPad and iPhone

See websites in full on your iPhone and iPad

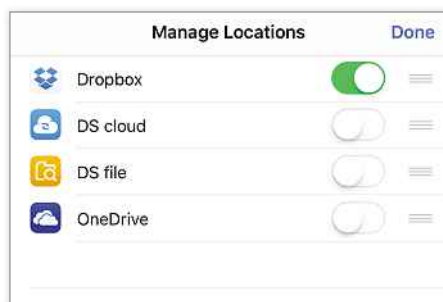
Lots of web designers helpfully provide mobile-friendly versions of their sites, which appear automatically when you visit from an iPad or iPhone (or indeed from any tablet or smartphone). The trouble is that some of these mobile sites just aren't very good – they don't provide all of the options of the full site, and can be awkward to navigate.

iOS 9 gives you the option to see the full version of many sites rather than the default mobile version. When visiting a cut-down mobile site in Safari, long-tap (press and hold) the refresh icon to the right of the address bar at the top, then tap Request Desktop Site at the bottom of the screen. Annoyingly it doesn't work on every site, but it's useful all the same.

Attach any file to a Mail message

For years, iPad and iPhone users have been limited to attaching photos to email messages in the built-in email app, Mail. If you wanted to attach any other file, you were out of luck.

iOS 9 finally lets you attach other files from other locations. Write your email as normal, then long-tap on the message. A black pop-up selection tool will appear. Tap the right arrow, then tap Add Attachment. Initially, you'll be taken to your iCloud storage, but you can also attach files from other locations,



Add files from other apps by enabling them in Mail's Manage Locations screen

including Dropbox. On the iCloud screen, tap Locations, then tap More. Any other online storage apps you have installed will be shown on the Manage Locations screen (see screenshot above).

Tap the slider to enable the app(s) you want to access – Dropbox, in our example – then tap Done. At this point you'll be returned to the iCloud screen again, but click Locations once more and this time you'll see Dropbox or your other chosen cloud service listed. Tap this, then find the file you want and tap it to attach it.

Save any web page as a PDF

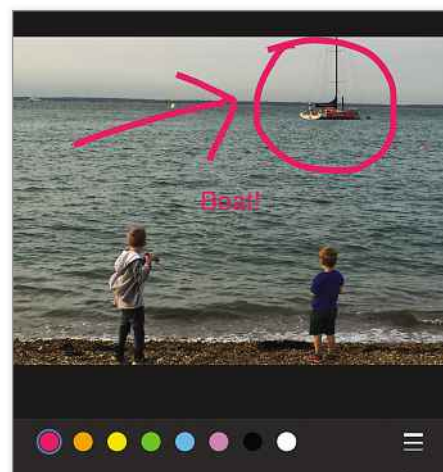
There's a hidden way to convert any web page to a PDF file and save it to your iPhone or iPad. Open Safari and navigate to the page you want to save. Tap at the bottom of the screen, then tap the Share icon (the box with the up arrow). Scroll right in the middle section (with the

coloured tiles) and you'll find an option to 'Save PDF to iBooks'. Tap this and the page will be converted, then opened for you in the built-in iBooks app.

Annotate photos in Mail

You can now annotate photos you attach to emails in Mail – useful if you want to draw your recipient's eye to something specific.

Write your email, then long-tap it and select 'Insert Photo or Video' from the pop-up menu. Browse for the photo you want, then tap it and tap Choose. Now long-tap on the photo within the email, and the pop-up menu will appear again. This time, select Markup. You'll see a set of tools for annotating the photo at the bottom of the screen. Select a colour and use your finger to draw the annotation on to the image. You can also click the 'T' icon to add text. Click Done when you're finished, and send the email as normal.



Use your finger to draw on photos before attaching them to an email

Make your battery last longer

iOS 9 comes with a new Low Power Mode, which reduces power consumption by turning off certain features, such as email fetching, background refreshing for certain apps and some visual enhancements. You'll automatically be prompted to switch to this whenever your battery charge dips below 20 per cent. But you can also manually activate it if you want to prolong the life of your device between charges. To do so, tap Settings, then Battery and flip the switch next to Low Power Mode to on. Tap Continue – you'll notice the battery icon turns yellow.



Show iCloud on your Home screen

If you use Apple's iCloud storage service, you can add a shortcut to your online storage account on your Home screen. Tap Settings, iCloud, then iCloud Drive. On the next screen, make sure iCloud Drive is switched on, then tap 'Show on Home Screen' to switch this on as well.

FreedomPop

Fed up with rip-off phone contracts? A new service provides a free(ish) alternative

What is it?

A “free” mobile service that has just launched in the UK, after proving a success in the US. Once you pay £6.99 to join, you can make calls, send texts and browse the web for free.

What's the catch?

Calls, texts and web access are limited. The most basic plan gives you 200 minutes of calls, 200 texts and 200MB of mobile data per month, completely free.

Would that be enough for me?

Depends how much you use your phone. We'd expect the average phone-addicted teenager to bust that limit within 48 hours, but anyone who uses their device more sparingly should be fine. That's true of texts and calls, anyway. Internet use is a different matter, because you need to visit around only 500 web pages to hit 200MB. Many people will do that in just a few days.

Would I be charged for going over?

Yes, 1.5p for every extra megabyte (so an extra 1GB would cost you £15). FreedomPop's business model obviously needs many people to do this, but the company does at least alert you when you're nearing your limit. It's also easy to see how many texts and call time you have left.

Are there any other sneaky charges?

Not really, because FreedomPop is refreshingly upfront about how it makes money - which is to persuade you to pay for more call time, texts and mobile data. After the basic plan, the next cheapest gives you 1,000 minutes of calls, 1,000 texts and 1GB of data for £9 per month. That's still pretty cheap. FreedomPop also sells extra features to enhance the service, such as a second number for your phone, and the ability to roll over unused data to the following month.



FreedomPop is an interesting example of the so-called ‘freemium’ model, in which companies tempt you with free access to a service, program or app, then aim to make money by enticing you to buy extras.

Are you sure there's no catch?

Well, one thing does worry us. FreedomPop says that users will have the “unique opportunity” to add unlimited data by completing surveys and downloading coupons. We're not sure what's “unique” about this, and if the price of a ‘free’ service means being bombarded with surveys and offers, many people will say ‘no thanks’.

Would I need to buy a new phone?

No - that's part of the appeal. Sign up to FreedomPop (www.freedompop.com) and you'll receive a SIM card to slip into your existing phone (both Android and iOS). You then need to download the respective app (for calls and texts), and you're ready to go. It works on tablets too.

Is it available throughout the UK?

Yes. Like Tesco and TalkTalk, FreedomPop is a MVNO (mobile virtual network operator), which means it piggybacks on another company's network to provide mobile internet access. In May it signed a deal to use Three's network, which covers 97 per cent of the UK's population (to check whether you're covered enter your postcode at www.freedompop.com/coverage).

So, should I cancel my existing phone contract?

Not yet. It's early days for FreedomPop in the UK, and it's still in **beta**, so we would advise waiting to see whether any problems arise. Also, you can't transfer your existing phone number, which is a pain. The US version of FreedomPop does allow this, so hopefully the option will be added to its UK equivalent soon.

We have high hopes for FreedomPop, though. It has a daft name and a clunky website, but for ‘light’ users of phones it could become an attractive alternative to expensive monthly contracts.

The Worst MALWARE EVER

► 2015 is already the most dangerous year in malware history – and 2016 will be worse. Jane Hoskyn explains why, and reveals what you must do to stay safe

The title ‘The Worst Malware Ever’ may sound like one of those late-night shock documentaries on Channel 5, like ‘The World’s Worst Serial Killers’ or ‘Most Horrible Shark Attacks Ever’. Oh, if only it were that simple.

Unlike serial killers, the worst malware ever hasn’t been sentenced to life in prison, and it’s definitely not dead. When hackers face a challenge, such as an antivirus (AV) that’s been updated to block their precious Trojan or to patch a vulnerability, they

don’t give up – quite the opposite. Malware doesn’t go away, it goes back to the drawing board, then bounces back in a powerful new form.

Just when you thought it was safe...

Hackers are determined workers, we’ll give them that. They’re driven by greed, glory and a desperate desire to beat the system (including your operating system). If a hacker has worked his (and it is mostly men) socks off to create a malicious bug,

then figured out how to get the thing into your computer, he’s going to work around any attempts to block it. He’s a hacker; workarounds are his job. That’s why the worst malware ever will never stop evolving, and why your PC has never been a more dangerous place.

We’ll start this feature with our version of that late-night ‘shock doc’, rounding up the scariest types of malware ever. We’ll reveal how hackers are using deadly new tactics, and have found ways to infect more of your devices than ever before.

Then we’ll show you how to find out which nasties you’re vulnerable to and which are affecting you right now. Finally we’ll explain how to get them out and keep them out – at least until they’ve evolved into an even more terrifying form that no one can yet imagine.

WHAT YOU MUST DO

- Find out how the world’s worst malware can steal from you and spy on you
- Discover why it’s deadlier than ever
- Scan your PC, phone and tablet for new vulnerabilities and bugs
- Weed out silent malware inside your PC
- Automatically update Windows, AV and software to block new threats
- Keep your data backed up to insure against the latest ransomware



THE NASTIEST MALWARE OF ALL TIME

1 Ransomware

Worst examples: CryptLocker, Cryptowall, Koler, LockerPin

How it works: Ransomware is so vile it makes other malware look cute. If you think of other malware as a tech version of having your pocket picked, ransomware is the tech version of having your home held to ransom. Your PC is full of important personal data and a lifetime of photos and messages, so it really is your second home.

When ransomware gets into this treasure trove, it locks you out and demands a ransom, usually in **Bitcoins**. (One Bitcoin costs around £150, having stabilised after reaching a £700+ peak a year ago, so we're not talking pennies here.)

That was the moderately bad news; now here's the *really* bad news. Ransomware has got a lot nastier since it was first identified in 2006. By 2013, hackers were using the CryptoLocker ransomware bug to encrypt every file on an infected PC. In 2014 we met Cryptowall, which installed password-stealing spyware at the same time as locking its victim's computer. In 2015, ransomware has spread its wings.

Why it's worse than ever: Ransomware makers – apparently bored with locking just PCs – have turned to tablets and phones. New Android ransomware such as Koler and the even newer, nastier LockerPin spreads via fake apps – a prime example of phishing, malware's favourite form of transport (see box page 52). Security researchers at F-Secure have found ransomware vulnerabilities in iOS, too (www.snipca.com/17989; PDF), though at the time of writing they haven't been exploited.

The future looks dim, doesn't it? It's



Hackers use Trojans like Spy Eye to steal your money and watch your every move

not. Ransomware may be powerful, but ultimately it's just fraud. Its infections can be removed safely and for free, and its ransom demands are nothing more than lies to extort money. Like all the other malware in this list, ransomware is not unbeatable – it just wants to scare you into believing it is.

2 Trojans

Worst examples: Zeus/Zbot, Citadel, Spy Eye

How it works: You may already know Trojan malware gets its name from the ancient Greek story of the wooden horse that was used to help Greek troops sneak into the city of Troy. Scroll forward a couple of millennia and your PC is now Troy, plundered by hackers who use Trojan horses ('Trojans') to get into your computer and wreak havoc.

