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# Windows 10 Creators Update



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Learn something new in every issue

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Watch them on  
your PC (at last!)

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*Special 500th issue*

# FREE SOFTWARE YOUR COMPLETE GUIDE

- ✓ Best free programs
- ✓ Install them without junk

- ✓ Unlock hidden tools
- ⊕ Dodgy software to avoid



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*Thank you!*

**PLUS**

DID THE RUSSIANS  
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So they'll never crash your PC **p48**



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Windows 10



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# From the Editor

There were a couple of ways we could have celebrated reaching our 500th issue. We could have spent 76 pages patting ourselves on our collective backs while blowing our own trumpets (not easy to do). Or we could have published a 500-page special issue, but I doubt it would have fitted on newsagents' shelves - or through subscribers' letterboxes.

Instead, we've focussed on the people without whom we'd never have made it to Issue 50, let alone 500 - our readers. On page 58 you give us your thoughts on computing in 1998, when *Computeractive* came into this world, and how things have changed since. It was heartening to read that we've managed to help so many of you over the years.



You'll find several other references throughout this issue to how computing has evolved, although our Cover Feature is set firmly in the here and now. In it Jane Hoskyn tells you everything she knows about free software, and that's possibly more than any other person alive.

**Daniel Booth**  
[editor@computeractive.co.uk](mailto:editor@computeractive.co.uk)



## THIS ISSUE IN NUMBERS

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new iPad - p21



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Price of Honestech's  
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## HOW TO USE SNIPCA URLs

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

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Special 500th issue

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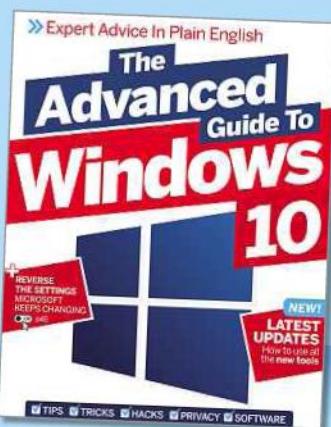
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at [www.snipca.com/21617](http://www.snipca.com/21617)

## Facebook could be charged for web terror and abuse

**F**acebook is at risk of being prosecuted in the UK for failing to remove images of child abuse and videos that promoted terrorism.

Undercover reporters from *The Times* flagged the offensive content to Facebook's moderators, expecting it to be removed. But Facebook said that the material didn't breach its 'community standards', despite much of it being illegal under British law. Its algorithms even suggested that users join groups that had published the material.

"One video appears to depict a sexual assault on a child. That would undoubtedly breach UK indecency laws", Julian Knowles QC told the newspaper. He added that if a moderator allows an illegal image to stay online, it "might be regarded as assisting or encouraging its publication



and distribution".

Obscene content included videos of beheadings, propaganda about the Westminster terror attack and paedophilic cartoons.

Police are likely to face growing pressure from MPs and charities to investigate the site. Labour MP Yvette Cooper, chairwoman of the home affairs select committee, called for the Government to consider proposals from German ministers to fine sites millions of pounds if illegal

content isn't removed quickly.

An NSPCC spokesman slammed Facebook's failure to remove illegal content as "appalling". He added that "it also raises the question of what content they consider to be inappropriate and dangerous to children".

Justin Osofsky, vice president of Global Operations at Facebook, said that it was "grateful" to *The Times* for making it aware of the content. He said that Facebook has removed all

### COMMENT

This report from *The Times* follows a BBC investigation in March that found the site doesn't always remove illegal content. Facebook needs to change its priorities fast. Its ability to block and delete vile videos has not kept pace with its capacity for making colossal amounts of money. It claims that its moderators are "highly trained experts who provide 24/7 cover", but little is known about how they work. Much more transparency is needed.

prohibited material reported by the newspaper, adding: "We are sorry that this occurred. It's clear that we can do better, and we'll continue to work hard to live up to the high standards people rightly expect of Facebook".

## PC sales rise... or do they?

Sales of computers worldwide have risen for the first time in five years, according to one set of statistics, but continued to fall according to another.

Market-research company IDC said that in the first three months of 2017 PC sales increased by 0.6 per cent. However, competing data from Gartner shows that they

fell by 2.4 per cent, sinking to their lowest level since 2007.

The disparity may be explained by the growing popularity of Chromebooks, which IDC includes in its sales data, but Gartner doesn't. These are laptops that run the Chrome OS, rather than Windows, and are intended to be used mainly to browse the

web, not for downloading software or performing intensive tasks like video editing.

IDC's Jay Chou said that sales of computers fell during the past five years because consumers chose to buy phones and tablets instead of replacing their PCs. But he added that they merely



"delayed" buying a new PC rather than abandoning computers completely, and he expects growth to continue.

The company's figures show HP overtaking China's Lenovo as the world's biggest PC seller, followed by Dell, Apple and Acer.



**You'll like this...** A new iPad app lets you 'hear' what Stonehenge sounded like 4,000 years ago ([www.snipca.com/24112](http://www.snipca.com/24112))



**...but not this** Vodafone and O2 customers are being targeted by emails containing malware ([www.snipca.com/24113](http://www.snipca.com/24113))

# Loyal broadband customers hit by 43% price increases

Broadband customers are being punished for their loyalty with higher prices, according to new research.

Citizens Advice analysed the cheapest deals offered by BT, Sky, EE, TalkTalk and Virgin Media, and found that prices rocket by an average of 43 per cent a year once introductory deals come to an end.

This amounts to £113 a year, which is five times more than customers were paying in 2011 to stay on the same deal.

The charity has called on internet service providers (ISPs) to be much clearer about how much customers will pay once the introductory offer ends, rather than burying it in the small print. It claimed that more than a third of customers were unaware that prices jumped so much.

It added that according to a recent survey customers over 65 are more likely than those younger to remain with their existing ISP, meaning their "loyalty penalty could



reach over a thousand pounds".

Gillian Guy, chief executive of Citizens Advice, said that because people stay with their ISP for an average of four years, these extra costs "can run into hundreds of pounds".

She wants the Government to examine the problem, saying it should scrutinise ISPs to the same extent as they do energy firms.

The report recommends that Ofcom should identify "vulnerable customers" and look at how they could be

protected from the impact of price rises. Capping broadband prices is one solution, Citizens Advice said, "similar to the pre-payment meter cap in the energy market".

The price rise varies greatly between ISPs. BT's increase is the highest, at 67 per cent, while Virgin Media's price stays the same (see full details on Citizens Advice's site: [www.snipca.com/24072](http://www.snipca.com/24072)).

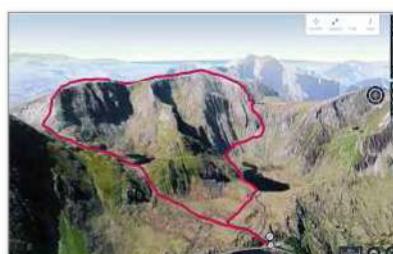
Have you been penalised for your broadband loyalty? Let us know: letters@computeractive.co.uk

## Plan your walking route in stunning 3D

Hikers and cyclists can now plot their route in dazzling 3D using new software from the Ordnance Survey (OS).

It provides a bird's-eye view of some of the UK's most dramatic scenery, including glens, lochs, lakes and mountains, but is available only as part of a £19.99 annual Premium subscription.

Called Aerial 3D, the software adds a layer to the OS Maps – a collection of maps available online and via an app. It is designed to complement the OS Landranger (1:50k) and OS Explorer (1:25) maps, which are available only in the



Premium version of OS Maps (compare it with the Free package at [www.snipca.com/24037](http://www.snipca.com/24037)).

The layer makes it easier for you to see where your route will be affected by natural hazards, such as crags, waterfalls and cliffs (see image). You can zoom into the landscape, and rotate it.

Nick Giles, Ordnance

Survey's leisure managing director, said that the new software helps users "plan in accordance with their skills and experience" so they can enjoy the great outdoors in safety.

In total OS Maps contains 950,000 routes created by users and organisations, although only the former are available in the Free version. The OS said that it will also provide an accessibility layer that lets wheelchair users see which routes they can tackle.

To sign up for a seven-day free trial of Aerial 3D (no credit card required) visit [www.snipca.com/24036](http://www.snipca.com/24036).

## IN BRIEF

### EU BANS PHONE-ROAMING FEES

From 15 June Brits travelling in the EU will be able to use their phones at the same cost as in the UK, bringing to an end the **roaming fees** that led to huge bills. The European Commission is introducing the law first proposed in 2013. It's not yet known how Brexit will affect the ruling.

### GOOGLE TO FLAG UP 'FAKE NEWS'

Google has added 'Fact Check' information to search results to help stop the spread of 'fake news'. Below some results you'll see a label (see screenshot) indicating the accuracy of a news story. Google's blog ([www.snipca.com/24058](http://www.snipca.com/24058)) shows that it will use ratings like 'False' and 'Mostly True', determined by fact-checking organisations and publishing companies.



## Tomorrow's world

Scientists from universities in California and Colorado say that a cracked phone screen may soon be able to heal itself. They have developed a polymer that stretches to regain its original form within 24 hours. One of the researchers, Dr Chao Wang, said he was inspired by the self-healing powers of comic-book character Wolverine. See him explain at [www.snipca.com/24039](http://www.snipca.com/24039).

## IN BRIEF

### WONCA CUSTOMERS' DATA STOLEN IN HACK

Nearly a quarter of a million UK Wonga customers may have had their data stolen in what could be one of the biggest security breaches in UK history. The controversial payday lender said it had contacted customers to say that hackers may have taken email addresses, phone numbers, bank-account details and the last four digits of card numbers. Visit [www.snipca.com/24073](http://www.snipca.com/24073) for info.

### CHROME STOPS ANNOYING PAGE JUMPS

Google has updated Chrome to stop web pages 'jumping' to the top after you've already scrolled down. This annoyance is often caused by the website adding an advert to the top of the page. Google has added what it calls 'scroll anchoring' to Chrome, which it claims will prevent an average of three page jumps per visit to a web page. Read more at [www.snipca.com/24093](http://www.snipca.com/24093).

# Microsoft fixes bank-hacking Word flaw

Microsoft has fixed a vulnerability in all versions of Word that was being used to steal bank login details. Called 'CVE-2017-0199', the update was part of the company's 'Patch Tuesday' security release for April, which comprised a total of 44 fixes.

The flaw was highlighted on 7 April by researchers at antivirus company McAfee, which said it immediately contacted Microsoft Security Response Center.

A day later researchers at security specialists FireEye said that they had detected the flaw several weeks earlier, and had been working with Microsoft to fix it.

At that point there had been no reports of the flaw being exploited by hackers. But two days later cybersecurity firm Proofpoint said it had spotted an email campaign that used the flaw to infect PCs with the Dridex malware.

Dridex is designed to steal login details for bank



accounts. It's thought that in 2015 hackers used it to steal more than £20m from UK-based bank accounts.

Proofpoint said scammers were emailing malicious Word documents to "millions" of people (see screenshot), mainly in Australia. Opening the document infects the PC, giving hackers access to it.

The company said because of the "widespread effectiveness and rapid weaponisation" of the flaw all Windows users should make sure they have automatic updates turned on, so that Microsoft's fix is applied immediately.

To do this in Windows 7 click your Start button, type windows update, click Windows Update under Programs, then click 'Change settings' on the left. Under 'Important updates' select 'Install updates automatically (recommended)'.

In Windows 10 automatic updates are turned on by default. To check this on your PC, click the Start button, Settings, then 'Update & security'. Click Windows Update on the left, then under 'Update Status' check whether your computer is up to date. If it's not, click 'Check for Updates'.

# Google shuts down Map Maker

Google has closed its Map Maker tool following incidents of online vandalism.

Launched in 2008, Map Maker quickly became a popular way for local people to add or correct information about their area to Google Maps. It meant that communities could easily change information as new buildings and roads were built, for example.

These changes were submitted to Google Maps moderators, who would decide whether to approve them. If approved, they were added permanently.

But Map Maker had caused problems for Google, most



famously in 2015 when a mischievous user added an image of the company's Android logo urinating on an Apple logo ([www.snipca.com/24075](http://www.snipca.com/24075)). This image sneaked through the moderation process, much to Google's embarrassment, forcing the company to suspend Map Maker for three months.

Some of Map Maker's editing options (see screenshot) are being added to

Local Guides ([www.google.com/local/guides](http://www.google.com/local/guides)), launched in 2015, in which users are rewarded for reviewing businesses, adding new places and uploading photos.

Regular 'guides' can enter exclusive competitions, attend Google events, and even test the company's new products before they're released.

Map Maker officially closed on 31 March. In a statement ([www.snipca.com/24074](http://www.snipca.com/24074)) Google encouraged users to join Local Guides in order to "keep contributing your local knowledge to Google Maps and engage with a passionate community of likeminded individuals".

## The world's gone mad!

We can understand people loving their technology, but a new survey suggests many are actually having sexual fantasies about tech devices. The study, conducted by advertising agency JWT, found that a quarter of users dream of having romantic liaisons with their automated voice 'assistants' – such as Apple's Siri, Amazon's Alexa and Microsoft's Cortana. It can surely only be a matter of time before one of them sues their owner for sexual harassment.

# Online pharmacies censured for risking patient safety

Websites selling prescription medicines are putting patients at risk by not following safety procedures, the UK's healthcare regulator has said.

The Care Quality Commission (CQC) reprimanded four online pharmacies: Doctor Matt, Frost Pharmacy, i-GP and White Pharmacy.

Doctor Matt has been suspended until June after it was found taking less than 20 seconds to assess a patient's claim for medicine.

Frost Pharmacy has been warned about prescribing large numbers of asthma inhalers without carrying out proper patient checks, while i-GP Ltd has been told to improve how it verifies the



identity of patients.

Inspectors have restricted what medicine White Pharmacy (pictured) can prescribe after finding that it was issuing a "high volume" of opioid-based painkillers without thoroughly checking patient histories.

Other problems included wrong medicines prescribed, poor communication with GPs and inadequate recording

of medical histories.

The crackdown is part of a wider investigation into the 43 pharmacies that are registered to trade online in the UK. Professor Steve Field, who leads the CQC's online prescribing inspection team, said: "We expect the same standards of quality and safety to be met as we would see in more traditional GP settings - this is exactly what people deserve".

His team's work has been praised by Helen Stokes-Lampard, head of the Royal College of GPs, who said: "We cannot tolerate a laissez-faire attitude towards dispensing of prescription medication; they are not sweets".

## USING A WEB CHEMIST: CHECK LIST

- It must be registered with the General Pharmaceutical Council using the EU common logo (pictured)
- Their address and contact details
- The cost of the prescription
- Make sure you're given clear information about using the medicine

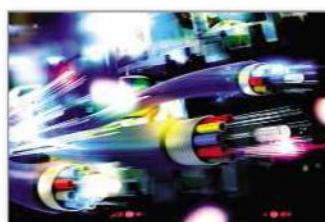


## Fibre broadband adverts 'mislead public'

Customers are in danger of being misled by broadband adverts that promise "fibre" speeds, the UK's advertising watchdog has said.

The Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) says that internet service providers (ISPs) sometimes use the word 'fibre' to describe connections that actually rely on a slower copper cable from the street cabinet to the customer's home.

It's now investigating the use of the term to address "evolving concerns" from the public and MPs. In March Matt Warman, Conservative MP for Boston and Skegness, said that ISPs were "complicit in fraud"



for how they advertise broadband speed.

The ASA added that greater clarity was needed because the number of households able to access fibre is likely to increase rapidly following government spending in broadband infrastructure. It will consider whether 'fibre broadband' should be used to describe only services that use

faster cables from end to end.

The source of the confusion lies in how to describe a service that partially uses fibre cables. These are 'Fibre to the cabinet' (FTTC) connections, which are completed by a slower copper cable to the home. Much faster are 'Fibre to the premises' (FTTP) services, which can deliver 1Gbps broadband.

The ASA said it will update its investigation in the summer. It added it was "pleased" that ISPs have stuck to new rules introduced last year which enforce combining the cost of line-rental and broadband in monthly bills.

## IN BRIEF

### AMAZON BANS KODI TV BOXES



Amazon has banned people selling TV-streaming devices that make it easy to illegally watch paid-for content for free. Its updated policy ([www.snipca.com/24032](http://www.snipca.com/24032)) is being seen as a ban on TV boxes that come loaded with the Kodi media player, although Amazon doesn't mention the software. It will suspend or terminate the accounts of sellers, and "destroy" prohibited devices being stored in its warehouses.

### ANDROID WEB USE OVERTAKES WINDOWS

Internet use on Android devices is now more common than accessing the web through Windows computers. The mobile operating system, launched by Google in 2008, overtook Windows in March, according to figures from StatCounter ([www.snipca.com/24035](http://www.snipca.com/24035)). Although Android's lead is extremely narrow - 37.93 per cent to 37.91 per cent - it's expected to increase as more people choose to go online on phones and tablets.

### LAPTOPS IN CARGO 'A FIRE RISK'

Placing laptops and tablets in the cargo hold of aeroplanes carries a fire risk, the European Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) has said. Its warning follows the banning of large electronic devices from hand luggage on flights from several Middle Eastern and African countries. The EASA said that because these devices have lithium-ion batteries they should be carried inside the passenger cabin, where any problems could be resolved quickly.

## Named & Shamed

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

### WARNING: JUNK AHEAD

#### Junk offender: Xara Web Designer Premium

Xara Web Designer Premium is the undisputed leader of the WYSIWYG web-design gang (that's 'what you see is what you get'). It's got all the tools to create sophisticated websites without needing to know [HTML](#). Its £69.99 price tag is fair – and you can try it out for free.

So Xara was top of my shortlist for the section on great paid-for trials in our Cover Feature (see page 50) and remains our top web design Buy It! recommendation (see page 33), but it also reminds us that paid-for software can be junk offenders too.

#### Premium PUP

You'd have thought a program costing 70 quid wouldn't need to bundle adware in its installer. But here it is: 'simpliclean', pre-ticked and ready to infect your hard drive with one click of the Next button

(see screenshot).

'What advantages does simpliclean offer me?' asks Xara's installer. 'Safely delete junk data' and 'Save Energy' it replies. I checked Google for a second opinion, and found several. "I can't figure out how to delete simpliclean... I've installed this program accidentally," laments a visitor to UGetFix ([www.snipca.com/24088](http://www.snipca.com/24088)). "It won't uninstall from my PC no matter how many times I have tried," complains a reader of Program Uninstall Guides ([www.snipca.com/24089](http://www.snipca.com/24089)). Simpliclean may not be malware, but by appearing on PCs unexpectedly and refusing to budge without a fight, it exhibits classic **PUP** traits. If you have it, you should be able to remove it using Malwarebytes AdwCleaner ([www.malwarebytes.com/adwcleaner](http://www.malwarebytes.com/adwcleaner)).

I avoided downloading simpliclean by closing then deleting Xara's installer. It's



You wouldn't expect a PUP in the installer for a respected paid-for program – but here it is

not a happy ending, though. Finding junk in this otherwise excellent program was a disappointment. It's not as though Xara's owner Magix needs the money. Its new paid-for Web Designer 365 software is wrapped in terms so opaque they might as well be written upside-down in Greek. It's 'not a subscription service', insists the website – but you'll lose features unless you upgrade every year. Uh-huh. Remember when you used to be able to pay £50 for a CD of junk-free software, then keep it forever? Ah, memories.

### What are they talking about?

#### What they say

**Apple** ([www.snipca.com/24096](http://www.snipca.com/24096)):

"A housing for a portable electronic device incorporating shock absorbers that automatically deploy when a particular acceleration event is detected."



In one embodiment, bumper cushions are made from a buoyant material such that the smartphone may be made to float if inadvertently placed into a water environment."

#### What they mean

An iPhone case that floats when you drop it in the loo. Apple's latest patent application fills 17 tightly packed pages – without once using the word 'toilet'.

### Jane's villain of the fortnight

#### Ask Toolbar hackers

How do you make the Ask Toolbar even worse? By embedding it with remote-access malware that steals people's data from afar – secretly, for months on end.

Yes, these are dark times for Ask. Like last issue's villain Yahoo, Ask is a one-time web-search hero that fell on hard times and took to hijacking people's browsers for a living.

In November, hackers made the toolbar even worse – dangerous, in fact – by infecting its update mechanism with malware. Any PC user unlucky enough to acquire the toolbar risked downloading the malware as well, then having their data ransacked. The Ask Partner Network responded quickly to the threat but hasn't fixed the problem,



according to security firm Carbon Black ([www.snipca.com/24092](http://www.snipca.com/24092)).

Who's the real villain here, the Ask Toolbar or its hackers? The hackers are the ones making the malware, but the toolbar is the one forcing its way into victims' PCs, which is ironic given that it's called 'Ask'. The moral difference between adware and malware is getting too blurred for comfort.

Want to nominate a villain of the fortnight?  
Email us at [editor@computeractive.co.uk](mailto:editor@computeractive.co.uk)

## Question of the Fortnight

# Did Russia hack the Brexit vote?

MPs say Kremlin's hackers may have crashed voter website

**A**t around 10.15pm on 7 June last year, the EU voter registration site crashed, less than two hours before the midnight deadline (see screenshot). David Cameron tried to calm voter anger by extending the deadline by 48 hours.

Electoral administrators blamed a surge in demand following a TV debate with Cameron and Nigel Farage, saying that 525,000 people applied to register that day. But a new parliamentary report ([www.snipca.com/24111](http://www.snipca.com/24111)) on 'lessons learned' from the referendum insists that an attack by foreign hackers can't be ruled out.

The investigation, by the Public Administration Committee, says there are signs that the website could have been knocked offline by a DDoS (distributed denial of service) hack. In these attacks a specific website is targeted by a flood of traffic from a botnet. While the report doesn't directly accuse Russia, it says that along with China it



own report into the crash, has dismissed any allegations of "malign intervention", saying instead it was "due to a spike in users just before the registration deadline".

Security experts agree, damning the report's vague conclusions. Ollie Whitehouse from Surrey-based security company NCC Group told the BBC: "I think there's lots of conjecture. It appears to be one committee's opinion but

test of a trial".

However, proof could be buried in records kept by the website. John Graham-Cumming from networking firm Cloudflare said that "if logs show traffic from a large number of sources around the world, that might indicate that a botnet was used to attack the site". He said this would be "interesting", but conceded that "most websites don't store very detailed information".

So we're no nearer to knowing whether Russia hacked the site. But why would they even want to? It's widely accepted that Vladimir Putin wanted Brexit in order to destabilise the EU, but extending the deadline to register online was largely seen as benefitting the Remain campaign. This is because younger voters were more likely to register online and to vote to stay in the EU. Around 430,000 people registered to vote in the extension period.

Perhaps Russia's involvement in the referendum was more subtle. Labour MP and prominent

**“**What Putin can't achieve militarily he is already achieving using cyber warfare **”**

uses psychological tactics via cyber attacks to try to influence elections and referendums. Bernard Jenkin, the Leave-supporting chair of the Committee, said that hacking the Brexit site would have been "entirely in character" for both countries.

But is there any evidence of an attack? There's none in the report. And The Cabinet Office, which published its

with no supporting evidence".

Even if Russia did hack the site, it may be extremely difficult for the UK to prove.

Simon Edwards, founder of SE Labs and former antivirus tester for Computeractive, said that doing so "would almost certainly involve breaking laws in one or more countries". He questioned whether any evidence "would be strong enough to stand the

## THE FACTS

- A voter registration site for the EU referendum crashed on 7 June last year, just before the deadline to sign up
- The Government extended the deadline by 48 hours, angering many 'Vote Leave' campaigners
- MPs say that the site may have been knocked offline by foreign hackers in order to influence the result

Remainer Ben Bradshaw suspects that during the campaign Kremlin-backed spies spread pro-Brexit fake news on social media. He told Parliament in December that "what President Putin cannot achieve militarily he is already achieving using cyber and propaganda warfare".

Bradshaw will surely approve of the report's call for a new Cyber Security Centre to block attacks on UK elections and referendums. That's a sensible proposal regardless of what caused last year's website crash.

# Letters



Tell us what's on your mind

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## £30 broadband compensation? I'd lose £500 a day!

**✉** In Issue 499, you asked how much we should be compensated when our broadband is down and appointments to fix it are cancelled (News, page 9). I find the £30 per day suggested by Ofcom derisory. It's better than nothing, of course, but it hugely devalues the monetary importance of having speedy broadband.

As an accountant, I stand to lose around £500 a day if my broadband is kaput. The £30 compensation barely covers the coffee, muffins and yogurt I'd eat in my local coffee shop while using their Wi-Fi as an alternative.

Gerald Shaw



**✉** BT made £526m profit in the final three months of 2016. I, on the other hand, lost about £10,000 worth of business while waiting for Openreach to fix my busted broadband. So no, I don't think £30 a day is sufficient compensation.

Jan Wheater

## iPhone 'bath' warnings are 'ill-conceived'

**✉** Issue 499 dropped on to my doormat exactly a week after April Fools' Day, which was a shame because one of the news stories in it would have made a cracking hoax. I refer to the small piece on page 8 about a coroner saying that Apple should put messages on iPhones warning people not to use them while in the bath. I know it's tragic that a man died while doing so, but not everyone will be as careless as he was.

We can't legislate away all risk from modern life. Dangerous devices are everywhere. Should lawnmowers carry a warning about not cutting off your toes? Should microwave ovens remind you not to dry your clothes in them? I'm no fan of

Apple, but I hope its lawyers earn their astronomic salaries by rejecting this ill-conceived proposal.

Duncan Eastley

**✉** Never mind warnings about charging iPhones in the bathroom, what about warnings that buying Apple devices can seriously damage your bank account? I shan't be buying the new iPad (see our review on page 21), even for a "cheap" £339. My Android tablet cost half that, and is superb.

Ian Stancliffe

## Govt - not tech companies - speak for the people

**✉** I have some sympathy for Home Secretary Amber Rudd (pictured), who was ridiculed for suggesting that encryption made it easy for terrorists to communicate ('Question of the Fortnight', Issue 499). She was mocked for apparently not understanding technology properly – and she probably doesn't understand it as intricately as security



experts at WhatsApp or Google. But she certainly understands society better. Everyone I've spoken to says they are happy to sacrifice encryption if it means drastically reducing their chances of being mowed down by a fanatic. So-called tech 'experts' should stop talking among themselves, and start listening to the views of the general public.

Martha Hennessy



## Selling Kodi boxes shouldn't be a crime

**✉** So Brian Thompson goes on trial in May for selling Kodi boxes (according to your editor's message, Issue 498)? This is just the BBC hoping that he'll be sent to prison or receive a large fine. In my opinion this is a hearing that should never happen. If a shop sells a gun to someone, does that mean they are an accessory to a crime if that person then shoots someone? No, because there are checks in place, and so it shouldn't matter if he sells a box with every app installed to watch every show as it's broadcast.

## Pulling the Woolet over people's eyes

**✉** Last year, I bought a wallet for less than a tenner. It fits comfortably in my back pocket. It carries all my money and cards conveniently. I rather like it.

But I now feel inadequate, having read in Issue 499 (page 26) that you can buy a 'smart' wallet for £104! Is this ridiculous product ultimate proof that while tech advances should make devices cheaper long term, it also gives manufacturers the means to make

expensive gizmos that nobody needs?

Not only is the Woolet overpriced, it's also based on a flawed concept. The idea is that it connects with your phone, so you know where it is should you lose it. Sounds great in principle. But the knock-on effect is that people will take much less care of their wallet because they'll think it'll always be easy to find. It'll be rich pickings for opportunistic thieves in pubs and cafes.

Alex Sutherland



The BBC had its chance to go to subscription-only when the UK moved from analogue to digital but chose not to. There are many sites that broadcast old BBC content and make it available as catch-up. I believe you can watch this without any fear of ending up in court accused of watching BBC content.

Dean Stockton

## More praise for Poundland's mouse

In response to Ken Rigsby (The Final Straw, Issue 498), I too have used Poundland's mice for some years. They do start to fail after a while, but so what? They are a pound, after all! My local shop has decided to use half of the space that used to be taken up by tech for CDs and DVDs. Cables and phone cases have always been fit for purpose too. Occasionally, they stock some higher-end items, but it's a bit hit and miss because you might not see the same item for another six months.

Kim Barnes



## Bullied by banks into giving up cash

Having had bad experiences with glitchy cash machines in the past – one of which deducted money without bothering to give me any – I have little confidence in them. The worries of being spied on while inputting your PIN, or being mugged as the machine spews cash into your hand, is a worry to us all.

So why is it that bank branches, which are supposed to offer you a personal service in return for your cash, are closing on high streets everywhere? I didn't join a bank to use cash machines, contactless payment, and internet banking. I like to see cash counted by a person in a secure environment, not from a tin box in the wall.

Internet banking is inconvenient and untrustworthy too, but saves banks a fortune on staff and premises. People's worries about cloned websites, **phishing** attacks, hackers, and other technical problems count for nothing. Why should we have to buy expensive computers with security protection so we can get hold of our money, while we watch our banks being repurposed as wine bars and eateries?

My town has recently lost several

## STAR LETTER

### Creators Update gets the thumbs up

I was excited to read in Issue 499 (News, page 6) that Microsoft was making the Creators Update available early through the Update Assistant ([www.snipca.com/24001](http://www.snipca.com/24001)). I quickly downloaded it, and having played around with it for a few days I'd like to give you some early impressions.

First of all, I should state that I haven't encountered any problems with it. None of my settings have been changed, as far as I can tell, and it hasn't slowed down my PC. I can't stress enough what a relief this is.

Some of the most interesting changes are 'under the bonnet', so to speak. For example, there's a new Settings app (see screenshot) which gets rid of some of the clutter. It's less intimidating than the plethora of settings you were faced with in previous versions of Windows. I also like the changes to the Start menu, in particular how you can now drag and drop tiles on top of each other to create folders.

I've experimented with the 'Dynamic Lock' feature, and it seems to work well. It locks your screen when you move away from your PC, as long as you carry your phone, and you've paired it with your PC via Bluetooth.



There are lots of improvements to Edge too, which slowly but surely is replacing Chrome as my favourite browser. It hasn't crashed once since I installed the Creators Update.

