

# How to Use IIS to Host a Website Locally on Windows

 By Shay Lynn Khan — Jun 30, 2022



Web Development

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If you’re creating a website, you’ll probably want to test it before hosting it on the internet to ensure it works properly.

Ideally, you should test your site on the same web server that it will run on when you go live. This allows you to be sure that your site will behave in production the same way it behaves locally. Fortunately, most web servers are easy to install and use on your local computer.

On a Windows PC, you can use Internet Information Services (IIS). IIS comes free with Windows, so all you need to do is enable and configure it to view your website.

## What Is Internet Information Services?

IIS is a web server that you can use to host static or dynamic websites. A web server works by serving content—such as HTML, JavaScript, or media files—to a user’s browser, in response to a request.

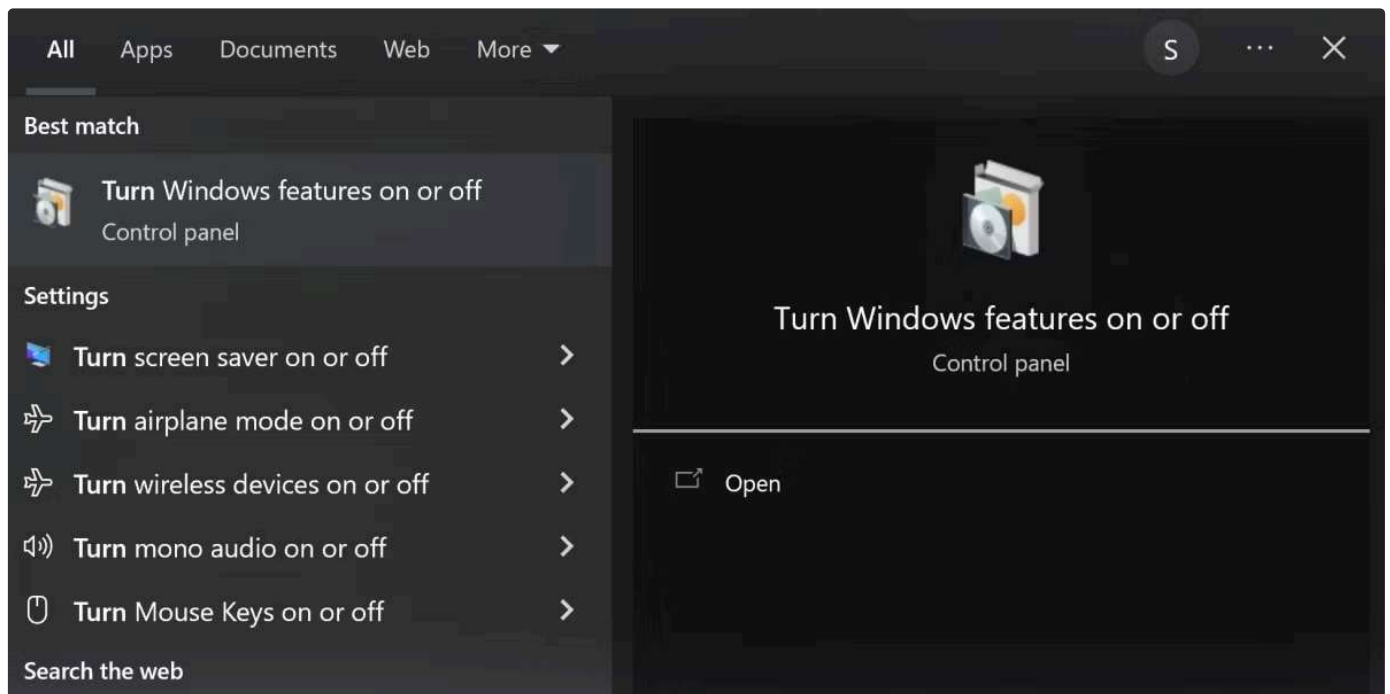
Some frameworks such as Angular already have basic built-in web servers. These will serve your [Link copied to clipboard](#) website to preview and test locally, using the localhost domain. However, there are some scenarios where you need to set up a full-blown web server yourself.

One example of this is when publishing a scene from a Unity project. You are likely to get an error if you try to open the index.html file directly in your browser, without a web server running. In this case, you could store your Unity WebGL files in IIS, and run them on the server.

## How to Enable IIS

Enable IIS using the **Turn Windows Features On and Off** menu on Windows.

1. Search for **Turn Windows Features On and Off** using the search bar:



2. Select the **Internet Information Services** option:

## Turn Windows features on or off

To turn a feature on, select its check box. To turn a feature off, clear its check box. A filled box means that only part of the feature is turned on.

- ☒ .NET Framework 3.5 (includes .NET 2.0 and 3.0)
- ☒ .NET Framework 4.8 Advanced Services
- ☒ Internet Explorer 11
- ☒ **Internet Information Services**
- ☐ Internet Information Services Hostable Web Core
- ☒ Legacy Components
- ☒ Media Features
- ☐ Microsoft Message Queue (MSMQ) Server
- ☒ Microsoft Print to PDF
- ☒ Microsoft XPS Document Writer
- ☒ Print and Document Services
- ☒ Remote Differential Compression API Support
- ☐ Simple TCP/IP services (i.e. echo, daytime etc)
- ☐ SMB 1.0/CIFS File Sharing Support
- ☐ Telnet Client
- ☐ TFTP Client