This havoc takes many horrible forms. Different types of Trojan can be used to take malicious remote control of your computer ('backdoor' Trojans) and hide malware in your system ('rootkit' Trojans). Numerous types can spy on you by logging your keystrokes, taking screenshots and even hijacking your webcam (so-called 'Trojan-Spy' malware such as Spy Eye). They can hijack your computer, using it to send data or malware that overwhelms other computers or entire **servers** ('Denial of Service' or 'DoS' Trojans).

Trojans can also spread ransomware. Cryptowall and CryptoLocker were both spread using Trojan infections. Find more examples from AV firm Kaspersky (www.snipca.com/17988); the list is depressingly long.

Why it's worse than ever: According to our security team at Dennis Technology Labs (DTL, www.dennistechnologylabs.com), banking Trojans are currently being used and abused in particularly alarming numbers. One single successful Trojan attack on a bank can see hackers funnelling money out of millions of accounts, including yours. The most infamous banking Trojan is Zeus, aka Zbot, which burst into life in 2007 and has since inspired thousands of variants that are getting scarier by the year. Type **banking Trojan** into Google and click News to read about the newcomers, from Sphinx (www.snipca.com/17990) to Shifu



LockerPin Ransomware

Reset PIN to Lock Android Permanently

Ransomware now wants to lock your tablet, too – but LockerPin's 'ransom' is pure fraud

(www.snipca.com/17989), which targets banking apps - previously assumed to be safer than banking sites.

On the bright side, says DTL's Simon Edwards, "Your bank will end up taking the hit rather than you. This obviously doesn't apply to ransomware, where you pay your own money". That still doesn't make us feel very safe, if we're honest.

3 Worms

Worst examples:

Mydoom, Koobface, The Moon, Moose

How it works: A worm is a type of program that replicates itself endlessly so it can spread between computers, potentially taking down a whole network.

Not all worms are malicious - they have been used by some software companies to spread security patches. But they're also a very easy way for hackers to cause widespread destruction. Mydoom was used to spread virus-infected spam in the early 2000s, and Koobface made headlines in 2009 when it spread through social networks to build a vast **botnet**.

The trouble with worms, from the hacker's point of view, is that they need holes to go through. So if you're diligent about keeping your operating system

(OS), software and browser up to date and patched, your PC is a dead end to a worm. But that's not the end of the story.

Why it's worse than ever: As we saw in Issue 454 (page 60), hackers have turned to other devices to create their nefarious worm networks. Not tablets and phones, because we tend to keep those updated as well. Instead, they're targeting our routers.

The best-known router worm is The Moon, which spread among older Linksys routers last year until a **firmware**



Linksys brought down The Moon with a firmware update and useful advice

update stopped it in its tracks. Then came Moose, which is still on the loose, spreading through numerous makes of router. If Moose infects your router, it uses your internet connection to post spam on social sites, and can be used to eavesdrop on your internet activity.

4 Zero-day attacks

Worst examples: No catchy names this time ('CVE-2015-5123', for example) - mostly affecting Flash.

How it works: Zero-day (known even more apocalyptically as 'zero-hour') attacks exploit new vulnerabilities - so new in fact that there's no patch available. Most zero-day malware can't be blocked by your AV either, because there's no **virus signature** yet.

Why it's worse than ever: Zero-day attacks are a relatively new problem, and their rapid growth is partly down to how we use our computers. These days we're using fewer big, expensive, installable programs (such as Microsoft Office) and more free online tools based on **plug-ins** such as Adobe Flash Player ('Flash') and Java.

That's great for our pocket and hard-drive space, but there's a big security downside. As you'll know from our Cover Feature in Issue 458, zero-day

WORST MALWARE HELPER EVER: PHISHING

Phishing is the art of tricking you into downloading something unsafe by making you believe you're downloading something safe. There's no clever technology involved - just plain old con-trickery.

For example, you may click a fake Download button and find yourself installing a vicious new backdoor Trojan, completely unawares.

Or you could click an irresistible email attachment, such as a file claiming to be a nude photo of former tennis player Anna Kournikova (www.snipca.com/17981; see screenshot right) - and unwittingly infect your PC with a self-replicating worm. The Kournikova worm was so notorious in the early years of this century that it even featured in an episode of US sitcom *Friends* (here's the script snippet: www.snipca.com.

www.snipca.com/17983).

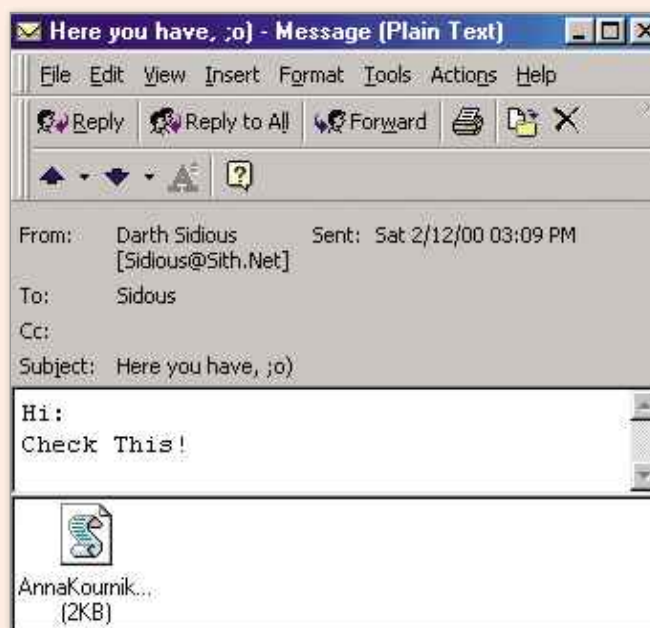
("You'll notice there's no nude photo of Anna in the screenshot. That's because it never existed - just the phishing file.")

WHY PHISHING WORKS

You could have the toughest AV in the world, but it won't stop a slippery phish.

Whenever you download a file, you'll probably see a security warning along the lines of: 'This file has been downloaded from the internet, are you sure?'. The normal human response is 'yes, of course I'm sure.' So you click Yes or OK, thereby telling your AV and OS the file is safe. So you can't blame them for failing to block it. Basically, you've installed the malware yourself.

This doesn't mean you're stupid (or even that Chandler



from *Friends* is stupid). Far from it, you're just a confident computer user. Con artists have taken advantage of human nature since time immemorial - and we fear they always will.

See our Cover Feature in Issue 450 (Make Your PC Hack-Proof) for ways to tighten your phishing protection and other AV defences; we'll offer a quick recap on page 60.



Adobe Flash Player has become notorious for zero-day vulnerabilities

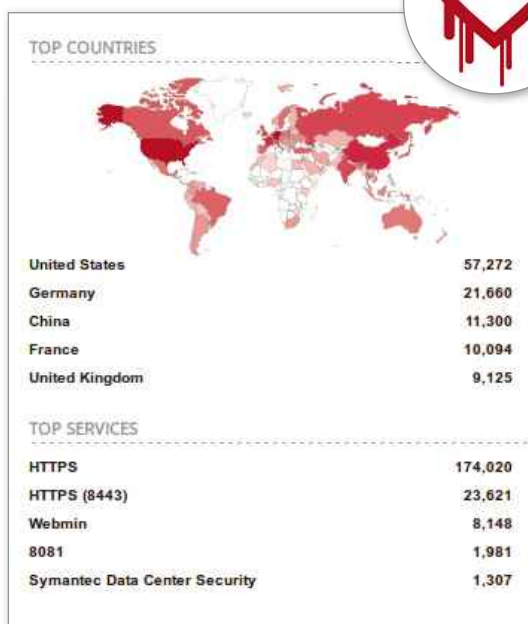
vulnerabilities have made Flash and Java positively dangerous (though some readers are happy to take the risk – see page 35). Flash is now so bad that, in July, Firefox took the dramatic step of blocking Flash content altogether.

5 Server bugs

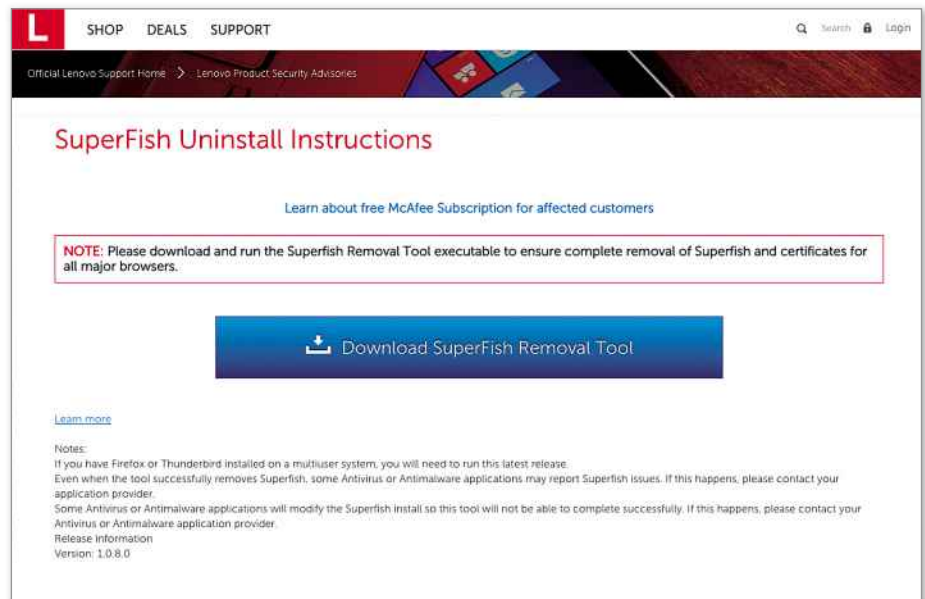
Worst examples: Heartbleed, Shellshock

How it works: Heartbleed and Shellshock, both uncovered in 2014, are like industrial fishing nets for hackers. Rather than bothering to break into individual PCs, hackers use these server bugs to break into giant servers and grab thousands, or even millions, of passwords and usernames in one go.

Password manager LastPass famously suffered a Heartbleed vulnerability earlier this year, but the server's encryption measures were too tight and hackers weren't able to exploit the flaw. Other vulnerable sites and servers have included GitHub, SourceForge and even LibreOffice (see more on Wikipedia: www.snipca.com/18057).



Servers tightened their security after Heartbleed, but you may still be vulnerable



Lenovo had to create a removal tool after pre-installing Superfish spyware in its laptops

Why it's worse than ever: Heartbleed in particular made lots of headlines last year (it even had its own logo, see below left), and websites responded en masse by tightening their encryption to LastPass level. So has Heartbleed gone away? Nope.

The vulnerability still affects thousands of internet-connected devices, according to security researcher John Matherly (here's a rather sobering map he posted on Twitter: www.snipca.com/18062). The key word there is 'devices'. We tend not to be as security-aware when we're browsing on our tablets and phones, so we may not notice if we're using flawed servers and unencrypted sites.

What's more, Heartbleed and Shellshock are a new type of attack – and they could merely be the start of something big. The next challenge for hackers is to unlock tight encryption measures used by sites such as LastPass, and they're working on that right now.

6 Spyware

Worst examples:

CoolWebSearch, Superfish, Rombertik

How it works: Unlike zero-day and server attacks, spyware has been around for ages and is easy to define: it's malware that spies on you.