Overall then, so far, so good. I'm not sure whether the update has turned me into a 'creator', but I'm definitely a happier user of Windows 10.

Frank Higgins

**CA says** Like Frank we've been very impressed by the new tools in the Creators Update. We think it's an exceptional update that most users should benefit from. We'll explain your installation options and reveal the hidden tools in the Cover Feature of our next issue – out Weds 10 May.



### The Star Letter writer wins a Computeractive mug!

banks, which means I have to travel elsewhere via car or bus – this really isn't a safe, convenient or practical situation if you are elderly, disabled or have children with you. I fear we are being manipulated into becoming a cashless society.

Graham Chaffer

### Mark Zuckerberg is no Edmund Hillary

No literary figure, from Shakespeare to Oscar Wilde, could have bettered Ken Rigsby's description of tech bosses like Mark Zuckerberg as "self-important twerps" (The Final Straw, Issue 499).



When I was growing up we had *real* heroes, people like Edmund Hillary, Donald Campbell and Douglas Bader. It saddens me that my grandchildren's generation will have to look to Zuckerberg and his ilk for inspiration. I read his 6,000-word manifesto for taking over the world, and it was pompous, pretentious drivel. Apparently, he has political ambitions, and some people think he wants to be President. God help us, and God help the United States of America.

Martin Connor

# Consumeractive

## Can I cancel ongoing subscription?

**Q** In March 2016 I paid £36 for a My Heritage ([www.myheritage.com](http://www.myheritage.com)) subscription. Without warning the website took a subscription for 2017 of £120. My Heritage said it would give me a 50-per-cent discount, but that I won't be able to cancel until next year. Isn't this unreasonable?

Dave Fisher

**A** Yes it is unreasonable, and My Heritage is wrong to tell Dave that he's now stuck with this subscription. Under the Consumer Contract Regulations you have 14 days in which to cancel a subscription for a service providing you've not used it. This right applies whether the subscription is new or ongoing. Because My Heritage breached the law by giving Dave misleading information, it must let him cancel even if he has missed the 14-day deadline.

Customers need to remember when signing up for online services that they often renew automatically. My Heritage should have emailed Dave about his subscription renewal and the price hike. We've told Dave to ask the site for a full refund. The Government is finally tackling these 'subscription traps', as outlined in March's Budget (see News, Issue 498, page 9).

**CASE ONGOING**

## Should the seller or manufacturer handle faulty goods?

**Q** In December 2016 I bought a Dell UltraSharp 25in monitor from an Amazon Marketplace seller called Buyur ([www.snipca.com/24014](http://www.snipca.com/24014)). The monitor suddenly stopped working and Buyur advised me to return it to Dell for repair because this would be quicker than dealing directly with it. But I've read in Computeractive that customers contracts are always with the retailer. Should I stick to my guns and request a replacement or refund from Buyur? Or should I go direct to Dell?

Diana Gamble

**A** The best option has always been to ask the retailer – Buyur in this case – to repair inherently faulty goods, rather than rely on the manufacturer's warranty. Even more so with the introduction in 2015 of the Consumer Rights Act, which gives retailers only one chance to repair an item.

As we've seen in several readers' cases recently, retailers often refuse to recognise a repair carried out by the manufacturer under warranty. Legally, this means they can still insist on carrying out their own repair should



**DELL**

the manufacturer's fix fail to work.

However, in practical terms, as Buyur has pointed out to Diana, it's sometimes quicker to cut out the middle man and go straight to the manufacturer. After all, Buyur would simply have sent the monitor to Dell for repair anyway. But you should always tell the retailer of your plans, asking it to acknowledge your actions and agree that if the repair fails it must replace the item or issue a refund – and not try to prolong your pain with another repair.

Since explaining all this to Diana, she told us that Dell has agreed to replace the monitor. She's in a good position because Buyur has emailed her to acknowledge the problem, advising her to go straight to Dell. On our advice she reminded Buyur that it will still be legally responsible if this new monitor stops working.

**CASE CLOSED**

## How can I get a retailer to honour a warranty?

**Q** I bought a car battery with a warranty from The Battery Guys ([www.thebatteryguys.co.uk](http://www.thebatteryguys.co.uk)) in March 2015. It failed on 6 January this year. I've had it tested and the tests show that it's faulty. However, The Battery Guys insist I return the battery for further tests. I think this is unnecessary. Am I right?

Ewen Stewart

**A** Legally The Battery Guys are allowed to test the battery under warranty, but we understand

Ewen's reluctance to return the battery because it may be considered a 'dangerous item', and therefore be expensive to post. It's unlikely the warranty will cover delivery costs.

If Ewen is confident that the battery is inherently faulty he could make this clear to The Battery Guys, citing the Sale of Goods Act, and ask them to collect the battery. If this doesn't work, he could take his case to the small claims court, but the judge may not take into consideration the tests he carried out. In the meantime



we'll contact the company to see if there's another solution.

**CASE ONGOING**



We stand up for your legal rights

## How the law has changed since 1998

Consumer law has changed a lot since our first issue in 1998. These are five of the most significant ways your rights have improved.

### March 2003

The Sale and Supply of Goods to Consumers Regulations meant that in the first six months after purchase the retailer had to prove that goods *weren't* inherently faulty. Previously the customer had to prove that they were.

### March 2003

These regulations also forced companies to legally honour the terms and conditions in their warranties.

### June 2014

With the Consumer Contract Regulations

replacing the Distance Selling Regulations, the law finally began to catch up with the digital world. For the first time, consumers were given clear rights when buying digital content, such as software, music, films and games. Now they had up to 14 days in which to cancel for a full refund, as long as they hadn't downloaded, played or watched the content.

### October 2015

Customers' digital rights were also strengthened by the Consumer Rights Act (CRA). For example, if a device were broken by a **firmware** update, the consumer can now seek redress. But for this law to have teeth we would need to see more legal cases made against tech giants such as Microsoft, Google and Apple.



### October 2015

The CRA also put an end to companies forcing customers to put up with repeated repairs. Retailers and manufacturers now have one chance only to repair inherently faulty goods. If this doesn't work, they must refund or replace.

## CASE UPDATE



### Hotpoint customer no longer in a whirl



It looks like Whirlpool is taking action to fix the faulty tumble dryers made by its brands Hotpoint, Creda and Indesit.

Computeractive reader Emma Steers, whose case we featured in Issue 499, told us she phoned Hotpoint (on 0800 151 0905) to complain that nobody had contacted her even though she'd submitted online details of her tumble dryer months before. Whatever she said worked, because Hotpoint sent someone to repair it. Emma can now use it after a year of waiting.

Emma could also have contacted Very, the online retailer she bought the dryer from. Legally, Very could have argued that they should be given the chance to repair it, but we think Emma had waited so long for a fix that she would have been within her rights to demand a replacement or partial refund.

Emma's success shows that sometimes the old-fashioned approach of phoning a company is more effective than leaving details online. But you should first check online whether your tumble dryer is affected by the safety problems identified by Whirlpool. Visit [www.snipca.com/24031](http://www.snipca.com/24031) then click

'Check your model' on the right. Next, check whether it has a green 'dot' sticker in the door area or on the back plate. If so, your dryer is safe. If not, enter its model and serial number in the boxes.



## THIS WILL COME IN USEFUL

### Donate to charity online

#### Age UK

[www.ageuk.org.uk/donate](http://www.ageuk.org.uk/donate)

#### British Heart Foundation

[www.bhf.org.uk/donate](http://www.bhf.org.uk/donate)

#### British Legion

[www.snipca.com/23966](http://www.snipca.com/23966)

#### Cancer Research UK

[www.snipca.com/23964](http://www.snipca.com/23964)

#### Dementia UK

[www.dementiauk.org/donate](http://www.dementiauk.org/donate)

#### Great Ormond Street Hospital

<https://donate.gosh.org>

#### Help for Heroes

[www.snipca.com/23979](http://www.snipca.com/23979)



#### Macmillan Cancer Support

[www.macmillan.org.uk/donate](http://www.macmillan.org.uk/donate)

#### Marie Curie

[www.mariecurie.org.uk/donate](http://www.mariecurie.org.uk/donate)

#### NSPCC

[www.nspcc.org.uk/donate](http://www.nspcc.org.uk/donate)

#### Oxfam

[www.oxfam.org.uk/donate](http://www.oxfam.org.uk/donate)

#### RNIB

[www.snipca.com/23995](http://www.snipca.com/23995)

#### RNLI

<https://rnli.org/support-us/give-money>

#### RSPCA

[www.rspca.org/donate](http://www.rspca.org/donate)



# Protect Your Tech

Scams and threats to avoid, plus new security tools

## WATCH OUT FOR...

### New 'lawful citizen' email scam

#### What's the threat?

An epidemic of scam emails that try to scare you into responding by claiming that the sender has received a document containing your personal information. Action Fraud says it received over 200 reports in just three days, while several readers emailed us about it.

Although the email bears the usual scam hallmarks of bad spelling and grammar, it's more convincing than most because it contains your name and address. The exact wording of the email varies, but the sender typically begins by saying they are "bothering you for a very important cause".

The email goes on to explain that the attached document contains a "significant amount of individual info about you", and that the sender



obtained it probably as a result of a hack. They quote your address as an example of this data, and even describe themselves as a "lawful citizen" (or similar).

The document is named with your surname, and the email includes a password to open it.

#### What should you do?

Hard though it may be, resist all temptation to click the document. If you do, you'll be asked to enable **macros** in Word (see screenshot), a common hackers' trick. They want you to run code in the document that downloads a **GIF** file to your computer. This will connect to the scammers' network in order to absorb your computer into a **botnet**.

If your firewall or antivirus blocks the GIF download, you'll see a box telling you to turn it off. Right at the end, instead of seeing your personal information as promised, another box pop ups telling you that the "file is corrupted and cannot be opened". At that point the damage has been done, and the scammers have control your PC.

## ScamWatch READERS WARN READERS

In Issue 498 we asked whether you've been targeted by TalkTalk scammers. Dozens of readers emailed us to say they had, including the following...

The last TalkTalk scam call was from a woman who said I had a problem with my service. She insisted she was from TalkTalk, and quoted an account number (which sounded correct – so may have come from the hacking attack in 2015). I told her I'd check this, but she insisted that I didn't need to. I said that I still wanted to, but at this point she became abusive. I repeated that I didn't believe she was anything to do with TalkTalk, and – after swearing at me – slammed the phone down.

D White

## TalkTalk SPECIAL

Last November I had a problem with my TalkTalk broadband, so I phoned their helpline and, after restarting the router, the connection was restored. I was passed to another department which said they would check my computer for errors to prevent this fault recurring. I agreed to install TeamViewer (big mistake). The alarm bells rang when I was asked to log into my bank account. When I refused he said he'd installed a bug on my PC that would lock it if I did not pay him £300 in iTunes vouchers and give him the code number. I refused. Two days later my computer died. Fixing it cost me £150.

Roger Barker

In February, I received two calls on the same day claiming to be from TalkTalk saying there was a problem with my



router and asking me to go online so they could fix it. This was ironic because it was just after I had switched from TalkTalk to a new ISP. However, I decided to play along. I kept him on the line for 15 minutes before he realised I was having him on. He called me a cheat and a liar (and other words you won't be able to print).

Paul Dredge

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

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# Best Free Software

Jane Hoskyn recommends new programs that won't cost you anything

## FILE-COMPRESSION TOOL

### Bandizip 6.02

[www.bandisoft.com/bandizip](http://www.bandisoft.com/bandizip)

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



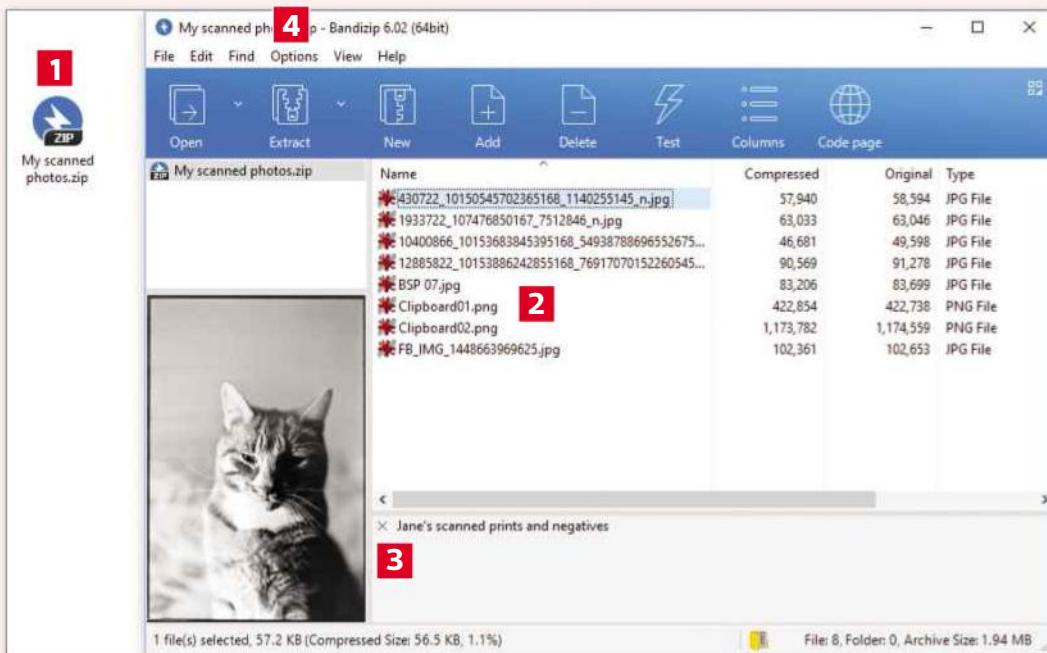
Windows has built-in tools for dealing with ZIP files, but it's slow and limited. If you do lots of zipping (and indeed unzipping) you'll need a decent third-party program, and the new version of Bandizip is the easiest and most powerful we've used.

Unlike its old rival 7-Zip, Bandizip doesn't have its own compression format (7z in 7-Zip's case), but instead focuses on supporting as many formats as possible – including RAR, ISO and new formats ZPAC and LZIP – as efficiently as possible. And unlike its other big rival, WinZip, Bandizip is completely free.

Bandizip now opens on a Start Screen with two big buttons: Open Archive and New Archive. To switch to the main program window (shown in our screenshot below), click View, then untick Start Screen. This main window opens automatically when you drag and drop any zipped file from Explorer on to Bandizip.

Drag-and-drop support is new in version 6.02, which arrived within days of the newly stable version 6.0 in early April. Other new options include encryption using AES-256 or the special compression-encryption format ZipCrypto, generally regarded to be less secure than AES-256 (most things are, to be honest). You can also now create and extract multiple ZIP files at once, add comments to archives, create multi-volume ('split') archives, and preview archive contents before extracting them.

To get it, click Download Bandizip, then save and run the junk-free installer. Follow the steps to set Bandizip as your default compression program. This integrates it into your right-click menu for easier use. To change Settings later, press F5 in Bandizip. If you're running Windows Vista, download the new portable version to a USB stick then run it from there. The download page also has a portable version of Bandizip 5 for Windows XP.



**1** To quickly compress a folder of files, drag the folder on to the Bandizip program shortcut, click Start, then Close. By default this creates a ZIP file on your desktop.

**2** To see what's inside any zipped file, and to compare the original and compressed size of its contents, drag it on to Bandizip. Click an item to see a preview on the left.

**3** To add comments to a zipped file's **metadata**, click Edit, then Archive Comment. Enter your notes, or click 'Load comment from file', then navigate to a text file. Click OK.

**4** To set up AES-256 encryption for zipped files you create from now on, click Options, Settings (or press F5), click Compression, then tick 'Use AES256...'.

## TEXT EDITOR

### Text Editor Pro

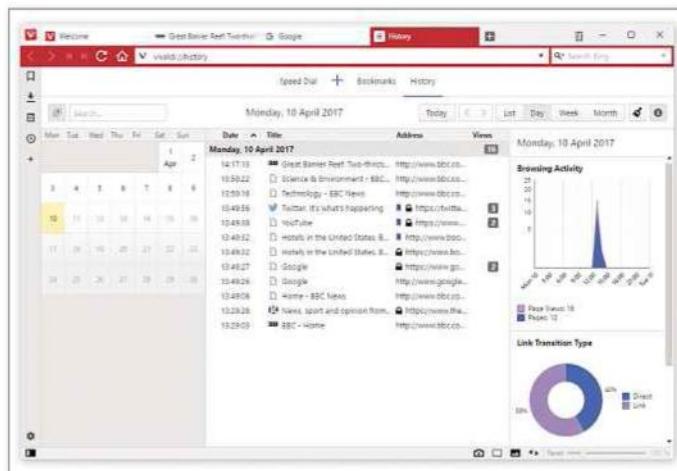
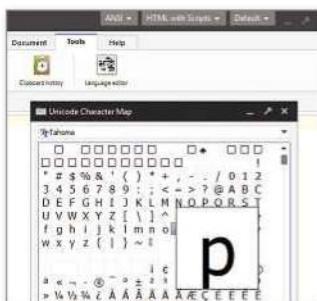
<http://texteditor.pro>

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

Write web pages, build your own computer programs or just keep notes on your desktop using this powerful new version of the program previously called EditBone.

At its most basic, Text Editor Pro is a souped-up alternative to Notepad. You can open multiple documents in tabs; bookmark documents; search for text; convert units; and insert items from your clipboard history. But it's as a web-code editor that this tool really excels. It supports more than 50 programming languages including Java, CSS, [HTML](#) and even good old [MS-DOS](#), and includes a character map to help you write code (see screenshot).

Text Editor Pro now has installable and portable versions. The installer is quick and junk-free, but opt for portable ('Zip package') if you're running XP or Vista.



## BROWSER

### Vivaldi 1.8

<https://vivaldi.com>

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

Vivaldi makes browsing the web faster and easier. It doesn't do this through sheer power – page-load times are actually a bit slower than in Chrome. Instead it provides a range of thoughtful tools that help you get around the internet quicker – and then retrace your steps with ease.

This new version reveals your browsing patterns on graphs and offers new ways to search your history. Press Ctrl+H to open History in the main window, or click the clock icon to see it in the side panel alongside whatever page you're browsing. Use the dropdown menus to sort it by date, page title, web address and even by page views – all reversible with one click – then search your history within time limits such as Today, Last 7 Days and custom 'Date Range...'. The Notes side panel now lets you drag text and links directly from web pages on to a note.

## WHAT SHOULD I DOWNLOAD?

We tell you what software to use

### How can I get a list of drive files into a spreadsheet?

**Q** I'd like to be able to get a text output list of all the files on one of my external hard drives when I connect it to my Windows 10 computer, so I can then copy the list into a spreadsheet. Do you know of a program that can do this?

Allan Smith

**A** First, try this hidden Windows trick. Plug in your drive, then navigate to it in Explorer. Press Shift and right-click at the same time, then select 'Open command window here'. In the Command Prompt window that opens, type `dir >contents.txt` (we've used 'contents' but you can name the file anything, as long as it's one word), then press Enter. Windows instantly creates a text file containing a list of files in that directory, including names, sizes and dates created. The text file is saved in the folder. This trick also works with any folders on your PC.

This still means a lot of spreadsheet-typing work for you. To automatically open the list in Excel, use Directory List & Print ([www.snipca.com/24069](http://www.snipca.com/24069)). Click Download then English to get the installer, which is junk-free. Don't worry about the '(Pro)' label – it'll always be free unless you decide to stump up \$20 (£16) for the paid-for version. The free version is probably sufficient, but we found it tricky. Click Help, then Manual or Website if you get bogged down.

The paid-for version of TreeSize Free (see page 54) also lets you export an Excel spreadsheet of drive contents, and it's much easier to use than Directory List & Print. At €44.95 (about £38.40), TreeSize Professional ([www.jam-software.com/treesize](http://www.jam-software.com/treesize)) is expensive – but you can use it free for 30 days. Click '30-day free trial' to install it. You won't have to hand over any payment information. When the month is up, the paid-for features will stop working. For more free trials worth signing up for, turn to page 55.

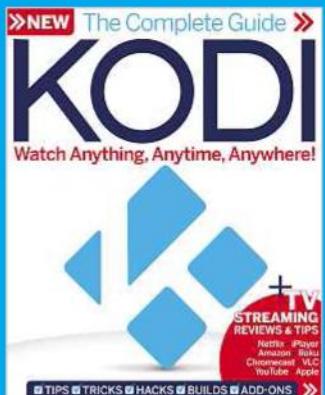
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# Reviews

New products tested by our experts

PC | £941 from Yoyotech [www.snipca.com/24015](http://www.snipca.com/24015)

## Yoyotech Warbird G2

A better than average PC - with a light show



Intel makes most of the processors that PCs run on, and it does that by etching billions of transistors on to tiny wafers of silicon. The efficiency of each design depends partly on the arrangement of transistors (or 'microarchitecture') and partly on how close together it can place them (shrinking). In recent years, Intel's microarchitecture has been updated about every 18 months in what's known as a 'tick-tock' cycle. Each tick represents a shrinking of the previous microarchitecture, each tock represents a brand new architecture.

**“Don't be put off by its design - this is a solidly reliable desktop PC”**

A year ago, though, Intel had to admit the next tick – codenamed Cannon Lake – wasn't going to arrive on time, and we'd have to put up with an extra tock at the turn of 2017 in the form of Kaby Lake. Despite a lot of PR hype about how this would deliver amazing improvements, nobody has been particularly astonished to learn that Kaby Lake processors don't perform significantly better than the previous Skylake series. But here they are.



So far we've tested desktop PCs running the i5-7400 and the i5-7600 processors. Now here's an i5-7500. And if you thought that would mean its performance would be somewhere between the other two, you're spot-on.

In case you might be thinking all this seems a little dull and predictable, Yoyotech has attempted to stave off boredom by choosing a case festooned with multi-coloured LEDs. They're completely lacking in any practical function, but because they only cost a few quid these days and use virtually no electricity, why not go to town? Lights furnish the two big fans behind the perforated grille at the front. Meanwhile, the Gigabyte H270-Gaming 3 motherboard – visible through the perspex side window – has yet more around its edges and along the slots. The whole lot can be set to a choice of steady or ever-changing colour patterns using a front panel button, Gigabyte's RGB Fusion software or, believe it or not, a supplied remote control.

If that sounds like just another gizmo to go wrong, you're right again. We couldn't get the G2 to take any notice of the remote most of the time, although that could have been a one-off problem. Still, the lights are fun. What matters more is that the i5 is accompanied by the excellent GeForce GTX 1060 graphics card. Ours came with a full 6GB of memory on board, and blazed through even very demanding 3D games at Full HD resolution with maximum quality settings, or at 4K with some compromises. This means it also has plenty of muscle for compatible creative programs, such as photo and video

### SPECIFICATIONS

3.4GHz Intel i5-7500 quad-core processor • 8GB memory • 6GB GeForce GTX 1060 graphics card • 120GB SSD • 1TB hard drive • 1x USB Type-C • 1x USB 3.1 • 6x USB 3.0 • 4x USB 2.0 • Gigabit Ethernet • Windows 10 Home • 515x200x466mm (HxWxD) • One-year warranty [www.snipca.com/24015](http://www.snipca.com/24015)

editors. If games aren't crucial, you can opt for the cheaper 3GB version, bringing down the total price to just under £900.

You might want to put the saving towards the £61 upgrade to 16GB of main memory, although the standard 8GB will be adequate for most purposes. The SSD is also on the small side, at 120GB, but it's enough to install Windows and a load of programs that will still load a lot faster than from the 1TB hard drive. There's room to add another three 2.5in drives and two 5.25 optical drives (CD/DVD or Blu-ray), as well as one spare PCIe x16 slot and two basic PCIe x1. And we were pleased to see an M.2 slot for the very quickest SSD options, although it's not used by the drive supplied.

The Warbird G2 isn't the fastest Kaby Lake PC, nor the cheapest. But with a well-balanced specification at a fair price with room for upgrades, it shows middling needn't be dull.

**VERDICT:** With solid all-round performance for general, gaming and graphics tasks, the Warbird G2 will be a good choice for many users



**ALTERNATIVE:** Chillblast Fusion Hubble £1,000 With an overclocked i5-7600K, this gives you even more processing power for a few more pounds



**TABLET** | £339 from Apple [www.snipca.com/24022](http://www.snipca.com/24022)

## Apple iPad 9.7in

A full-size iPad for less

The iPad was so successful when it arrived seven years ago that it almost killed off the bottom end of the laptop market, prompting the company's then-CEO Steve Jobs to start blathering about a "post-PC era". Android versions followed, and soon everyone wanted a tablet. But in the last couple of years, they've stopped selling. Apple sold only half as many iPads in the first quarter of 2017 as in the same period in 2014, despite offering more models to choose from.

**“Heavier than the iPad Air, but retains the sharp screen and costs less”**

Apple still believes tablets are the future. But it has a new plan. Instead of launching yet another option to add to the 7.9in iPad mini 2 and iPad mini 4, the 9.7in iPad Air 2 and iPad Pro, and the 12.9in iPad Pro, it's killed off the iPad mini 2, made the iPad mini 4 more expensive, and ditched the iPad Air 2 for a cheaper version. Did you get all that?

So the new iPad 9.7in (no longer Air) is now the cheapest iPad you can buy, at £339 with 32GB of storage. That's £100 more than the cheapest iPad a month ago, the £239 iPad mini 2, which is now



discontinued; but £60 less than the iPad Air 2, which it replaces.

The iPad 9.7in is slightly heavier and appreciably thicker than the iPad Air 2, and its screen loses some benefits introduced in that model. The previous laminated panel made the display feel as though it was right at the surface of the glass, and an advanced anti-glare coating stopped reflections getting in the way. Now it's back to having a noticeable gap between your finger and the graphics, and reflections are a problem again. It's still a great screen, extremely sharp and with accurate colour, but it's obviously been compromised to shave cost and give you a reason to consider spending the extra on the iPad Pro. The Pro also has much better cameras and supports the Pencil stylus.

Nothing else is visibly different from the iPad Air 2. The processor is the A9, as used in the iPhone 6S, and our tests show it's slightly faster than the Air 2's A8X. As before, a sensible 32GB of storage is standard, but remember you can't expand it later with a [microSD card](#). What's changed is battery life: the iPad 9.7in lasted us 14 hours 47 minutes of video playback, more than four hours longer than the iPad Air 2. That's one change we do welcome.

### SPECIFICATIONS

Apple A9 processor • 32GB flash storage • 9.7in 2048x1536-pixel touchscreen • 8-megapixel rear camera • 1.2-megapixel webcam • 802.11ac Wi-Fi • Touch ID fingerprint sensor • iOS 10 • 240x170x7.5mm (HxWxD) • 437g • One-year warranty [www.snipca.com/24033](http://www.snipca.com/24033)

### HOW WE TEST

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

Dennis Publishing also owns the magazines PC Pro, Computer Shopper and Web User and the websites Expert Reviews ([www.expertreviews.co.uk](http://www.expertreviews.co.uk)) and Alphr ([www.alphr.com](http://www.alphr.com)). This means we can test thousands of products before choosing the most relevant for Computeractive.

### FAIR AND IMPARTIAL

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

### OUR AWARDS



We award every product that gets five stars our Buy It! stamp of approval. It means we were extremely impressed by the product, and we think you will be too.



Every product that gets a four-star review is given the Great Pick award. We highly recommend these products, although they just fail to meet the high standard of our Buy It! winners.

### PRICES

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

**VERDICT:** This is an excellent price for an iPad, particularly when you consider the improved battery life



### ALTERNATIVE: iPad mini 4

£419 Yes – unbelievably – Apple's smaller tablet is actually now more expensive, because it's sold only with a huge 128GB of storage



# Reviews

PHONE | £170 from Amazon [www.snipca.com/24076](http://www.snipca.com/24076)

## Motorola Moto G5

No longer the best budget buy

For the last couple of years, Motorola's Moto G has been our favourite budget Android phone. The G3 was brilliant, the G4 (see our review, Issue 479) was even better, and now the G5 is...

Well, let's start at the beginning – it looks good. Motorola (now owned by Lenovo) always did a decent job of making plastic cases appear classy, but for many people metal feels more upmarket, and that's what the G5 gets. Available in grey or gold, the rounded rear panel has a distinctive two-tone effect. And here's where the Moto G5 pulls a bit of a fast one. While the back itself is aluminium, the edges are still plastic. Hmm.

**“Not a bad phone, but worse than its predecessor”**

The circular camera cutout works well – no awkward bump here – and there's now a fingerprint sensor on the front, a feature previously limited to the pricier Plus model. A dual-SIM version is available with 3GB of memory rather than the standard 2GB, which will speed up multi-tasking. But this model is exclusive to Amazon in the UK and costs £10 extra (£180).

The screen is still Full HD, but it's got slightly smaller and doesn't go as bright as the Moto G4. Contrast is reduced, too, only covering 86 per cent of the sRGB colour range, down from 90 per cent. As with the new iPad (see page 21), we're frustrated to see something that was good getting worse.

Like Apple, Lenovo has also opted for a processor that's not better, just different. While the iPad came out slightly faster than before in our tests, the G5 fell

### SPECIFICATIONS

5in 1920x1080-pixel screen • 13-megapixel rear camera • 5-megapixel front camera • 16GB flash storage • MicroSD card slot • 802.11ac Wi-Fi • Bluetooth 4.2 • 3G/4G • 144x73x9.5mm (HxWxD) • 145g • One-year warranty [www.snipca.com/24071](http://www.snipca.com/24071)



slightly behind its predecessor. Coming after new models like the Honor 6X (see Issue 495) and Lenovo's own P2 (see Issue 498), which cost only a little more and are faster, that doesn't impress us much.

Phones like the P2 have also showed dramatic improvements in battery life this year. Not the G5. In fact, at 13 hours 39 minutes of video playback, it was nearly two hours shorter than the G4, even though the case is thicker. Finally, the camera specification is basically unchanged except for faster autofocus, and while we were very happy with our pictures outdoors, they were still dodgy inside or in low light.