OK

Cancel

3. Expand **Internet Information Services**, and select all the sub-features you require:

## Turn Windows features on or off

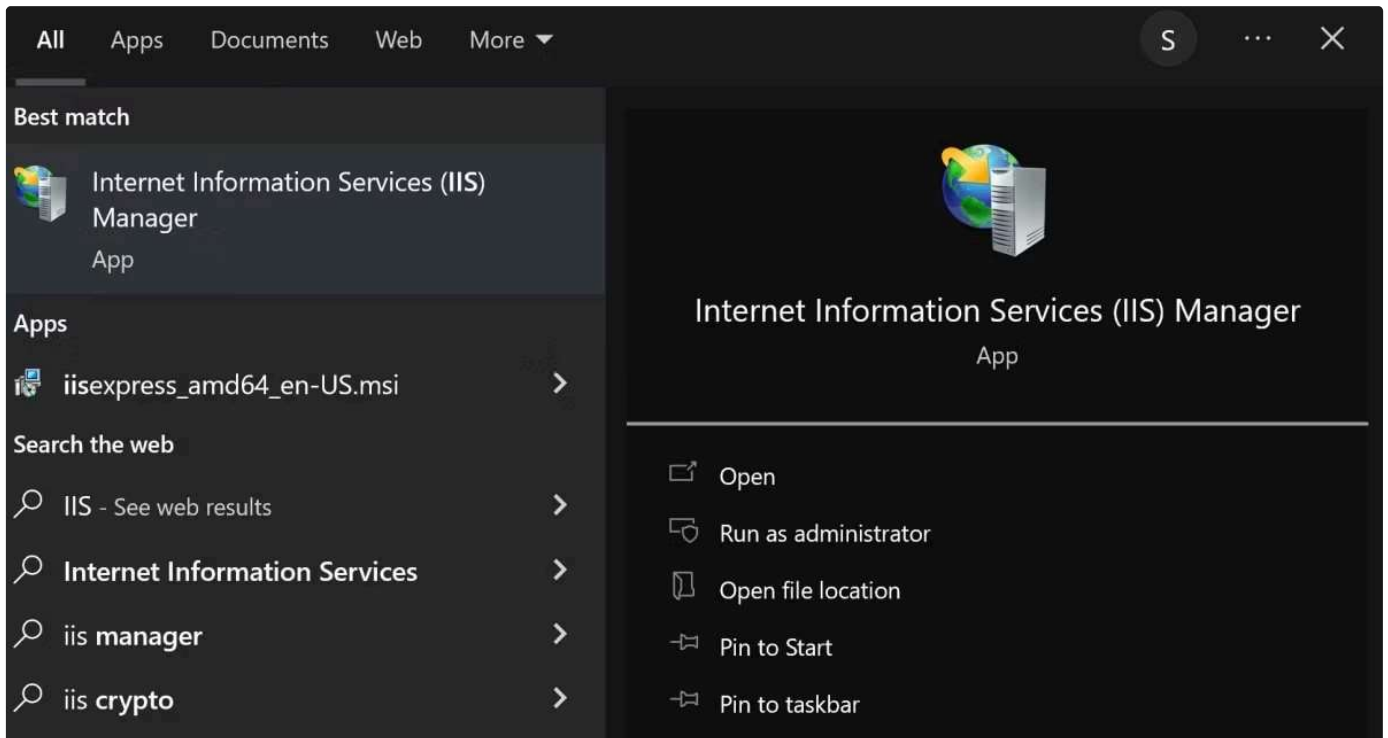
To turn a feature on, select its check box. To turn a feature off, clear its check box. A filled box means that only part of the feature is turned on.

- ☒ **Internet Information Services**
  - ☒ FTP Server
    - ☐ FTP Extensibility
    - ☒ FTP Service
  - ☒ Web Management Tools
    - ☒ IIS 6 Management Compatibility
    - ☒ IIS Management Console
    - ☒ IIS Management Scripts and Tools
    - ☒ IIS Management Service
  - ☒ World Wide Web Services
    - ☒ Application Development Features
    - ☒ Common HTTP Features
    - ☒ Health and Diagnostics
    - ☒ Performance Features
    - ☒ Security