Early spyware such as CoolWebSearch (now an awkward teenager, 13 years old)

was spread via phishing sites and adverts, mostly in Internet Explorer, but later in Firefox and Chrome as well. It hit you with pop-ups, redirected you to pornographic sites, slowed down your PC and, of course, spied on your private data. For years, hundreds of spyware attacks worked in much the same way.

Why it's worse than ever: 2015 has seen spyware reborn in vicious new forms – and even pre-installed on computers by PC manufacturers. This horrendous abuse of trust was first exposed in February, when Lenovo bundled Superfish spyware in new laptops (See News, Issue 457). The company was forced to create a Superfish removal tool (www.snipca.com/18051), but didn't learn its lesson, because it's been found pre-installing two other types of spyware since (www.snipca.com/18050). Extraordinary.

Other new spyware, such as Rombertik, is spread by good old phishing, but is far more advanced than its predecessors. Once it's got into your browser, Rombertik – first reported in May 2015 – runs checks to ensure it's not in a sandbox or other virtual security cell. Then it decrypts, installs and reproduces itself, overwriting its original file so it's almost impossible to find and remove. Finally, it settles in to record every move you make online.

One thing Rombertik isn't is a "suicide bomb" in your PC (www.snipca.com/18054). It can't destroy your PC or the files inside it – that's not in the interests of spyware. For an accurate, detailed description, read this blog from security company Sophos: www.snipca.com/18053.

Computeractive Bookstore

NEW!

THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO WINDOWS 10



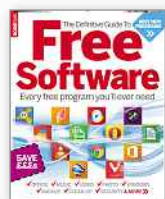
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HOW TO STAY SAFE FROM THE WORST MALWARE EVER

Find your security holes

Bullies thrive on weakness, and hackers thrive on vulnerability. You can wipe out most of your PC's vulnerabilities by keeping your OS and software up to date, and bolster your defences with a properly configured AV. For more guidance on making your PC hack-proof, see our Cover Feature in Issue 450.

But as we've seen, hackers know all your best hack-proofing strategies, and they're determined to stay one step ahead by looking for your latest vulnerabilities. So you need to find these security leaks and plug them.

You can do this using online tools that don't interfere with your AV or **firewall**. The free online PC Pitstop Vulnerability Test (www.snipca.com/18082) looks for flaws in your software and reveals if, and where, you need critical security updates.

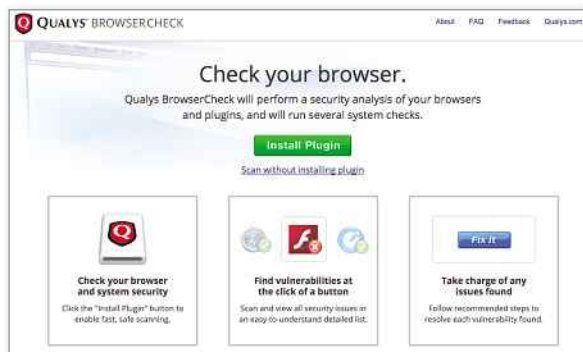


Kaspersky Internet Security now has a built-in Ransomware Decryptor tool

It won't close any holes for you, but it gives you the information you need to find appropriate updates and patches.

Qualys FreeScan (www.snipca.com/18083) is an even more thorough scanner, and will find holes in your browser and Wi-Fi network as well as your installed software and OS.

It's also free and works online, but you have to create an account to use it. To quickly scan your browser and **add-ons** only, use Qualys BrowserCheck (<https://browsercheck.qualys.com>). It works in any browser and doesn't require an account, but it does install a plug-in unless you click 'Scan without installing plugin' below the green button.



The free online tool Qualys BrowserCheck finds vulnerabilities in your browser and add-ons

Find and remove malware your AV missed

In all likelihood, there's a Trojan or spyware on your PC right now. Malware is getting better and better at sneaking past your AV - which isn't even designed to block some nasties, such as **browser hijackers** and adware (which may also be spyware).

The good news is there are plenty of free tools that can find and kill the intruders your AV missed. These tools aren't designed to run constantly in the background, so they won't conflict with your AV. We recommend keeping the latest versions of free, portable tools Malwarebytes Anti-Malware Free (www.snipca.com/18084), AdwCleaner (www.snipca.com/18085) and the **open-source** anti-spyware tool HiJackThis (www.snipca.com/18089) in a folder on your Desktop and on a USB stick. They all quickly scan your entire PC - including your registry and browsers - for malicious files, and then let you remove the nasties.

Microsoft also has detailed tips on removing spyware from different versions of Windows. Here are the guidelines for Windows 7: www.snipca.com/18090.

Dig out router worms

F-Secure's free online Router Checker (www.snipca.com/18087) reveals in seconds whether your router is hosting a worm or other malware. Rather than looking for malicious files, it looks for malicious activity such as **DNS** requests that don't end up where they're supposed to go. If all is well, you'll see a big green message: 'No issues were found'. If all isn't well, you'll be told what to do next.

Most worm infections can be removed by updating your router's firmware. Firmware updates also help prevent infections by patching holes. You'll find firmware downloads and instructions on the manufacturer's website. If you've tried ►

DO HEARTBLEED SCANNERS WORK?

The internet came under serious attack by Heartbleed, and it fought back with oodles of free tools for checking whether the services and devices you use are at risk. There are also loads of free apps that claim to check your tablet and phone for Heartbleed vulnerability. Search Google for 'heartbleed check' and you'll get pages and pages of them.

But do they actually work? No, by and large. A study by UK security consultant Hut3 found that "most of the tools available failed to detect the Heartbleed vulnerability" (www.snipca.com/18094) - and some may even contain malicious bugs (a classic example of phishing).

The one "notable exception" in the



Hut3 test was the SSL Server Test (www.snipca.com/18095) from Qualys, the company that makes the excellent free BrowserCheck tool. It's not the friendliest-looking site (see screenshot), but it may be the most reliable place to check whether a site is at risk of Heartbleed and other password-steal attacks.



Scan for worms and other router malware using F-Secure's free online tool Router Checker

updating the firmware and Router Checker is still reporting "issues", try obliterating the worm with third-party firmware (search the router database at www.snipca.com/18088). See our feature in Issue 454 for more on dealing with router worms.

Remove ransomware from your PC, tablet and phone

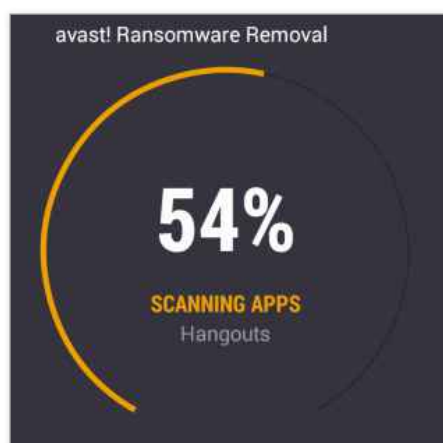
Ransomware, as you know, is fraud: paying up won't remove ransomware (most of the time), and ransomware can often be removed for free. But there's no 'one size fits all' fix. The best removal strategy depends on the type of

ransomware and the device it has infected.

The single most effective anti-ransomware tool we've seen is Avast Ransomware Removal, which is free (www.snipca.com/18092). However it only works on Android tablets and phones, and is specifically designed to remove CryptoLocker and Simplotter ransomware. If you're not infected by either, the app serves no purpose; it's not a ransomware-blocker. Of course, if you *are* infected, you won't be able to use your tablet or phone, so you'll have to download the app to your device via your PC using the link above.

Avast's free AV app, 'Mobile Security & Antivirus' (www.snipca.com/18130), claims it can detect and remove ransomware before your device is locked, but we haven't been able to test this.

Most PC ransomware is tougher to remove than mobile ransomware, but security firms are working hard to keep up with the hackers. Some AV programs have been updated to include tools for unlocking and removing certain ransomware infections, so check your AV's website for details. Kaspersky Internet Security, which consistently tops the tests run by our security team at Dennis Technology Labs (DTL, www.dennistechnologylabs.com), can



Get CryptoLocker and Simplotter off your device using Avast Ransomware Removal

now remove ransomware including CoinVault (www.snipca.com/18093). We've got so much faith in Kaspersky's brilliant AV that we're still selling it for the special price of £19.99, down from £39.99, through our Software Store (see page 68).

However, ransomware is evolving fast. (Stop press: it's now been found in **jailbroken** iPhones, so iOS certainly isn't immune: www.snipca.com/18098.) As a result, removal tools become obsolete. Your best long-term defence against ransomware and data-wiping malware is not removal, but backing up. "The only easy, practical way to handle ransomware is to keep your data backed up," DTL's Simon Edwards told us. "It costs a few pounds a month to store all your files securely in an online backup system like Google Drive. You can even store multiple versions of files, which will help if you accidentally back up files encrypted by the malware."

Block zero-day attacks before they're discovered

Finally, back to zero. If zero-day malware exploits holes that haven't been patched yet, how are you supposed to stop it?

Start by looking for a Cloud Protection option in your AV settings, and enable it (Kaspersky Internet Security and Norton Security both include this). This setting aims to give you protection from internet threats the moment they're discovered.

Also install the free tool Malwarebytes Anti-Exploit (www.malwarebytes.org/antiexploit), which wraps all your browsers in extra layers of security to keep out new threats. Anti-Exploit is not a substitute for AV, but is fast turning into an essential companion for it. **ca**



Malwarebytes Anti-Exploit provides extra protection from zero-day threats

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WINDOWS 10: The First 100 Days

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- Plus** • Office 2016 alternatives
They're all brilliant and free
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The web's hidden scams

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Is Thunderbird still FAB?



Is it really over for Mozilla's email program?
Jane Hoskyn finds out if Thunderbird is still "go"

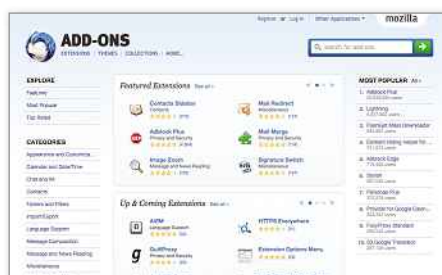
In Issue 458's Cover Feature I lined Thunderbird up against a wall, alongside usual suspects Flash, Java, Hola and iTunes, and told you to uninstall it forthwith.

Mozilla's venerable email program has suffered multiple vulnerabilities in recent years and I just didn't think it was worth the risk or hard-drive space. Several readers emailed to say I was wrong. Well, you're right to say that Thunderbird has not been shot down – it's been passed successfully into the hands of its **open-source** community. But is it the best choice for managing your emails? That's another matter. Let's look at the pros and cons. Note: no one wrote in to defend iTunes, by the way.

Thunderbird: the case for

In spring 2015, the Thunderbird community launched version 38 (38.3.0 at the time of writing, www.mozilla.org/thunderbird) – the best in years. It's chock-full of features – including new security measures – and still completely free to download.

Like other open-source projects Linux, LibreOffice and Mozilla's browser Firefox, Thunderbird benefits from its



Thunderbird supports thousands of free add-ons, including Adblock Plus

passionate user base. If it suffers a setback, they fix it, improve it and march on. The community also provides a support network (www.snipca.com/18132) and an ever-growing choice of **add-ons** (www.snipca.com/18133), including Adblock Plus (advert blocking), Enigmail (message encryption) and QuickFolders (tabbed organising).