**VERDICT:** It's still very reasonably priced and by no means a bad phone, but the Moto G's fifth incarnation isn't anything to call home about



**ALTERNATIVE:** Motorola Moto G4 £139 It's still on sale and cheaper, so we'd be tempted to get one of these while you can, if a fingerprint sensor isn't essential



## Do I really need a... Home assistant?

### What does it do?

Smart speakers like Google Home (pictured right), and Amazon Echo (below) listen for you speaking to them and access remote voice services to either speak back an answer or act on your command. For under £150 you get a full-time personal assistant.



### Why would I want it?

If you want to know what time a film is on at the local cinema, just ask. Run out of kitchen roll again? Place an order. You can check the time, weather or traffic, play and pause music and set calendar reminders. If you've installed smart lightbulbs, you can ask to turn them up or down. It's like having Jeeves in a can.

### What's the catch?

These boxes listen all the time, and as soon as they think you're talking to them they start recording everything they hear. If that's not giving you a slightly creepy feeling, you may not have been paying much attention to the way personal data is being used by tech companies to build marketing profiles and how it can end up in the wrong hands. Naturally, we're assured that it's all kept private and secure. But there's already been a case where police in the US asked to access Amazon Echo records (the company initially declined, then agreed), and hackers have obtained and released all sorts of personal data in the past.



### So can I do without it?

Yes: the voice assistant on your smartphone already has similar features. But smart speakers are proving popular because of their sheer convenience. If you decide you'd rather not have one, remember that people you visit may do.

**LAPTOP-TABLET** | £1,449 from Dell [www.snipca.com/24051](http://www.snipca.com/24051)

## Dell XPS 13 2-in-1

Two devices for the price of two

Everybody knows what a laptop looks like, but how should it be *made*? Traditionally, a metal frame – like a scaled-down desktop PC – was wrapped in a plastic shell. Apple took things in a new direction a few years ago when it started building its laptops as a ‘unibody’, meaning the whole keyboard section is carved out of a single piece of aluminium.

Some rivals followed suit, but not Dell. Instead, the XPS is a sandwich, with aluminium on the bottom and black carbon fibre on top. ‘Carbon fibre’ sounds very high-tech, but you’d be within your rights to call it ‘plastic’, and for some plastic with a join around the edge just isn’t as classy as seamless metal. Even so, Dell has done a nice job, and the XPS 13 2-in-1 not only looks but feels special.

Its name comes from the 360-degree hinge, which lets you fold the keyboard away and use the touchscreen as a tablet. There’s little temptation to do so, because the keyboard is excellent, and the large touchpad works well. After a short while, however, we did find ourselves reaching



**“Not cheap, but an excellent keyboard and smooth operation”**

for the touchscreen, perhaps because the XPS 13’s compact size brings it enticingly close. And with Windows 10’s touchscreen Tablet mode available to make the trackpad redundant, the convertible format does make a certain amount of sense – even if it weighs twice as much as a tablet.

A glance at the specs suggests there’s a Kaby Lake ‘i7’ processor inside, but it’s actually Intel’s renamed m7 (now known as the i7-7Y75). It uses a lot less power and heats up less than processors from the main Core ranges, but it’s nowhere near as fast at running Windows programs. Even compared with a desktop PC i3 processor, it’s not particularly

capable, and its built-in HD Graphics 615 card is just adequate for 3D gaming. But with 8GB of memory and a fast 256GB SSD, the XPS 13 feels smooth in everyday use, and the battery lasted us a practical seven hours 54 minutes of video playback.

If you don’t plan to use your laptop for anything more than basic tasks, you can pay £100 less for an i5-7Y54 with just 4GB of memory, but that seems like a big compromise for a relatively small saving. There’s no denying that the XPS 13 2-in-1 is expensive, and unless you really feel the need for the touchscreen, the plain XPS 13 (see our review, Issue 496), which is almost as slim and light but significantly faster, is a better buy – although still costs four figures.

### SPECIFICATIONS

1.3GHz Intel Core i7-7Y75 dual-core processor • 8GB memory • 256GB SSD • 13.3in 1920x1080-pixel screen • Webcam • 802.11ac Wi-Fi • 1x USB Type-C/DisplayPort • 1x USB Type C/Thunderbolt • MicroSD card reader • Windows 10 Home • 13.7x304x199mm (HxWxD) • 1.24kg • One-year warranty  
[www.snipca.com/24052](http://www.snipca.com/24052)

**VERDICT:** If a slim, light 2-in-1 is what you want, this is a great choice, but you’re not getting much performance for your pound



**ALTERNATIVE:** Dell XPS 13 £1,379

With a full i7-7500U processor for less money, this standard laptop is much more powerful



## INFINITYEDGE & BEYOND

As electronic devices shrink in size, manufacturers are shaving off the space around the screen. With Dell’s InfinityEdge screen it’s almost gone, except at the bottom, where a wide bar hosts the webcam. That means it looks up your nose, which is not flattering.

You can pay extra for quadruple resolution, but as standard the XPS 13 comes with a Full HD screen, which looks sharp enough. We had no complaints about contrast or colour

but, like other InfinityEdge panels, it adjusts brightness levels automatically depending on what’s on screen. That’s no good for photo or video editing, because you can’t rely on what you’re seeing, so we’d like the option to disable it.

The webcam problem is tougher to resolve: edge-to-edge screens that keep it at the top, like LG’s UltraFine, look weird. Should we go back to the days of clip-on cams?

## What we reviewed in Issue 1

As Computeractive hits Issue 500, we revisit the products that impressed us in Issue 1. Computing has come a long way since...

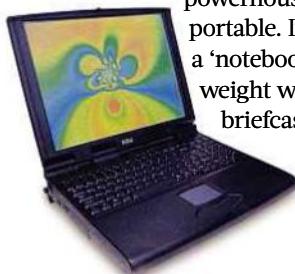
### PC Time Colossus 266-2

We called this tower PC "ugly", but it still won our Best Buy award. After all, for £1,560 you couldn't argue with a blazing fast 266MHz Pentium II processor, packed with 7.5 million transistors (today's have upwards of two billion). A 6.5GB hard drive might not sound generous, but with digital cameras at the time offering a maximum resolution of 640x480 pixels, what was going to fill it up?



### Laptop MBC ProNote 15.1in

This boasted a 1024x768-pixel screen, which is just over a third of a modern Full HD resolution. With its 233MHz Pentium processor and 64MB of memory – not quite a hundredth of what you'd expect now – it was quite the portable powerhouse. Well – sort of portable. It was marketed as a 'notebook,' but in size and weight was nearer to a briefcase. And if you think carrying it sounds painful, try paying for it – only £2,790!



### Printer Panasonic KX-P6300

Solid-state electronics change fast; cogs and rollers, not so much. But Panasonic's KX-P6300 was an unusual laser printer by any year's standards. To achieve the ridiculously low price of £217, it relied on a Heath Robinson-style arrangement with toner fed from a bottle. This proved quite a bonus if you had plans to go to a fancy-dress party as a coal miner. Today, Epson's EcoTank printers are a little more secure and their contents less carcinogenic.



### Storage Iomega Zip Plus

Iomega's Zip Plus (£170) was like a floppy drive but stored a massive 100MB on each cartridge. It was a revolution for creative users and magazine publishers, who could put a whole issue on an

affordable cartridge and send it via motorcycle courier to the printer (before reliable internet came along and made things faster).



### Network adapter Xircom Credit Card Ethernet Modem 5.6

Priced £300, this slotted into a PC socket and connected you to the internet, through an unmodified telephone line, at a heady 56Kbps. That's one five-hundredth of the UK's average broadband today. Downloading a Netflix film would have taken several lifetimes.

### VoIP Vocaltec Internet Phone 5.0

Vocaltec's Internet Phone 5.0 let you make calls over the information superhighway for just £35 – "a hipper alternative to the telephone", we concluded, using the adjective 'hip' in a way few 1960s festival-goers would recognise. You could even make international calls at local rates! This was five years before Skype, and rather raised our expectations of online chat.





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**PHILIPS**

# Reviews

PRINTER | £67 from Amazon [www.snipca.com/24065](http://www.snipca.com/24065)

## Canon Pixma TS5050

Almost an ideal all-in-one



How do you make an all-in-one inkjet printer stand out? Some manufacturers add fancy colours and swoopy curves. But Canon's new design distinguishes itself by being compact and self-effacing. We like it. The 3in colour LCD isn't a touchscreen, but the new menu buttons are easy to use, and you can print wirelessly from Apple, Android and Windows 10 Mobile devices as well as PCs, or directly from an SD card. One annoyance is that the 100-sheet paper tray has a flap that you have to close manually, and the printer sometimes wouldn't recognise we had closed it until we wiggled it a bit.

The TS5050 did well in our speed tests, reaching 12.5 pages per minute (ppm) on a 25-page black text document in both normal or the ink-saving draft mode. Colour pages came out at 3.7ppm, or 4.8ppm in draft mode. At high detail, two 10x8in photos took nearly seven minutes

but were worth the wait, although photo professionals would notice colours appear a little 'warm' (ie, they have a red tint). The five-ink system uses black pigment for text and black dye for graphics. Shop around for Canon's XL cartridges and you'll pay about 2.5p a page for text or 7p for colour graphics. That's a bit pricier than some rival printers, but not bad.

**“Great scans and speedy output, but no double-sided printing”**

The scanner was quick for this class of machine right up to 1200dpi, although photocopies, at 20 seconds for black and a tad longer for colour, could have been faster and were slightly dark. Scanning quality was excellent, with sharp focus and wide dynamic range.

### SPECIFICATIONS

- 4800x1200dpi maximum print resolution •
- 1200x2400dpi maximum scan resolution •
- 100-sheet paper tray • USB 2.0 • 802.11n Wi-Fi •
- 126x372x315mm (HxWxD) • 5.5kg • One-year warranty [www.snipca.com/24066](http://www.snipca.com/24066)



So why doesn't it get five stars? Unlike Canon's MG5750 (see our review, Issue 470), our current favourite printer, the TS5050 can only print on one side of the paper. If you want to use both, you'll have to ask your software to print the odd-numbered pages first, then feed the paper back in and print the even pages on the back, a process likely to result in confusion and paper jams. That aside, the TS5050 is recommended.

**VERDICT:** It's a pity that it doesn't support double-sided (duplex) printing, but this is otherwise a very good all-in-one printer



**ALTERNATIVE:** Canon Pixma MG5750  
£70 This bulkier machine lacks an SD slot but can print both sides, and uses the same ink cartridges



## WHAT SHOULD I BUY? We solve your buying dilemmas

### How do I digitise my video tapes and records?

**Q** I have a Windows 10 PC. What external capture cards would you suggest I use for digitising VHS tapes and vinyl records to my hard drive. And what software should I use to process these formats before burning to DVD and CD?

Robert Fairbairn

**A** You'll need a composite or S-video input to connect to your VHS player, or analogue stereo to your music player. These are

essentially the same. You could spend as little as £7.49 on Honestech's VHS to DVD Converter ([www.snipca.com/24056](http://www.snipca.com/24056)), which provides RCA inputs (the red, yellow and white plugs) and a USB output to your PC. The box comes with cables, the CyberLink PowerDirector 10 video-conversion program, and MediaEspresso 6.5, which provides further options and supports audio-only.

If your CD or record player has phono outputs, just connect the red and yellow plugs. If not, use a stereo jack to twin

phono adapters. But your PC may already have an analogue stereo line-in, often coloured blue. Connect this straight to your music player with a male-to-male jack or phono cable, and use a free program such as Audacity ([www.snipca.com/24059](http://www.snipca.com/24059)) to record from it.



**✉ Do you need advice on what you should buy?**  
Email us at [letters@computeractive.co.uk](mailto:letters@computeractive.co.uk)

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# Reviews

**ROUTER** | £25 from Amazon [www.snipca.com/24086](http://www.snipca.com/24086)

## TP-Link WR810N

A pocket-sized router

This is one of the cheapest Wi-Fi routers around, and it's exceptionally compact, taking the form of a tobacco tin-sized box with a mains plug sticking out of one corner. That makes it ideal for carrying to places where the available internet connection might not suit what you need to connect to it, such as in a hotel or someone else's home or office.

**“ Range and speed are limited, but it could prove very handy ”**

And it's pretty versatile: you can use it as a standalone router, connected to a broadband modem or wired Ethernet network socket; or as a Wi-Fi extender, sitting halfway between an existing router and somewhere its signal won't

quite reach; or in 'client mode' to connect a device with only a wired Ethernet port, such as a desktop PC or games console, to a wireless network. Rather than having to go into the setup web page every time, a switch lets you choose the mode.

There are two Ethernet sockets built in, catering for a variety of configurations, and a USB port to attach and share a storage drive or charge your phone. The WR810N's biggest limitation is that, as the 'N' implies, it only covers the 802.11n 2.4GHz band, so newer 802.11ac devices won't be able to use 5GHz for the best speeds. That's not ideal, especially for the

### SPECIFICATIONS

802.11n Wi-Fi router/extender • 2x 100Mbps Ethernet ports • USB port • 85x27x82mm (HxDxW) • One-year warranty [www.snipca.com/24085](http://www.snipca.com/24085)



advertised purpose of connecting a TV-streaming stick, and we found both range and speed were limited. It also sticks out of the mains socket quite awkwardly. But it does work, and could prove very handy.

**VERDICT:** Even for occasional use we'd be happier with something faster, but as a cheap way to solve Wi-Fi access problems it's worth considering



**ALTERNATIVE:** Coredy E300 £23 This serves similar purposes and has aerials you can move, although that didn't help it work any faster in our tests



**PLANT MONITOR** | £130 from Amazon [www.snipca.com/24083](http://www.snipca.com/24083)

## Parrot Parrot Pot

A baby monitor for plants

Everyone's talking about the 'connected home', except Parrot. Better known for its drones, the French tech company wants to introduce you to the 'connected garden', or as we prefer to think of it, the internet of twigs.

You can't tell from the photo, but the Parrot Pot isn't just a little flower pot to pop on your windowsill – it's a foot-high planter that takes two-and-a-half litres of soil (not included). It's designed for both indoors and out, and runs on four AA batteries, no mains power required.

### SPECIFICATIONS

2.4L planter with 2.2L water tank • Soil moisture sensor • Fertiliser level sensor • Light sensor • Temperature sensor • Requires iOS 8 or higher or Android 4.4 device with Bluetooth 4.0 or higher • 31x21x21mm (HxDxW) • Two-year warranty [www.snipca.com/24082](http://www.snipca.com/24082)

Add your preferred shrub and fill up the built-in water tank, and, through the accompanying Flower Power app for your Apple or Android device, it will bombard you with data about your foliaged friend's light, temperature, humidity and fertiliser levels.

Using its database of over 8,000 plants, it advises you on exactly what needs doing to keep it happy. Even baby monitors aren't this obsessive. If what's required is a bit of H2O, the Pot can automate the process. Any other care that may be necessary is still down to you.

We can't deny that this, the only smart flowerpot we've seen, is the best smart flowerpot we've seen. But we're not convinced you need it, unless you *really* miss your plants when on holiday.



**VERDICT:** Like a lot of home-automation gadgets, the Parrot Pot is very clever but creates as much fuss as it saves you



**ALTERNATIVE:** We don't know of any other smart plant pots. If you do, please don't feel obliged to send details. Honestly, we're fine

**SPEAKER** | £179 from Richer Sounds [www.snipca.com/24109](http://www.snipca.com/24109)

## Cambridge Audio TV2 v2

All about the base



Soundbars have become common additions to widescreen TVs, sitting neatly below the screen and adding much better audio than most built-in speakers can deliver. They can also be effective if you use your PC for games and films, especially if you like to sit back to watch. Though 100-odd watts of output might be overkill when you're sitting at your desktop PC. Even when you're not using the screen, they can serve as general-purpose speakers for whatever gadgets you like to play music from, which is all the more convenient if they support Bluetooth for wireless connection.

**“It made us feel like the action spread out far beyond the box”**

This model is described as a sound base rather than a bar, because it's big enough to support your monitor instead of being placed in front. That has the side effect of raising your screen a few inches, which is a good thing, since most monitor stands are too low. If you use it with your TV rather than a PC, it's chunky enough to support big screens.

Cambridge Audio is the own brand of Richer Sounds, which is known for selling high-quality audio equipment at low prices. They've recently knocked 20 quid off this improved version of their popular TV2, making it strikingly good value. Not that it's particularly fancy:

### SPECIFICATIONS

150W stereo sound base with built-in subwoofer • HDMI input • 3.5mm stereo input • Phono inputs • Coaxial digital input • Bluetooth • Remote control • 100x550x33mm (HxWxD) • One-year warranty  
[www.snipca.com/24109](http://www.snipca.com/24109)

there's no surround-sound or '3D' effect, and no separate subwoofer, just a big 6.5in **woofer** mounted on the underside to boost low frequencies. Two forward-facing full-range drivers do the rest. These use patented 'balanced-mode radiator' technology, which was big news a few years ago, enabling a single unit to cover mid-range and high frequencies effectively.

And it works. TV soundbars have a tough job, because you might want to watch anything from a jazz concert to a blockbuster action film, and most of the time you'll be keenly aware of how clearly speech is reproduced. The TV2 version 2 handled everything we tried with great aplomb, from rumbling explosions through rich dialogue to sparkling cymbals. It may not technically be a surround system, but it made us feel like the action spread out far beyond the box's half-metre width.

Connections are basic, but Bluetooth with **aptX** is included for all your mobile devices, although not the higher-quality Apple AirPlay. A remote control is included too.

**VERDICT:** Unless you really need extra features, sound quality is what speakers are all about, and we loved the audio output from this reasonably priced unit



**ALTERNATIVE:** **Bose Solo 5 £240** We liked this slimmer Bluetooth soundbar's clear speech reproduction, but it's gone up in price and overall sound quality isn't as good



## The Computeractive Wishlist

Products we would like to see

### No.18 A CLIP-ON KEYBOARD THAT DOESN'T FLOP

The computer keyboard is the most timeless symbol of the PC era. Screens have changed from small and square to big and wide, mice have been overtaken by touchpads, and the computer itself is as small as a fag packet, but the keyboard is eternal. Even tablets now have optional keyboards, while laptops still come as a keyboard and screen, although many pull apart.

If you've ever actually used a touchscreen machine with a detachable keyboard (like the iPad and Origami Smart Keyboard pictured), you'll know the crucial problem. It doesn't just detach when you want it to; it detaches when it feels like it. And then you have to remember the knack of getting it back on. Even then most clip-on keyboards flop around like a landed haddock, relying on a flimsy kickstand or folding case to prop the screen.

There's got to be a solution to this. Can someone please invent a detachable keyboard hinge that really works?



### NEXT ISSUE

ON SALE  
Weds  
10 May

**Samsung Galaxy Tab S3**  
At last, an update to the best Android tablet



**Box Cube Panther**  
An i5 desktop PC with TX 1060 graphics for under £900



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£15 from [www.snipca.com/23209](http://www.snipca.com/23209)



Our pick of products that have won the Buy It award

## LAPTOP

**Dell Inspiron 15 5000**  
£699 from [www.snipca.com/23375](http://www.snipca.com/23375)  
Tested: Issue 459



Now updated with Intel's seventh-generation processors, this laptop (not the 2-in-1 version) now edges the ZenBook below and starts at just £449, but mid-range configurations with SSD and AMD R7 graphics are the best choice.

**ALTERNATIVE:** **Asus ZenBook UX305CA**  
If you want something sleeker, this offers basic performance in a superbly slim... and light metal case. £600 from [www.snipca.com/23376](http://www.snipca.com/23376)

## DESKTOP PC

**Wired2Fire Diablo Ultima V2**  
£800 from [www.snipca.com/23767](http://www.snipca.com/23767)  
Tested: Issue 497



Teaming Intel's latest i5 processor with a Radeon RX 460 graphics card, this delivers great all-round performance and adequate gaming, helped by a fast M.2 SSD plus a generous 2GB hard drive and 16GB of memory.

**ALTERNATIVE:** **Chillblast Fusion Hubble** For advanced performance, this overclocked Kaby Lake i5 PC comes with a GTX 1060 graphics card. £1,000 from [www.snipca.com/23380](http://www.snipca.com/23380)

## APPLE iPAD

**Apple iPad 9.7in**  
£339 from [www.snipca.com/24079](http://www.snipca.com/24079)  
Tested: Issue 500



The replacement for the iPad Air 2 is slightly bulkier and has a downgraded screen but remains the best mid-sized tablet, with a sensible 32GB of storage. You'll need the £549 iPad Pro if you want to use the Pencil stylus (£99).

**ALTERNATIVE:** **iPad Mini 4** The smaller 7.9in iPad is excellent, but Apple's decision to sell it only with a huge 128GB makes it unreasonably expensive. £419 from [www.snipca.com/24080](http://www.snipca.com/24080)

NEW ENTRY

## ANDROID TABLET

**Samsung Galaxy Tab S2 9.7**  
£400 from [www.snipca.com/23385](http://www.snipca.com/23385)  
Tested: Issue 462



With both Google's Nexus 9 and Sony's Xperia Z4 Tablet now discontinued, this ageing device is our top full-size tablet by default. Google's similarly priced Pixel C is also worth considering, but lacks the S2's microSD slot for extra storage.

**ALTERNATIVE:** **Huawei MediaPad M3 8.0** If you prefer a smaller tablet, this is sleeker than Samsung's 8in S2. £300 from [www.snipca.com/23386](http://www.snipca.com/23386)

## APPLE iPhone

**Apple iPhone SE**  
£350 from [www.snipca.com/21683](http://www.snipca.com/21683)  
Tested: Issue 474



It may be Apple's 'budget' phone, but the smaller SE beats most others in the market with top-end processing power, a great screen and camera, fingerprint recognition and Apple Pay. You should consider paying £439 for the 64GB model, though.

**ALTERNATIVE:** **iPhone 6s** A bigger screen, better camera and 3D Touch justify the price, but as with the SE the 64GB model (£619) is the best choice. £499 from [www.snipca.com/20441](http://www.snipca.com/20441)

## ANDROID PHONE

**Motorola Moto G4**  
£139 from [www.snipca.com/21685](http://www.snipca.com/21685)  
Tested: Issue 479



With an attractive 5.5in screen, an excellent 13-megapixel camera, a 13-hour battery and decent performance, the G4 is the best budget option.

**ALTERNATIVE:** **Samsung Galaxy S7** Restoring the microSD slot to allow extra storage makes this an even better top-end phone than the S6, with a fantastic screen and camera and incredible 18-hour battery life. £420 from [www.snipca.com/21684](http://www.snipca.com/21684)

# 2017

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## EBOOK READER

### Amazon Kindle (2016)

£60 from [www.snipca.com/21901](http://www.snipca.com/21901)

Tested: Issue 483



Amazon's basic ebook reader is now good enough to be our first choice. It's plasticky, but slim and lightweight, with a decent 4GB storage and good battery life. Consider the £110 Paperwhite if you want backlighting or (for £60 extra) 3G.

#### ALTERNATIVE Kobo Aura One

Competing with Amazon's Kindle Oasis, this premium model from Kobo has a large 7.8in screen and is comfortable to read. £190 from [www.snipca.com/22031](http://www.snipca.com/22031)

## SECURITY SOFTWARE

### Kaspersky Internet Security 2017

£19.95 from [www.snipca.com/21532](http://www.snipca.com/21532)

Tested: Issue 493



Kaspersky Internet Security 2017 has won our past eight antivirus tests. Compatible with Windows 10, the 2017 edition is available at an exclusive reader discount on our Software Store. Go to the link above for a one-year, one-device licence or buy a two-year, three-device licence for just £39.99.

#### ALTERNATIVE: Avast Free Antivirus

Almost as good as Kaspersky, but sometimes blocks legitimate software. Free from [www.snipca.com/16493](http://www.snipca.com/16493)

## PHOTO EDITING

### Serif Affinity Photo

£49 from [www.snipca.com/23739](http://www.snipca.com/23739)

Tested: Issue 498



Designed for both full-time professional image retouchers and the rest of us keen amateurs, this is a beautifully designed and comprehensive program for both Windows and Mac users, although so far it performs better on Macs.

#### ALTERNATIVE: Xara Photo & Graphic Designer 365

For all-round design and drawing plus photo filters, this affordable app has a lot to offer. £50 from [www.snipca.com/19280](http://www.snipca.com/19280)

## PC MONITOR

### AOC Q2778VQE

£253 from [www.snipca.com/21902](http://www.snipca.com/21902)

Tested: Issue 468



It comes with no extras, such as built-in speakers or a USB hub, but this 2560x1440 panel gives you a full 27in screen with excellent contrast and colour accuracy at a very reasonable price. It's a little laggy for gamers, but there's no ghosting on motion.

#### ALTERNATIVE: Dell UltraSharp U2414H

This 1920x1080, 24in screen has a stand that can switch to portrait mode. Colour accuracy is excellent. £217 from [www.snipca.com/21908](http://www.snipca.com/21908)

## ROUTER

### Synology RT1900ac

£148 from [www.snipca.com/21903](http://www.snipca.com/21903)

Tested: Issue 474



If you're looking to upgrade an outdated router, there are lots of dual-band 802.11ac models to choose from. This one suits most broadband connections that don't require an ADSL modem and has plenty of options, such as sharing a connected printer or storage.

#### ALTERNATIVE: TP-Link Archer C9

Not quite as fast, but this or the D9 (with ADSL modem built in) is a simple and capable router with a stylish design. £100 from [www.snipca.com/21909](http://www.snipca.com/21909)

## NAS

### Synology DS216j

£140 from [www.snipca.com/23387](http://www.snipca.com/23387)

Tested: Issue 449



The DS215j has now been replaced by this similar two-drive NAS enclosure with a slightly faster processor. With good setup software and lots of features, its only flaw is that installation is a little fiddly. A great choice for network storage.

**Synology DS416j** Synology's fast and flexible four-bay NAS has also been updated. £256 from [www.snipca.com/23388](http://www.snipca.com/23388)

## HOMEPLUGS

**TP-Link AV1200 Powerline Wi-Fi Kit WPA8730**

£125 from [www.snipca.com/23766](http://www.snipca.com/23766)

Tested: Issue 495



HomePlug adapters use your mains wiring to extend your network where Wi-Fi won't reach. This kit provides Wi-Fi at the far end too, so phones and tablets can connect as well as PCs and other Ethernet-equipped devices.

**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. £20 from [www.snipca.com/21691](http://www.snipca.com/21691)

## MULTIFUNCTION PRINTER

**Canon Pixma MG5750**

£78 from [www.snipca.com/21693](http://www.snipca.com/21693)

Tested: Issue 470



You don't get many frills, but this compact all-in-one printer/scanner includes all the essentials, like Wi-Fi and printing both sides of the paper (duplex), at a reasonable price. It's fairly quick, running costs are better than average, and the five-ink system ensures photos and black text both come out looking great.

**ALTERNATIVE:** Brother MFC-J5320DW

For more business-type tasks, this all-in-one has automatic paper feed for the scanner and the ability to print occasional A3 pages. £170 from

[www.snipca.com/21694](http://www.snipca.com/21694)

## WEB DESIGN

**Xara Web Designer Premium 365**

£70 from [www.snipca.com/16955](http://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. However, we've recently spotted junk in its installer (see page 10).

**ALTERNATIVE:** Incomedia WebSite X5 v12 Evolution It may feel a little basic, but this straightforward program outputs efficient HTML code and responsive pages. £50 from [www.snipca.com/19440](http://www.snipca.com/19440)

## COMPETITION

Win 1 of 3

**Lexar Professional 1000x 128GB microSD cards**

Winner of a 'Great Pick' award in Issue 497, Lexar's 1000x is one of the best microSD cards you can buy if you shoot a lot of videos, or take hi-res photos on a camera and import them to your PC. It excelled in our sequential read tests, which means it's extremely fast at recovering and transferring videos. We managed to transfer a 9.33GB video in just 73 seconds. To enter this competition, email your address to [cacomp@dennis.co.uk](mailto:cacomp@dennis.co.uk) with '1000x' in the subject line by midnight 9 May.



The Professional 1000x comes in four sizes – 32GB (£21), 64GB (£35), 128GB (£85) and 256GB (£138) – available from Amazon: [www.snipca.com/23674](http://www.snipca.com/23674). For more info on Lexar's products visit [www.lexar.com](http://www.lexar.com).

## SOLID-STATE DRIVE

PRICE DROP

**Samsung 960 Pro 512GB**

£318 from [www.snipca.com/23389](http://www.snipca.com/23389)

Tested: Issue 491



Made for the fast M.2 interface that's increasingly common inside PCs, this is not a cheap option, but if you want an SSD you want speed, and this has it in spades. Samsung's 850 Evo (£150 for 500GB) is a good budget choice.

**ALTERNATIVE:** Kingston SSDNow

UV400 480GB Much slower, but still faster than a hard drive, this gives you more GB per pound. £140 from [www.snipca.com/22127](http://www.snipca.com/22127)

## SECURITY CAMERA

**Y-cam Day/Night**

£130 from [www.snipca.com/22987](http://www.snipca.com/22987)

Tested: Issue 483



Smaller and simpler than rivals, this all-in-one 720p HD Wi-Fi camera is triggered by motion. Play back or watch live remotely from your iOS or Android phone or tablet. A week's cloud storage is free, upgradable to 30 days for £3.99 per month.

**ALTERNATIVE:** Netgear Arlo

Batteries, which last months, make these cameras (the price is for two) very practical. Cloud storage beyond a week costs extra. £250 from [www.snipca.com/21653](http://www.snipca.com/21653)

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# Workshops & Tips

PULL OUT  
& KEEP  
Issue 500

Edited by Sherwin Coelho

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



- 35** Master the best new video editor
- 38** Download Netflix TV and films

- 40** Prepare your PC for the Creators Update
- 42** Share meeting points on Google Maps

## PLUS

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

- 47** Make Office Better
- 48** Secret Tips For... BC Uninstaller

## Master the best new video editor

**What you need:** Kdenlive; Windows 7, 8 and 10 **Time required:** 45 minutes

Kdenlive is one of the best free video-editing programs for Linux PCs. Its latest version now works on Windows for the first time. The program lets you import all your videos and music files and edit them on a

convenient timeline. You can add effects to videos, transitions between clips and your own soundtrack to create the right mood. We'll explain all the tools you'll need to create a stunning video in under an hour.