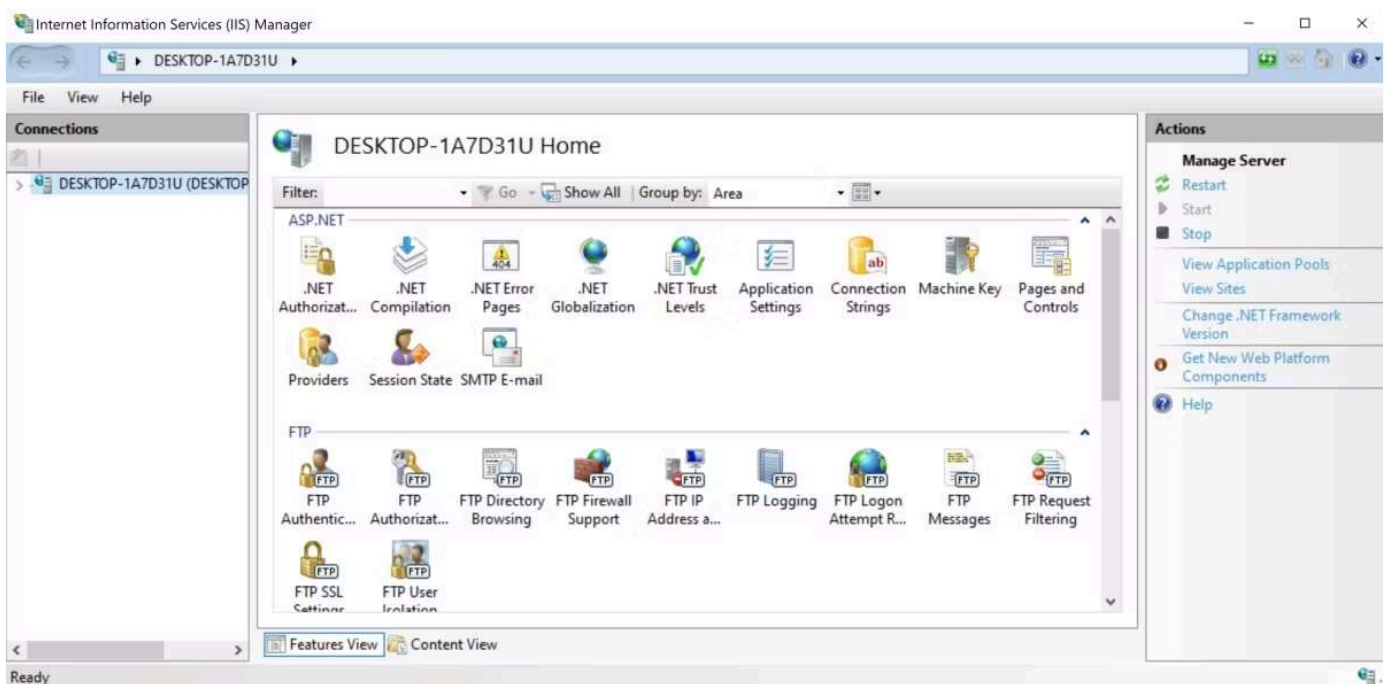
OK

Cancel

4. Click **OK** and wait for Windows to apply the new changes. In the future, if you decide to remove or change any features, Windows may ask you to restart your computer before applying them.
5. Search for the IIS application, which will now be available to open on your Windows computer:



6. Open IIS to view the IIS console:



## How to Create a Simple Test Website

## Create a simple static website using HTML and CSS.

[Link copied to clipboard](#)

1. Create a new file called **index.html**. Add the following content to the file:

```
<!DOCTYPE html>
<html lang="en-us">
<head>
  <title> Simple Test Website </title>
  <meta content="text/html; charset=utf-8" />
  <link rel="stylesheet" href="styles.css">
  <link rel="stylesheet" href="https://maxcdn.bootstrapcdn.com/bootstrap/3.4.1/css/bootstrap.min.css">
  <script src="https://ajax.googleapis.com/ajax/libs/jquery/3.6.0/jquery.min.js"> </script>
  <script src="https://maxcdn.bootstrapcdn.com/bootstrap/3.4.1/js/bootstrap.min.js"> </script>
</head>
<body>
  <div class="nav">
    <nav class="navbar navbar-inverse nav">
      <div class="navbar-header">
        <a class="navbar-brand" href="#"> Website </a>
      </div>
      <ul class="nav navbar-nav">
        <li class="active"> <a href="#"> Home </a> </li>
        <li> <a href="#"> About </a> </li>
        <li> <a href="#"> Contact </a> </li>
      </ul>
    </nav>
  </div>
  <div class="container">
    <h1> This is a test website </h1>
  </div>
</body>
</html>
```

2. Create a new CSS file called **styles.css**. Add the following styling to the file.

```
* {
  font-family: sans-serif;
}

.nav {
  border-radius: 0px !important;
  color: white;
}

.link {
  margin-right: 10px;
  font-size: 12pt;
}

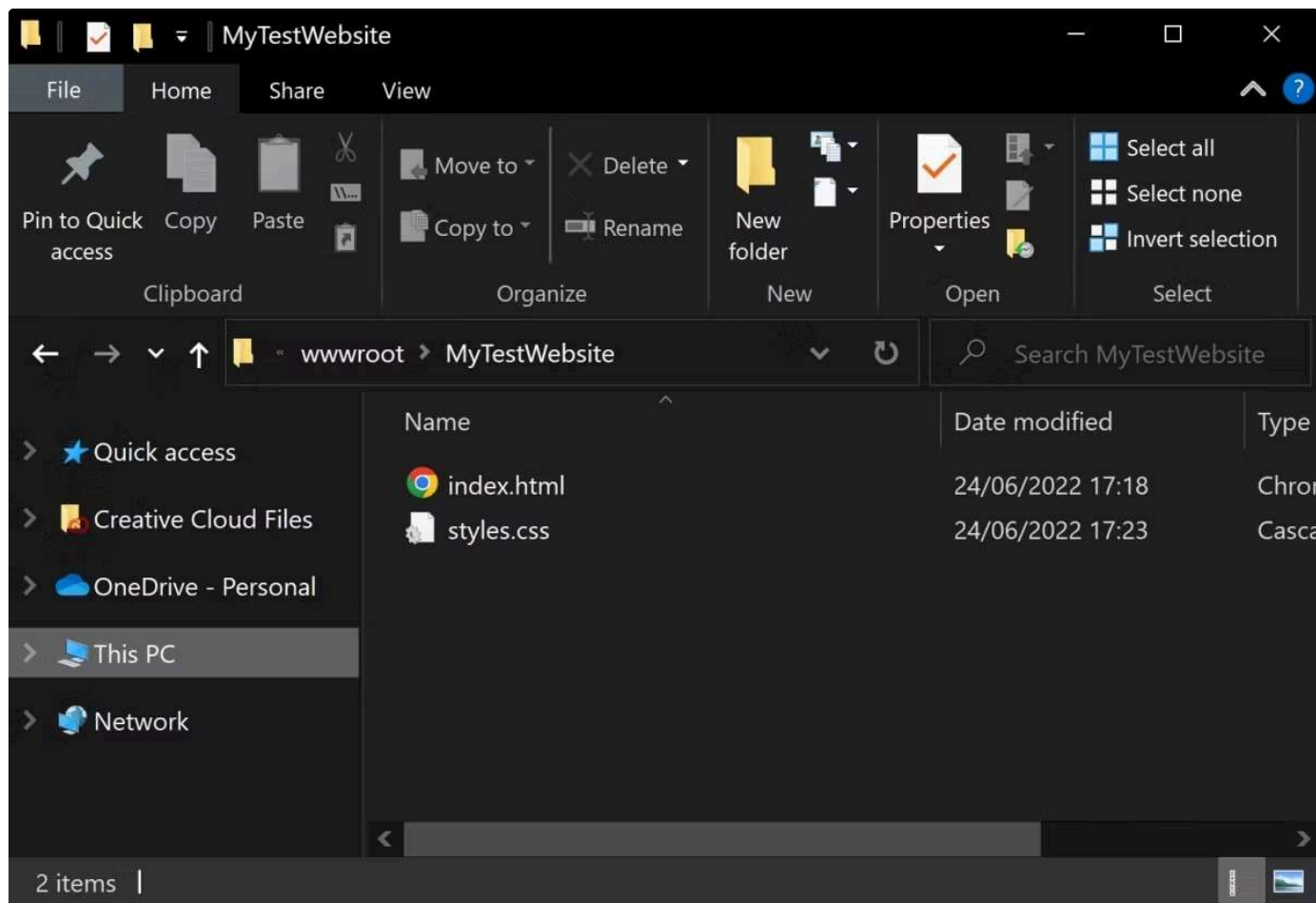
.brand {
  margin-left: 20px;
  margin-right: 40px;
  font-size: 18pt;
}
```

```
| }
```