As you may know, email clients like Thunderbird aren't email accounts – they let you access one or more accounts in one place on your computer. Version 38 brought big improvements to Thunderbird's support for email services like Gmail and Outlook.com, along with news feeds (RSS) and even Yahoo Chat, so you don't have to use them in your browser.

Thunderbird: the case against

"You don't have to use them in your browser?" That actually sounds like a disadvantage to me. And there's the rub. Whether you love Thunderbird or not comes down to how you use your PC and email.

In this age of high-speed internet, high-level encryption, fast but small **SSDs** and cheap terabytes of storage, I think it makes sense to keep your emails off your hard drive. In fact the idea of automatically downloading this stuff fills me with horror. It'd clog up my hard drive in no time, stop me accessing messages and contacts from other PCs or devices, and may smuggle in malware.

Perhaps I'm biased because I love the internet and dislike having to update installed programs continually just to stay safe (check out all these security updates for Thunderbird 38: www.snipca.com/18134).

Of course Gmail, Outlook.com, Yahoo Mail and so on are not totally hack-proof, but nor is Thunderbird – it uses a **server** too. If you love it, keep using it; just keep it updated and be aware of its limitations.

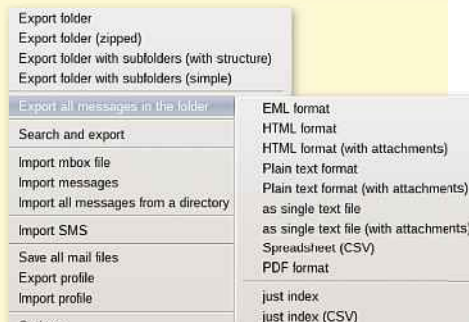
• **Do you agree with Jane? Let us know**
letters@computeractive.co.uk

MIGRATING FROM THUNDERBIRD TO OUTLOOK

Reader Peter Linley wrote to us asking how to export his email data from Thunderbird to Outlook. As Peter had discovered, Thunderbird's default export format (MBOX) is not supported by Outlook, which uses PST instead.

Software for converting MBOX to PST is pricey. The best, SysTools MBOX Converter (www.snipca.com/18147), has a free version that lets you convert a mere 25 emails per folder; for more it's \$49 (£32).

As a workaround, use the programs' individual email formats instead: EML for Thunderbird and MSG for Outlook. Free Thunderbird add-on ImportExportTools (www.snipca.com/18142) lets you bulk-export messages as EML (see screenshot), and free Outlook add-in 'Convert EML files to Outlook MSG' (www.snipca.com/18148) lets you convert and import them. You sacrifice your folder structure, which would be kept with MBOX and PST.



Windows 10 PROBLEMS FIXED

PART
FOUR

In the final part of our special series, our Problems Solved team

tackle more of your Windows 10 headaches

Will upgrading to Windows 10 wipe Movie Maker?

Q I have Windows 7 and use Movie Maker a lot as I find it very simple and it does everything I need. I've been told that it is not available in Windows 10. As I have Windows Live Essentials installed on my computer, will Movie Maker still work when I upgrade?

John Henry



Windows 10 doesn't include Movie Maker, but it can still be downloaded for free

A You're right that Windows 10 doesn't include Movie Maker, but if you already have it installed on your Windows 7 PC and you install Windows 10 as an 'in-place' upgrade, then Movie Maker will remain untouched. However, if you perform a 'clean' install of Windows 10 then everything on your PC will be erased, and Movie Maker will not be reinstalled.

Microsoft is not offering support for Movie Maker in Windows 10, but it remains available for free download, and in our tests it all seems to work as normal. So, if needed, grab Movie Maker from www.snipca.com/17965.

How do I set up Microsoft Edge to stop printing adverts?

Q I received an email with travel tickets to print, but I'm unable to print them in Microsoft's Edge browser without all the adverts also appearing. Why can't I set up Edge to print just the email? I've solved the problem for now by closing Edge and opening the email in Internet Explorer, where I was able to print just the email as usual.

Dave Smith

A You're using a web browser to access your emails so you must be using a webmail service, many of which display advertising. Knowing this, our guess is that in Internet Explorer (IE) you've got an ad-blocking add-on installed, such as Adblock Plus (<https://adblockplus.org>). This works more or less invisibly, so you might've added it ages ago and forgotten about the useful work it does.

Edge doesn't yet support add-ons (aka extensions), but Microsoft has said it's planning to add this at some point. For

now, the easy options are stick to printing in IE, or put up with the ads.

If you're a determined sort, then it's possible to edit a Windows file called 'hosts' to block all sorts of unwanted online content by redirecting the electronic requests back to your own machine – which will serve up precisely nothing in return.

You could create your own hosts file, but it would take forever. Instead, grab one of the many created and updated by online altruists (try Dan Pollock's, at www.snipca.com/17970). Press Ctrl+A to select everything on this page and then Ctrl+C to copy it. Now launch Notepad and press Ctrl+V to paste it. Next, press Windows key+E to launch File Explorer and navigate to C:\Windows\System32\drivers\etc. Click 'hosts' then press F2, then rename your current hosts file to 'hosts.old'. Finally, return to Notepad and save its content as a file called 'hosts' (with no extension) into the C:\Windows\System32\drivers\etc folder.

```
# You are free to copy and distribute this file for non-commercial uses,
# as long as the original URL and attribution is included.
#
# See below for acknowledgements.
#
# Please forward any additions, corrections or comments by email to
# hosts@someonewhocares.org
#
# Last updated: Sep 15th, 2015 at 23:12
#
# Use this file to prevent your computer from connecting to selected
# Internet hosts. This is an easy and effective way to protect you from
# many types of spyware, reduces bandwidth use, blocks certain pop-up
# traps, prevents user tracking by way of "web bugs" embedded in spam,
# provides partial protection to IE from certain web-based exploits and
# blocks most advertising you would otherwise be subjected to on the
# Internet.
#
# There is a version of this file that uses 0.0.0.0 instead of 127.0.0.1
# available at http://someonewhocares.org/hosts/zero/.
# On some machines this may run minutely faster, however the zero version
# may not be compatible with all systems.
#
# This file must be saved as a text file with no extension. (This means
# that the file name should be exactly as below, without a ".txt" appended.)
#
# Let me repeat, the file should be named "hosts" NOT "hosts.txt".
#
# For Windows 9x and ME place this file at "C:\Windows\hosts"
# For NT, Win2K and XP use "C:\Windows\System32\drivers\etc\hosts"
```

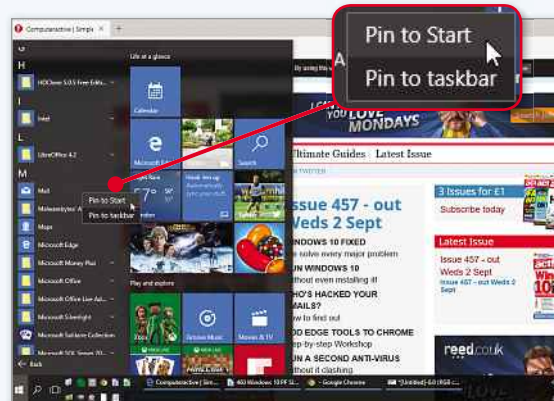


Use a host file as a workaround to prevent adverts appearing on printed emails in Edge

Why can't we print from the Mail app?

Q We have two screens on our Windows 10 PC – one for my wife and one for myself. We are unable to print from the Mail app on either screen. The following message appears: 'Nothing was sent to print. Open a document and print again'. Also, the Mail and Calendar tiles on my wife's screen have disappeared from the screen.

Mr P H Horn Restore lost tiles by clicking 'Pin to Start'



A Your printing problem may be caused by the Edge browser, as elements of Mail connect to this during printing. Clearing Edge's **cache** and browsing data could fix this. Launch Edge, click the menu button (three dots) at the top right, then choose Settings followed by 'Choose what to clear' under 'Clear browsing data'. Start by ticking the first four boxes, leaving 'Form data' and Passwords unticked (unless you're happy to wipe this data also). Click Clear, and then try printing in Mail.

If it doesn't work, return to Edge and, still under 'Clear browsing data', click

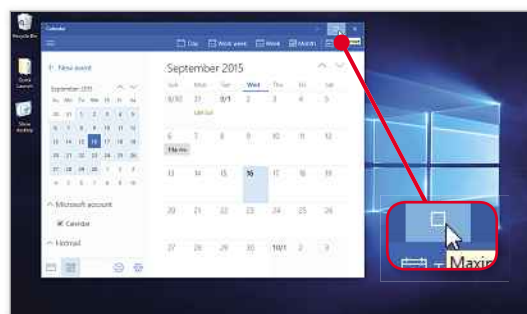
'Show more', then tick the first of the boxes here ('Media licenses'). Click Clear, return to Mail, then try to print. If it still fails, repeat this process until all boxes are ticked.

For your second problem, we're not sure what you mean by 'two screens', but to restore lost tiles, click Start followed by 'All apps', scroll down to find the relevant app, then right-click it and choose 'Pin to Start'. Note that when you do this the app's tile will be pinned to the bottom of the right-hand side of the Start menu, so you may need to scroll down to find it – you can then drag and drop it to wherever you want.

How do I make apps full-screen?

Q It may just be me doing something wrong, but when I click on any of the 'boxes' or apps in the Start menu, they come up on my screen, but are not full screen, so I can still see my wallpaper in the background. Is there a way I can make them full screen?

Rex Moore



Click the Maximize button in the top-right corner of an app to make it fill the screen

A You're not doing anything wrong – this is the standard way that Windows 10 now works. You can still make an app fill the screen by clicking its Maximize button, which is the little square at the top right (and click it again to reverse).

Preview versions of Windows 10 put an extra menu icon in the title bar of apps that allowed full-screen mode to be set as

the default, but that feature didn't make it through to the final version. In the absence of that convenience there's a useful keyboard shortcut: Windows key+up arrow. Press this and the current window will instantly maximise, and revert to its previous size on a second press.

Will a new graphics card let me run Windows 10?

Q I can't upgrade my PC to Windows 10 because I have an Nvidia **graphics card**. So as far as I see it I can either buy a new Windows 8 PC and upgrade to 10, or replace my graphics card, then upgrade to 10 and keep my current PC. Are there cards available for my older PC? If there are and I managed to install Windows 10, would my PC be able to handle the plethora of updates?

Colin Baker



Find out which Nvidia graphics card are compatible with Windows 10

A It's true that some Nvidia cards are incompatible with Windows 10 and will remain so forever, unless Nvidia changes its mind and creates updated drivers for them. The company maintains a list of cards that are compatible at www.snipca.com/17971.

You didn't tell us anything about your 'older' PC, but we think it's running Windows 8.1 because the Get Windows 10 (GWT) app's compatibility report would've told you about the problem with your Nvidia card. Incompatible graphics cards aside, pretty much any computer capable of running Windows 8.1 will run Windows 10 with much the same level of performance – so yes, a new (compatible) graphics cards should do the job for you. **ca**

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For more fixes buy the definitive guide to Windows 10

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HACK YOUR PC WITH A USB STICK



Got a drawer full of USB sticks going to waste? Jonathan Parkyn shows you how to turn them into tools for fixing, securing and speeding up your PC

Create an emergency PC toolkit

These days, most of us have at least one USB stick (also known as a USB flash drive) hanging around that we rarely use, if ever. But if you're using Windows 8/8.1 or 10, it takes only a little preparation to convert that humble USB stick into an instant insurance policy that may, one day, help you out of a tight spot.