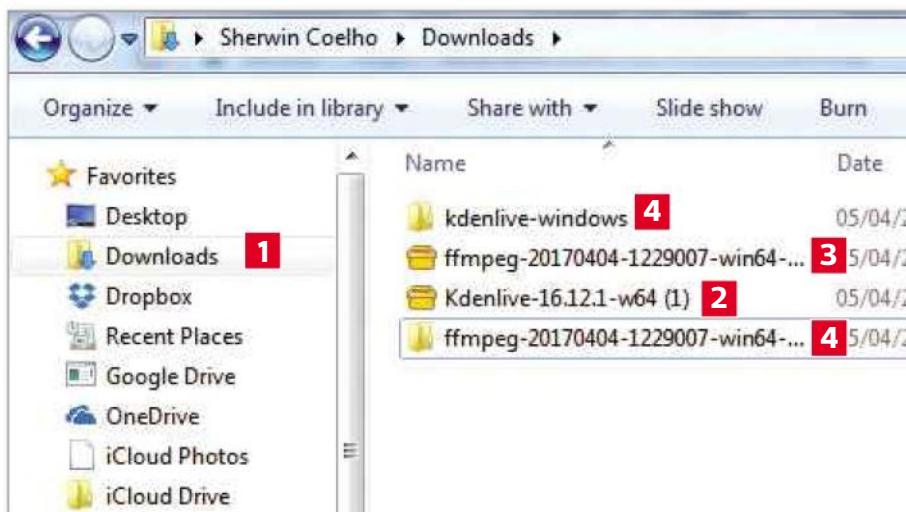
**STEP 1** To download Kdenlive, go to [www.snipca.com/24040](http://www.snipca.com/24040), then click the Windows

Download button at the top. It downloads as a zipped file, so you'll need a file-compression program, such as PeaZip ([www.peazip.org](http://www.peazip.org)), to open it. You need to update Kdenlive's file-format database for it to work properly, and to do this you need a program called FFmpeg. Download this from [www.snipca.com/24041](http://www.snipca.com/24041), select your Windows version **1**, select Shared in the Linking section **2**, then click the Download FFmpeg button **3**.

to decode, encode, transcode, mux, demux, stream, filter and play. FFmpeg can utilize hardware acceleration to minimize conversion time.

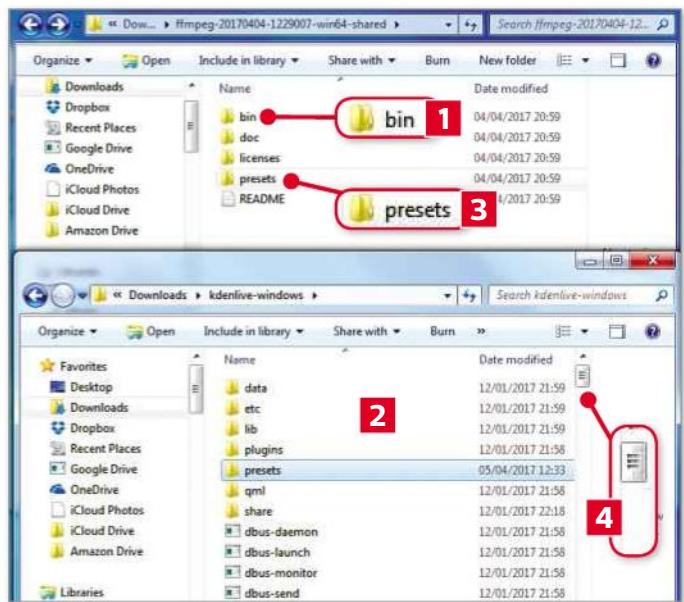
Version	Architecture	Linking
20170404-1229007 3.2.4	64-bit <b>1</b> 32-bit	Static Shared <b>2</b> Dev

**Download FFmpeg** **3**



**STEP 2** Now create a new folder on your desktop and copy the video and audio files you want to include in your final video here. Next, open your Downloads folder **1**, then double-click the Kdenlive zipped folder **2** to open it in PeaZip. Click Extract at the top, then click OK at the bottom right. Once everything is extracted, open the 'ffmpeg' zipped folder **3**, click Extract, then OK. You'll now see two folders – 'kdenlive-windows' and 'ffmpeg' **4**.

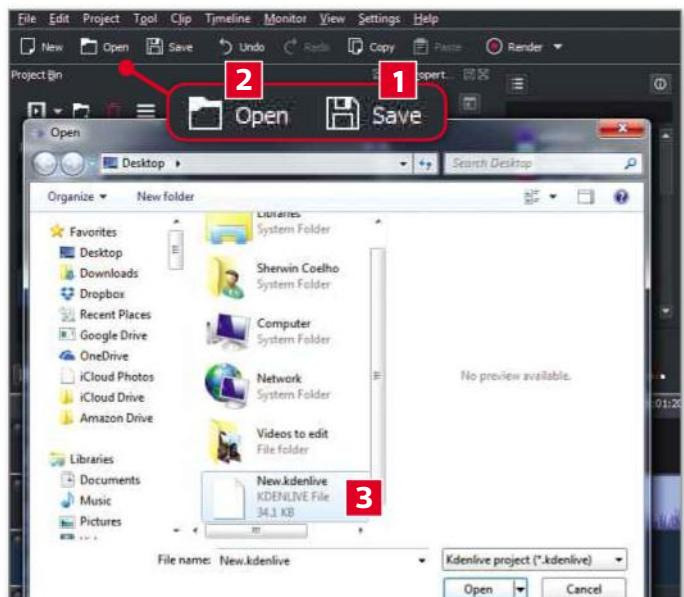
# Workshops



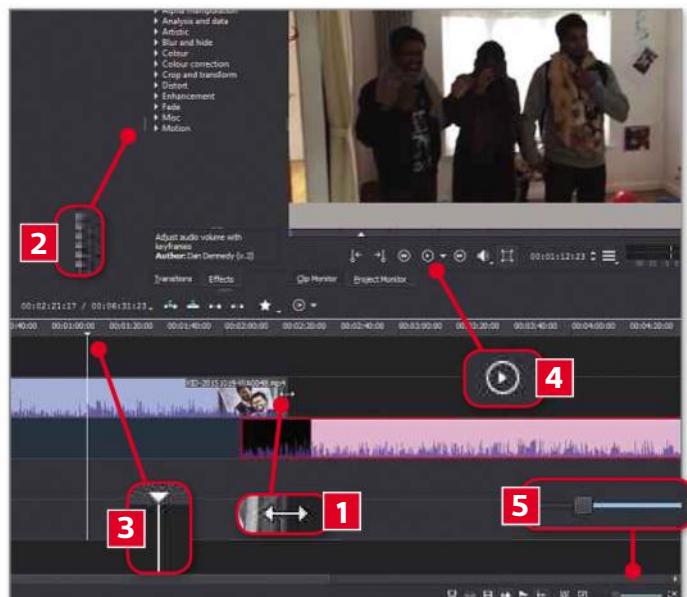
**STEP 3** Open both folders in separate windows. Now open ffmpeg's 'bin' subfolder 1, press Ctrl+A, Ctrl+C, then right-click inside the kdenlive-windows folder 2 and click Paste. Next, right-click the ffmpeg 'presets' subfolder 3, click Copy, click anywhere inside the 'kdenlive-windows' folder 4 to the kdenlive setup file (it's about 9,000KB). Double-click this to launch the program, then click OK.



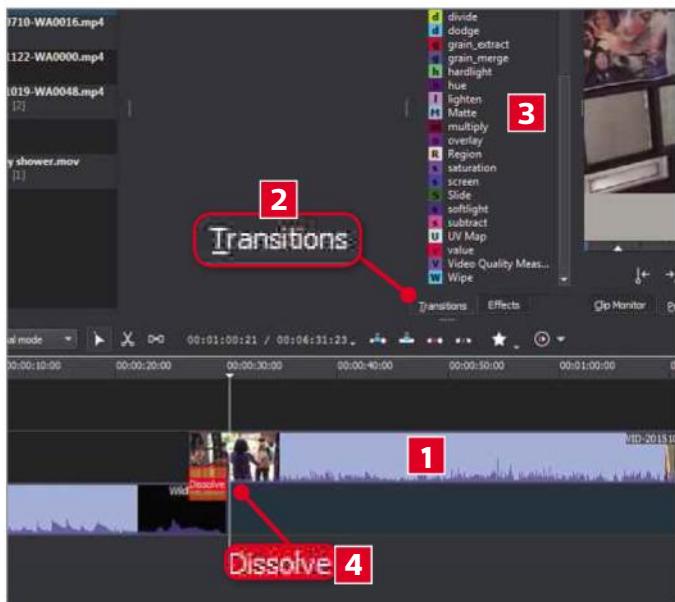
**STEP 4** To import your media files into Kdenlive, click the 'Add clip' button 1, navigate to the folder you created on your desktop, press Ctrl+A to select all your files, then click OK. If you see a warning about your video-file format, click 'Change default to HD 1080 30 fps'. Now click and drag the first video you want to edit from the Project Bin 2 to the Video 1 row in the timeline 3. Drag the next two videos you want to use to the Video 2 row 4 and Video 3 row, ensuring there's a slight overlap between them 5. Press Ctrl+Z if you need to undo any changes.



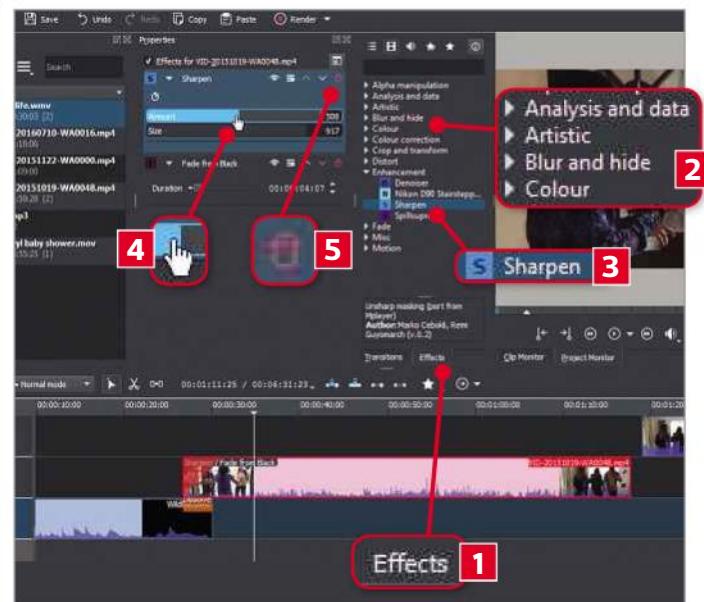
**STEP 5** Before you begin editing you should save your file. To do that, click Save 1, name the file, choose your save location, then click OK. From now on, simply click Save (or press Ctrl+S) to save any changes you make while editing. If Kdenlive or your PC crashes, reopen Kdenlive by launching its setup file. Click Open 2, navigate to and select your saved file (look for a '.kdenlive' extension) 3, then double-click to open it. The program window will appear exactly how you last saved it.



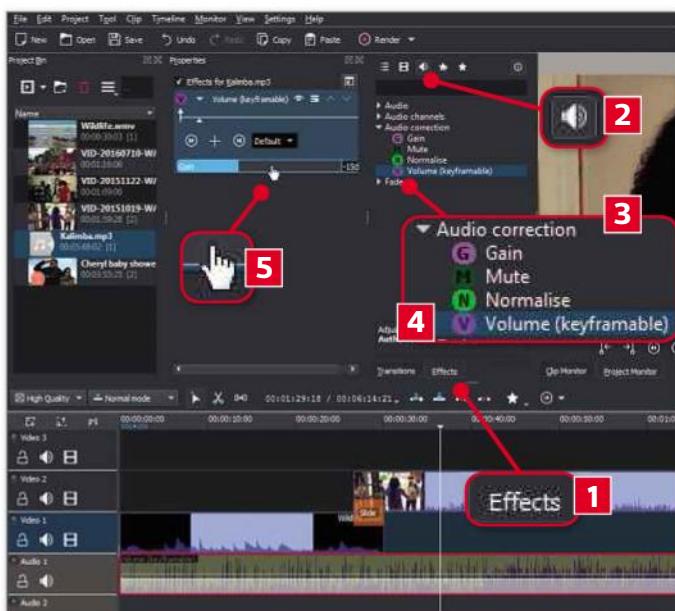
**STEP 6** Drag videos across your timeline to reposition them. To trim a clip, move your cursor to its edge until you see a horizontal bar 1, then drag inward. Enlarge any of Kdenlive's sections by clicking and dragging the vertical or horizontal dots separating each section 2. Click the time marker 3 to see a preview of your video in the preview pane at the top right. Click Play 4 (or press the spacebar) to watch your video from where the marker is. You can zoom in and out of your timeline using the slider 5.



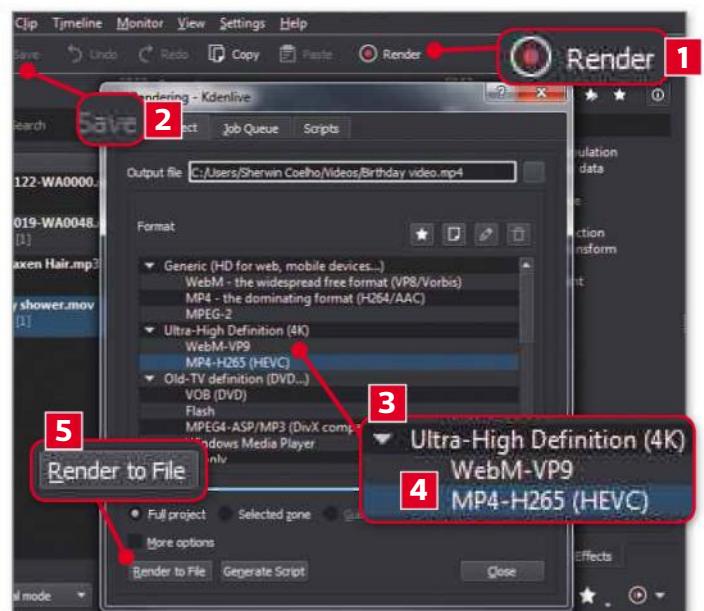
**STEP 7** To split a clip **1**, right-click it at the split point, then click Cut Clip. This creates two sections that you can edit. To add **transitions** between clips, click the Transitions tab **2** to see a list of effects **3**. Drag and drop your chosen effect (for example, Dissolve) on to the area on your timeline where your two clips overlap **4**. You can change the effect's length by clicking and dragging its edges. Select the effect, then press Delete if you want to remove it and try another one.



**STEP 8** It's also easy to add effects to video clips on your timeline (such as sharpen, fade in/out and filters). To do that, select the clip, then click the Effects tab **1** to see a list of categories with dropdown menus **2**. Select the relevant dropdown menu, then double-click the effect you want **3**. You'll see sliders in the Properties pane that let you modify the intensity of your effect **4**. Play your video, then adjust the effect to your liking. Click the bin icon **5** to remove an effect you don't want.



**STEP 9** Finally, we'll show you how to add background music to your video. Drag your music file from your Project Bin to the Audio 1 row on your timeline. Reposition this to the point you want your music to start. You can cut and trim your audio file in the same way as your video clips. To adjust your music volume, click to select the track, click the Effects tab **1**, the volume icon **2**, the 'Audio correction' dropdown menu **3**, then double-click Volume **4**. Now click and drag the Gain slider **5** to change your volume level.



**STEP 10** Once you're happy with everything you need to export your finished video. Click the Render button **1**, the Save button **2**, rename your file, choose your save location, then click Open. There are different video formats you can choose from. For the highest resolution click the Ultra-High Definition (4K) dropdown menu **3** and select MP4 **4**. Now drag the Quality slider (at the bottom) to the right. Finally, click 'Render to File' **5**. You'll see a countdown timer stating approximately how long this process will take and a notification will appear at the top of your PC when it's finished. ●

# Download Netflix films and TV shows

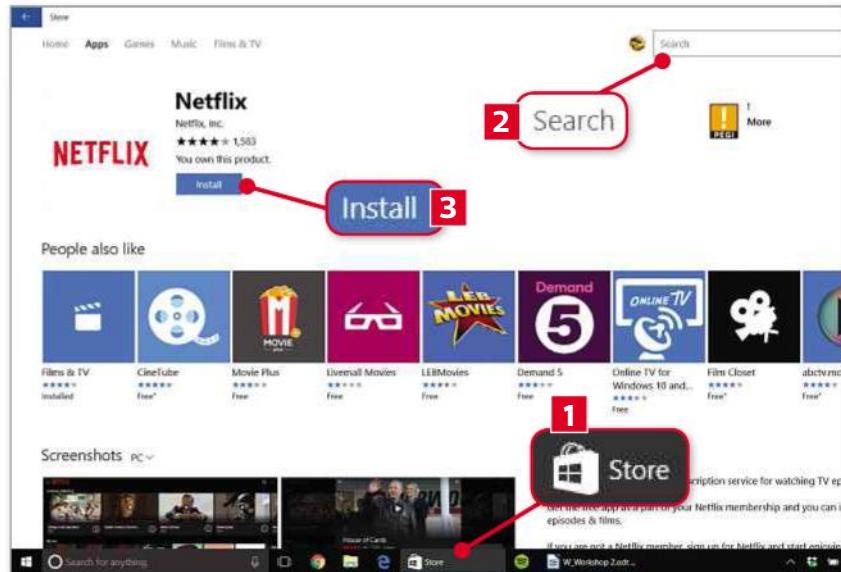
**What you need:** Windows 10 **Time required:** 20 minutes

Last November, Netflix announced that for the first time users could download certain films and TV shows to watch offline. However, you could only do this using its Android and iOS mobile apps. But now you can

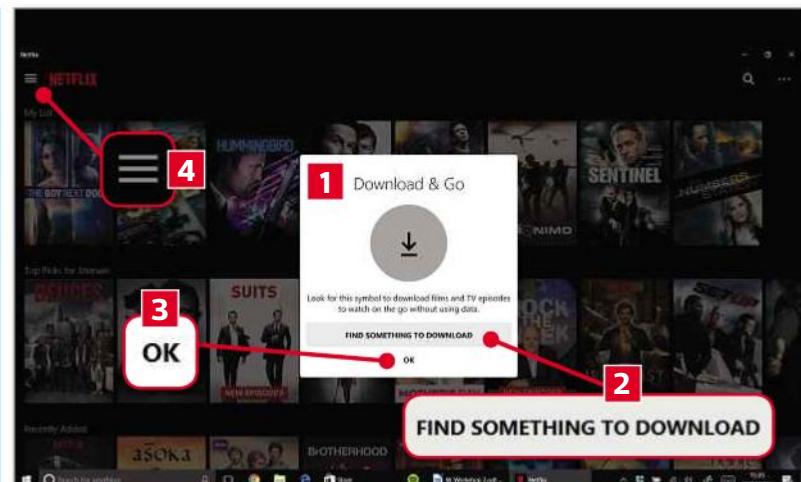
download content to your PC using the free Netflix Windows 10 app. This is a great way to ensure uninterrupted playback if you don't have a reliable broadband connection. It's also handy if you travel with your laptop.



**STEP 1** To install the Netflix app, click the Windows Store icon **1** on your taskbar, type **netflix** in the search bar **2**, and press Enter. Click to select the Netflix app in the search results, then click **Install** **3**. When that's done, click Launch to open the app. If you have a Netflix account, click Sign In at the top right and log into your account. If not, click Join Free For A Month. You will need to select one of its three plans (starting at £5.99 per month – payable after your month's trial), then create your account.



**STEP 2** Once you've logged in, select your user profile **1**. You can create multiple user profiles for each account. Netflix logs viewing history on each profile allowing it to recommend relevant content based on what you've watched. It also offers a Kids account **2** that provides child-friendly content. Click the pen icon **3** to open Netflix in your default browser. From here, you can create more user profiles if you want or edit existing ones.



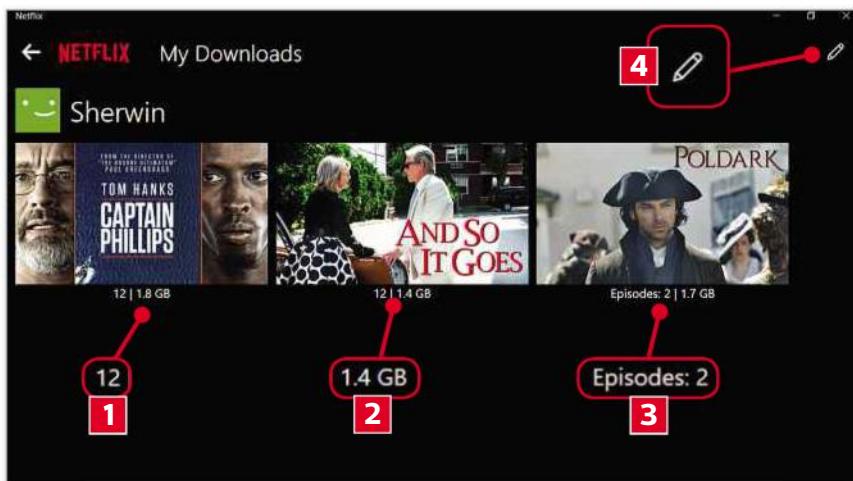
**STEP 3** After selecting your profile in the app, you'll see a 'Download & Go' window **1**. Click **FIND SOMETHING TO DOWNLOAD** **2** to see the films and TV shows you can download to watch offline. If you want to browse the entire Netflix library, click **OK** **3** to go to your main Netflix page. To access downloadable content from this page, click the menu (three horizontal lines **4**), then click 'Available for Download'.



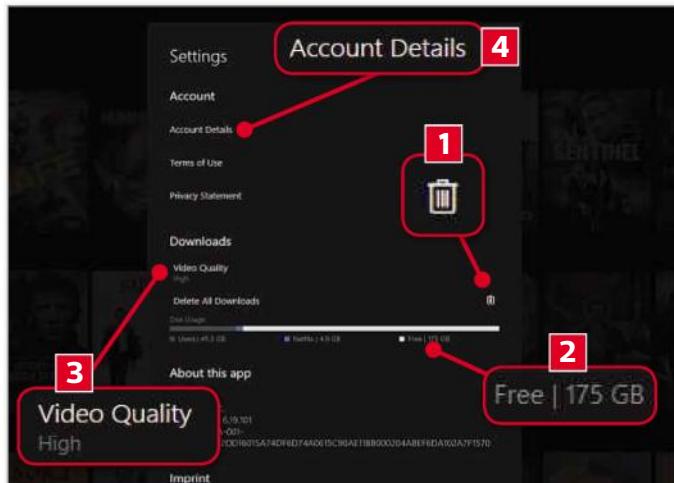
**STEP 4** In the 'Available for Download' section **1** content is displayed in categories (New Releases, Dramas, TV Programmes, Great Britain, and so on). To download a film, click the one you want, then click the Download button (which changes to Downloading **2**). Click this button for options to pause or cancel the download. You'll see its download progress bar at the bottom **3**. Close the window **4** (this won't affect the download), then repeat the process to download other films.



**STEP 5** To download a TV series, scroll to a relevant category (such as TV Programmes or Great Britain), then click the TV series you want. Click the download icons **1** below the episodes you want. You'll now see the progress for all downloads in the bar below **2**.



**STEP 6** To watch the films and TV shows you've downloaded when you're offline, click the three lines at the top left of your Netflix PC app, then click My Downloads. Here, you'll see your downloads with info such as the age-restriction rating **1**, the download size **2** and number of episodes you've downloaded **3**. Simply click the title you want to watch. Consider deleting content after watching it to recover storage space on your PC. There are two ways to do this. Click the pen icon **4**, tick the items you've watched, then click the bin icon at the top right.



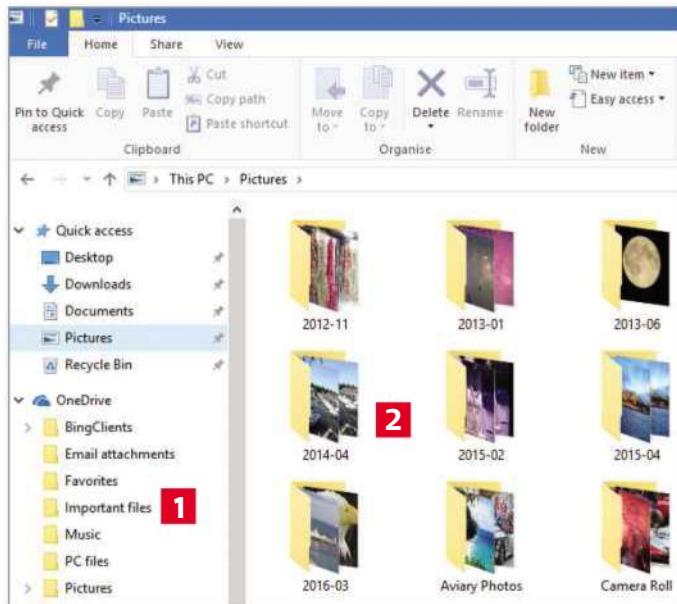
**STEP 7** Alternatively, to delete *all* your downloaded items in one go, click the three dots at the top right of Netflix's main screen, then Settings. Next, click the bin icon **1** beside Delete All Downloads. On this screen, you'll also see how much free space you have on your hard drive **2**. Ensure Video Quality is set to High **3**. Click Account Details **4** to open your Netflix account in your browser. From here, you can change (or cancel) your Netflix plan, your password, email address, payment information and billing details. **5**

# Prepare your PC for the Creators Update

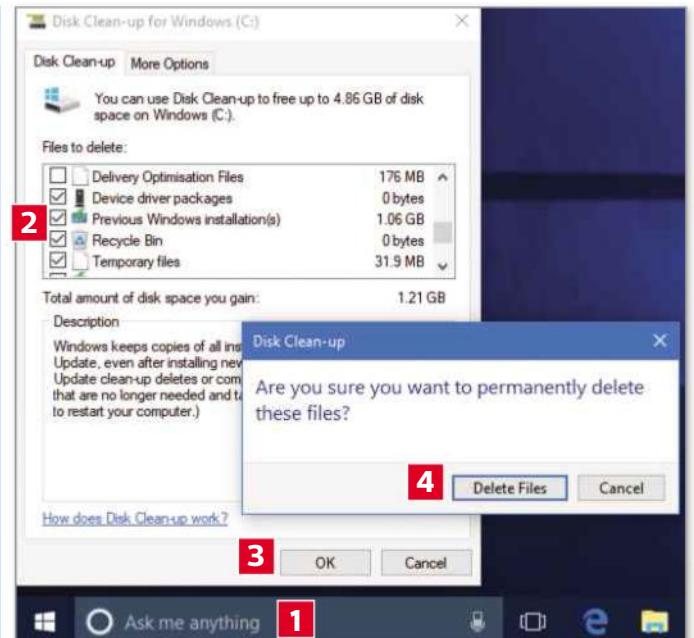
**What you need:** Windows 10; External hard drive **Time required:** 40 minutes

The Windows 10 Creators Update came out on 11 April, but it could be a few more days (or weeks) before you get it. Even if you've got it already, you may want to wait a few weeks before installing it, so that Microsoft can iron out any bugs

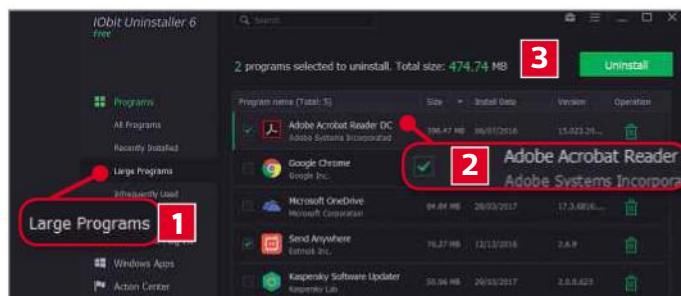
from the first release. While the update should be smooth, users have complained that previous big Windows updates have caused them problems. We'll show you the five things you should do before upgrading to avoid disaster.



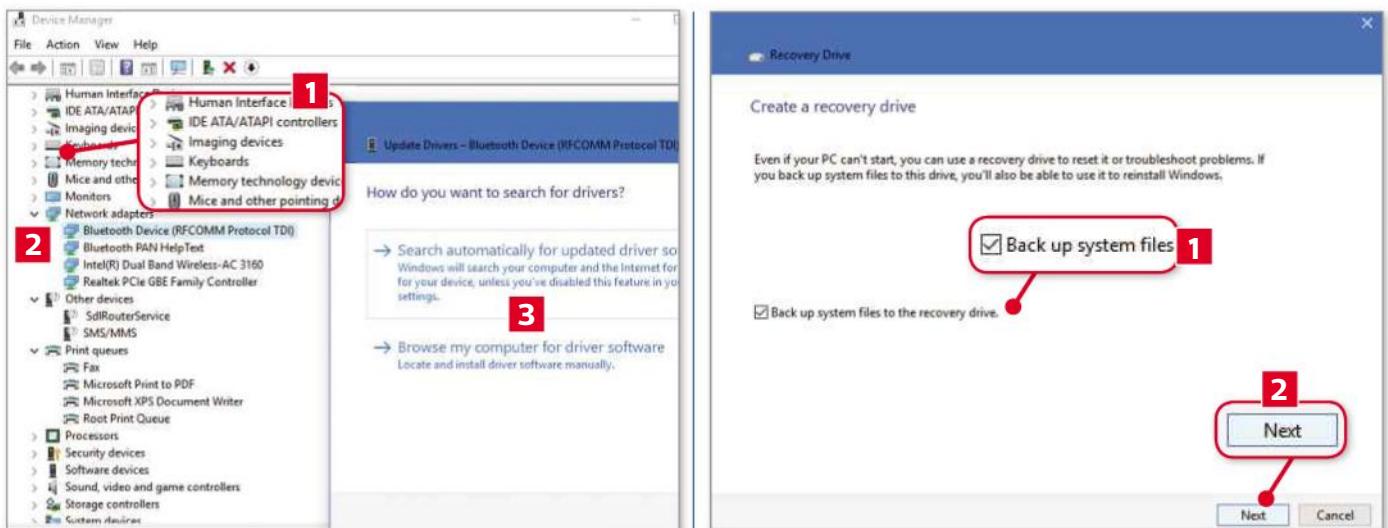
**STEP 1** The biggest complaint with previous big Windows updates (such as the Anniversary Update) was that it deleted some users' files. Therefore, the first thing you should do before the Creators Update is back up your important files. Use an external drive if you have one, or an online-storage program – such as OneDrive, Google Drive or Dropbox. OneDrive may be the easiest for you because it's built into Windows 10. Search for OneDrive on your PC, then log in when prompted. You'll now see your OneDrive folders within File Explorer **1**. Click and drag your files/folders **2** to the relevant OneDrive folders back them up.