Link copied to clipboard

```
.container {  
  text-align: center;  
  padding: 40px 20px;  
}
```

3. Create a new folder in the **C:\inetpub\wwwroot** directory on your computer, called **MyTestWebsite**. This folder is specifically used for storing the web pages and other content that make up your website.
4. Copy or move the **index.html** and **styles.css** files into the new **MyTestWebsite** folder.

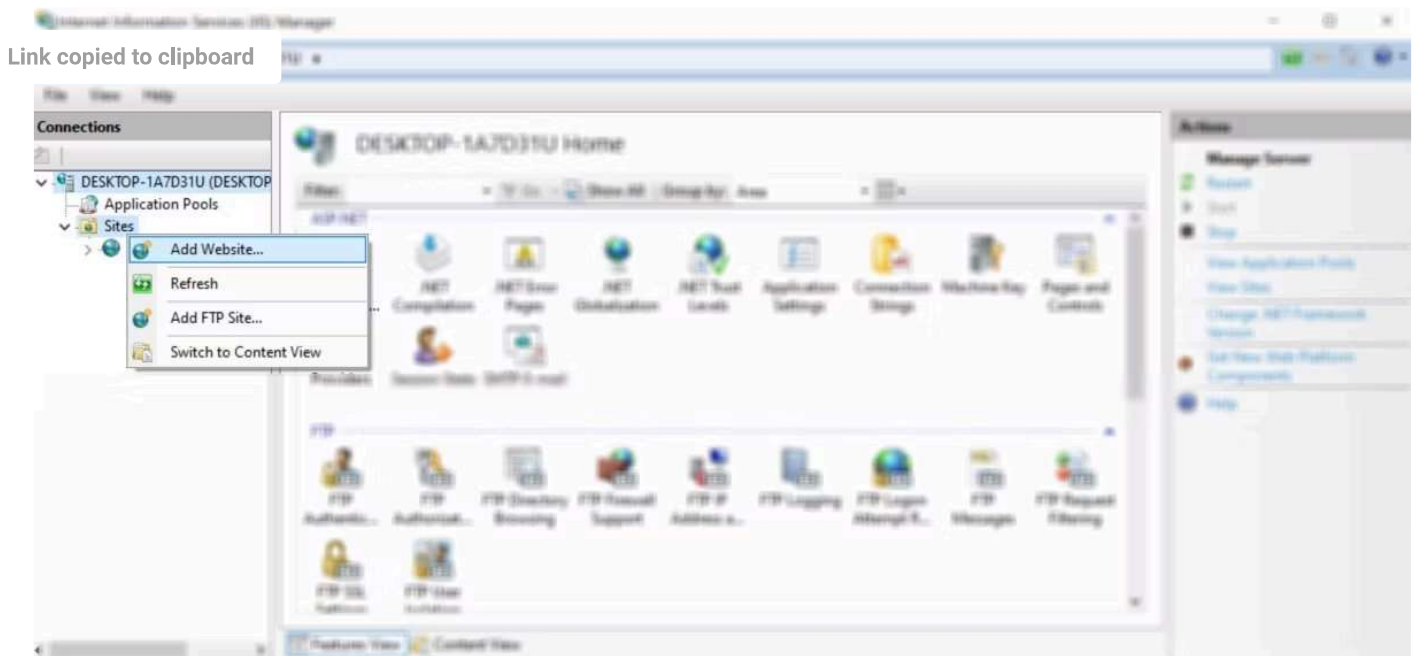


## How to Add and Configure Your Website Using IIS

To host your website using IIS, create a new website and point it to your content.

1. In the left-hand sidebar of the IIS console, right-click on the **Sites** directory.
2. From the options in the menu, select **Add Website**, to open the configuration window:





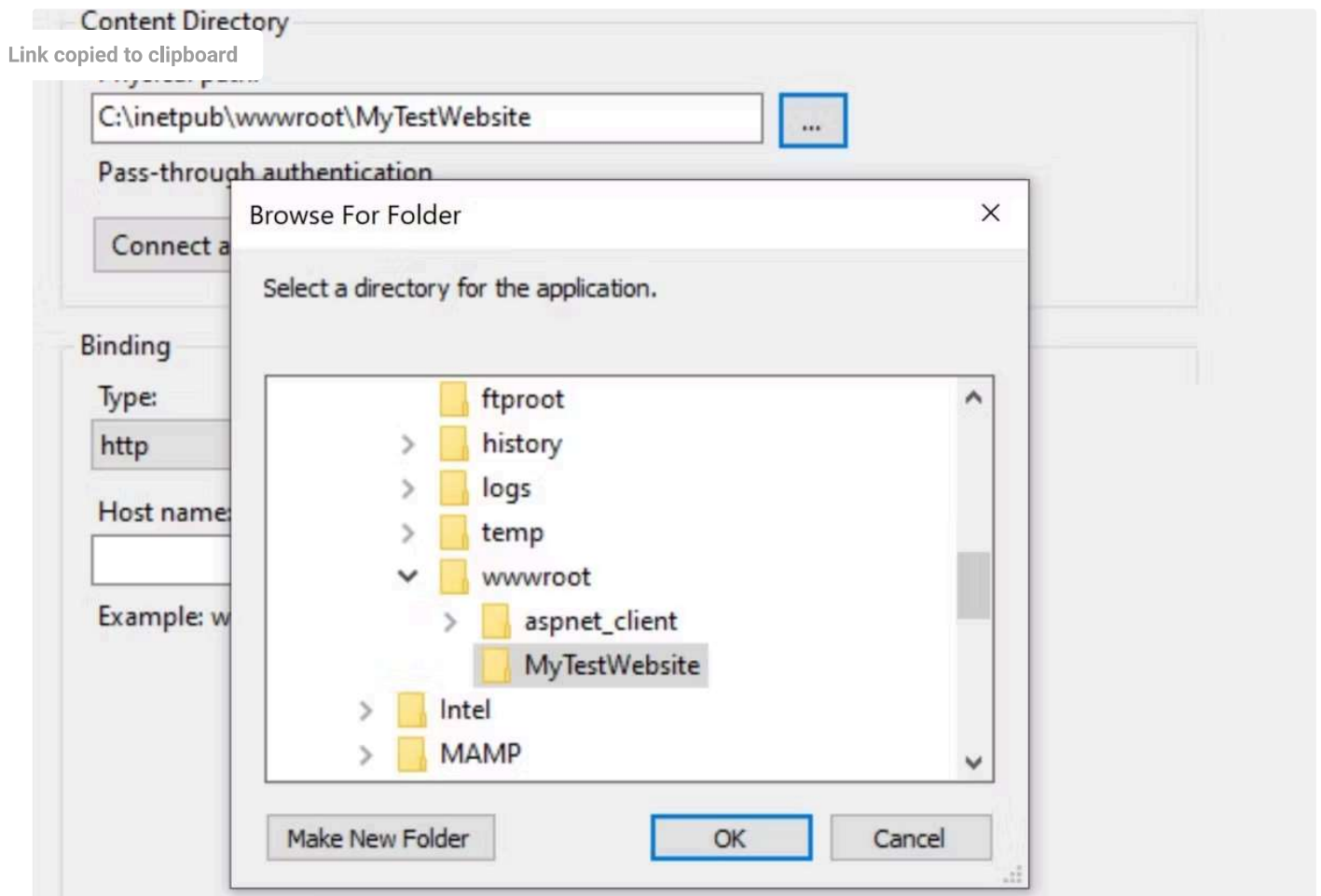
3. Add a name to the **Site name**, such as "My Test Website". IIS will automatically fill in the field for the Application pool.

Add Website

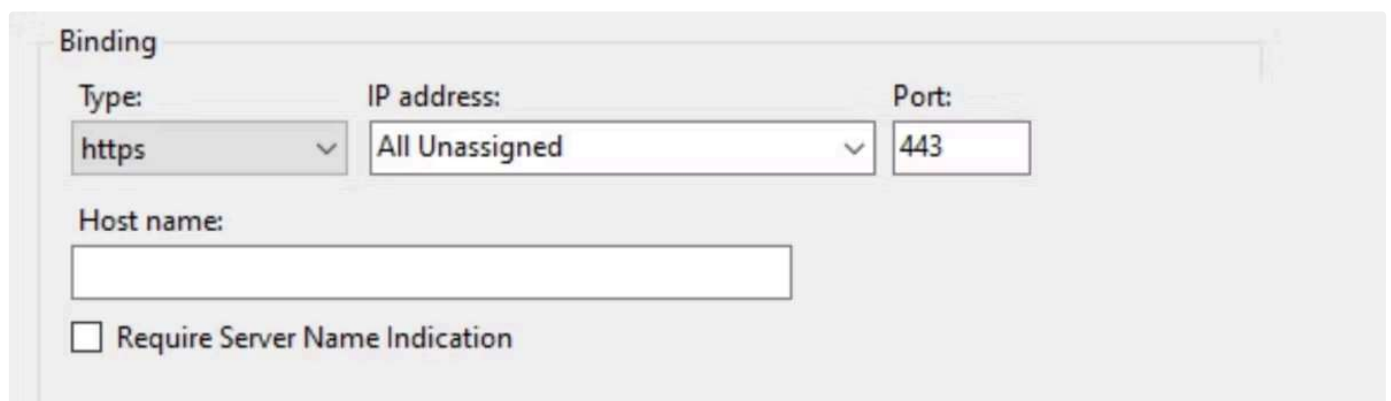
? X

A screenshot of the 'Add Website' dialog box in IIS Manager. The 'Site name' field contains 'My Test Website'. The 'Application pool' field also contains 'My Test Website', with a 'Select...' button to its right. Below these fields is a section titled 'Content Directory' which contains a 'Physical path' field (currently empty) and a button with three dots to its right. At the bottom of the dialog are two buttons: 'Connect as...' and 'Test Settings...'.

4. Add the physical path, which is the location where you have stored your website files on the computer. Click on the three dots to select a folder. From the menu, navigate to the **MyTestWebsite** folder, under the **C:\inetpub\wwwroot** directory.



5. Select https as the **Type**. The default **Port** for HTTPS is 443, but you can change the port to something else if that's currently in use.