Windows 8/8.1 and 10 include a tool for creating a bootable recovery USB drive (see box below). Using this drive, you can launch a set of Windows tools - such as System Restore, Automatic Repair, Safe Mode and System Image Recovery - without having to start Windows. So if your PC won't start normally one day, simply insert the USB stick and run the stored Windows tools from it.

To create the bootable recovery drive, plug your USB stick into your PC, type **recovery** into Start and then click 'Create

a recovery drive' when it appears. Windows 10 lets you include backups of system files, and Windows 8/8.1 lets you include a recovery **partition**; for the latter the USB stick will need at least 4GB of free space.

If you're using Windows 7, you can make a similar bootable toolkit, but you'll need to use a blank CD or DVD instead. Pop in a disc, click Start and type **repair**, then click 'Create a system repair disk'.

Create a bootable malware scanner

Some malware, such as **ransomware**, can nobble your PC so badly that your installed security programs are rendered



Turn a spare USB stick into a bootable drive full of Windows recovery tools

ineffective, or Windows itself becomes unstable (read more about this in our Cover Feature, page 50).

One way to overcome this is to turn a USB stick into a bootable scanner that finds and removes infections without you having to start Windows. Security companies Kaspersky and AVG both provide free tools for creating a bootable scanner that you can use on PCs running Windows XP and above.

You can't install both the Kaspersky and AVG tools on the same drive, but it's worth creating two separate AV scanners. Malicious files that are missed by one scanner may be picked up by the other.

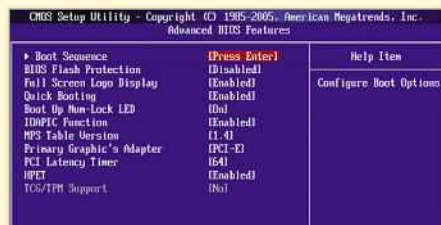
For Kaspersky Rescue Disk, insert a USB stick with at least 256MB of free space, and go to www.snipca.com/18046. Download both the 'ISO image of Kaspersky Rescue Disk 10' and the 'utility for recording Kaspersky Rescue Disk 10 to USB devices', then double-click the latter and follow the instructions to create the drive. For AVG, head to www.snipca.com.

MAKE YOUR PC SUPPORT BOOTABLE USB

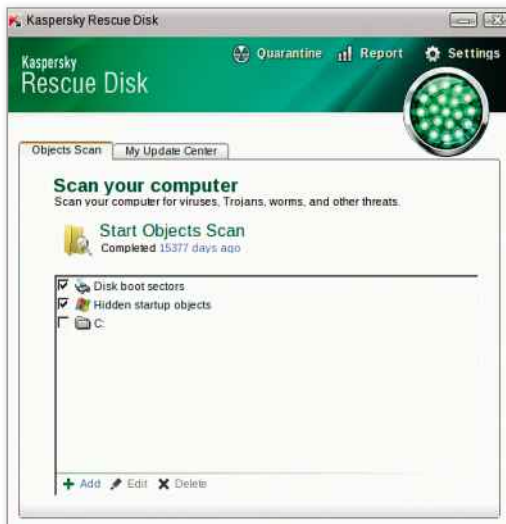
Many of our hacks involve using a USB stick as a 'bootable' drive. This means you run software from it when you boot your PC, letting you bypass Windows and run another OS (such as Linux), or sidestep malware that's got into your system.

But not all computers are configured to boot from USB. If you're having problems booting to software from a USB stick, restart your PC and tap the key (or key combination) required to access the **BIOS** (usually F2 or Del; check your PC's instructions).

Navigate to 'boot order' or 'boot



sequence' (this may be in the 'advanced' menu). You should see a list of drive types. Use the Page Up and Page Down keys to reorder the list so that the removable or USB type is at the top. Save and exit the BIOS, then restart your PC with the USB stick plugged in.



A bootable malware scanner is a very useful weapon in your USB arsenal

[com/18045](http://www.snipca.com/18045) and click 'Rescue CD (for USB stick)'. Unzip the file, insert a USB drive with at least 320MB of free space, then double-click Setup in your unzipped folder, select your USB drive and follow the remaining prompts.

Lock your PC

You can use a USB stick as a key to lock and unlock your PC. Download Predator Home Edition (www.snipca.com/18059, Windows XP and later; it costs \$10, around £6.50, but you can use the free trial first). Install the program, then insert any USB stick and follow the on-screen instructions to set up your key.



Download Predator to use a USB stick as a key to lock and unlock your PC

When that's done, your drive will work just like a real key. Plug it into the computer, and you can access it as normal. Pulling out the USB stick, however, instantly locks the PC, preventing other people accessing your personal files and information.

Give an old PC a performance boost

You may already know about ReadyBoost (www.snipca.com/18105). This Windows tool, built into every version since Vista, lets you speed up your computer by

plugging in a USB stick. It works by using the stick's faster **flash memory** as **virtual memory** when it's running short of **RAM**.

To use ReadyBoost, insert your USB, right-click the drive in Windows/File Explorer and select Properties. Click the ReadyBoost tab, then tick 'Use this device'.

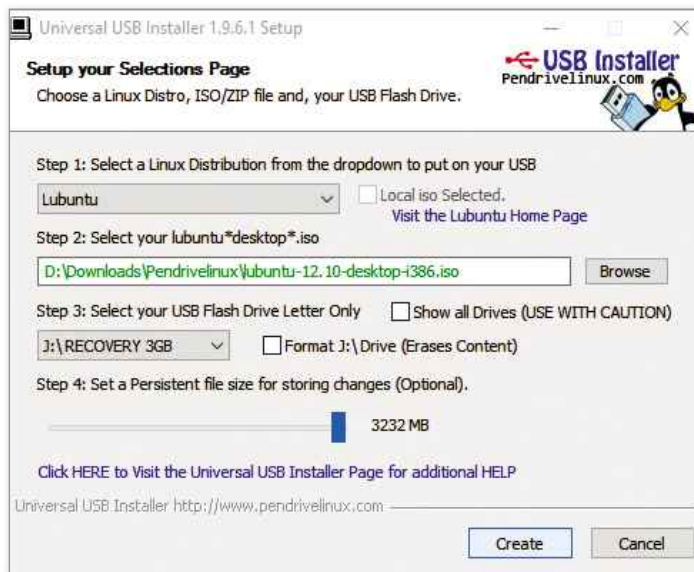
There are some restrictions, however. First the USB stick needs to have at least 256MB free, and it needs to meet Microsoft's speed requirements (Windows will tell you if it doesn't). Also, newer PCs with lots of free memory and a fast **SSD** are unlikely to benefit from ReadyBoost; older PCs stand to gain most. So it's rather annoying that ReadyBoost was only introduced *after* XP.

If you're prepared to spend £20 on a similar tool that works in XP, your best bet is eBoostr (www.eboostr.com). The free-trial version lets you use the tool without restrictions for two hours between computer restarts.

Run Linux from a USB

Many popular Linux distributions ('**distros**') now let you run the OS from a USB stick, without the hassle of having to replace Windows or set up a **dual-boot** installation. You can use the USB to install programs, create and save files, and more.

We recommend choosing a lightweight distro such as Lubuntu, as this will be fast and responsive, even when running from USB. Go to www.snipca.com/18060 and click the **32bit** or **64bit** standard image disc, depending on your system type. You'll need a free tool called Pendrivelinux Universal USB Installer (www.pendrivelinux.com), which loads the OS on to a bootable USB stick. You should use a fairly large stick – between



Create a portable PC on a stick with Lubuntu and Pendrivelinux

2GB and 16GB – if you want enough space for saved files and programs.

With both files downloaded and the stick inserted, double-click the Universal USB Installer program to launch it and follow the on-screen steps, selecting your Lubuntu distro and your USB, then using the slider to set how much of the remaining space you'd like to use as a 'persistent' area for storage. Whenever you want to bypass Windows and use Linux instead, simply plug in your Linux USB and start your PC.

Partition your hard drive

Mucking about with drive partitions while Windows is running can often spell disaster, and Windows' own partitioning tools aren't exactly exhaustive. Parted Magic (<http://partedmagic.com>) is a much better alternative that lets you clone, resize and move partitions. The tool costs around £6 (good value, in our opinion) and is delivered as an **ISO file**. Instead



Use Parted Magic to clone, resize and move partitions

of burning the ISO to a CD or DVD, however, you should use the Pendrivelinux Universal USB Installer (see previous tip) to transfer Parted Magic to a bootable USB stick. **ca**

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Problems Solved

PROBLEM OF THE FORTNIGHT

Why is Yahoo hijacking my search?

Q I have a laptop running Windows 8.1, and Google Chrome is set as my default web browser. However, I've recently noticed that when I open a search window, the browser sometimes changes to Yahoo. Is there a way to stop Yahoo becoming my default browser without my specific request?

David Farris

A We think you mean that new Chrome tabs sometimes open to display the Yahoo search page, because Yahoo doesn't itself make a browser. The company does market a 'Yahoo-optimized' version of Firefox, which basically means Yahoo is set as the default search engine – but that's not related to Chrome, and not the cause of your problem.

We're pretty confident your PC has been infected by some kind of **browser hijacker**, because this would explain the irregular nature of the behaviour you describe. Obviously, we can't be sure which one but it's probably the Yahoo Community Smartbar (YCS), which acts in exactly this way. It's usually installed at the same time as an app that you do want, using underhand tactics to gain your permission – such as a tiny, pre-ticked Agree box.

Fortunately, it's usually easy to remove this interloper, though it does take quite a bit of work. In Windows

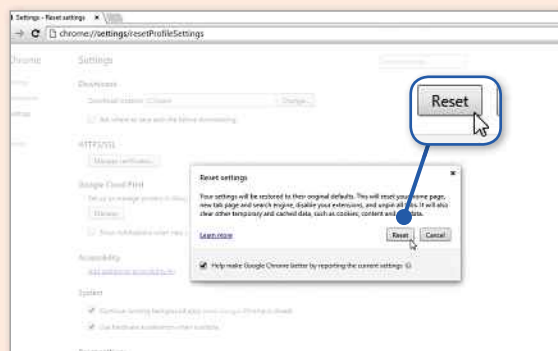
8.1, press Windows key+X then click Control Panel. Now click 'Uninstall a program' (under Programs) then look for the YCS entry. This will typically be 'MyStart Toolbar' but you might have been infected by a different variant, so scan through the items noting down anything that looks suspect – and then use Google to research it more if needed. But if MyStart Toolbar is there, click it then click Uninstall, followed by Yes.

Now you need to clean out the hijacker's leftovers, which will also be in Internet Explorer (IE) and Firefox if you have those browsers installed. Starting with Chrome, open the menu (click the icon with three horizontal lines at the top right) then click Settings, followed by Extensions. Scroll down to the bottom and click 'Show advanced settings'. Again scroll down to the bottom, and this time click 'Reset settings', followed by Reset to confirm.