**STEP 2** The Creators Update is several gigabytes, which means it'll require considerable storage space on your C Drive. So the second thing you need to do is free up storage space on your PC. The fastest way to do this is using Windows' Disk Clean-up tool. Type `disk cleanup` into the search bar **1**, press Enter and click OK. Next, click the 'Clean-up system files' button at the bottom left, then click OK again. After the screen loads, tick 'Previous Windows installation(s)', Recycle Bin, and 'Temporary files' **2**, then click OK **3**, Delete Files **4** and wait until that's done.

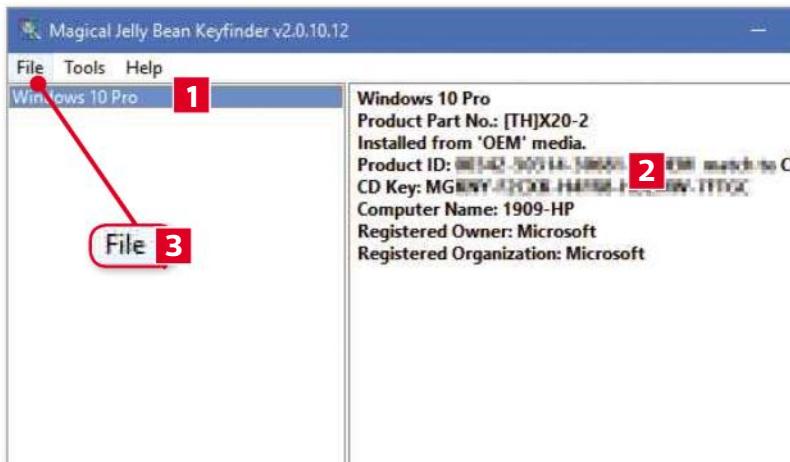


**STEP 3** The other ways to recover storage space are to uninstall redundant programs and remove PC junk. Consider using Revo Uninstaller (see page 52) or IObit Uninstaller ([www.snipca.com/24114](http://www.snipca.com/24114)). In IObit Uninstaller, click Large Programs **1**, select all the redundant ones **2**, then click Uninstall **3**. You'll be prompted to remove junk that's left behind after the uninstallation. Finally, run CCleaner ([www.snipca.com/24115](http://www.snipca.com/24115)) to remove junk leftover by programs, including your browsers and Office software. Open CCleaner, click Analyze, wait for it to finish, then click Run Cleaner.



**STEP 4** The main reason why most PCs tend to crash after a big Windows 10 update is because your **drivers** are outdated and therefore incompatible with the new Windows version. To ensure that this doesn't happen, you should check and update all your drivers. To do that, search for **device manager** on your PC. When it opens, click all the dropdown menus **1**. If any red or yellow icons appear next to your drivers, right-click the faulty driver **2**, click 'Update driver', 'Search automatically for updated driver software' **3**, then follow the onscreen prompts to install and update it.

**STEP 5** In severe cases, a huge Windows update can crash PCs. To safeguard against this, it's a good idea to create a system-recovery drive. First, insert an empty USB stick or external hard drive (minimum 16GB) into your PC. Next, type **recovery drive** into your PC's search bar, then click 'Create a recovery drive'. Ensure 'Backup system files to the recovery drive' is ticked **1**, click **Next** **2** and wait until that's done. Now select your inserted drive from the list, click **Next**, then **Create**, wait until that's done, then click **Finish**.



**STEP 6** Finally, you should save the product keys for your Windows version and any paid-for software you own (such as Microsoft Office and antivirus programs). This is handy if you need to reinstall any programs after upgrading or if you need to restore your PC from your recovery drive. Install and open the free program **Magical Jelly Bean Keyfinder** ([www.snipca.com/24116](http://www.snipca.com/24116)). You'll see your Windows version and any other paid-for programs that you've installed **1**, with their product keys **2**. To save this info as a text file, select the first entry on the left, click **File** **3**, 'Save as', rename the file and save it on your PC. Repeat this for other entries. Save this info somewhere safe so you can access it when needed.

- We'll reveal every new tool in the Creators Update in our **NEXT ISSUE** – out Wednesday 10 May



**STEP 7** If your PC doesn't boot after upgrading to the Creators Update, then insert the recovery drive you created (in Step 5). Your PC will automatically detect it and give you the option to refresh or reset your PC. The former saves your files, while the latter erases everything on your PC. Try Refresh first **1** and see if that works. If it doesn't, then click 'Advanced options' **2**, Automatic Repair, then follow the prompts to fix your PC and restore it from your drive. Use Reset **3** as a last resort if both these methods fail.

## Share meeting points on Google Maps

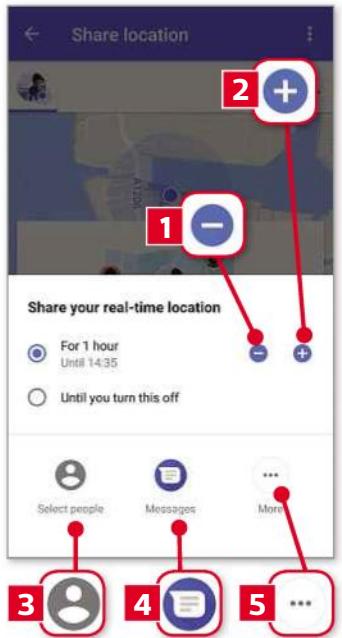
**What you need:** Android or iOS phone or tablet **Time required:** 15 minutes

Google now lets you share your exact location with others using Google Maps (built-in Android app; iOS [www.snipca.com/24019](http://www.snipca.com/24019)). The feature is really useful if you want to arrange to meet friends or family at your current location. You can share

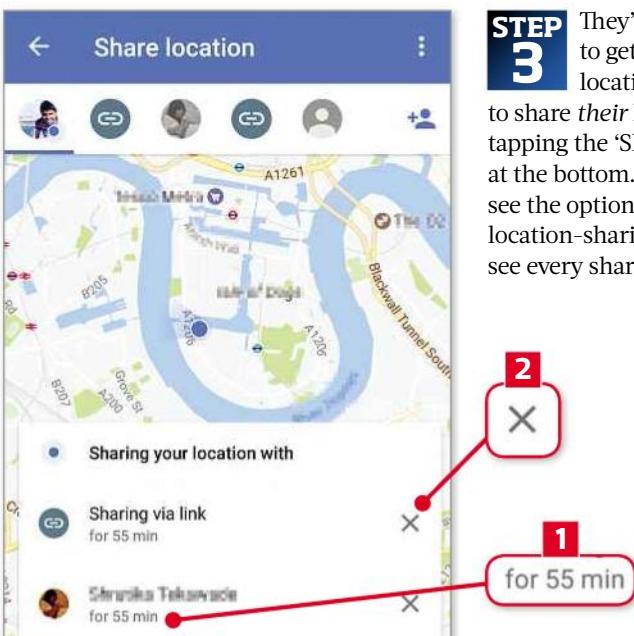
this information using any compatible app, including email, text messaging and social media. You can also set how long you'll be at this location (from 15 minutes to three days). It's easy to terminate location-sharing once you meet up.



**STEP 1** To use the feature, you need to be at the place where you want to meet your friends. Open Google Maps, tap the three lines at the top left, tap 'Share location', then tap Get Started. You'll now see the option to share your location for one hour or until you turn this feature off. You can reduce 1 the sharing time to a minimum of '15 minutes' or increase it 2 to a maximum of '3 days'. You can share your location via Gmail 3, texts 4 or other compatible apps 5 (including WhatsApp, Skype and Facebook Messenger).



**STEP 2** We'll show you how to share your location using Gmail, but the process is similar for other apps. Tap 'Select people' to see contacts you email often. Tap to select the people you want to meet 1. Scroll down to Contacts 2 to see others you can include. When you've added everyone you want 3, tap Share 4. Your recipients will need to open the relevant app notification (depending on the method you chose to share), tap the link to your location, then tap Continue to see your location in Google Maps.



**STEP 3** They'll now see the option to get directions to your location. They can also choose to share *their* location with you by tapping the 'Share your location' slider at the bottom. If they do this, they'll see the option (as in Step 1) to set a location-sharing time limit. You'll now see every sharer's location on the map

(as will they), which is useful if you need to call or text them to provide directions. As soon as you all meet up, you can terminate the sharing link. To do this, return to the 'Share location' section in Google Maps. You'll see for how long your link is still valid 1. Tap the X 2 beside the person's name or link to end location sharing.

### NEXT ISSUE

- Share your PC screen with multiple people
- Control Kodi from your tablet
- Make your own music for free
- Track flights from your iPad

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ON SALE  
Weds  
10 May

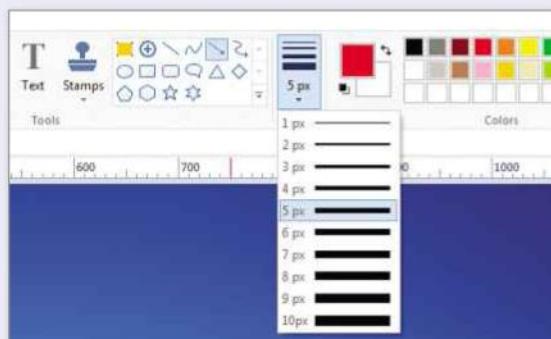
## TIP OF THE FORTNIGHT

### Annotate screenshots with PicPick

In Issue 499, one of your Workshops explained how to add text and graphics to a screenshot using the free program, Screeny (see page 42). My favourite screenshot program is PicPick ([www.picpick.org](http://www.picpick.org)). While it has fewer annotation tools than Screeny, in my opinion it's easier to use and a better program overall.

Open the program, click the File tab, Program Options, then 'Hot keys'. Here, you can set keyboard shortcuts for creating different types of screenshots (full screen, single window and so on).

To annotate your screenshot with a



graphic, select the shape you want in the Tools section. Next, click the 1px dropdown menu to select the line thickness for that shape (see screenshot), then select a colour on the right. When

you've finished, click and drag on your screenshot to add that graphic to it. You can then click and drag the entire graphic to reposition it or just its corners to resize it.

To add text, click the Text option in the Tools section, then click and drag across the screenshot to create a text box with sample text you can type over. You'll now see a dropdown menu with options to change your font style, size and colour. Once you're happy, press Ctrl+S to rename the screenshot and save it on your PC.

Adrian Masters



Adrian wins a copy of our 2016 Back Issue CD

Buy it on Amazon [www.snipca.com/23209](http://www.snipca.com/23209)

#### EMAIL

##### Use the new, cleaner and simpler version of Yahoo Mail

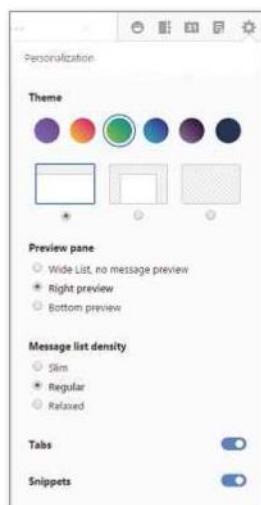
When I last logged into my Yahoo Mail account, I received a pop-up message telling me to try the new version of the service. If you don't see this message, click the 'Try the new Yahoo Mail' at the bottom left.

The first thing you'll notice is a cleaner interface with three vertical panes – your email folders, your list of messages and a preview pane. Click the settings (cog) icon at the top right. In the previous version clicking this revealed a long list of options that required some work. However, in this version, you'll see simplified options that let you change your theme, choose where you want your preview pane to appear and how your list of emails looks (see screenshot right).

The sliders below let you see the options at the top of your inbox as tabs instead of buttons, and choose whether or not you want to see the first line of your email in the message list. Click More Settings for further options, including switching on desktop notifications and changing

your email signature. At the bottom, you'll find the option to revert to the classic version of Yahoo Mail if you prefer.

Darren Farley



#### WINDOWS

##### Resolve Windows Firewall Control problem

In Issue 499's Letters Page (see page 13), Computeractive reader Fraser Drummond explained how he ran into a problem when using the free program Windows Firewall Control ([www.snipca.com/23495](http://www.snipca.com/23495)). Basically, he noticed that some programs (including Chrome and Outlook) wouldn't connect to the internet when he switched from a low to medium firewall setting. He then had to create firewall exceptions for each of these programs.

I believe all his difficulties could be resolved by simply going to the program's Notifications tab and selecting Display Notifications. After doing this, you'll see a pop-up message with options every time a program accesses the internet. Here, you can simply accept or decline access, or even grant access for a specific amount of time.

Martin Rubenstein



#### MUSIC

##### Change music tempo and pitch in real time

A few months back I started learning ballroom dancing, and soon after that started taking bass-guitar lessons. I needed a program that would let me slow down music so I could practise dance steps and change musical pitch so I could learn to play bass in different keys.

I stumbled upon several programs that let me do this, but not in 'real time' as they played. Others like 'VLC media player' let you change tempo, but not pitch. Eventually, I found Impulse Media Player ([www.snipca.com/24067](http://www.snipca.com/24067)) – a free media player that can change the speed without affecting the pitch and vice versa – all in real time. Drag and drop the track into the program to play it. You'll see two sliders (see screenshot above) which let you adjust tempo and pitch.

Bob Farish

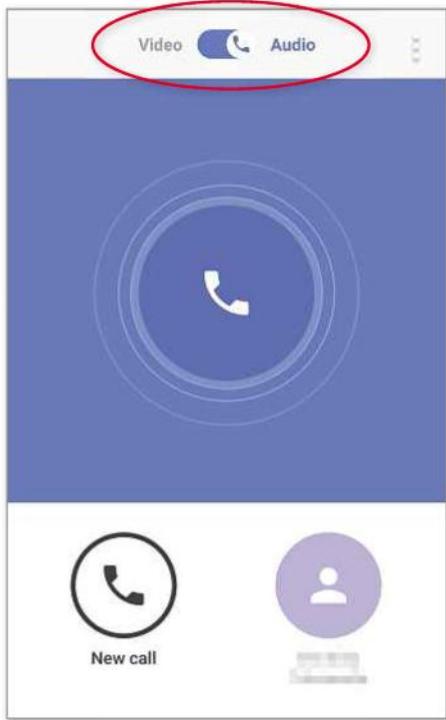
# Phone and Tablet Tips

## Brilliant things to do on your device

### ANDROID

#### Save money calling abroad using Google Duo

In Issue 484 (see page 42) we explained how to use Google's new video-chat app Duo. With its latest update, the app now lets you make audio calls, which consume less mobile data. It also works over Wi-Fi, so it's a great option if you need to call abroad without incurring additional costs. Install and open the app (Android [www.snipca.com/24097](http://www.snipca.com/24097); iOS [www.snipca.com/24098](http://www.snipca.com/24098)).



[www.snipca.com/24098](http://www.snipca.com/24098)). By default it is set to Video mode, but simply tap the slider to make audio calls (see screenshot below left). Next, tap 'New call'. You'll see a list of all contacts that have the app installed. Tap to select the one you want to call.

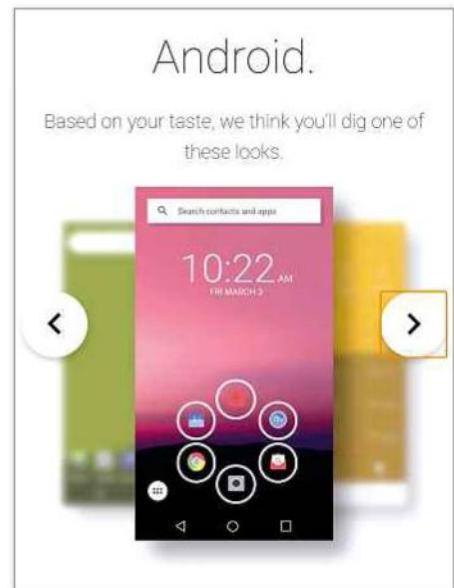
### ANDROID

#### Customise your home screen using Google's simple test

Unlike on iOS devices, there are loads of ways you can customise your Android home screen. There are free apps that let you change your wallpaper, tweak the appearance of your icons and add **widgets**. There are also launcher apps that let you revamp the whole look and feel of your device. One great example is Nova Launcher, which we covered in our 'Customise your phone and tablet's home screen' Workshop (Issue 498, page 40).

To make the whole customisation process easier, Google has devised a simple test to help you find the apps you need and the design you crave.

To try the test, open Chrome on your phone or tablet, then go to [www.snipca.com/24095](http://www.snipca.com/24095). Tap Take The Test, then Let's Go. You'll now see around 15 screens with two or three tiles that you need to select by tapping. For example, you'll see a choice of options like Monochromatic or Multicolour; Vibrant or Muted; and Patterned or Random. The final few screens let you determine what you mainly use your device for (messaging,



emailing, gaming or working) and whether you're a beginner, advanced or intermediate Android user.

At the end of the test, you'll see three home-screen images based on your selections (see screenshot above). Tap the right or left arrows to select the one you prefer.

Now scroll down to see five apps that you need to install if you want to make your device's home screen look like the one you selected.

The apps appear under their relevant categories – Your Wallpaper, Your Icons, Your Launcher, Your Widgets and Your Keyboard. You can either install all five apps or only the ones you want.

## Best New Apps

### Meteor

Free

Android: [www.snipca.com/24103](http://www.snipca.com/24103)

Meteor tells you where in your house you'll get the best performance from certain apps that rely on your Wi-Fi. So,

for example, you can find out which room is best for making Skype video calls. It supports 17 popular apps, including Gmail, Chrome, Dropbox, YouTube and Spotify.



### Apple Music

Free

Android: [www.snipca.com/24104](http://www.snipca.com/24104)

Apple has updated the Android version of its Music app, adding useful features that

were previously only available in the iOS version. You can now view song lyrics as you listen and see suggestions for albums, artists and radio stations based on what you listen to.

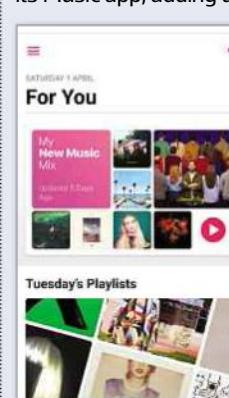
### Airspace Explorer

Free

iPad only: [www.snipca.com/24102](http://www.snipca.com/24102)

Developed by the UK's National Air Traffic Services, Airspace Explorer lets you track over 10,000 flights in real time. Tap any plane to see more info, including its flight number, departure airport, destination, aircraft type and cruising altitude. The app is a **beta** version but we had no problems.

### What you should install this fortnight



iOS

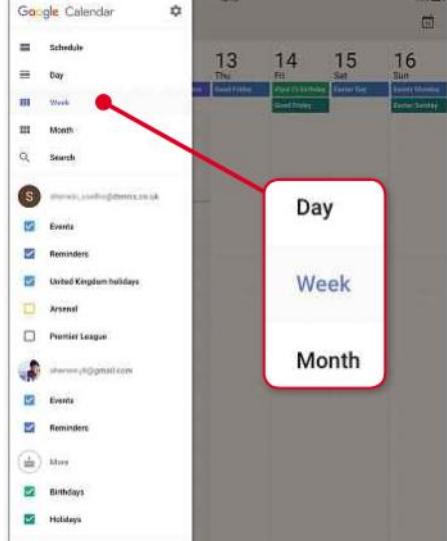
## Create Google Calendar events on your iPad

 Google recently launched an iPad version of its popular Google Calendar app. We'll show you how to set up and use the app, so that you can create events on your iPad and receive notifications on other devices that have the app installed.

Install the app from [www.snipca.com/24101](http://www.snipca.com/24101). If you already use a Gmail account on your iPad, you'll be prompted to log in when you first open the app. Alternatively, if you have multiple Gmail accounts, you can add events from all of them to the app. To do that, tap the sliders next to your listed email addresses when you open the app, then tap Get Started. Finally, tap Allow, swipe across the introductory screens, then tap OK.

When the app opens, you'll see all your events (in various colours to represent birthdays, holidays and so on) on a weekly view. Tap the three lines at the top left to see what each colour represents. By default all event types are ticked, but you can untick the ones you don't want to see. From here, you can also change your default view from Week to Day or Month (see screenshot). Tap any event on your calendar, then tap the pen icon to edit its details, such as the time, location or reminder setting.

There are two ways to add a new event reminder. You can scroll to the day the event starts, long-press the start time bracket, then enter your event details in the pop-up window that appears. Alternatively, tap the orange '+' button at the bottom right, tap Event/Reminder,



then enter the details (including date and time) when prompted.

ANDROID & iOS

## Share multiple photos using WhatsApp

 WhatsApp Messenger (Android)

[www.snipca.com/24099](http://www.snipca.com/24099); iOS [www.snipca.com/24100](http://www.snipca.com/24100) is one of the most popular messaging apps. Previously, the app let you send a maximum of 10 photo and/or video files to another contact or group in one go. They have now increased this limit to 30 media files.

Open WhatsApp, tap the paperclip icon at the top, then tap Gallery (see screenshot above). Next, select



one of the albums on your device, long-press the first photo/video you want to send, then tap to select the others. When you've finished, tap OK, then tap the Send icon at the bottom right.

## Games With Kids

What to play together on your phone and tablet

AGES 0-5

### Jungle Book Hide and Seek

£1.99 [www.snipca.com/24105](http://www.snipca.com/24105) (iOS)

As well as an audio narrative of Rudyard Kipling's classic tale with animal noises and sound effects, this app offers loads of interesting games. Our favourite involves moving the device around to scan the virtual jungle, then tapping each animal to learn more about them.



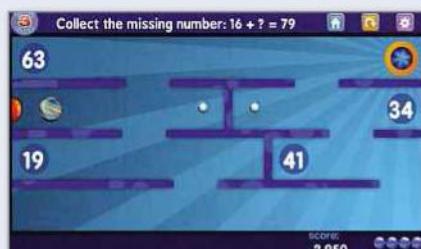
AGES 6-10

### Marble Math Junior

£1.79 [www.snipca.com/24106](http://www.snipca.com/24106) (Android)

£3.99 [www.snipca.com/24107](http://www.snipca.com/24107) (iOS)

This app aims to make maths calculations less daunting for your kids. They'll see an equation at the top and various numbers dotted around a maze. The aim is to drag the marble to the correct number(s) to solve the equation.



AGES 11-16

### Typeshift\*

Free [www.snipca.com/24108](http://www.snipca.com/24108) (iOS)

Typeshift is a new word puzzle with a twist. You need to swipe letters up and down to form a word. As you improve, the complexity of the grids will increase and you'll see clues to help you find the correct solutions.



\*Contains in-app purchases

## WINDOWS 10

### Translate text in Microsoft Edge

 Microsoft's browser Edge offers a simple way to translate foreign-language text with just a few clicks. To do this, you need to install the Microsoft [extension](#) Translator.

Open Edge, click the three dots at the top right, click Extensions at the bottom, then click the 'Get extensions from the Store' link. When the Store opens, click the 'Translator for Microsoft Edge' extension, then click the blue Get button. Next, select your C Drive then click Install. You'll see a message near to your notification area when that's completed. Finally, click the Launch button, then click 'Turn it on'.

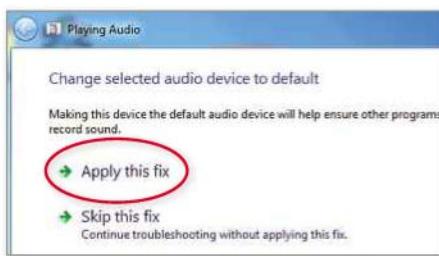


Now whenever you come across foreign-language text while browsing, highlight it, then click the Translator icon on your toolbar (see screenshot above). The tool will tell you which language the text is in and provide the option to translate it into English. Click the 'Translate this page' button to see your highlighted text translated.

## WINDOWS 7, 8, 10

### Fix audio problems

 If you can't hear any audio from speakers or headphones connected to your PC, there's an easy way to diagnose and rectify the problem. Press the Windows key, type [fix audio problems](#), then click the 'Find and fix audio



## WINDOWS 10

### Transfer files from your PC to phone via Bluetooth

 Most new Windows 10 PCs come with Bluetooth technology built in. It's one of the quickest ways to send files (such as photos and documents) wirelessly from your PC to your phone (and vice versa).

First, make sure you have switched on the Bluetooth option on your phone – simply tap the Bluetooth icon in your device's notification area. Now, go to your PC, press the Windows key, type [bluetooth](#), then click the 'Bluetooth and other device settings' option below Settings. On the page that opens, click the Bluetooth slider to turn it on (see screenshot). Next, click '+ Add Bluetooth or other device' then select Bluetooth.

Your PC will scan your network for any Bluetooth devices within range. Select your phone when it appears in the list. Now return to your phone, tap the 'Touch to pair with [your PC's name]' notification, then tap Pair. Finally, click Connect on your PC to pair the devices.

playback problems' option. This opens Window's Troubleshooter tool.

Click Next, and in the list that appears select the problematic device (your speaker or headphones, for example), then click Next again. Windows will now analyse the problem and suggest the best course of action. In most cases, you'll see an 'Apply this fix' button (see screenshot below left). Click this then follow any prompts. Eventually, you should see a message saying your problem has been fixed. Click Close and your audio problems should be resolved.

## WINDOWS 7, 8, 10

### Change what happens when you close your laptop's lid

 By default when you close your laptop's lid, it will go into Sleep or Hibernate mode. You can change this, or make your laptop shut down entirely. To do this, right-click the battery icon in your system tray (accessible by clicking

## Bluetooth & other devices

 Add Bluetooth or other device

### Bluetooth

 On

Now discoverable as "1909-HP"

### Other devices

 HUAWEI Mate 9  
Paired

To transfer files from your PC to phone, right-click the Bluetooth icon in your PC's notification area, then click 'Send a File'. Now select your phone's name, click Next, Browse, navigate to the PC folder, click to select the files you want to send, click Open, then Next. Finally, unlock your phone and click Accept when you see the option to receive files via Bluetooth. Tap the notification to see your files (which you can download to your device or share using relevant apps).



the up arrow in your taskbar), then click Power Options. This opens the Control Panel.

Now click 'Choose what closing the lid does' on the left. Beside the option 'When I close the lid' you'll see two dropdown menus. These let you determine what happens when your PC is running on battery power and when it's connected to a power source. Click the dropdown menus, and choose from 'Do nothing', Sleep, Hibernate or 'Shut down' (see screenshot above), then click 'Save changes' at the bottom.

## EXCEL

### Customise spreadsheet charts



It's easy to convert your spreadsheet data into charts.

Better still, you can customise these charts in a matter of minutes. First, highlight the relevant data, then click the Insert tab. In the Charts section you'll see a selection of charts you can click to apply. Some chart types have dropdown menus that display further options you can click to select.

To customise your chart, click to select it. You'll see three icons at the top right of your chart – Chart Elements, Chart Styles and Chart Filters. Click Chart Elements to see several boxes (including gridlines and axis titles), some of which will be pre-ticked. Tick the other boxes to add those elements to your chart.

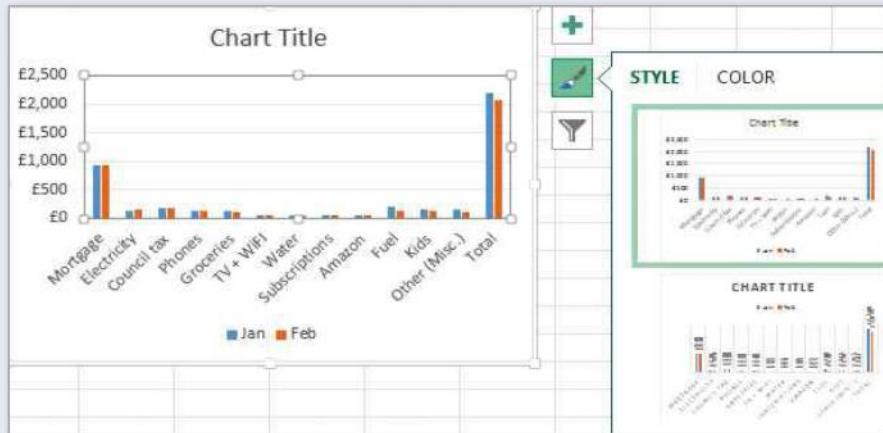


Chart Styles has two tabs – Style and Color (see right of screenshot). The former offers different layouts, while the latter offers various colour combinations that you can click to select.

The Chart Filters button lets you exclude certain values from your chart. By default, all these are ticked. Untick any option you don't want, then click Apply.

## WORD

### Make quick calculations in Word



Word offers a handy Calculator tool, but you need to first enable it. Click the Customise Quick Access Toolbar arrow (see screenshot below), then click More Commands at the bottom. You'll now see two sections with dropdown menus. Set the left-hand dropdown menu to All Commands, scroll down the list on the left, select Calculator, click the Add button in the middle, then click OK at the bottom right.

You'll notice a new Calculator icon (a green circle). Whenever you need to make any calculations in Word, highlight the equation, then click this icon. You'll

see the answer at the bottom left of your document.

## OUTLOOK

### Mark emails as read without having to open them



By default, Outlook only marks an email as 'read' when you've opened it for at least five seconds. This means simply clicking multiple emails in your inbox quickly, won't mark them as having been read. There's an easy way to change this default setting so that emails are marked as read as soon as you click them.