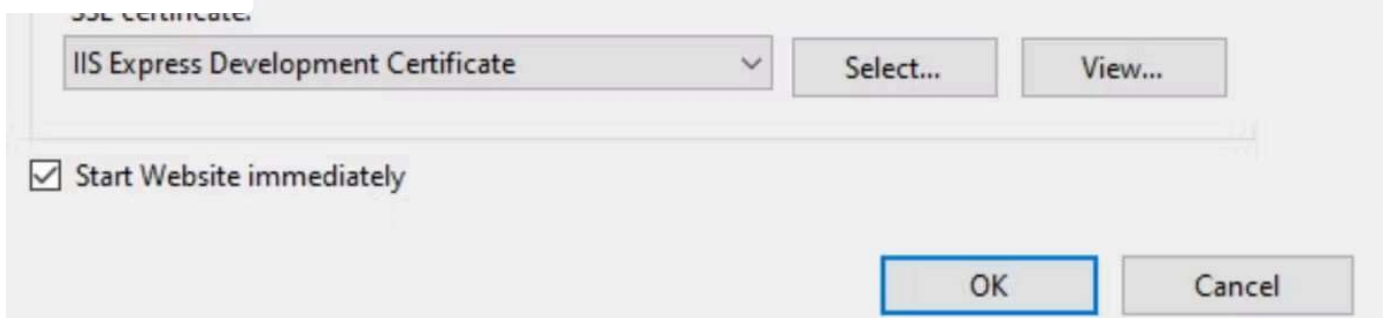


6. You can also configure a host name, but leave this blank for now.

7. For the **SSL Certificate**, select **IIS Express Development Certificate**.



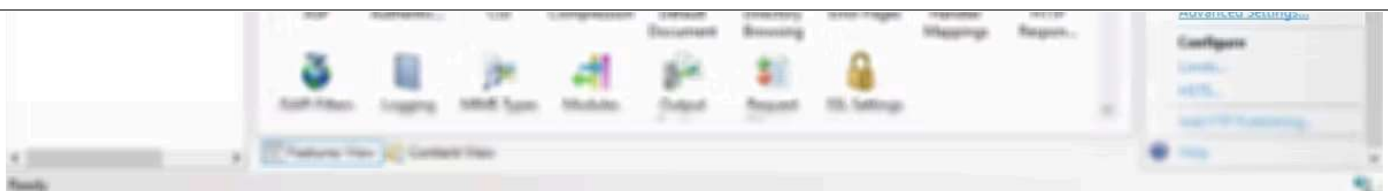
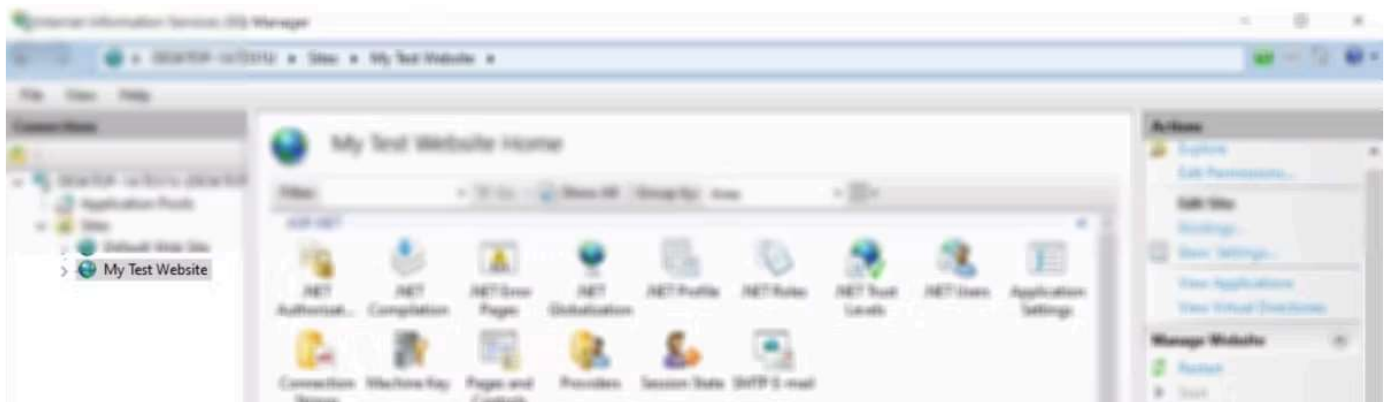
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8. Select **Start Website immediately**, and click on **OK**.