In IE, click the cog at the top right, then choose 'Internet options'. Select the Advanced tab, then click the Reset button. Tick 'Delete personal settings' then click Reset. Wait, then click Close when prompted.

To reset Firefox, open its menu (three horizontal lines), click the question-mark icon and then choose Troubleshooting Information. Click the Refresh Firefox button, followed by Refresh Firefox to confirm. Wait for it to complete, and then click Finish.

That should do the trick, but to clear out any remaining detritus we'd suggest running the free AdwCleaner tool, which you can download from www.snipca.com/17891. No installation is required so just double-click the downloaded .exe file, and then click the Scan button.



Reset your browser's settings to their original defaults to clean out hijackers and adware

Why won't clicked links work?

Q Please help a very silver surfer! I am receiving emails from a credible source that contain links I'm trying to click in order to visit the relevant website. For about three months now, whenever I click one of these links, Windows tells me: "This file does not have a program associated with it for performing this action. Please install a program or, if one is already installed, create an association in the Default Programs control panel". I don't know what this means and I am totally bemused.

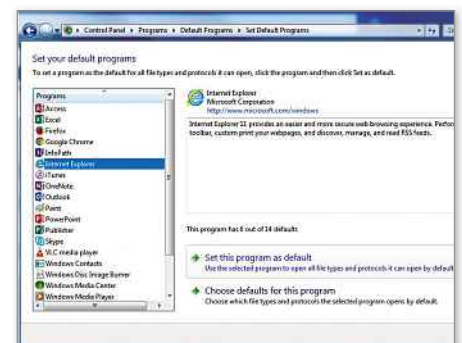
Gerry King

A It means that Windows has lost its association between clickable links (or 'hyperlinks') and the default web browser, so it doesn't know what to do when you click them. It can happen for a variety of reasons, but it's really easy to fix.

In Windows 7, click Start followed by Default Programs, then click 'Set your default programs'. Now click your preferred web browser (such as Internet Explorer), then click 'Set this program as the default'.

The procedure's a little different in Windows 8.1 or 10. In Windows 8.1, press Windows key+C to open the Charms bar, then click Settings, followed by 'Change PC settings', and then 'Search & apps' followed by Defaults.

In Windows 10, click Start, followed by Settings and then 'Default apps'. Next, click 'Web browser', then choose the desired browser from the list.



Reset your default browser if you have problems clicking links in emails

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Should I upgrade to 64bit Windows?

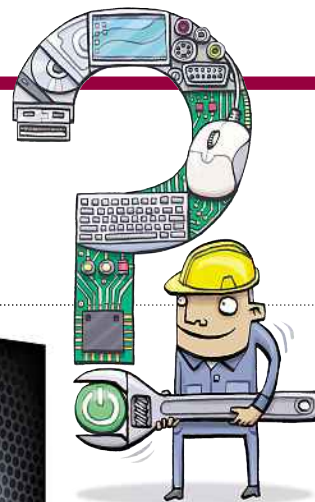
Q It's not often I continue to subscribe to magazines but yours has given me the confidence to build two computers in the past six years. I built my existing desktop computer four years ago. The CPU is an AMD Athlon II X2 processor on an Asus M4A88TD-V EVO/USB3 motherboard, on to which I installed the 32bit edition of Windows 7 with the maximum of 4GB memory.

What I would like to know is whether it would be feasible to speed things up using a 64bit Windows system and a higher-rated processor? I'm quite happy with the motherboard.

Tim Goadby



A Yes, you'll certainly be able to speed things up. We'd start with the upgrade to a 64bit edition of Windows, because this would allow you to install more memory: the combined cost is likely to be cheaper than a replacement processor, and together they should speed things up considerably. Your motherboard supports a maximum of 16GB DDR3 RAM; Crucial sells 8GB



upgrade kits for around £42 (see www.snipca.com/17747).

If the speed improvement doesn't satisfy you

then the best processor released for your motherboard's AM3 socket was the six-core AMD Phenom II X6 1100T (see picture). They're no longer manufactured so this won't be a cheap upgrade (with new models selling for around £295, www.snipca.com/17746), although you will certainly find used models much cheaper – if you're prepared to take a chance on second-hand goods.

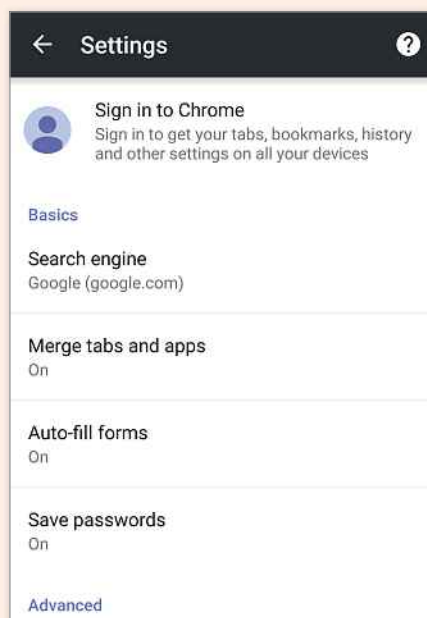
Can I install an older version of Android Chrome?

Q My Android phone recently let me know that Android 5.1 was available for download, so in a state of excitement I installed it. It's mostly okay, but Chrome seems to have changed in several ways – and not for the better. By far the biggest annoyance is that the tabs now seem to be all mixed up with app tabs, so when I press the Recents button (in Android not Chrome), I see a number of Chrome tabs as well. What's more, Chrome has lost its own tabs button. It's a total mess as far as I'm concerned. Is there a way to uninstall this version of Chrome and go back to an older one?

Paul Walter

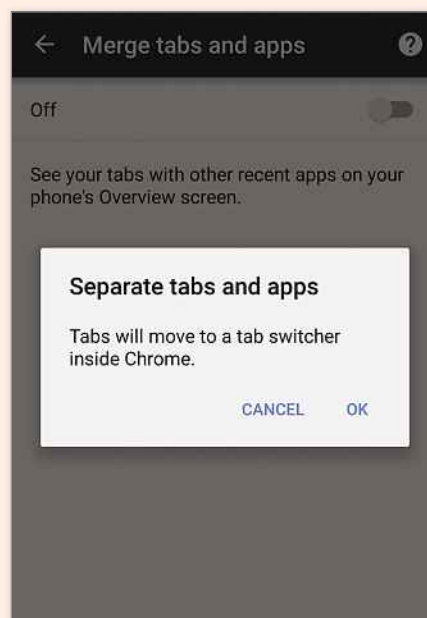
A It's possible to revert to earlier versions of apps, but the process for doing so doesn't always work, and the older versions might not work with the version of Android you have installed.

So, before we explain how to do that,



Separate your Chrome tabs and apps in your task switcher via Android settings

we'll alert you to a switch that'll solve your biggest annoyance with the latest Android Chrome – its tendency to merge tabs with apps in the task switcher. First, launch Chrome then tap the menu button (three stacked dots) followed by Settings. Now tap 'Merge tabs and apps' and tap the switch to the Off position, followed by OK to confirm.



That will put the tabs button back into the latest Chrome version, and you'll probably find it much easier to use now. But, if not, from the Android home page tap the Settings icon followed by Apps (in the Device section). Now scroll down and tap Chrome. Tap Uninstall Updates followed by OK.

Problems Solved

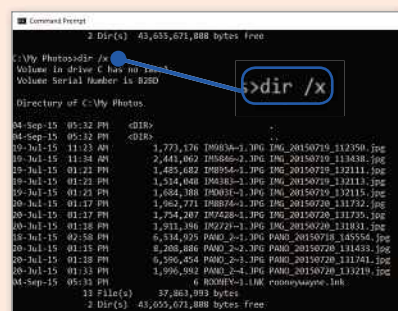
How do I delete a file with a long name?

Q My grandson downloaded a photo of Wayne Rooney, which I deleted. But it's left a shortcut that I can't delete because Windows says the file name is too long, and won't let me shorten it. How can I delete this?

John Davidson

A You can do this in the Command Prompt window. Click Start, type **cmd**, then right-click **cmd.exe** and choose 'Run as administrator'. Next, navigate to the relevant folder using the **CD** command. For example, typing **cd\users\john\my photos** and pressing Enter would set the Command Prompt to that folder on the current drive. Change the current drive by typing its letter followed by a colon – **D:**, for example – and then pressing Enter. Now type **dir /x** to list the folder contents in the truncated form used by older operating systems – eight characters followed by a full stop, followed by a three-character file extension.

Use this knowledge to identify the relevant file. It's a shortcut, so it'll have a '.lnk' extension, so you're looking for something like 'ROONEY~1.LNK' (the Command Prompt window will display files in capitals). Carefully type **del** followed by a space and then the file name – **del rooney~1.lnk**, for example. Then press Enter. The file's now gone, so click the red cross to close the Command Prompt window.



Use the Command Prompt window to delete files with long names

Why has my Taskbar moved?

Q For no known reason, the Taskbar on my Windows Vista PC has suddenly flipped from the bottom edge of the screen to the right-hand edge. In doing so, I've lost all the small icons that lived on the left-hand side, which I used as shortcuts to launch lots of my favourite programs. Can you advise me in simple terms how to reinstate it to the bottom edge?

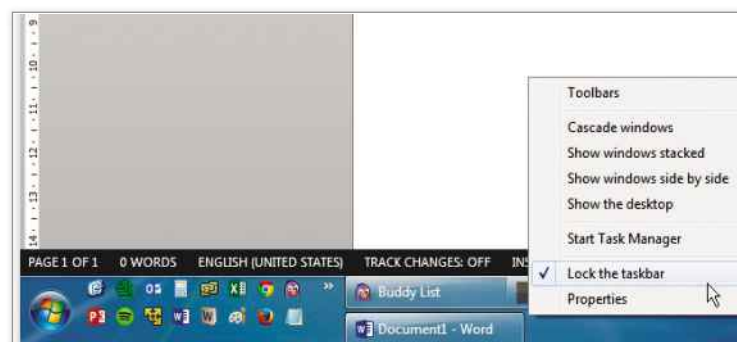
John Holliday

A The Taskbar can be anchored to any edge of the screen, simply by clicking its top edge and then dragging and dropping. This is surprisingly easy to do inadvertently – when attempting to resize the Taskbar, for instance, or even if you're just a bit of

a slow clicker when selecting icons near the top.

When you do this the Taskbar shuffles itself around to fit. However, as the vertical sides of your screen are obviously shorter than the horizontal ones, some icons may be squashed or disappear completely – and that's what's happened to the Quick Launch area that contains the icons for your favourite tools.

To move the Taskbar back, hover the cursor over its left edge and then simply click then drag and drop to the bottom of your screen. You can also stop it from happening again by 'locking' the Taskbar's position and layout. Right-click a blank part of the Taskbar then tick 'Lock the taskbar' (see screenshot).



Ensure your Taskbar stays where it is by right-clicking it then locking it in place

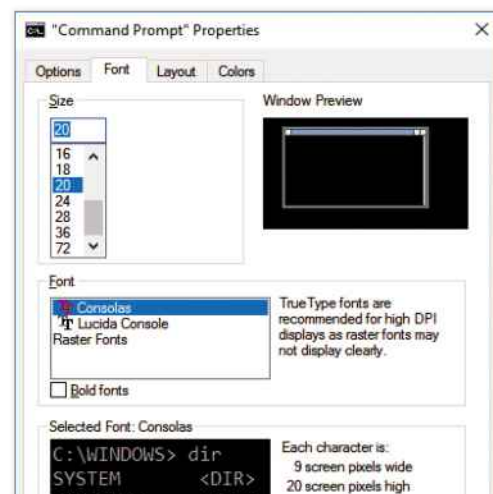
How do I make the Command Prompt font bigger?