To do that, click the File tab, then Options. Next, click Mail at the top left, then click the Reading Pane button on the right. In the window that opens, untick the box next to 'Mark items as read when viewed in the Reading Pane'. Tick the next two boxes – 'Mark item as read when selection changes' and 'Single key reading using space bar' (see screenshot below), then click OK twice. You can now mark your emails

as read by clicking them and scroll through an email by pressing your space bar.

## SWAY

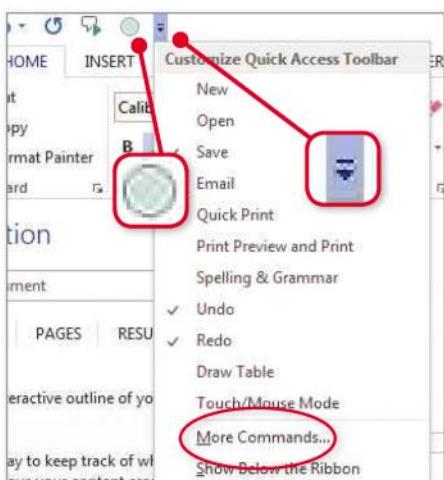
### Turn your photo albums into online presentations



Windows 10's Photos app has a useful option to add an entire album of photos to your Sway account in one go. For this to work, you need to be using the same Microsoft account on your PC as you use to access your Sway account.

First, open the Photos app on your PC, then click the Albums tab at the top left to see your library of photos. To create a new album, click '+ New album' at the top right, then tick the photos you want to add. Click Done at the top right when you've finished choosing, then click Save. Next, click the Share icon at the top right, 'Upload to Sway', select your Microsoft account, then click Continue.

Now, go to [www.sway.com](http://www.sway.com), click 'Sign in' at the top right and log in with your Microsoft account. You'll see your album's title in the My Sways section at the bottom. You can now start editing your presentation. For example, you can add captions and effects to your photos and delete any you don't want to include.



# Secret Tips For...

# BCUninstaller



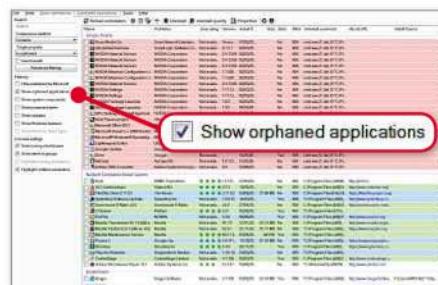
Delete programs that fail to uninstall properly, view Windows 10 apps, clean up 'leftovers' and change your startup programs

## Remove 'orphaned' programs

BCUninstaller ([www.snipca.com/18041](http://www.snipca.com/18041)) is designed to replace Windows' Uninstall tool in the Control Panel. One of its best hidden tools lets you find 'orphaned' programs, which have been left on your PC without an uninstaller.

To see orphans, tick the 'Show orphaned applications' filter (on the left – see screenshot above right) – they will then be highlighted in pink. To group them together so you can more easily check them, make sure 'Show items in groups' is ticked (on the left), then click the Uninstaller Kind column. Scroll down to the Simple Delete group to see the orphaned programs.

Delete any you don't want in the usual way: click one to highlight it, then click Uninstall. Click Create when prompted (to create a **system restore point**). Once that's done, a Command Prompt window will open which will prompt you to type **y** (for yes) and press Enter to confirm the deletion of each file (you should delete every file BCUninstaller suggests). Once you've



**Tick the 'Show orphaned applications' box to see and remove stubborn programs**

finished, click Close, then Yes when prompted to 'look for leftovers'. If BCUninstaller finds any traces (registry keys and other hard-to-shift files associated with uninstalled programs), click the 'Delete selected' button to remove them.

## List only Windows 10 apps

You can filter BCUninstaller's list of programs so that it only shows Windows 10 apps. These include Microsoft's built-in Windows 10 apps (such as Groove Music and 3D Builder), as well as any you've installed from the Windows



**Click this to see only Windows 10 apps when deciding what you want to uninstall**

Store. To see these, make sure the 'Show Windows Store apps' box is ticked (on the left), click View, then View Windows Store apps (see screenshot above). The apps will all be highlighted in light blue. You can now uninstall these in exactly the same way as any other program.

If you're unsure which ones to get rid of, we recommend removing 3D Builder, Gamebar, Get Office, Get Started, Groove Music, Microsoft Wallet, Skype Preview, Xbox, Xbox Identity, Candy Crush and Royal Revolt – assuming you don't use any of them.

## Disable startup programs

To see a list of programs that load automatically whenever you boot your PC, click Tools, then Open Startup Manager. The default view lists every boot process (including Windows' system processes). To limit the list to programs only, click the dropdown menu at the bottom of the Startup Manager window, then select 'Show startup entries'.

This will show just the programs that have requested to be loaded when Windows boots. Look at the Enabled column to see which of these have permission to do so. On our PC, for example, a program called ShadowPlay (an Nvidia program used to record footage of video games) was enabled. We stopped it by right-clicking its entry in the list, then unticking Enabled.



be ticked by the program). Click the 'Delete selected' button to remove the leftovers you've ticked. Some of the files you try to delete might give a Folder Access Denied error message – for these we suggest you click Cancel to skip them.

**What program would you like secret tips on? Please let us know at editor@computeractive.co.uk**

# What's All the Fuss About...



# Project Neon

Windows 10 is getting a lick of paint – and it's all in the best possible taste

## What is it?

Microsoft's new 'design language' for Windows 10, which will change how the operating system looks and works. Early glimpses show transparent boxes, fluid animations, large white spaces and subtle blurring around words. It's all very tasteful.

## So it won't have neon signs like Piccadilly Circus?

No, it's much more attractive, although we can't guarantee that Microsoft won't let Coca-Cola and McDonald's advertise in the Start menu. Nor should it be confused with the Project Neon construction work that's taking place in Las Vegas (you'll come across this should you search for the term online!).

## Can I take a look?

Certainly. The main screenshot is the latest leaked image, showing one of the biggest changes – transparent tiles on the Start menu. Currently these tiles are as solid as one of the gold bars Bill Gates uses as a paperweight. You can also watch this video of Microsoft's Groove Music desktop app ([www.snipca.com/23013](http://www.snipca.com/23013)), which has been given the 'Neon' treatment. The overall effect has been compared to Aero Glass.

## What's that?

The design introduced in Windows Vista that replaced XP's Luna. It was the biggest design update since Windows 95, changing the look and feel of buttons,



checkboxes, menus, progress bars and icons. New 'Aero'-themed elements were added in Windows 7, including Aero Peek, which previewed a window when you hovered your mouse over its thumbnail image in the taskbar. But Windows 8's widely unloved Metro design put an end to that, adopting a flatter look with almost no transparency or depth. Microsoft compromised in Windows 10 by adding optional transparency and blurring to some areas, including the Action Centre. Neon takes this further.

## But is this change just for the sake of it?

Microsoft has been guilty of this several times in the past, so we don't blame you for asking. But we think the changes will be subtle enough to improve your experience of Windows without you really noticing. That said, we hope the 'blurring' effect doesn't make it tricky to move and resize windows. And bear in mind that nothing has been finalised. Microsoft will keep tweaking until Neon is ready. Who knows – it may even draw inspiration from the many amateur Neon designs that have been posted online, such

as this excellent effort from 'Lukas': <http://lukeled.deviantart.com>.

## Is Project Neon part of the Creators Update?

No. It's likely to come in Redstone 3, the codename for the next major update due this autumn (some reports say its final name will be Mobility Update). Microsoft is expected to reveal more details at its Build conference for software developers, which runs from 10–12 May.

## What else is coming in Redstone 3?

Not sure yet, but we expect the My People app to finally make an appearance, after initially being scheduled for the Creators Update. Sitting on your taskbar, the app will give you access to the people you contact most often, making it easier – so Microsoft claims – to keep in touch with them through services like Skype and Outlook.

## So it's definitely not a new version of Windows?

Definitely not. In fact, there will never be another new version of Windows, if Microsoft sticks to its guns. Instead it will be updated regularly with new tools and redesigns, such as Neon. All the early signs are that it will be bright and beautiful.



Aero Glass – the design for Windows Vista and 7 – is being brought up to date in Microsoft's Project Neon

*Special 500th issue*

# FREE SOFTWARE YOUR COMPLETE GUIDE

For our special 500th issue, Jane Hoskyn tells you everything you need to know about free programs – what to use, where to find them, and their best hidden features

Nineteen years is one small step for man, one giant leap for programs. If you were to say “remember 1998?”, we’d probably answer “of course, seems like last week”, but in software terms 1998 is prehistoric.

When the first issue of *Computeractive* hit the shops in February of that year,

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Learn secret ways to make your favourite software do more
- Block toolbars and junk in free software installers
- Discover the best free trials for paid-for software
- Use free portable tools – including those Windows tries to block

there was no such thing as Google (founded September 1998) or Windows 98 (June). No Mozilla. No Napster. No MSN or Yahoo Messenger. Bet you a fiver you were using Netscape to browse the web, if you were doing so at all.

Software has come so far since then that some people say it’s had its day. You can do everything online and on your smartphone, they argue, so programs are irrelevant. Well, we disagree in the strongest possible terms. Thanks to innovations such as [open-source](#) and portable programs, independent developers are falling over themselves to release ingenious little tools that put you back in control of your PC.

At the other end of the scale, we’re seeing amazingly powerful programs that deliver the sort of benefits we couldn’t

have imagined 19 years ago. You can replace your set-top box with Kodi, tour the globe in incredible detail with Google Earth and publish your own novel using LibreOffice – all completely free. Meanwhile, the biggest downside of free software – installer junk – is under threat from tools specially designed to combat it. Free software isn’t dead – in fact it’s never been more alive.

For this bumper eight-page Cover Feature we pick the very best free programs in 10 major categories, then dig deep to find new and hidden features that might surprise you. Then we’ll share our secrets for finding the latest brilliant free tools and installing them safely. Finally, we’ll ponder where software will go next. Will you still be dodging installer junk in another 500 issues’ time?

## ANTI-ADWARE TOOLS



### Best program: Unchecky

<https://unchecky.com>

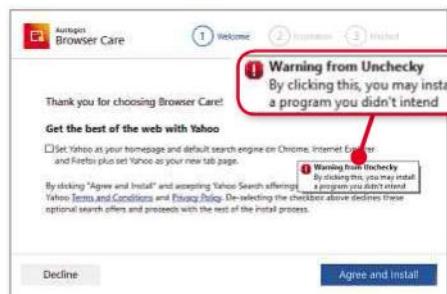
Latest major version: 1.0

Unchecky is like antivirus (AV) for adware. Just as your AV blocks malware spread by hackers, Unchecky blocks adware spread by companies. Call it adware, call it bloatware, call it PUPs – call it what you like, as long as you call a halt to it before it gets into your hard drive. PUPs such as the Ask toolbar and Yahoo search engine can be as hard to remove as malware, and do just as much damage.

Unchecky works by automatically ‘unchecked’ (unticking) adware on your behalf when you run an installer. It runs quietly in the background, looking for PUPs. When it blocks one, you’ll see an alert like the one in our screenshot. Don’t let Unchecky make you complacent, though. Companies change their adware tricks faster than we or Unchecky can keep up, so always be vigilant when installing free software.

#### Best hidden tools

Unchecky gets on with its job without



Hover over any item in an installer to find out if Unchecky considers it a PUP

you ever needing to open it. But if you do open it – by clicking the alert, or the leaf icon in your system tray – you can then click ‘Activity log’ to see a detailed list of all installers caught trying to smuggle adware on to your PC. Right-click the list to clear it.

Unchecky now shows ‘warning tooltips’ to help you identify junk in an installer. Hover your mouse over a potential adware source, and up pops a warning message (see screenshot above). You can disable these **tooltips** in Settings, but we recommend leaving them on.



Malwarebytes AdwCleaner finds and removes adware that can sneak past Unchecky

#### Also try: Malwarebytes AdwCleaner

[www.malwarebytes.com/adwcleaner](http://www.malwarebytes.com/adwcleaner)

Another great little tool that works alongside (and won’t conflict with) your AV, AdwCleaner finds and removes the junk that Unchecky misses. It may even dig up adware that’s been hiding in obscure locations on your PC for years.

#### Don’t use: Ad-Aware Free Antivirus

This “legendary anti-spyware” program claims to stop adware and malware. Don’t believe a word – it’s one of the worst junk offenders we’ve seen.

## PC CLEANERS



### Best program: CCleaner

[www.piriform.com/ccleaner](http://www.piriform.com/ccleaner)

Latest major version: 5.0

It doesn’t take long for a new computer to slow down as it fills up with **temporary files**, **caches**, log files and the other daily detritus of a PC user’s life. CCleaner is still the most powerful program for clearing this clutter. At 13 years old it’s positively senior in software terms, but its maker Piriform constantly adds features to keep it ahead of younger rivals.

Recent additions to its armoury include

support for removing Windows 10 apps (click Tools, then scroll down the Uninstall list) and Firefox **extensions** (click Tools, Browser Plugins, then Firefox), and there’s a steady stream of new tick boxes on the Windows and Applications lists.

Make sure you get CCleaner Free, and not the free trial. Click Download Free Version, then Free Download, and then the Download button in the Free column. Alternatively, use the free portable version ([www.piriform.com/ccleaner/builds](http://www.piriform.com/ccleaner/builds)).

#### Best hidden tools

CCleaner has a secure cleaning option that overwrites data while it’s being

deleted. This slows down the cleaning process but ensures your old data can never be read by hackers and snoops. Click Options, Settings, then ‘Secure file deletion’.

Another great hidden feature is actually a separate program – the CCleaner **plug-in** CCEnhancer ([www.snipca.com/24005](http://www.snipca.com/24005)). This free, portable tool adds dozens more tickboxes to CCleaner’s Applications list, such as Skype Temporary Files, Windows Media Player Databases and even CCleaner itself (see screenshot far left). Extra options are marked with an asterisk, and none are pre-ticked.

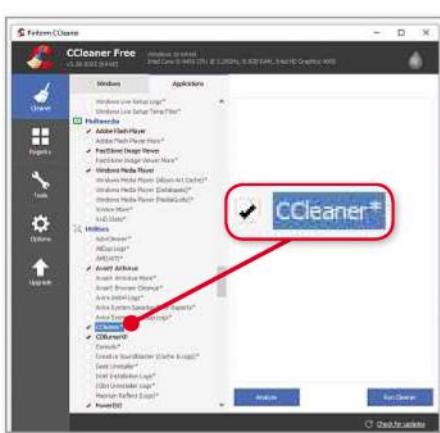
#### Also try: System Ninja

[www.snipca.com/23018](http://www.snipca.com/23018)

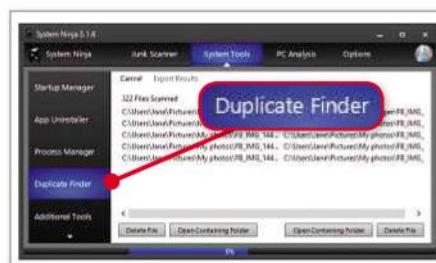
CCEnhancer’s creator also makes this nimble PC-cleaning tool. It includes a Duplicate Finder (see screenshot left) that, unlike many others, won’t hit you with hidden charges.

#### Don’t use: Wise Registry Cleaner

No matter how careful you are with this program’s installer, it will litter your PC with unwanted junk that keeps coming back.



CCEnhancer adds dozens more cleaning options to CCleaner – including CCleaner itself



Remove duplicate files and PC clutter for free using System Ninja

# OFFICE SOFTWARE



## Best program: LibreOffice

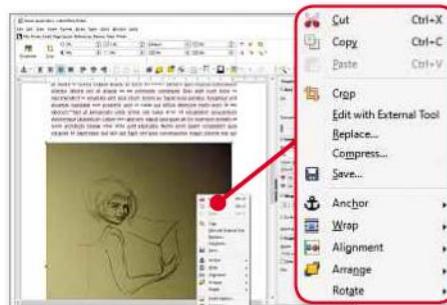
[www.libreoffice.org](http://www.libreoffice.org)

Latest major version: 5.0

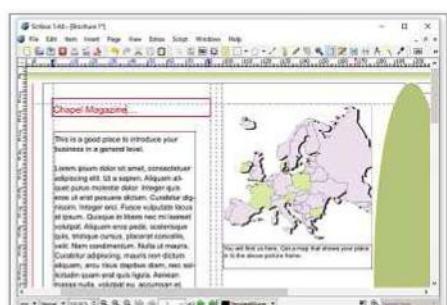
The cheapest legal way to get Microsoft Office is to pay an annual subscription of £59.99. For a free alternative try the open-source LibreOffice, which offers similar functions to Office and now supports all its file formats, including Word documents (DOCX) and Excel spreadsheets (XLSX). The only thing it'll cost you is more than 500MB of hard-drive space. Actually it doesn't have to – because unlike Microsoft Office, LibreOffice has a portable version ([www.snipca.com/24009](http://www.snipca.com/24009)) that you can run from a USB stick.

### Best hidden tools

There's a hidden sidebar of tools in LibreOffice's Word equivalent Writer. To enable it, click View, then Sidebar. You can then open a second box of commands by clicking a corresponding icon. If this makes the window too cluttered, click the arrow on the border to open and close the sidebar, or shift it to your desktop by clicking its menu icon



Add new sidebars to LibreOffice Writer and edit your embedded photos and scans



Create your own magazines and leaflets using desktop-publishing program Scribus

then clicking Undock.

Use the Insert menu to embed PDFs, graphs, photos, scans and videos (WMA or AVI) into your documents, spreadsheets and presentations. Right-click the inserted item for options such as Insert Caption, Wrap and 'Edit with External Tool' (see screenshot above).

### Also try: Scribus

[www.scribus.net](http://www.scribus.net)

LibreOffice Writer has enough features to almost qualify as a desktop-publishing (DTP) tool. But the gold standard for

open-source DTP is Scribus. It's easy to learn and hard to master, like all the most powerful software, and offers professional-level tools for creating magazines, leaflets and ebooks – although Scribus users are still waiting for an EPUB export option ([www.snipca.com/24013](http://www.snipca.com/24013)).

### Don't use: WPS Office

Formerly known as Kingsoft Office this is much smaller than LibreOffice, Scribus and Office, but its free version is full of annoying limitations. For example, it adds a watermark to your exported PDFs.

# UNINSTALLERS



## Best program: Revo Uninstaller

[www.revouninstaller.com](http://www.revouninstaller.com)

Latest major version: 2.0

Revo is the most powerful free uninstaller you can use. It can dig so deep for program leftovers that it offers two less-thorough options, in case its full scan is too time-consuming or might destabilise your PC.

Despite this, it's very easy to use. Click a program in the list, then click Uninstall. Revo automatically creates a **system-restore point**, removes the program and then offers three 'Scanning modes': Safe, Moderate and Advanced (see screenshot below). Moderate is the default, but click Advanced if you want to be sure of blitzing every last trace from your registry and hard drive.



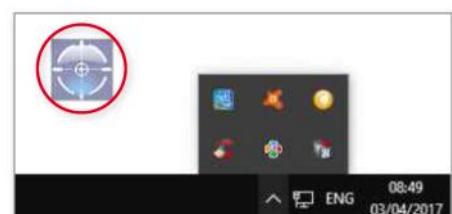
Choose Advanced in Revo Uninstaller to remove every last trace of a program

To get Revo, click Downloads, then scroll down and click Free Download (installable version) or Free Portable.

### Best hidden tools

You may have tried Revo's ingenious Hunter Mode tool already. Click Hunter Mode, and the Revo window will vanish – leaving a small crosshairs icon (see screenshot right) that you can drag on to any program shortcut or system-tray icon to kill its processes or remove with one click. To make Hunter Mode even more powerful, set it to run when Windows starts. Right-click the crosshairs icon, then click 'Auto start with Windows'. Now you'll have Hunter Mode on call at all times.

To export a detailed list of all your installed software, right-click anywhere in the Uninstall list, select 'Export List to' and then choose text or HTML. And did you know you can save a detailed list of a program's leftovers, too? Right-click the 'Found leftover files and folders' list, then click Export. Revo's Tools button reveals more hidden features. Open Autoruns Manager, scroll down to 'Location: Services' to remove startup processes left



Drag Revo's Hunter Mode tool to your system tray to investigate running programs

behind by adware, and use Unrecoverable Delete to annihilate sensitive files.

### Also try: PC Decrapifier

[www.pcdecrapifier.com](http://www.pcdecrapifier.com)

This indelicately named free tool doesn't just list which programs are installed on your PC, it also reveals which ones you should uninstall. It's ideal for running on a new computer to check for pre-installed software. PC Decrapifier lets you uninstall multiple programs at once, but it's much less thorough than Revo.

### Don't use: Auslogics Browser Care

This program for uninstalling extensions bundles several PUPs in its installer, including a nasty Yahoo toolbar. Use Revo's Browsers Cleaner tool instead.

## PRIVACY TOOLS



**Best program:**  
**O&O ShutUp 10**  
[www.snipca.com/24004](http://www.snipca.com/24004)

### Latest major version: 1.0

Microsoft constantly tracks your Windows 10 activity, and there's not much you can do to limit this in Settings. Unless, that is, you use O&O ShutUp 10. This portable program offers a list of Windows 10 settings that compromise your privacy, including Cortana, **telemetry** and web tracking in Edge. Click a slider to turn it green and disable that setting.

### Best hidden tools

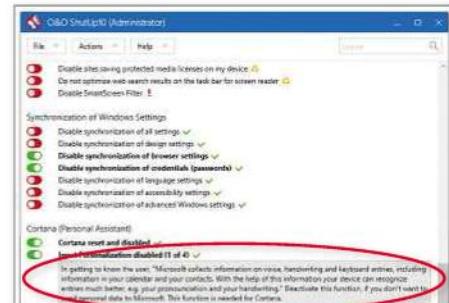
Click each line of text to open a hidden description (see screenshot), then click again to close. To save your existing

settings as a configuration file ('.config') that you can restore much more easily than rolling back to a system restore point, click File then 'Export settings'. To roll back, go to File, 'Import settings', then navigate to the config file.

### Also try: CyberGhost

[www.cyberghostvpn.com](http://www.cyberghostvpn.com)

This **VPN** (virtual private network) encrypts all your data and disguises your **IP address**, so you can pretend you're browsing from another country and unlock web content that's normally only available there. For example, you can potentially use CyberGhost to watch BBC iPlayer from abroad. The basic version is free.



Click the short description next to a setting in O&O ShutUp 10 to reveal more details

### Don't use: McAfee WebAdvisor

Supposedly blocks web snoops and reports on the safety of websites, but instead spreads PUPs and dramatically slows down your browser.

## SYSTEM MONITORS



**Best program:** **SysGauge**  
[www.sysgauge.com](http://www.sysgauge.com)

### Latest major version: 1.0

See at a glance if your processor, memory and hard drive are working too hard, then get an alert if one of them is about to blow a gasket. SysGauge lets you add many more counters, including some specific measurements such as the **CPU** usage of particular Chrome tasks.

### Best hidden tools

Switching your PC off and on again really is the best way to fix many short-term problems - and SysGauge can do this for you automatically in response to a trigger that you decide. For example, to trigger a restart when CPU usage exceeds 98 per



Set SysGauge to automatically restart your PC when your processor is overworked

cent, right-click CPU Usage in the Counter list, then click Edit Counter, Add, type **98**, tick Execute Action, then select Initiate System Restart from the dropdown menu (see screenshot).

To save all current measurements as a spreadsheet, PDF or text, click Monitor

then Save Report. You can even set it to export a report at intervals (say, every hour) and email it to you automatically (click Options, then Advanced).

### Also try: HardInfo

[www.snipca.com/24007](http://www.snipca.com/24007)

Lift the lid on your PC and Wi-Fi network with this detailed **benchmarking** tool. It now has an Operating System screen full of info you'd struggle to find in Windows, such as your Windows activation key and registry size.

### Don't use: Core Temp

Useful for taking the temperature of your processor, but it bundles a game called Goodgame Empire in its installer.

## BACKUP TOOLS



**Best program:**  
**Macrium Reflect Free**  
[www.macrium.com/reflectfree](http://www.macrium.com/reflectfree)

### Latest major version: 6.0

Have you a backup plan? We mean a copy of your software and data in case something happens to your PC - or you want to upgrade Windows or migrate to an **SSD**. Reflect makes this so easy. Use the step-by-step instructions to copy your entire system or certain partitions, then restore it from a drive, DVD or USB stick.

### Best hidden tools

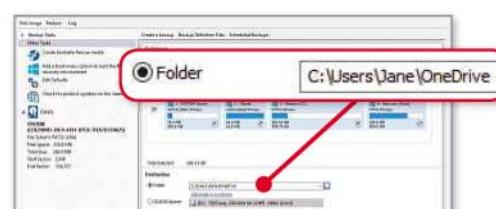
Reflect can compress your backups so they take up much less space (click

Advanced Options). Click 'Intelligent sector copy' to copy only data that Windows actually uses. There's a lovely 'Grandfather, Father, Son' schedule option that automatically saves different-sized backups daily, weekly and monthly. Click Backup, Backup Templates, then Differential Backup.

### Also try: CryptSync

[www.snipca.com/24012](http://www.snipca.com/24012)

Choose a pair (or pairs) of folders, then let this handy tool sync any changes you make in one folder to the backup folder - which it also encrypts. You can add a password for even stronger security.



Back up your whole system for peace of mind using Macrium Reflect Free

### Don't use: BurnAware

We like storing backups on physical media, and we love that BurnAware lets us choose exactly what to save to DVD - so it's infuriating that BurnAware now bundles McAfee's useless program WebAdvisor in its installer.

# TOOLS FOR FILES & FOLDERS



**Best program:**  
**TreeSize Free**  
[www.snipca.com/24008](http://www.snipca.com/24008)

## Latest major version: 4.0

Spot space-hogging files and quickly check the size and contents of any folder – as well as external drives and partitions – using this fascinating tool. Its new TreeMap option displays the contents of any selected drive in exact size order. Hover over any folder to check its location, and double-click it to launch its own map.

## Best hidden tools

Right-click a TreeMap then select ‘Show chart in 3D’ to give the map a burnished glow. More usefully, select ‘Show single

files’ (see screenshot) to see every file in your selected drive – all in size order and colour-coded according to format. It makes giant files very easy to spot, but it’s also hard to read. Click Chart Options, then drag the ‘Level of detail’ slider to make the map less cluttered. Alternatively, use your mouse wheel to zoom in and out.

## Also try: TeraCopy

<http://codesector.com/teracopy>

Windows is hopelessly slow at moving large numbers of files between drives, but TeraCopy can do it in seconds. Version 3.0 lets you move unlimited files for free – a feature you previously had to pay for – and can be set to delete files automatically once they’ve been copied.



Select ‘Show single files’ in TreeSize Free to see every file in a drive or folder

## Don't use: FreeFileSync

Handy for keeping folders organised and rooting out duplicates. Or would be, if it didn’t hide adware in its installer by disguising it as a licence agreement.

# MEDIA PLAYERS



**Best program: Kodi**  
<http://kodi.tv>

## Latest major version: 17.0 (Krypton)

Turn your PC into a smart TV, video recorder, music player, photo library and screen-sharing tool without paying a penny or breaking the law. Recent headlines about shop owners being hauled into court for selling set-top boxes



Set Kodi to shut down the display when it's been idle for half an hour

with Kodi pre-installed have given it a bad reputation, but Kodi is really just a more powerful version of Windows Media Center (WMC). It’s what you do with it that counts. And provided you don’t cram it with dodgy add-ons that let you watch paid-for TV for free, it’s legal and safe. For an in-depth guide to using Kodi, see our Cover Feature in Issue 498.

## Best hidden tools

Are you in the habit of falling asleep in front of the TV? Then set Kodi to shut down your display when it’s been idle for, say, half an hour. Click the settings cog, ‘System settings’, ‘Power saving’, then click ‘Put display to sleep when idle’.

If you share your computer with family and friends, set up separate password-protected profiles to ensure they can’t

access your content and activity. Go to ‘Profile settings’, then click ‘Add profile’. If you don’t want anyone using Kodi other than you, click ‘Interface settings’, then ‘Master lock’.

## Also try: VLC

[www.videolan.org/vlc](http://www.videolan.org/vlc)

VLC is nearly as powerful as Kodi but much less intimidating. It doesn’t devour your entire screen, for starters. Its proper old-fashioned menus include tools for making screen-recordings, adding subtitles to your videos and quickly converting between formats.

## Don't use: Freemake Video Converter

The good news: download online videos by pasting their URLs. The bad news: you risk PUPs including Yahoo and Wajam.

# PHOTO SOFTWARE



**Best program:**  
**FastStone Image Viewer**  
[www.faststone.org](http://www.faststone.org)

## Latest major version: 6.0

This wonderful program is just 15MB in size but has all the photo-editing and management tools you need. You can adjust, retouch, resize, rename and convert your photos, add and edit their **metadata**, and turn them into slideshows.

## Best hidden tools

Want to use your photo in a greetings card or poster? Right-click its thumbnail then

click Print, ‘Design and Print’ (or press Alt+P). In the window that opens, you can add text, borders and speech bubbles (see screenshot). The Freehand Region option lets you ‘draw’ any shape with your mouse to save that area to your clipboard.

## Also try: Gimp

[www.gimp.org](http://www.gimp.org)

Open-source graphics suite Gimp is the closest free equivalent to Photoshop, but is large (up to 300MB). Forthcoming Gimp 2.10 adds powerful warp transform tools and complete colour management.



Press Alt+P to customise your photo using FastStone’s ‘Design and Print’ tool

## Don't use: Fotor

Only works online with no offline mode. It doesn’t let you print your creations unless you download them to your PC then use another program to open them.

## GREAT PROGRAMS IN A CATEGORY OF THEIR OWN



### Google Earth Pro

[www.snipca.com/24017](http://www.snipca.com/24017)

Google's virtual globe used to cost \$399 (£265), then suddenly went free two years ago – which must have stung if you'd bought it a few weeks earlier. Now we can all fly through cities, forests, oceans and even around Mars in stunning 3D for nothing. The program is no longer updated but still supported, so it's safe to install on Windows 7 and above.