9. Highlight the new **My Test Website** directory in the left-hand column.

10. Click on **Advanced Settings**, which is in the list of options on the right side of the panel.



11. Under the Behavior section, change the **Enabled Protocols** option to "https", and click on **OK**.

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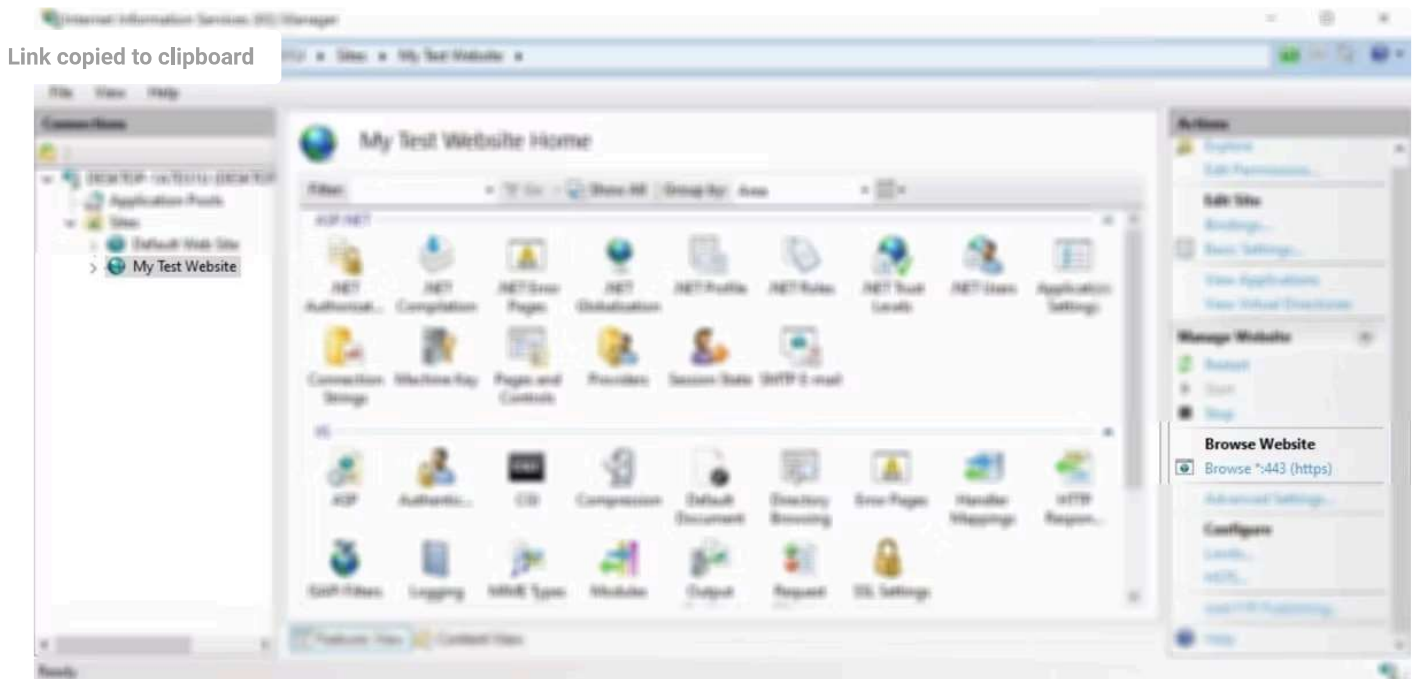
Application Pool	My Test Website
Bindings	https*:443:
ID	2
Name	My Test Website
Physical Path	C:\inetpub\wwwroot\MyTestWebsite
Physical Path Credentials	
Physical Path Credentials Logon	ClearText
Preload Enabled	False
▼ Behavior	
Enabled Protocols	https
> HSTS	
> Limits	

12. If you want to edit these details at any point in time, you can click on the **Basic Settings** or **Advanced Settings** options in the right-hand menu.

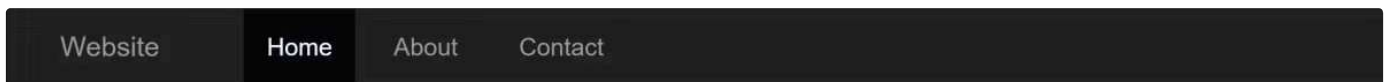
## How to Stop, Start or Restart Your Website on the Web Server

To start your web server and view your website, click on the Browse option in the right-hand menu. You can also restart or stop the web server at any time.

1. To run your web server, click on **Browse \*:443 (https)** in the right-hand menu.

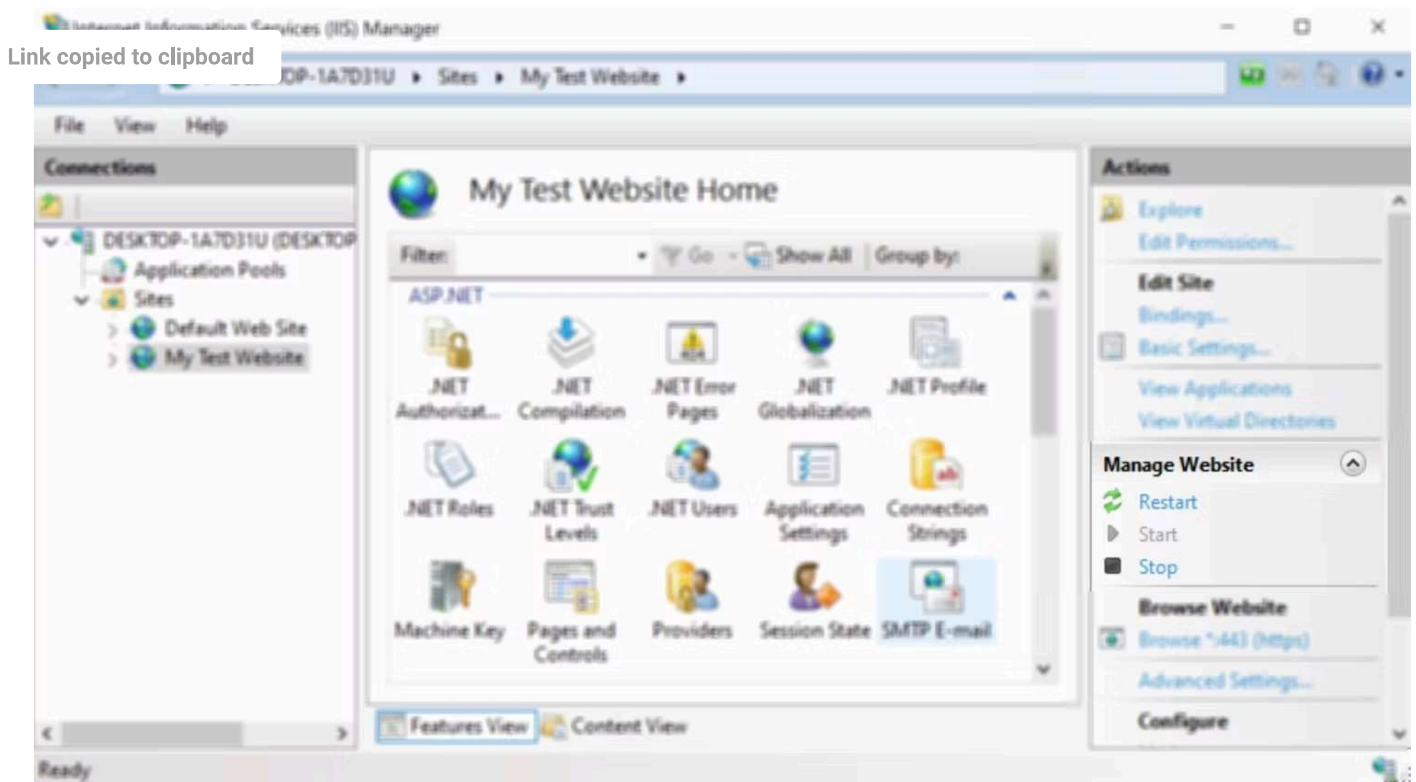


2. Your website should now be running on the web server. You can access it via the URL <https://localhost/>. If you receive a warning about your site connection not being secure, you may have to use a different valid SSL certificate. You can find good [documentation from Microsoft](#) on how you can create a new SSL Certificate and use it in IIS.