Q I've been following Jane Hoskyn's series on using the Command Prompt. One problem I have is that the text displayed in the Command Prompt window is too small to read. Is there any way to make the font bigger? I've had a good poke around in the Display section of Control Panel but I can't find anything.

Shaun Connor

A Yes, there is a way, but don't blame yourself for not finding it because it's well hidden. Open a Command Prompt window as usual (type **cmd** at the Start menu and press Enter), then right-click its own Command Prompt icon at the top-left of the window and choose Defaults from the pop-up menu.

There are lots of options to experiment



Make text in the Command Prompt window easier to read by increasing its font size

with here, but for your specific needs, click **Font**, select a bigger number from the **Size** list and then click **OK**.

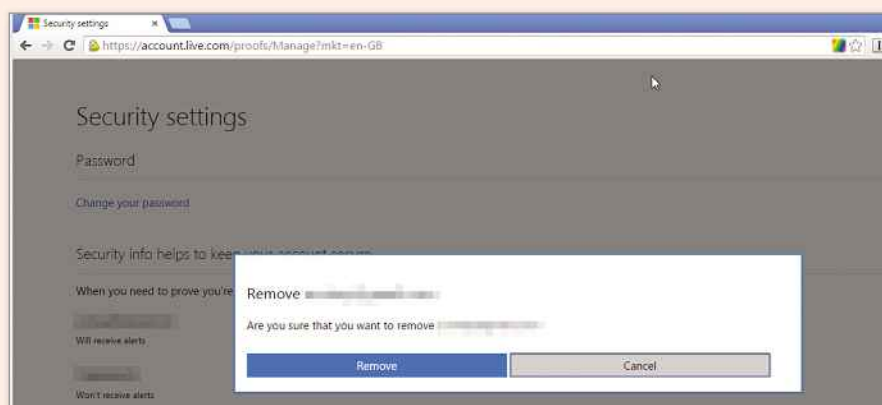
How do I delete my old Microsoft email address?

Q I bought a Windows 8.1 laptop. It keeps asking me to verify my account, but insists on using my old email 'live.co.uk' address. When I first set up my computer I used my outlook.com email address to log in. I have tried to delete this old email address but it keeps using it to verify my account. Please help!

John Morris

A Your old email addresses are stored in the security section of your Microsoft account, so you need to go there to remove old ones or add new details.

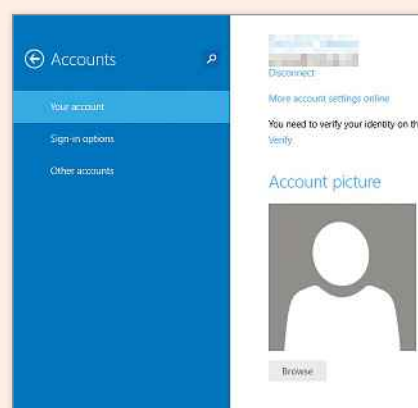
First, visit <https://account.microsoft.com> and log in with your outlook.com email address. Next click the 'Security & privacy' tab at the top, followed by the 'Manage advanced security' link under the 'Account security' heading. Now click the Remove link next to your outdated email address, followed by



Remove out-of-date email addresses in your Microsoft account's Security settings...

Remove to confirm. Next, click the 'Add security link' and fill in the form to add new backup security details – a mobile phone number or an alternative email address.

Then, in Windows 8.1, open the charms bar (Win+C), click Settings followed by 'Change PC settings', then Accounts followed by 'Your account'. Under the 'You need to verify your identity on this PC' link click Verify and then follow the prompts to confirm your identity (a code will be sent to your new email address or phone number, which you'll then need to type here).



...then verify your identity on your PC via your computer's settings

Can I separate text messages and Google Hangouts?

Q I recently upgraded to Android 5.1, only to find that Google Hangouts seems to have taken over my text messaging. In other words, some of my messages seem to go to people via Hangouts, so they receive them on their PC.

At other times my messages are sent as

traditional text messages. I know this because people are receiving them on their phones. I find the whole setup confusing and I'd like to return to basic text messaging. Is there a way I can do this?

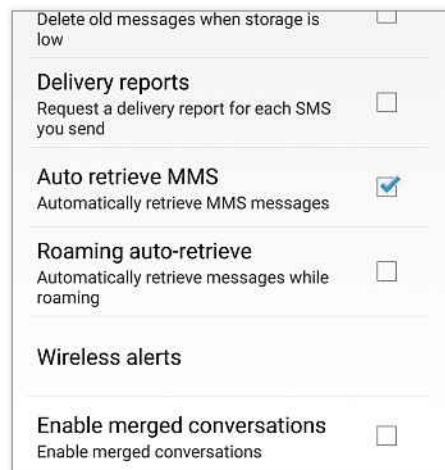
Julian Hill

A We agree that Hangouts is confusing, but you have a few options. You can easily switch between sending traditional texts and Hangouts (the latter requires the user to have a Google account). To do this, tap the little square icon to the left of the message-entry area and choose which type of message you'd like to send. In the message history above, different colours are applied to help you distinguish between the two: Hangouts have a green background; text messages are white.

If you'd prefer to keep text and Hangout threads separate, you can do that too. In Hangouts, tap the menu icon (three horizontal lines at the top left), then tap Settings followed by SMS, and

untick 'Enable merged conversations'.

Finally, you could install a standalone text-message tool and set it as your default – so you'd never again have to deal with Hangouts. Surprisingly, Google offers its own traditional text-message app, called Messenger – a free download from www.snipca.com/17259. Once installed, launch the Android Settings app then tap 'More' under 'Wireless & networks', followed by 'Default SMS app'. Select the Messenger button and then tap the back button.



Separate text and Hangout threads by unticking 'Enable merged conversations'

NEXT ISSUE

ON SALE
28 Oct

- Why won't BT let me send a Word document?
- How do I edit my Android dictionary?
- Why does my USB stick corrupt files?
- ...And many more

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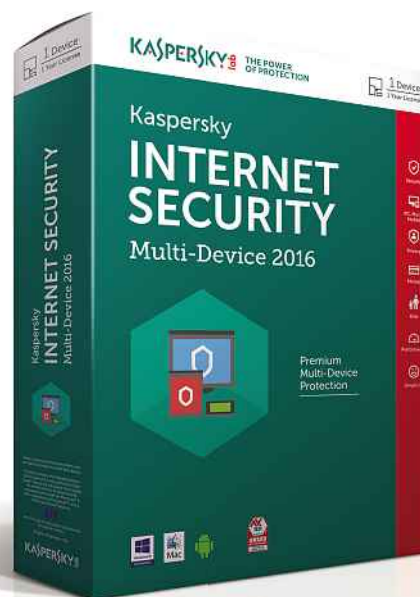
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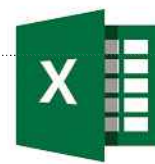
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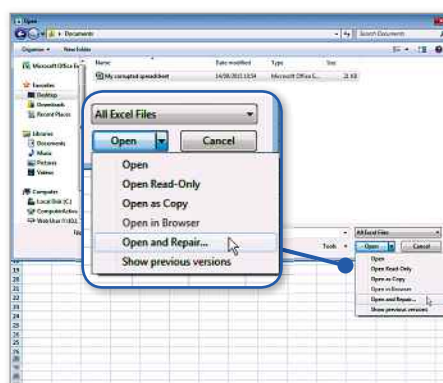


Microsoft Excel

Recover corrupted spreadsheets, fix performance problems and cure printing headaches

Spreadsheet won't open

If a spreadsheet stops opening properly – or even at all – launch Excel and click File, then Open (or File, Open, Computer, then Browse in Excel 2013). Locate the problematic spreadsheet file and click it, but instead of clicking Open, click the down arrow next to the Open button and select 'Open and Repair', then click Repair when prompted. With any luck the file will open and you'll see a message showing a link to a log file with more details about the repair. If this doesn't work, try the instructions above again, but this time choose the Extract Data option when prompted, then select 'Convert to Values'. Bear in mind that some data may be missing. Save the recovered file with a new name.



Use Excel's built-in repair tool to try fixing corrupted spreadsheet files

Excel crashes on startup

Crashes and startup errors are often a sign there's a problem with your Microsoft Office installation. Click Start (or right-click it in Windows 10), then Control Panel. Click 'Uninstall a program', then scroll down and click Microsoft Office. Click the Change button above it, then click Repair when prompted and follow the remaining steps.

If this doesn't work, try uninstalling Office then reinstalling it again from scratch. If you're getting a 'not enough memory' error, try disabling add-ins (Office-speak for add-ons).

Excel is slow and unresponsive

Performance problems are sometimes caused by add-ins. If Excel is really unresponsive or unstable, try launching it in safe mode – hold Ctrl down, then



Launch Excel in safe mode and disable add-ins to fix performance problems

double-click Excel's shortcut icon and click Yes when you see the message (see screenshot above). Then click File, Options, Add-Ins. Next to Manage at the bottom, select each type of add-in in turn, and untick all the add-ins listed in each case. Restart Excel, then repeat the process to re-enable any add-ins you use one at a time until the problem happens again, this way you'll identify which add-in is causing the problem. Disable it permanently.

Cursor freezes in Excel 2013

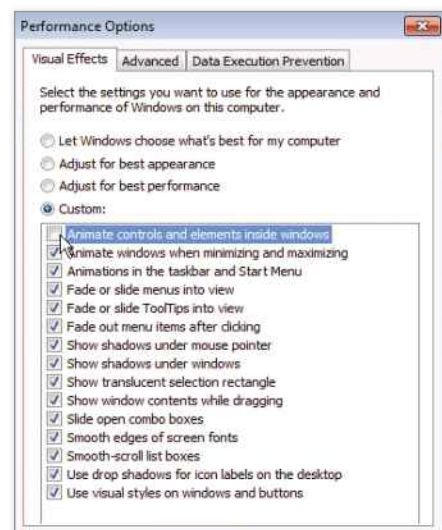
Excel 2013 can suffer from other performance problems, including a freezing or 'stuttering' mouse cursor and a slow response when you type.

First try clicking File, Options, Advanced, then Display and selecting the 'Disable hardware graphics acceleration' option. If that doesn't solve the problem, click Start, right-click Computer (or File Explorer in Windows 10) and select Properties. In the window that opens, click 'Advanced system settings' on the left. In the new window, click the Advanced tab, then Settings button under Performance. Another window will open – here, click the Visual Effects tab, then untick 'Animate controls and elements inside windows' and click OK (see screenshot above right).

Spreadsheets won't print properly

It's easy to end up with seemingly random bits of your spreadsheet printed over

dozens of sheets of paper. The fix for this is to specify exactly how your spreadsheet should fit the page. Click the Page Layout tab, then click the down arrow in the bottom right of the Page Setup tools. In the dialogue box that opens, choose either Portrait or Landscape, depending on how wide your document is. Next, tick the 'Fit to' option and select how many pages wide or tall you want – leave them both as '1' to fit the entire spreadsheet on one page, but bear in mind that this may shrink the page so much that it becomes unreadable. Click Print Preview at the bottom to see what your print-out will look like.