#### Hidden tool

Press Ctrl+Alt+A to launch the built-in Flight Simulator. Choose your plane and real-life airport (we like Kathmandu, for the Himalayas – see screenshot right), then pilot the plane using your keyboard and mouse (for more info go to [www.snipca.com/24021](http://www.snipca.com/24021)).



### Ultimate Settings Panel

[www.snipca.com/24020](http://www.snipca.com/24020)

In Windows XP, the Control Panel felt like a friend. In Windows 10, it feels like an afterthought. Microsoft now scatters settings all over the place, leaving you to use the search box. But what if you don't know what to search for? Ultimate Settings Panel puts all your settings back in one place.

#### Hidden tool

Click the Windows 10 tab, then Magnifier.



Fly a virtual plane over the Himalayas with Google Earth Pro's Flight Simulator

In the dock that opens, click '+', View, then Lens. This gives you a virtual magnifying glass for moving over text to make it easier to read.



### Calibre

[www.calibre-ebook.com](http://www.calibre-ebook.com)

Not everyone wants to use a Kindle for their ebooks – or get their ebooks from Amazon. If you want choice and control, use Calibre instead. This open-source tool is a viewer, downloader, manager, editor and converter all in one.

#### Hidden tool

Calibre incorporates a browser for Project Gutenberg – the ongoing effort to digitise everything that's ever been written. Click

the little arrow next to 'Get books', click Stores, then Project Gutenberg.



### PortableApps

<http://portableapps.com>

This small, open-source tool hosts more than 300 portable 'app' versions of popular portable programs, including GnuCash, Skype and Stellarium. Tick as many as you want, and they'll be download to a **virtual drive** on your PC.

#### Hidden tool

PortableApps now lets you back up your downloaded apps and their settings to a **ZIP file**. Click its system-tray icon, then Backup.

## 5 PAID-FOR TRIALS WORTH SIGNING UP FOR

The best things in life are free... for a few weeks at least. As much as we love free software we know the most powerful programs often have a price tag. The trick is not just to know which ones are worth paying for, but to know which ones you can try for free – without ever having to enter your payment details.



### Desktop tool

#### Fences

[www.snipca.com/24027](http://www.snipca.com/24027)

#### Free trial: 30 days

Fences tidies your messy desktop with the speed and panache of Mary Poppins. It sorts your shortcuts and other clutter into groups, automatically and instantly – and it's a joy to behold. There's no free version, but you can save \$9.99 (£8) by using the free trial – for a month, anyway. Clicking 'Try it Free' redirects you to a download **mirror site**, but the installer



Bring instant order to your messy desktop with Fences

has no junk. You'll need to confirm your email address during setup, but there's no registration and no request for a payment card number. You won't get a bill after 30 days, and Fences won't disappear from your PC – it'll simply stop working.



### File manager

#### Xplorer2 Ultimate

<http://zabkat.com>

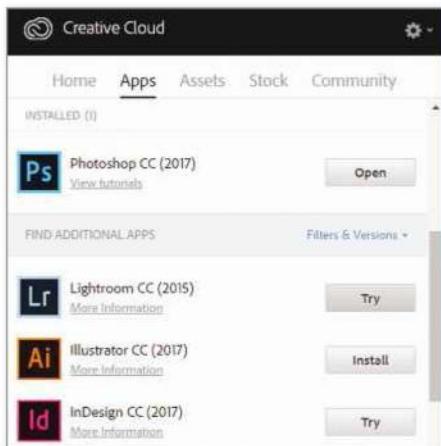
#### Free trial: 21 days

Xplorer2 is to Windows Explorer what a Ferrari is to a milk float. It can find duplicates, sync folders, calculate statistics, archive content and much more – all in a highly customisable tabbed window. Click 'Download Free 21 day trial', then Ultimate to get the installer. No commitment or registration needed. A full licence costs \$49.95 (£40); the Professional version is \$29.95 (£24). ▶

## Photo & video software Adobe Creative Cloud [www.snipca.com/24023](http://www.snipca.com/24023)

**Free trial: 7 days**

Get Photoshop, Lightroom, Premiere Pro and many more superb Adobe tools completely free – but only for a week apiece. Click ‘Start your free trial’ to install the Creative Cloud launcher. You’ll need to create a free Adobe ID, but you won’t have to provide payment details. Run the launcher, then click Apps to browse the programs. Click Try to install trial versions, and Install to get free tools



**Get Photoshop, Lightroom and other Adobe tools free – but only for a week**



### Manage multiple email accounts using Postbox and never lose track of attachments

such as Adobe Bridge (see screenshot below). As with Fences, the trials will stop working when their time is up.

## Email client Postbox [www.snipca.com/24030](http://www.snipca.com/24030)

**Free trial: 30 days**

Manage multiple email accounts and download attachments automatically using this fast email client. Scroll down and click ‘Try Postbox for free’, then enter your email address. Click the Windows link in the ‘Welcome to Postbox’ email (see screenshot above) to get the installer. We could barely boil the kettle in the time it took Postbox to import our entire (huge) Gmail inbox.



### Remove multiple unwanted programs in one go using Revo Uninstaller Pro

If you decide you can’t live without this program, a lifetime licence costs \$40 (£32).

## Uninstaller Revo Uninstaller Pro [www.snipca.com/24026](http://www.snipca.com/24026)

**Free trial: 30 days**

Many of the free programs we’ve mentioned here have more powerful paid-for versions, and Revo is a prime example. Pro adds a Quick Uninstall option (see screenshot above) that removes multiple programs at once then deletes their leftovers. It also has Force Uninstall, spreadsheet export and registry backup. Click Download Free Trial to get the installer. No registration or payment details are required.

## WHERE TO GET FREE SOFTWARE (AND WHERE NOT TO)

### Use download mirror sites as a last resort

‘Freeware’ listings sites such as Tucows and Cnet’s Download.com (see screenshot below) may aspire to be like the reviews pages of a newspaper, but they have more in common with the dodgy small ads at the back. These mirror sites aren’t just out to inform and entertain – they’re also out to make money. And they do this by bundling adware in many of their installers.

Use these sites to discover new programs, by all means, but don’t download from them unless it’s the *only* place a program is available. Don’t

even think about clicking anything on a download mirror site without using an advert-blocker such as Adblock Plus (<https://adblockplus.org>), which dramatically cuts the risk of clicking a fake Download button.

### Download from developers – with care

The behaviour of download mirrors hasn’t gone unnoticed by the people who actually make the programs. Some even warn their users. “Do NOT download Attribute Changer from CNET/Download.com” pleads the maker of free file-management tool Attribute Changer ([www.snipca.com/24038](http://www.snipca.com/24038)).

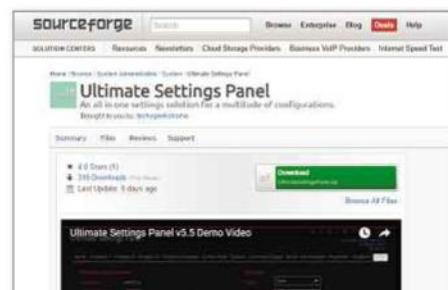
But while we recommend downloading from the developer’s site whenever possible, stay on your guard. Developers play tricks too. Some use installers to push their more shoddy products. Microsoft bundles Bing with Skype, for example, and IObit bundles Advanced SystemCare with IObit Uninstaller. Others bundle third-party products for money. Adobe – not a company short of cash – bundles McAfee and Intel junk

with Acrobat Reader. Always be cautious when running an installer, and use Unchecky to spot and stop PUPs.

### Find open-source programs

Open-source software host SourceForge (<https://sourceforge.net>) is a great place to find new and interesting free tools, and even download their code. Many open-source programs (such as CryptSync and Ultimate Settings Panel, see screenshot below) are only available via SourceForge – often because the developers don’t have their own websites.

But SourceForge isn’t junk-free. In 2015, it was exposed for bundling adware with



SourceForge gives developers a place to host open-source tools like Ultimate Settings Panel



**Look but don't download from mirror sites like Cnet's Download.com**

Gimp. Gimp's developer Jernej Simončič was furious (read the angry emails here: [www.snipca.com/24042](http://www.snipca.com/24042)). SourceForge ditched the offending installer and promised it would never use pre-ticked PUPs in future (so unticked junk is still OK, then?)

If you want to get open-source software with a no-junk guarantee, use FossHub ([www.fosshub.com](http://www.fosshub.com)). It can't match the number of programs and community spirit of SourceForge, but it makes browsing and downloading software very easy. You'll never find adware in a FossHub installer, or even an advert on the website.

## Install multiple free programs at once

Free web tool Ninite (<https://ninite.com>) lets you install and update multiple programs in one go, by packing them in a single junk-free installer. The 60-odd programs available include some we've mentioned in this feature, plus big names like iTunes, Dropbox and TeamViewer – as well as a few junk offenders such as Skype, Glary Utilities and AVG. To get them without junk, tick as many as you want, click Get My Ninite and then save and run the EXE file. It's very quick and guaranteed adware-free.

We've created a special Ninite installer that contains a selection of programs covered in this feature. To download it, go to [www.snipca.com/24043](http://www.snipca.com/24043).

## DEVELOPERS MAKING WINDOWS BETTER

**These four independent developers just can't stop churning out great, free Windows-tweaking software – upsetting Microsoft in the process...**

### NIRSOFT

[www.nirsoft.net](http://www.nirsoft.net)

Free, portable tools – mostly to do with security and Wi-Fi – and all the work of one man, Nir Sofer. Recent favourites include WirelessNetworkWatcher (see screenshot), which reveals who's connected to your Wi-Fi, and BrowserAddonsView, which finds all extensions and plug-ins on your PC.

### NirSoft



### THE WINDOWS CLUB

[www.snipca.com/24049](http://www.snipca.com/24049)

Browse the list of small, free tools for fixing Windows annoyances, including 10AppsManager, Ultimate Windows Tweaker and AltPlusTab. The Windows Club – no relation to Microsoft – also publishes free ebooks.

### PHROZEN

[www.phrozensoft.com](http://www.phrozensoft.com)

Small but growing collection of privacy tools including Winja – which automatically uploads suspicious files to security site VirusTotal – and Who Stalks My Cam, to root out webcam hackers. Click Freeware then scroll down for Download links.

### SORDUM

[www.sordum.org](http://www.sordum.org)

Free, portable system tools. Recent releases include DNS Jumper, for quickly switching your **DNS server**; and PowerRun, which lets you run software with privileges higher than administrator.

### Why does Windows block these?

Windows 10's SmartScreen feature is supposed to keep you safe, but it's often far too quick to block portable system tools, especially new ones made by independent developers. If it blocks a program you're sure is safe, first check the EXE file with online safety database VirusTotal (<https://virustotal.com>). If it gets a zero or very low 'Detection ratio', it's probably safe. You can override SmartScreen by clicking 'More info', then 'Run anyway'.

## WHAT SOFTWARE WILL YOU BE USING IN 2036?

The only certainty about tech predictions is that they'll be wrong. By now you were meant to have an android bringing you breakfast in bed, not an Android as your alarm clock. Teenagers were meant to be zooming around on hoverboards (see Michael J Fox in *Back to the Future*), but instead they're taking selfies. Futurology is a mug's game – but that's never stopped us before so let's give it a whirl.

A few clear trends emerge from the last

19 years. First, democracy. In the 1990s' world of tech, a handful of big names dominated. Microsoft, Apple, Netscape and Adobe made the programs, and you paid for them. Imagine a world where a browser cost more than a train ticket. That world was 1998.

Now, a generation of fearless coders using open-source technology is about to deliver a free-software baby boom. Those selfie-snapping teenagers can create programs and apps as easily as

the generation before made mixtapes on cassettes – and they will not be bullied by the likes of Microsoft.

We don't think PC programs are on the way out, despite the continued rise of online tools. Installers will disappear, though. In their place we'll have a huge choice of portable programs that integrate with the web and may even work on multiple platforms. The future of software is bright – and free. And we'll continue to recommend the best programs.

**NEXT ISSUE** On sale Wednesday 10 May

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## Windows 10 Creators Update

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# How computing has changed since 1998 in your words...



On Thursday 26 February 1998 a new magazine launched with the aim of making computing accessible to everyone. Five hundred issues later, you tell us how computers have changed your life in the 19 years since

**R**eading Issue 1 recently, I was struck by how computing progresses at two distinct speeds. There's rapid change in the devices we use and their capabilities. In that first issue, for example, we wrote about palmtop computers, pagers and MiniDisc players – not tablets, smartphones and music streaming.

But on a deeper level there are timeless issues that don't change with the advance of technology. For evidence of this, take a look at our first cover (pictured above), which promised ways to beat computer rage. I'd like to think we've helped keep your PC-related outbursts at bay over the past 19 years, offering new fixes, tips and advice every fortnight.

Another thing that hasn't changed is your enthusiasm for getting in touch to discuss computing (although we get more emails now than letters!). I want to thank everyone who sent me their thoughts on what's changed since 1998. I just wish we had enough room to include them all.

**Daniel Booth, Editor**

## What computer did you use in 1998?

We had moved on from my first DOS-based PC to a desktop PC for my husband (and the rest of the household), and a laptop for me. The family PC was a Northwood Aurora Powermedia M, which had an Intel 200MHz Pentium processor with 32MB memory, and a 4.1GB hard drive. We chose a 15in monitor, a parallel port adapter, and the Corel bundle of WordPerfect 8, WebMaster suite, and Print & Photo House. This all set us back an eye-watering £2,356!



Rev Pam Crane

**“I was scared stiff of computers when I started, but now I’m the in-house techie, solving problems our friends have”**

## How have your computing skills improved?

I was scared stiff when I started, but by 1998 I had developed a lot more confidence, and now I'm the in-house techie, solving quite a lot of the technical problems we or our friends encounter. I have to say that without *Computeractive* I wouldn't have been able to do it. Thanks!

## GOOGLE? WHAT'S THAT?

10 things that weren't mentioned in Issue 1

- |              |                |
|--------------|----------------|
| 1 Android    | 6 TV streaming |
| 2 Broadband  | 7 Twitter      |
| 3 Facebook   | 8 Wi-Fi        |
| 4 iPad       | 9 YouTube      |
| 5 Smartphone | 10 Google      |

## What's been the best innovation since then?

The evolving USB. It fits everything, and you can take not only files, but entire archives of files and programs with you wherever you go.

## What program have you used most?

Hard to say, because as a creative writer and cottage publisher I have always used my much-loved WordPerfect, the excellent Microsoft Publisher and Adobe Photoshop Elements.

## What's been the most overrated tech?

The recently burgeoning Internet of Things. It is making us lazy, and it's horribly insecure. Who wants their fridge hacked and bank details stolen?

## MEANWHILE, 29 YEARS BEFORE ISSUE 1...

In 1969 I worked for a graphic arts company who had just had a new computer system installed. They employed artists to draw pictures and design the layout of the page, and my job was to use the computer to set up and type the words around the pictures and follow the layout. The machine was large and bulky, but very accurate, and was a pleasure to work with.

However, the printing machine was a different story. This had to be warmed up, but the printed matter had to be soaked in a water substance to seal the print, particularly if it was intended for machinery.

I found it all very interesting and enclose a photograph that might give *Computeractive* a laugh!

Audrey Turner



### What PC were you using in 1998?

An Omega PC (part of the now-defunct Time Computers). It had a Cyrix 166+ processor (actual speed was 133MHz), 32MB of RAM, a 2.1GB hard drive, and a 28k internal modem.



Hugh Marshall

### What's been the best tech innovation since 1998?

It has to be **virtualisation**. The elasticity, where you can quickly assign or remove resources as needed, has proven to be a major benefit for businesses and home-based computer users.

### What program have you used most since 1998?

Microsoft Word. I started off on version 2 aged seven, and passed the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL) when I was 14 with Word 2000.

### What PC did you use in 1998?

I used a Sinclair QL, which had 128KB of memory. Initially I used a portable TV as a monitor, and before long, bought a dot-matrix printer. Then I got a proper monitor and expanded the memory with a plug-in card to 720KB. A friend of mine built a PC and used Windows 98. He urged me to do the same, which I did, and eventually I moved to Windows XP.



Roy Smalley

### What's been the best tech innovation?

The internet and in particular search engines.

### How have your computing skills improved?

As I was only 10 in 1998, my PC skills were basic but better than fellow classmates. Since then I've been inspired by *Computeractive* to see the full potential of what PCs could do. I even won your 'Tip of the Fortnight' in September 2006. I pursued a degree in Computer Systems Technology, passed with first-class honours, and now work in cloud computing.

### What's been the most overrated tech?

Two pieces of technology spring to mind: 3D TV and plasma TV. The fact that Samsung have omitted 3D support in their flagship TV models and 4K Blu-ray players leaves me to believe that it'll go the same way as DVD-Audio and Betamax. As for plasma TV, it was nice to have a larger-than-life screen in your front room, but this came at the cost of **screen burn**, wasted heat and high energy bills.

### What program have you used most?

Probably Microsoft Word.

### How have your computing skills improved?

My skills developed from zero when I first bought the QL to my present level, where I might describe myself as a reasonably competent amateur.

### What's been the most overrated tech?

Not so much overrated, but the biggest waste of time and money has been hacking and scamming. It may not be a waste of money for scammers, but users spend an unbelievable amount of time and money combating threats, restoring things to normal after an attack.

### What computer did you use in 1998?

I started the year with a Packard Bell Pentium 100 PC, and ended it with a home-built PC using components bought from a mail order company. It used an AMD K6-2 processor running at 300MHz, had 32MB RAM, and a 2.1GB hard drive running Windows 98. Both PCs were used with a 15in Packard Bell monitor.



Craig Nock

### What's been the best tech innovation since?

Easy - the tablet, all kickstarted by Apple's iPad. The obvious answer is the smartphone, but these were available in 1998, albeit very primitive models. I used the Nokia communicator, which let you email and browse the web.

### What program have you used most?

It has to be Microsoft Word. I produce and edit documents several times a day.

### How have your computing skills improved?

I started working in IT when I left the RAF in 1996. By 1998, I was proficient enough to build PCs from components and troubleshoot most issues. I learned a lot from magazines such as *Computeractive*, but also taught myself throughout the early stages of my IT career. I'm now director for a national IT company.

### What's been the most overrated tech?

A few spring to mind: HD-DVD, 3D TV, Windows Phone and Windows Vista. But it has to be Google Glass. Too expensive, unnecessary, gimmicky and ugly. It was never going to catch on.



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## How computing has changed since 1998

### What computer did you use in 1998?

In 1996 I 'signed up' to the internet on a Dell PC I was using at the time. It probably had something like 1MB of storage. I had a CompuServe account with a long email address. CompuServe had 'chat areas' where you could go to chat with people. I went into one and met someone online who could type as fast as I could, which impressed me! We used to meet in a private area once a week and chat using expensive dial-up! The upshot of our meeting was the wedding cake you



Josie Kinchin



### What computer did you use in 1998?

I purchased my first PC in 1993 for \$1,930, and was still using it in 1998, albeit with some upgrades. It had an Intel 486DX2-66 processor with 8MB RAM and a 212MB hard drive.



Paul O'Brien

### What's been the best tech innovation?

The smartphone or 'pocket oracle' as I call it. To be able to talk to Android and get instant answers is quite amazing.

### What program have you used most since 1998?

1. Microsoft Word 2. Adobe PageMaker 6.5.

### How have your computing skills improved?

My PC skills in 1998 were quite good as I'd been trained on computers in 1987 for work. I still remember some of the DOS commands and configurations.

### What's been the most overrated tech?

I used to think that Facebook was a big waste of time, but I've been able to use it for setting up groups for friends and family.

can see pictured (below left) from 1998. John and I are still happily married.

### What's been the best tech innovation?

The internet and the ability to connect worldwide. Back then there was no way (that I knew about) of scanning and uploading photographs, so John and I exchanged real photos by airmail.

### What program have you used most?

MS Office, particularly Word. Indeed I have documents on my current PC that I created in 1998 while living in Israel.

### How have your computing skills improved?

When I was teaching, I joined the IT team and in my last year, cut my actual teaching hours and became first-line support, spending more time under a desk than sitting at one. Since retiring, I have increased my skill level and am often called upon by relatives and friends to fix their PC problems.

### What computer did you use in 1998?

I got my first PC aged eight in 1998. My parents had no idea what a PC was but a neighbour had given me a brief tour and mentioned it to my parents. I picked it up fast and asked them to get me one. It was a Packard Bell Club, with a Cyrix MII 300 processor, 32MB RAM and a 2GB hard drive, running Windows 98. That machine lasted me nearly five years and was a fantastic start. It got me through school and into a career where my computer skills really helped me.



Martin Gallagher

### What's been the best innovation?

The development of broadband internet and SSDs.

### What program have you used most?

Other than Internet Explorer, I would say Winamp ([www.winamp.com](http://www.winamp.com)), which is still my main MP3 player. I'm a bit old school and like my music all organised manually in folders rather than in a library. Winamp has always been a nice, lightweight program,

### 10 COMPANIES IN ISSUE 1 THAT NO LONGER EXIST

- 1 Byte Superstore**  
(bought by PC World in 1998)
- 2 Dan Technology**  
(bought by OE Group in 2002)
- 3 EveshamVale** (went bust in 2008)
- 4 Gateway 2000**  
(bought by Acer in 2007)
- 5 Gremlin Interactive**  
(bought by Infogrames in 1999)
- 6 LineOne** (bought by Tiscali in 2001)
- 7 Roldec Systems** (went bust in 1999)
- 8 Time Computers**  
(went bust in 2005)
- 9 Tiny Computers**  
(bought by Time in 2002)
- 10 Xircom** (bought by Intel in 2001)

### What's been the most overrated tech?

Nothing really, because whatever has been invented has been a stepping stone to the next rung on the tech ladder.

**“For the first two years of owning a PC I had no internet connection”**

running just as well on that old Cyrix MII 300 PC as it does on my current PC.

### How have your computing skills improved?

My skills back then were 100-per-cent novice. For the first two years of owning a PC I had no internet connection, so I soon knew every setting and option in Windows 98. The next few years were spent dealing with the problems a web-connected machine could bring. My parents couldn't help, so I just had to work it out for myself, soon becoming the go-to guy for everyone's issues. I chose a career down a different path, but it's let me enjoy computing as my main hobby ever since.

### What's been the most overrated tech?

The SLI/CrossFire gaming graphics cards. I do a bit of gaming, but it's the only computing advance that I've never taken advantage of.

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# Problems Solved

## PROBLEM OF THE FORTNIGHT

### Can I keep my Orange email address?

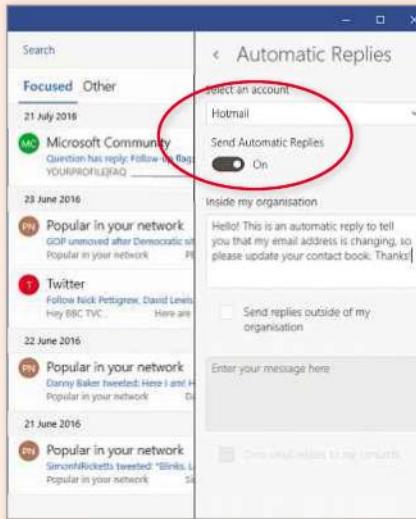
**Q** When I was an Orange customer years ago, I set up an email address ending in orange.net – and that's been my main contact point ever since. Last week I got an email purportedly from EE saying that my email address will stop working at the end of May this year. At first I thought it might be spam but Googling around it seems to be real, and EE has taken over Orange. I absolutely do not want to switch because everyone I know contacts me at the orange.net address. Is there any way to keep it? I don't mind paying. If not, what should I do? And what will happen if people email my old address? I also have a really old Hotmail address people sometimes email me on. Is this at risk also? I use Mail in Windows 10, incidentally.

Debbie Collier

**A** Unfortunately, this email from EE is legitimate and your orange.net email account will be permanently disabled on 31 May. Orange became part of EE years ago, and has for a long while been a 'legacy' brand and service.

We're sure that if you found a few million quid down the back of the sofa and offered it to EE, then the company might find a way to keep your Orange email address working. Back in the real world, however, the firm has committed to shutting down a number of its legacy domains. For the benefit of other readers who might be affected, these include orangehome.co.uk, wanadoo.co.uk, freeserve.co.uk, fbsusiness.co.uk, fslife.co.uk, fsmail.net, fsworld.co.uk and fsnet.co.uk. If you have an email address with any of these domains you should read EE's statement and guide: [www.snipca.com/23914](http://www.snipca.com/23914).

People emailing your orange.net address from June will in return receive a failure message, so you need to act fast: let everyone in your contact book



Tell your contacts about an address change via Windows 10 Mail's Automatic Replies

know your alternative address. You might also want to set up a new account. EE itself recommends Gmail ([www.gmail.com](http://www.gmail.com)) – and we can't argue with that for those needing an alternative. To import emails from an existing account, click the Gmail Settings cog followed by Settings then 'Import mail and contacts', and follow the prompts. This will work for your Orange account until 31 May.

However, in your particular case you already have a Hotmail account so it's not imperative that you set up a new email account. Microsoft owns the hotmail.com domain, and it is likely to be killed off eventually – and the company long ago changed the name of the web version to Outlook.com.

As you also have a Hotmail account active and set up in Windows 10 Mail you could even set up an automatic message to tell people your alternative email address. In Mail, click the Hotmail account on the left, then click the Settings cog followed by Automatic Replies. Flip the Send Automatic Replies switch to On (see screenshot), and then type a suitable message into the pane below.

### Is my AOL desktop infected?

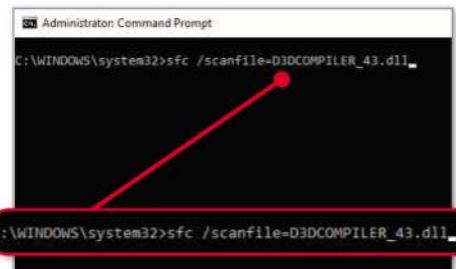
**Q** I have a Windows 7 PC, and get emails through AOL Desktop. Recently, when launching AOL Desktop, I get a message that tells me that D3DCOMPILER\_43.dll is missing. When I click OK the message disappears and AOL Desktop appears. I get this message with no other program. I tried Googling it but got confused. What's causing this? Is my PC infected? Do I have to pay to reinstall? Should I just continue to press OK?

Tom Marshall

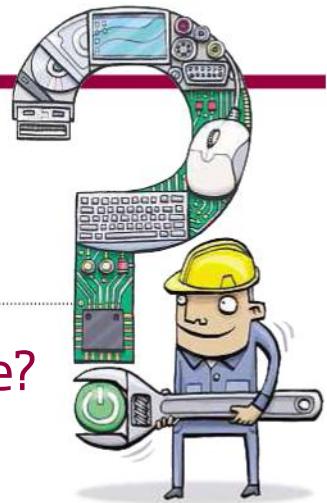
**A** The file mentioned in the error message is related to Microsoft's DirectX 11 graphics framework. This is a part of Windows that helps the operating system deliver multimedia content, such as video and games. The file in question is most likely corrupted rather than actually missing, even though the error message tells you it's missing. Not all programs call on all parts of DirectX, and this particular component deals only with 3D graphics. If you don't play 3D games, you won't normally see the error.

Your version of AOL Desktop might ordinarily play a 3D animation, for example. It calls on D3DCOMPILER\_43.dll, and then fails, but is able to continue because the file is not critical to the rest of the program.

You can fix it by instructing Windows to repair the file. To do that, click Start, type cmd and then right-click cmd (or Command Prompt) and choose 'Run as administrator'. Now type sfc /scantfile=D3DCOMPILER\_43.dll (see screenshot) and press Enter. Close the window and then restart your PC.



Use Command Prompt to tell Microsoft to repair faulty 3D graphics files



Our experts solve all your tech problems

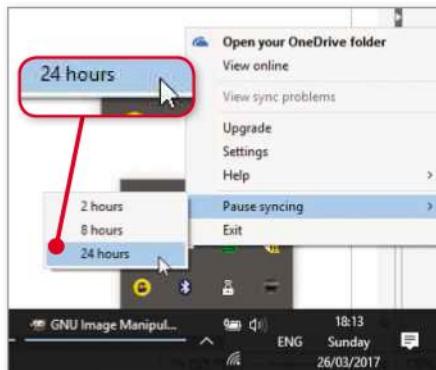
✉ Email us your problem and we'll try to help: [noproblem@computeractive.co.uk](mailto:noproblem@computeractive.co.uk)

## Why does Windows want me to stop OneDrive?

**Q** For the last few weeks I keep seeing a message that says, 'This PC is on a metered network. Pause OneDrive to reduce network charges.' I have no idea why. I've been with BT for many years and, on the whole, I'm happy with the service. Is this a new charge from Microsoft, or something to do with BT?

John Canning

**A** It's not a charge from anyone. Rather, it's a warning that Windows believes you're using what's known as a metered internet connection. This typically means that your computer is *tethering* via a 3G or 4G mobile phone, where data is typically charged by the megabyte or gigabyte. Alternatively, a traditional, landline-based broadband package with capped usage could count as metered. As OneDrive is always uploading and downloading content it uses a lot of data, so it's sensible to disable it on a metered connection – to



To avoid the 'metered network' warning, pause OneDrive syncing

avoid using up your data allowance.

As you're with BT we're pretty confident that you have a traditional broadband package. But we think that at some point recently you've used a hidden Windows 10 feature that halts the download and installation of Windows 10 updates – and that's the 'Set metered connection switch'. It's easy to enable, but also just as easy to forget that you've done so. The recent appearance of the

OneDrive message supports our theory, because it's exactly what would happen when the switch is in the On position.

There's nothing to worry about and, assuming you're PC isn't connected via a 3G/4G mobile phone or on a capped broadband package, keeping OneDrive active won't see you racking up any unexpected charges – so feel free to ignore the message.