This is a test website

3. To stop or restart the web server, click on **Stop** or **Restart** on the right-hand menu.



## Hosting a Website Using IIS

Local testing is an important part of any development cycle, including when you're building a website.

You can host your website locally using the Internet Information Services (IIS) web server. You can use it to host any static website (such as a standard HTML or CSS site) or dynamic website (such as an ASP.NET site).

There are various options you can choose from when hosting your website online. If you are hosting a simple website, you could store your website files on Dropbox, Google Drive, or One Drive, before hosting them.

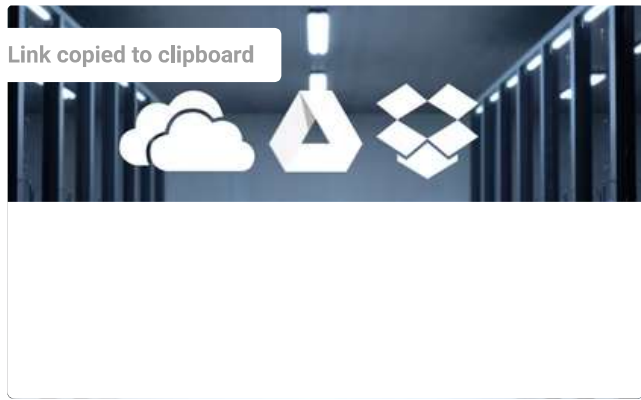
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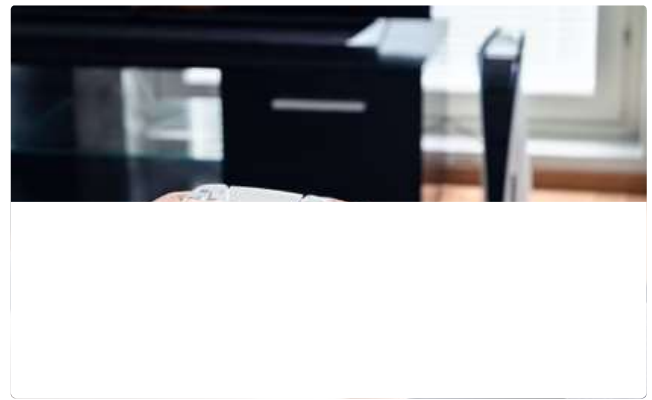
 **RECOMMENDED**



## How to Get Free Website Hosting With Dropbox, Google Drive, or OneDrive

If your website is simple, static, and just for fun, there's another option: hosting on a free cloud storage service like Dropbox, OneDrive or Google Drive.

Jan 5, 2022



## You Should Know How to Use Safe Mode on Your PS4 or PS5

This mode can be useful for troubleshooting problems with your console

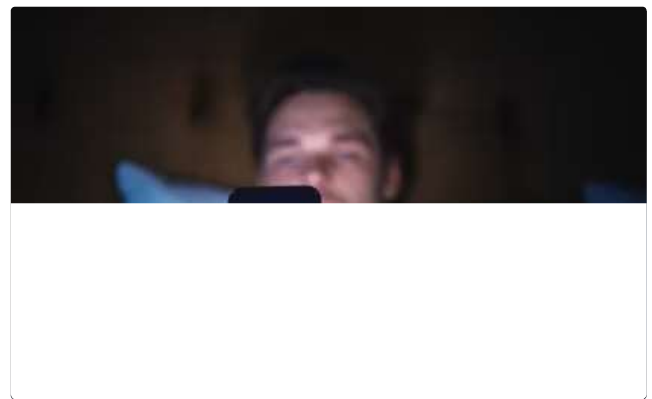
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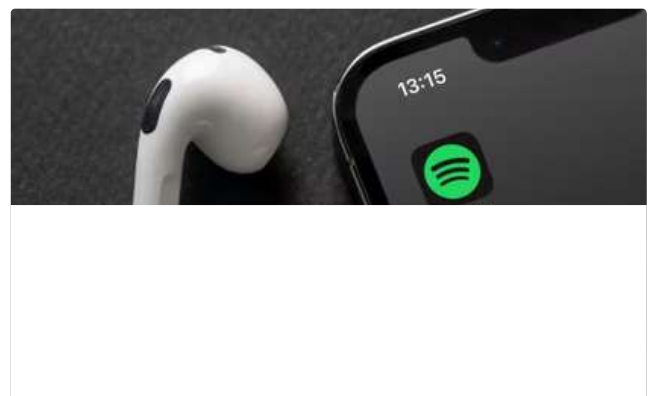
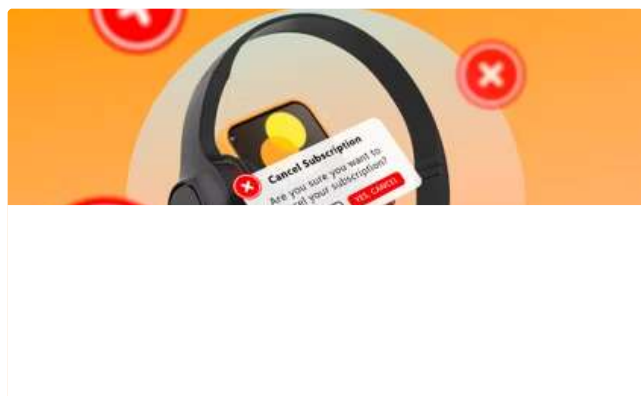
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