Disabling this Windows visual effect can fix performance problems in Excel 2013

AutoSums don't add up correctly

Check there are no hidden rows or columns with values that could be affecting the total. On the Home tab click Format, Hide & Unhide, and select Unhide Rows, then Unhide Columns to reveal any values that might be lurking invisibly.

Alternatively, if you set the Calculation Options to Manual, as described earlier, this will prevent AutoSum from automatically calculating the total correctly. Click the Formulas tab, then click Calculation Options and select Automatic, then try again.

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A4 25 sheets **£12.99**
A4 100 sheets **£39.99**
A4 250 sheets **£84.99**
A3 25 sheets **£25.99**
A3+ 25 sheets **£35.99**

Premium Matt Duo 200 gsm:
A4 50 sheets **£12.99**
A3+ 50 sheets **£34.99**
Heavy Duo Matt 310gsm:
A4 50 sheets **£17.99**
A3+ 50 sheets **£44.99**

PP-201 Plus Glossy II 275gsm:
6x4 50 sheets **£9.99**
7x5 20 sheets **£11.99**
A4 20 sheets **£11.99**
A4 20 sheets **£27.99**
A3+ 20 sheets **£36.99**
SG-201 Semi-Gloss 260gsm:
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A4 20 sheets **£11.99**
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A3+ 20 sheets **£42.99**

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Colours 5.5ml each **£3.99**

T0791-T0796 Owl Inks
Originals:
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£12.99

Compatibles:
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£3.99

T0801-T0806 Hummingbird Inks
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A4 50 sheets **£18.99**
A3+ 25 sheets **£22.99**
Gloss 271gsm:
6x4 100 sheets **£12.99**
7x5 100 sheets **£18.99**
A4 50 sheets **£18.99**
A3+ 25 sheets **£22.99**
Double Sided Matt 250gsm:
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A3 50 sheets **£27.99**

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A4 15 sheets **£15 FREE** **£9.99**
A3 20 sheets **£29.99**
A3+ 20 sheets **OFFER** **£24.99**
Ultra Gloss 300gsm:
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7x5 50 sheets **£12.99**
A4 15 sheets **£11.99**
Premium Semi-Gloss 251gsm:
6x4 50 sheets **£8.99**
A4 20 sheets **£14.99**
A3 20 sheets **£29.99**
A3+ 20 sheets **OFFER** **£24.99**
Archival Matte 192gsm:
A4 50 sheets **£14.99**
A3 50 sheets **£33.99**
A3+ 50 sheets **£44.99**
Heavyweight Matte 167gsm:
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No.350 Black 4.5ml **£11.99**
No.351 Colour 3.5ml **£14.99**
No.363 Black 6ml **£13.99**
No.363 C/M/Y/PC/PM each **£9.99**
No.363 SET OF 6 **£39.99**
No.364 Black 6ml **£7.99**
No.364 PB/C/M/Y 3ml each **£6.99**
No.364 SET OF 4 **£21.99**
No.364XL Black 14ml **£13.99**
No.364XL PB/C/M/Y 6ml each **£12.99**
No.364XL SET OF 4 **£49.99**
No.920XL SET OF 4 **£46.99**
No.932XL SET OF 4 **£43.99**
No.950XL SET OF 4 **£69.99**

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No.21 Black 10ml **£7.99**
No.22 Colour 21ml **£11.99**
No.45 Black 45ml **£4.99**
No.56 Black 24ml **£9.99**
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No.364 Black 10ml **£4.99**
No.364 Colours 5ml each **£3.99**
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Grace 6x4 300 photos **£14.99**
Grace 7x5 100 photos **£7.99**
Grace 7x5 200 photos **£13.99**
Grace A4 100 photos **£15.99**
Grafton 6x4 200 photos **£9.99**
Grafton 7x5 200 photos **£13.99**
Baby 6x4 200 photos **£9.99**
Travel 6x4 200 photos **£8.99**

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Emilia 10x8 two colours **£7.99**
Emilia 12x8 two colours **£8.99**
Rio 6x4 four colours **£5.99**
Rio 7x5 four colours **£6.99**
Rio 8x6 four colours **£7.99**
Rio 10x8 four colours **£8.99**
Rio 12x8 four colours **£9.99**

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32GB **£32.99**
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LP-E12 for Canon **£12.99**
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3		EE: Broadband & Calls	£9.95 (£1.00 for 12 months)	12 months	17Mbps max speed	∞ unlimited **	£12.00
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In the next issue of our sister title Web User...

- **HACK YOUR OWN PC**
The best Registry tweaks you'll ever make
- **WINDOWS 10 RECOVERY**
Discover its hidden rescue tools
- **MAKE CCLEANER EVEN BETTER**
Advanced tools that are easy to use
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Jargon Buster

32bit A measure of how much data a computer can process at once. Most older PCs are 32bit, more modern ones are 64bit.

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

64bit A technology that processes information in larger chunks. Most modern computers are 64bit.

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

802.11n A standard for wireless networks that allows for high transfer speeds.

Add-in Microsoft's name for tools that can be added to Office software.

Add-on See Plug-in.

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

Bitcoin A type of digital currency in which encryption techniques are used to regulate the generation of units and verify the transfer of funds, operating independently of a central bank.

Botnet A group of infected PCs connected via the internet, and used to infect other PCs.

Browser hijackers Programs that change your default browser, its homepage and search engine when you install them.

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.

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

CPU Central Processing Unit. Another term for a processor.

DDR3 The newest, fastest commonly used type of memory.

DisplayPort A new socket for connecting monitors that's still relatively rare.

Distro A version of the Linux OS and the programs that go with it.

DLNA Digital Living Network Alliance. A technology that enables devices to communicate with each other and display media files.

DNS Domain Name System. A technology that associates computers with their addresses on the internet.

Dual boot To set up a PC with two operating systems, so that one must be chosen each time it starts.

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

Firewall A piece of software or hardware that prevents unauthorised access to a computer over a network, such as the internet.

Firmware Basic software stored on a device, such as a music player, to control its operation.

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

Geotag Adding geographical identification metadata to various media such as photos and videos.

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

Gsm Grams per square metre.

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

HTML Hypertext Markup Language. The language used to write most web pages.

HTML5 The latest much safer version of the Hypertext Markup Language.

Hotkey A key set up to perform a complex action.

Hybrid hard drive A mass storage device that contains both a conventional hard drive and a flash memory module.

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

Jailbroken An iPhone, iPod or iPad that has been modified to get around Apple's restrictions.

LCD Liquid-Crystal Display. The technology used to create almost all flat displays – from digital watches to televisions.

LED Light-Emitting Diode. An electronic device that emits light. Used on almost all electronic devices, and to provide the backlight for some LCDs.

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).

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

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.

NFC Near-field communication. A technology that allows two devices to communicate by being touched together or placed near to each other.

Open source Software that can be modified by anyone, rather than just by the employees of the company that created it.

Partition A large hard drive can be split into two or more partitions or 'virtual' drives.

Plug-in A small program that adds extra features to your web browser or to other applications, and is loaded only when it's needed.

Processor The processor – or central processing unit – is the brain of a computer.

PUP Potentially Unwanted Program. A program that may not be desired, despite the user consenting to it being downloaded.

RAM Random-access memory. The computer's working area, used for data storage while the PC is switched on.

Ransomware Malware run by hackers who take over your PC and demand payment to release it.

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

Restore Point A Windows backup of system files and settings.

Retina Apple's marketing term for extremely high-resolution displays. Typically above 300 pixels per inch (ppi).

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

Server A computer on a network that distributes information to other PCs.

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

Trojan A malicious computer program that's disguised as a different, harmless program.

USB 2.0 Faster successor to USB that's used by devices such as external hard drives.

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.

Virtual memory A reserved area of hard-drive space that your PC can use as 'virtual' memory, or RAM, whenever it is running short.

Virus signature A unique string of bits of a virus.

Web standard The formal, universal standard and other technical specification that define and describe aspects of the World Wide Web.

The Final Straw



STUART ANDREWS is
Computeractive's Mr Angry

This issue Stuart Andrews can't grasp the point of...

Gigantic gadgets

I now look back with nostalgia on the days when we used to joke that if mobile phones got any smaller we wouldn't be able to find them in our pocket. These days the damn things are only getting bigger. The same thing is happening to our tablets and even to our monitor screens. It seems we like our technology super-sized, as if bigger automatically means better. I'm not so sure.

“

Your fingers can't wrap around the phone and hit the virtual keys unless they are longer than ET's

”

With some high-tech gizmos, going large makes sense. Take TVs, for example: the bigger the screen, the more immersive your programmes and films, and were it not for my wife's concerns about interior décor, I'd have the biggest one money could buy. But a monitor? I sit roughly two feet away from the thing. If it's larger than 24 inches, I have to turn my head to see the corners.

The trend for bigger tablets is just as ridiculous. Initially, the whole point of tablets was that they were compact and easy to carry, but were great for browsing the web, playing games and watching TV. Why make one that's effectively a laptop with no keyboard that you can't

comfortably hold with one hand?

It's smartphones, however, where things are really getting stupid. We used to think that a few people needed a halfway house between a phone and tablet – the horrifically named 'phablet' – but now everyone wants that bigger screen. I'd agree that the early iPhones and Android phones were a bit too small, but I still don't understand how we got from there to here. Five inches is increasingly the norm, while the latest phablets are packing 5.5- to 6-inch screens. Who needs a phone that big?

Let's look at this sensibly. Sure, those whopping screens are great for watching videos, but ergonomically they're a disaster. Try to use one one-handed, and your fingers can't wrap around the phone and hit the virtual keys unless they are longer than ET's. This leaves you with a phone you always have to use two-handed, prodding away with a finger even when all you want to do is make a call.

And when you *do* make a call, you feel a plonker, holding up some vast slab of aluminium, glass and plastic to your ear. With the old iPhones you could phone someone discreetly, but with these monster-phones there's no chance of that. They're the technology equivalents of a Range Rover Evoque – showing off that you've got money to burn and that you're not afraid to think bigger than those small-minded souls with their tiny, lightweight phones. Well, bully for you.

Plus, while phones are getting bigger, I haven't noticed the same thing happening to trouser pockets. As



someone who writes about tech I've tried a few super-sized phones, but it's always the weight and heft of them in my pocket that gets to me, as the corners dig into places where I'd rather corners didn't, or occupy so much space that there's no room for my keys. Just try to get one of these whoppers out in a hurry: one minute you're trying to squeeze your fingers into the pocket, the next you're desperately trying to tug both hand and phablet out. Struggle too long and you'll get some odd looks and possibly fall foul of indecency laws. Does that really sound like a good idea?

It speaks volumes to me that several perfectly intelligent people I know have bought smartwatches, purely because it means they won't have to pull out their pricey big-screen phones any more. Seriously. You spend £400 to £600 on a phone then need a £300 accessory to avoid using it? Doesn't this tell you something has gone wrong? Let's stop this madness now and let phones be phones and tablets be tablets. Let's turn our back on the phablet menace before it's all too late.



Do you agree with Stuart?

Let us know at letters@computeractive.co.uk

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