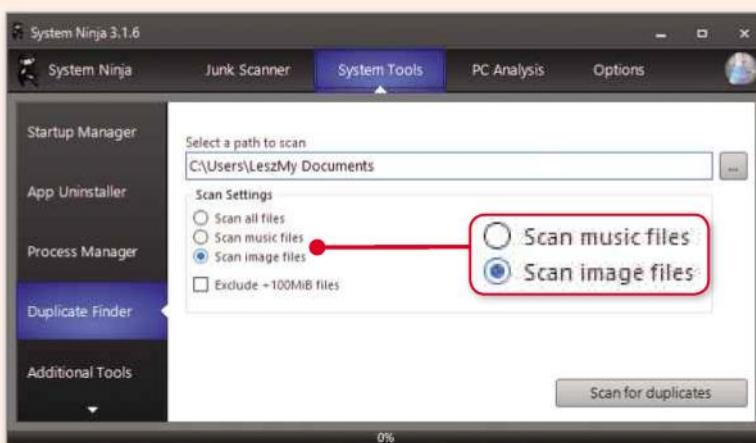
If it bothers you, you'll either need to pause OneDrive or tell Windows you're not on a metered connection. To do the former, right-click the OneDrive icon in your notification area, then point to Pause Syncing and choose a duration (see screenshot). For the latter, click Start followed by the Settings cogs, then click 'Network & Internet' followed by Wi-Fi, and then your router's name (at the top). In the 'Metered connection' section, click to switch 'Set as metered connection' to Off.

## How do I know which duplicates to delete?

**Q** I tried System Ninja's new Duplicate Finder option ([www.snipca.com/23986](http://www.snipca.com/23986)). Not knowing if the 9,000 files it flagged were really all 'dups', I contacted System Ninja support, who told me in no uncertain terms that I shouldn't use Duplicate Finder unless I knew what I was doing! Is that advice right? Would thousands of dupes be correct? What's safe to delete and what's not? Also, is there a quick method of deleting duplicate files, as Control (Ctrl)+A doesn't select all.

Les Marshall

**A** System Ninja's advice is very sensible: it would be foolhardy to delete duplicate files unless you're sure they're safe to be removed.



You can refine your search for 'dups' in System Ninja

Thousands of dupes on one PC would not be unusual, as many **temporary files** are created with the same or similar names. There's no easy way to tell you which of the thousands of files are safe and which aren't, so if unsure, leave well alone.

However, what you could do is use the available options to narrow the search to folders containing duplicates you know would be safe to delete. After selecting the 'Find matching files globally'

setting and clicking Next, you have the option to select a particular folder (such as My Documents), or to scan only for music or image files, for example (see screenshot).

Finally, you're right that Ctrl+A doesn't work in Duplicate Finder, but Shift will. So, to select a bunch of files, click the first then hold down Shift and click the second: everything in between will be selected.

# Problems Solved

## How do I view my wrist scans?

**Q** I recently had an MRT scan on my wrist. The clinic gave me a CD with the various images burned on to it. I tried to open these images on my Windows 10 PC, but a box appears that states 'Class Not Registered'. None of my usual image programs, such as Paint and Windows Photo Viewer, will open these images. The files on the CD all end in .dcm. Do you know what these are? Is there a free and safe way to open them?

Roy Murray



MicroDICOM is a free program that lets you view medical scans in .dcm format

**A** Yes, these are Digital Imaging and Communications in Medicine files, otherwise known as DICOM (hence the .dcm file extension). The format exists for the purposes of medical imaging, as you're familiar with.

If you want merely to view .dcm files then MicroDICOM is a great free program that'll let you do just that – download it from [www.snipca.com/23920](http://www.snipca.com/23920). Once installed, just double-click a .dcm file to view it in MicroDICOM (see screenshot).

MicroDICOM does have a few options for enhancing image quality (check the Filters menu), but if you want full-on editing capabilities then the GNU Image Manipulation Program (GIMP) is also compatible with .dcm files. It, too, is a free download – get it from [www.gimp.org](http://www.gimp.org).

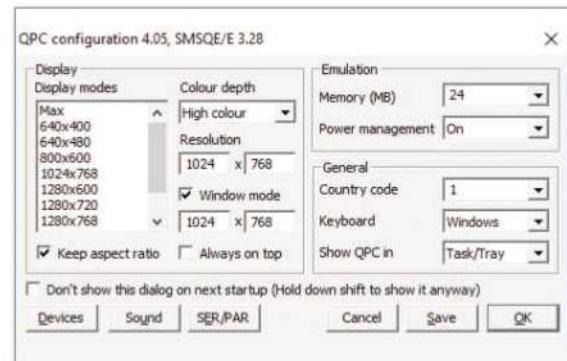
## Can I translate my QL disks on a PC?

**Q** I used to have a Sinclair QL computer, with a 3.5in floppy drive as an accessory. I retain some family tree data on a bunch of 3.5in disks. My PC drive recognises the disks but I don't know how to read the data. Do I need an emulator to translate the QL format to Windows? Is there such a program? Who knows – there might be someone else out there with a similar problem!

Roy Smalley

**A** We could easily spend several pages exploring all the relevant factors but here's a potted version.

Being able to read the disks might eliminate the need for an emulator. If you had the good fortune to have saved your QL family tree data in the ancient but still popular Genealogical Data Communication (GEDCOM) format then you'd be able to view the files in any compatible genealogy tool or service. Family Tree Builder 8.0 is free for personal use, and will import .ged



QPC2 is a free emulator that enables a PC to translate floppy-disk data used on an old Sinclair QL computer

(GEDCOM) files – [www.snipca.com/23922](http://www.snipca.com/23922). Just choose Import GEDCOM from the file menu, and follow the prompts. GEDCOM has been around for over 30 years (and therefore during the QL's era), so it's entirely possible this will be all you need to do.

Otherwise, you'll need a QL emulator. QPC2 is a free one that works with all recent versions of Windows (see screenshot), so download it from [www.snipca.com/23921](http://www.snipca.com/23921). You'll then need to load the QL program used to create the family tree, and use its Export option to save as GEDCOM. Then proceed as above.

## Where can I find the BBC Red Button to watch sport on my iPad?

**Q** I watch a lot of sport on Sky and the BBC. When watching on BBC channels sometimes the screen says to press the red button. Doing this lets me carry on watching when coverage is about to end on the normal channel, or to see some non-tevised

events and matches. I've just got my first iPad on to which I've installed the BBC iPlayer app. I can view live TV but I have no idea how to get these 'red button' channels. Can you help?

Greg Pettit



There is a separate BBC Sport app to watch the Beeb's live sports coverage on an iPad

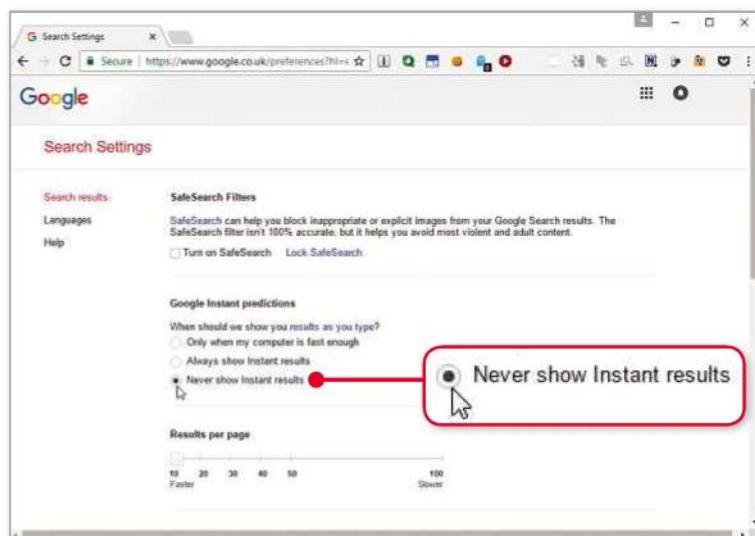
**A** The BBC calls this the Red Button service. On TVs and set-top boxes its services include extra coverage, as you know, and Ceefax-style pages. Neither of these are currently available in the BBC iPlayer app. However, the live sport available via the Red Button is also accessible in the separate BBC Sport app ([www.snipca.com/23923](http://www.snipca.com/23923)). Once installed, tap the menu button (three horizontal lines, top right) followed by Live Guide (see screenshot).

# Why does my Google search jump to the top?

**Q** I use Google to search the web in Chrome. When I start typing in the search box in the middle of the page, the cursor jumps straight to the top Google search bar. This is not a new problem. I have searched through Settings, and tried a different browser but the problem is the same. I'll be honest and say that I don't know if there is a difference between Google and Chrome, but either way this is very annoying. I just want to search using the middle box.

David Phillip

**A** Because you're uncertain, we'll start by saying that Google is the name of the company. Among Google's many products are Search (the search system) and Chrome, which is its web browser. So Chrome isn't Google, but Google does make Chrome. However,



You can switch away from Google Instant – and the top search bar – in Search Settings

Chrome's default home page is Google Search so, unless it's changed, the first thing you see when you fire up Chrome is the Google Search box in the middle of the page.

The cause of your problem is that you have enabled a feature called Google Instant. This displays search results 'live', as you type, and in order to do this it

needs to shift your typing to the browser's top bar. This feature is governed by the settings in your Google account, not in Chrome or any other web browser – which is why you're suffering the same in a different browser.

To fix it, visit [www.google.com/preferences](http://www.google.com/preferences), choose 'Never show Instant results', then click Save (see screenshot).

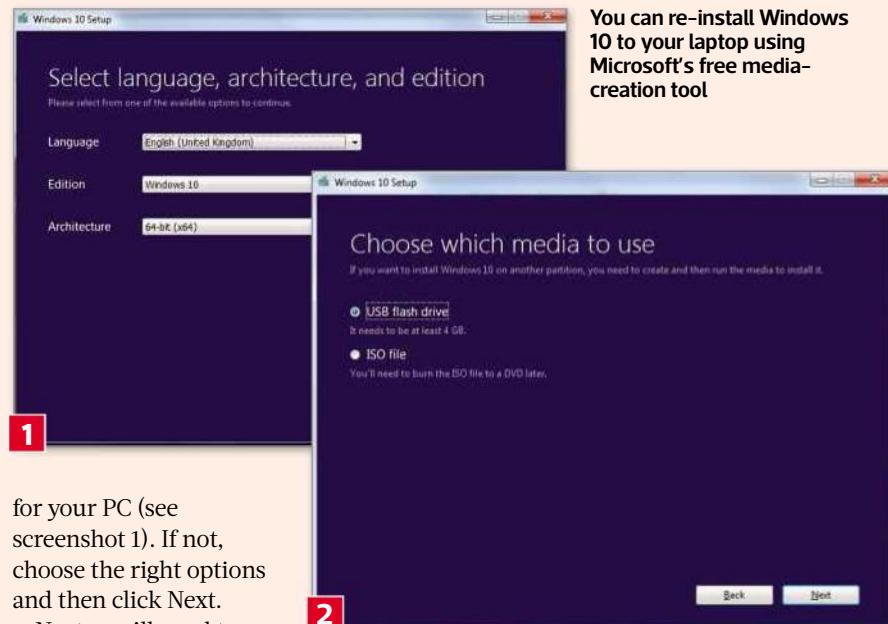
## How do I get back to Windows 10 after a factory reset?

**Q** I upgraded my Acer 5552 laptop from Windows 7 to 10 soon after the free upgrade became available. However, the sluggishness that the laptop suffered under Windows 7 soon reappeared with Windows 10, until eventually it died and would not boot. Without thinking of the consequences I did a **factory reset** and went back to Windows 7. Having obtained Windows 10 quite legally and become used to it, I wonder whether there is any way of recovering it without having to buy a new copy? I do have the 20-digit product key.

Trevor Dowling

**A** Yes, you can do this using Microsoft's media-creation tool, which is a free download from [www.snipca.com/23924](http://www.snipca.com/23924). Click the 'Download tool now' button, then double-click the downloaded file.

Click Accept on the licence screen, then choose the 'Create installation media for another PC' option and click Next. Check that the Language, Edition and Architecture settings are correct



for your PC (see screenshot 1). If not, choose the right options and then click Next.

Next, you'll need to decide how to install Windows 10 back to your laptop (see screenshot 2). It's often simplest to use a USB stick. However, your laptop model does have a DVD drive, so you can choose the ISO option instead, as this will download a Windows 10 installation file that you can burn to DVD. If you need a DVD-burning

program, CDBurnerXP (from [www.snipca.com/23925](http://www.snipca.com/23925)) is a reliable free option.

Finally, insert the USB stick or DVD disc, restart your laptop and then follow the prompts to install Windows 10. If you're prompted for the product key, your Windows 7 one will do the job.

## OFFER OF THE FORTNIGHT

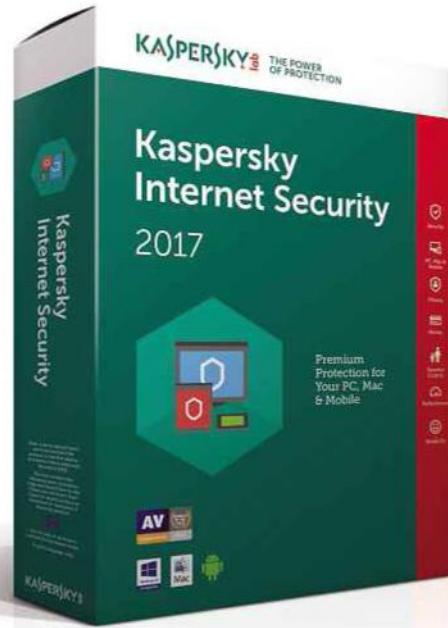
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## Whatever happened to... MiniDiscs?

**Q** I noticed that your 500th issue is on the way – congratulations! It prompted me to flick through your first issue, which I've kept all these years. In it, you raved about MiniDiscs. Whatever happened to that format?

Alexander Craig

**A** The 500th issue is here, and you're in it. So congratulations to you too!

We did cover MiniDiscs in our first issue but our advice was measured, pointing out that the technology was already six years old and that not everyone would prefer the sound quality over CD. But it wasn't the slightly poorer audio that did for the MiniDisc format so much as the rapid evolution and adoption of recordable CDs (CD-R) and MP3 players.

Price drops at the tail end of the 1990s had made the MiniDisc format an interesting option for consumers

wanting portable audio with a recording capability. However, at around the same time the manufacturing cost of CD-R media was in freefall, with a single CD-R disc costing roughly half that of a MiniDisc.

The first consumer MP3 players went on sale in 1998. Unlike Adaptive Transform Acoustic Coding (ATRAC) – the audio-compression system owned, implemented and tightly controlled by MiniDisc inventor Sony – MP3 was something of a licensing free-for-all, so it was more popular with consumers and device manufacturers alike.

Sony attempted to keep the MiniDisc format alive and relevant with several initiatives including the 2004 introduction of the Hi-MD, a refresh of the original standard that enabled use of higher-capacity discs for higher-quality recordings and longer playback – plus support for the MP3 format. However, it was too little too late, because by then dedicated MP3 players were rampant and CD-Rs cost mere pennies each.



How we covered  
MiniDisc players in Issue 1

MiniDisc limped on for a few years, but mainly as a legacy format supported only by Sony. In 2013, the company announced that it would no longer manufacture or sell MiniDisc players, though for the time being it continues to make and sell blank discs.

Want to know what happened to your favourite program, website or technology? Email [noproblem@computeractive.co.uk](mailto:noproblem@computeractive.co.uk)

## How do I set my SD card as internal storage?

**Q** I bought a Samsung Galaxy J5 phone recently, putting a **microSD card** in it for extra storage. Then, I installed the software update to upgrade to Android 6.0 (Marshmallow), as I believe this allows SD cards to be used as internal storage. When I checked the storage, the SD card was under the heading of Portable Storage, and when I touched it the only options were Unmount and Format. How do I change the SD card storage status from portable to internal?

Jenny Shore

The Samsung Galaxy J5 has the 'adoptable storage' feature disabled



**A** The feature you're talking about is called 'adoptable storage', and it allows compatible Android smartphones to 'adopt' an external storage device like an SD card and treat it as though it were internal – effectively upgrading space for app installations, videos and photos.

Sadly, on your phone, it's not an option because Samsung has decided to disable the feature. You'd have to ask the company why it did this but there is a performance factor, because a slow SD card could impact the overall speed of a device. Still, it would be nice to have the choice.

Unfortunately, the only way to get that choice is to 'root' your J5, which means breaking the electronic locks put in place by Samsung so that you can take full control. It's not a procedure for beginners and may invalidate your warranty. Moreover, as we warn regularly on these pages, the exact method changes all the while – so you'll need to go online to find the relevant latest technique. A good starting point is [www.rootmygalaxy.net](http://www.rootmygalaxy.net).



Installing a microSD card for extra storage on an Android 6.0 smartphone

## NEXT ISSUE

ON SALE  
Weds  
10 May

- How do I change my Facebook email address?
- How can I tell if my laptop will run Windows 10?
- How do I log in to my router?  
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## Why has Screeny's hotkey failed?

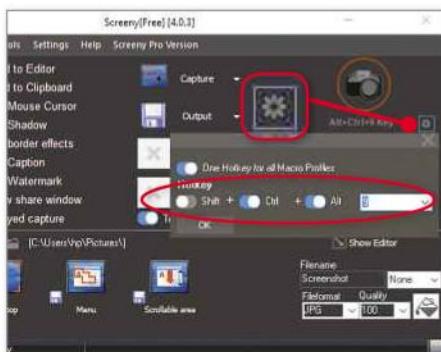
**Q** I survived the German-language installation instructions provided by Screeny (see Issue 499, page 42), but once the program had installed I was hit by a pop-up message that read: 'Enable hotkey failed. It is in use by another application. Select another hotkey'. What's going on here? How can one of Screeny's **hotkeys** already be conflicting with something else when I've only just installed it?

Ben Laurence

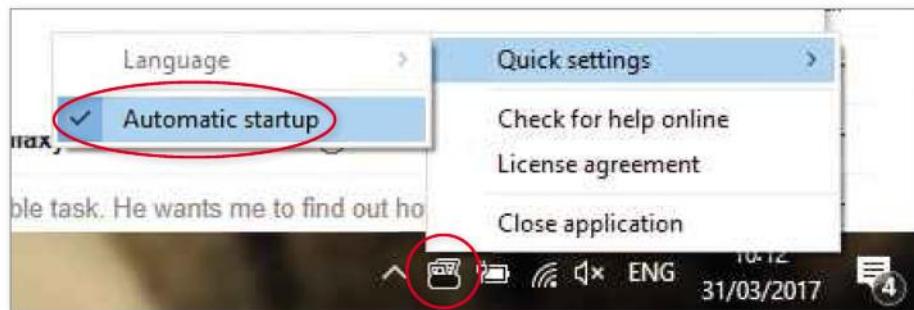
**A** The problem here is caused by the fact that Screeny wants to use only the Print Screen key as its screen-capture shortcut. This key happens to be one that several programs want exclusive rights to, including OneDrive and PicPick.

The solution is to change Screeny's default shortcut key combination for taking a screenshot. The setting you need to click is easy to overlook, so we're not surprised you missed it. Click the tiny settings (cog) icon, in the top-right section of the program's main window (see screenshot below). In the menu that opens you can set your new hotkey combination.

We suggest you change the default from the Print Screen key to something less commonly used. Include a combination of Shift, Ctrl and Alt modifier keys by switching their sliders on then select a



Change Screeny's default keyboard shortcut to avoid error messages



Untick Nimi Places' 'Automatic startup' setting to stop it loading as your PC boots

key other than Print Screen by clicking the dropdown menu and choosing from the list. For example, we selected Ctrl+Alt+9 (see screenshot below left).

## How do I uninstall Nimi Places?

**Q** I took your advice and added Nimi Places (see Issue 497, page 51) to my PC, but I find it makes my desktop look like Steptoe's yard. What's worse is that I cannot find a way to uninstall it. How can I remove it from my computer?

Michael Yarrow

**A** Nimi Places is a portable program, so it doesn't actually install in the traditional sense (which is why it won't be listed in the usual place when it comes to uninstalling it). To remove Nimi Places, right-click its icon in your notifications area (it looks like a scanner with paper passing through it – see screenshot above) and click 'Quick



Kodi's apparent seizure by the US government was an April Fools' prank

settings', then make sure 'Automatic startup' is unticked. Next, right-click the Nimi Places icon again and click 'Close application'. Open File Explorer (Windows Explorer in Windows 7) and navigate to **C:\Users\[your username]\Nimi Places\Containers**.

Here you'll find folders for all of the fences you created in Nimi Places. Open each in turn and move their contents to where you want on your PC. Once each of these folders are empty you can delete the entire '.Nimi Places' folder. Finally, find the Nimi Places file you downloaded and delete it (it's called 'Extract Nimi Places (portable).exe').

## Has the US government banned Kodi?

**Q** I was looking forward to following your guide to installing and using Kodi (Issue 498), but it looks as though the US government has "seized" the software. I wondered if there was another way to download the media player?

Richard Vaughan

**A** It seems that the message (see screenshot left) that suggested the US government had taken over Kodi was an ill-conceived April Fools' prank – see [www.snipca.com/24011](http://www.snipca.com/24011). Kodi put the message there itself as a temporary placeholder while it was redesigning its website (<https://kodi.tv>). Kodi's site is now online again and the Kodi download is available as normal.



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**Pixma Pro 9000**

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**Originals:**

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**Colours** 3.5ml each

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**Colours** 3.5ml each

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# Jargon Buster

Bust more jargon in our A-Z book: [www.snipca.com/21616](http://www.snipca.com/21616)



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

**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.

**AES-256** Advanced Encryption Standard. A form of encryption based on a key length of 256 bits. Cracking it would take longer than the age of the universe.

**APTX** A codec that's used to compress audio so it can be transmitted over Bluetooth with minimal quality loss.

**Autofocus** A camera setting which lets you automatically position the camera's lens to focus on the subject in the picture.

**Benchmarking** Comparing software and products with an accepted standard.

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

**Botnet** A group of infected computers connected via the internet, and used to infect other PCs, send junk email and perform other criminal tasks.

**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.

**Client** A computer program used to access and manage a user's email.

**CPU** Central Processing Unit. Another term for a computer processor.

**DNS server** A server that matches a domain name, like www.google.co.uk, to its associated IP address.

**DOS** Disk Operating System. Command-line operating system.

**dpi** Dots per inch. A measure of printed-image quality, or the size an object will be shown on screen.

**Driver** A file that tells Windows how to work with a peripheral device, such as a mouse.

**Dual-SIM** A phone that holds two SIM cards, letting you use services from two different networks.

**Emulator** A program that makes one computer act like another, allowing it to run that computer's software.

**EPUB** A file format used by many popular ebook readers.

**Extension** A program that adds extra features to your browser.

**Factory reset** Restoring an electronic device to original manufacturer settings by erasing its information.

**Firmware** Basic software stored on a device, such as a music player, to control its operation. Can sometimes be upgraded in a process often called flashing.

**GHz** Gigahertz. A measure of how many instructions a chip can process per second. 1GHz is equal to 1,000MHz.

**GIF** Graphics Interchange Format. A type of image file often used on the web, but now largely superseded by PNG.

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

**Hotkey** A key set up to perform a complex action.

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

**Internet of Things** Umbrella term for electronic devices – often found in the home but not PCs – that are connected to the web.

**IP address** Internet Protocol Address. A unique set of numbers, separated by full stops, used to identify computers and websites on the internet. For example, Google's IP address is 74.125.224.72

**LCD** Liquid crystal display. The technology used to create almost all flatscreen monitors.

**LED** Light-Emitting Diode. A device that emits light. Used on many electronic devices, and to provide backlight for some LCDs.

**M.2** A standard specification for PC expansion cards and connectors.

**Macro** An automated series of commands or options that can be run at any time. Handy if you often need to perform repetitive actions.

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

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

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

**MS-DOS** Microsoft Disk Operating System. The standard PC operating system before Windows.

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

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

**Partition** A large hard drive can be split into two or more partitions or 'virtual' drives. Each section is treated by Windows as though it were a separate hard drive.

**PCIe** Peripheral Component Interconnect Express. A faster version of PCI – a slot on the motherboard for expansion cards, such as for sound and memory.

**Plug-in** A small program that adds extra features to software or to your web browser.

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

**Roaming fees** Charges for using your phone to receive data through overseas mobile networks.

**Screen burn** Permanent screen discolouring, caused by a still image appearing for a long time.

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

**Solid-state electronics** Devices in which electricity passes through solid material, rather than through vacuums or tubes.

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

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

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

**Telemetry** Microsoft's system in Windows 10 that tracks how people use the operating system in order to improve it.

**Temporary file** A file created by a browser to store website data.

**Tethering** A way of providing internet access to a computer by connecting it to another device, such as a smartphone.

**Tooltip** A small message that appears when the cursor hovers over an option.

**Transition** Joining two video clips or moving from one clip to another. Common examples include wipes, dissolves and cutting to black.

**Virtual drive** A set of files seen by Windows as a separate hard drive.

**Virtualisation** Running a second 'virtual' operating system on a PC.

**VPN** Virtual private network. Keeps internet communication private even on insecure networks.

**Widget** A small program such as a calendar that runs on the Windows desktop, and phones and tablets.

**Woofer** A speaker designed to produce low-frequency bass sounds. Named after the noise made by dogs.

**ZIP file** A file that can contain a number of compressed documents or files.

# The Final Straw



**KEN RIGSBY is**  
Computeractive's Mr Angry

This issue Ken Rigsby is crying into his pint over...

## Tech going backwards

**F**ive hundred issues, hey? I reckon that means *Computeractive* has printed somewhere in the region of 100 million copies, and perhaps a total of 10 billion pages. I know the editor will want to check that figure with me. So yes, let's call it 10 billion.

We've changed a lot since Issue 1 in 1998. Colleagues have come and gone, and stale sections have been replaced by fresh ones. And why not? Things can't stand still. I mean, if we hadn't regularly updated our content then we'd still have a two-page section dedicated to reviewing CD-ROMs. Sometimes we'd theme it: Animals! Days out! Adult games! I think once we even combined all three, and the result was akin to a party political conference.

**“**  
**Back in 1998,  
*Computeractive’s*  
social-media strategy  
was going out for  
drinks after work**  
**”**

But that was then. I can't imagine that many readers would be thrilled if we regressed by reintroducing our CD-ROMs section. Still, the nostalgia of this issue has got me thinking that no matter how much *Computeractive* has evolved there are some aspects of technology that seem to have regressed.

A few months ago in this column I recalled that in the Nineties it was normal to expect a week's use from a single



charge of your mobile phone. Now a full battery lasts a day if you're lucky. But that's not the only thing that's gone backwards in the past couple of decades. In fact, I reckon I can think of at least five more. So here goes.

At number five, knobs. Over the years I've spent plenty of time twiddling knobs, if you'll pardon the expression. But these days when I want to adjust my monitor's brightness or contrast, I have to squint my way through incomprehensible icons on a tiny menu. Buttons and menus might seem more high-tech, but they're not as quick or simple as twiddling a dial.

Next up, pins. No, not my legs – although the knees aren't what they were – but dot-matrix printers. Obviously, I don't miss the noise, but have you ever tried getting an inkjet printer to create a carbon copy? And that's not all. I knew when my old Star Micronics dot matrix was running low on ink because pages would gradually fade. Now, with chipped cartridges, the first I know about low ink is when it's time to take out a second mortgage to buy replacements.

In at number three – repairability. Or rather, the impossibility of fixing things that previously could have been easily remedied. Swapping faulty memory modules or a hard drive is still simple enough – even on laptops – but many modern gadgets are effectively irreparable. Can you think of a single bit of your smartphone or tablet that you'd dare to

repair yourself? That's the problem.

At two is digital-rights management. Back in the heyday of dodgy BitTorrent services search engines like The Pirate Bay meant people could grab movies or shows that weren't available to buy. Now, those same people can download only what a bunch of lawyers and marketing executives have decided should be available in any particular week. I'm certain that many a Pirate Bay user would have happily paid for the stuff they downloaded if only someone had made it possible. Now we have the mechanism, but so much great content remains legally unavailable.

Finally, social media. Back in 1998, *Computeractive's* social-media 'strategy' involved the team going out for a few drinks after work. But now, for the selfie-addicted public, social media means boasting about the good times you're pretending to have, when in fact you haven't chatted to a human being in the flesh since the advent of Facebook and Twitter.

Mind you, even the idea of 'human beings' may seem quaint by the time another 500 issues have passed. Come back in 2036 to find out whether we've morphed into cyborgs and read my nostalgia piece about the good ol' days of Facebook.

What else is worse now than in 1998?  
Let us know at [letters@computeractive.co.uk](mailto:letters@computeractive.co.uk)

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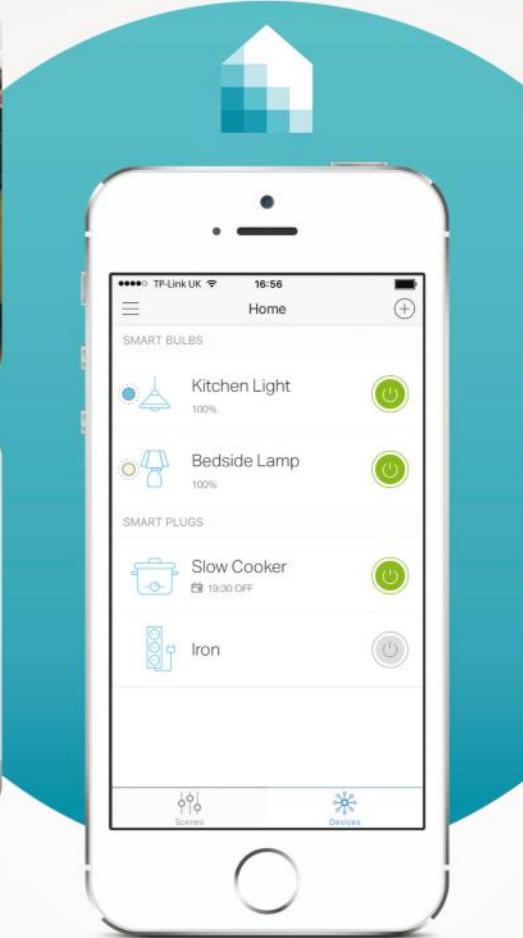
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