



NEW WINDOWS

HOW TO GET THE NEXT
BIG MICROSOFT UPDATE



GET CREATIVE

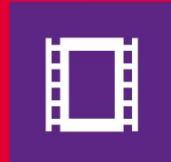
BRIGHT IDEAS TO TRY
ON YOUR HOME PC!



**UPGRADED TO
WINDOWS 10?
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Windows Help & Advice



Mobile



COMPLETE GUIDE TO REINSTALLING **WINDOWS 10**

Restore, refresh or roll back – start again with a new PC!



Pictures



Windows 10



Games



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Windows 10 Home

Intel® Core™ i7-6950X Processor

ASUS® X99-A II Mainboard
16GB DDR4 3000mhz Corsair Vengeance LPX Memory
480GB Kingston V300 SSD
2TB SATA III 6.0Gb/s 64MB HDD
6GB MSI Nvidia® GTX 980 Ti Video Card
16X LG® Blu Ray BH16NS40 Writer Black
CoolerMaster Staker 935 Gaming Case
CoolerMaster B700 B2 Power Supply
Cyberpower Advance Water Cooling system
Extreme Overclocking
LCD monitor is not included but optional



16x Optical Drive



HD 7.1



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FROM
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Windows 10 Home

Intel® Core™ i7-6800K Processor

MSI® X99A RAIDER Mainboard
16GB DDR4 3000mhz Corsair Vengeance LPX Memory
240GB Kingston UV300 SSD
2TB 7200rpm SATA III 6.0Gb/s 64MB HDD
4GB MSI Nvidia® GTX 970 Video Card
NZXT H440 Gaming Case
Corsair VS650 Power Supply
Corsair H55 Cooling System
LCD monitor is not included but optional



HD 7.1



CoolerMaster®



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Infinity X55



FROM
£829



Windows 10 Home

Intel® Core™ i5-6600K Processor

Gigabyte Z170-HD3 Mainboard
8GB DDR4 2400mhz Corsair Vengeance LPX Memory
2TB 7200rpm SATA III 6.0Gb/s 64MB HDD
2GB MSI Nvidia® GTX 960 Video Card
NZXT Source 340 Mid Tower Black
Corsair VS 450W Power Supply
Corsair H55 Cooling System
LCD monitor is not included but optional



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Welcome

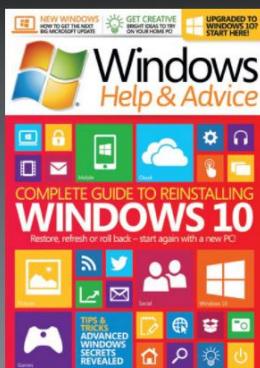
We knew it had to happen eventually, but it finally looks like Microsoft are pulling the plug on free Windows 10 upgrades. The free upgrade programme comes to an end on the 29th July, so make sure you upgrade all your PCs before then, unless you want to pay a hefty \$119 fee for the new version.

However, by then, we should hopefully be getting our hands on the first major update to Windows 10 – the Anniversary Update. If you're unsure about

whether you need it then check out our feature on page 69 where we cover it in full.

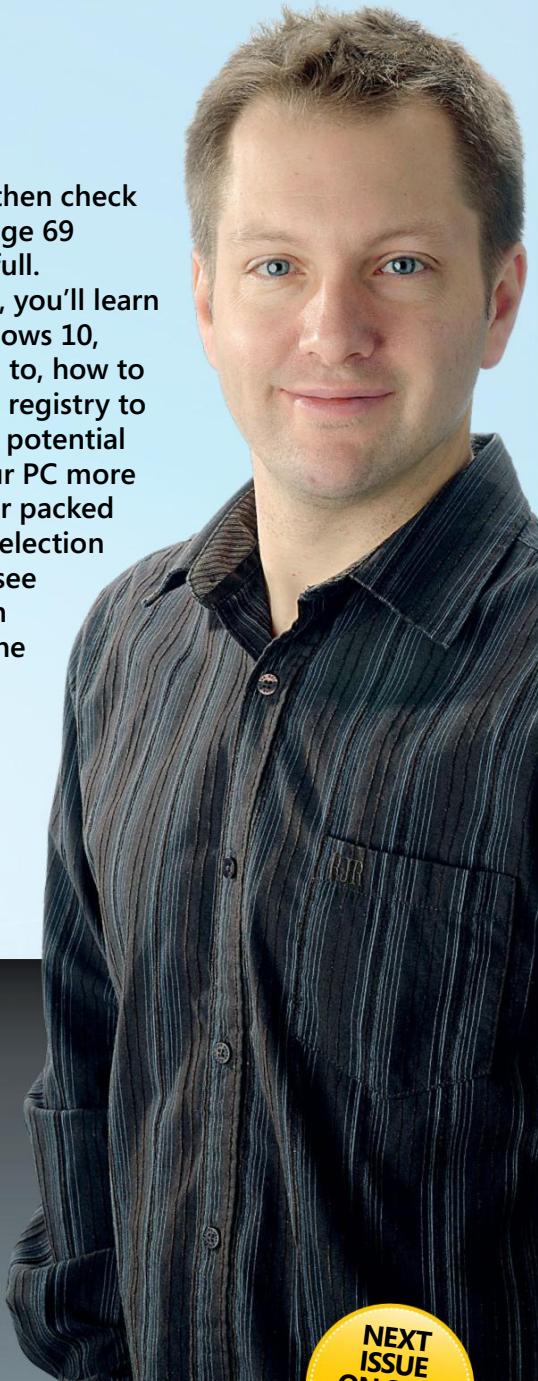
Elsewhere this issue, you'll learn how to reinstall Windows 10, should you ever need to, how to hack the Windows 10 registry to unleash your PC's full potential and how to make your PC more accessible. It's another packed issue! Enjoy our tips selection this month and we'll see you again on the 24th June for more from the world of Windows!

Graham Barlow Editor-in-Chief
www.facebook.com/windowsmag



SUBSCRIBE TO THE MAG TODAY AND SAVE – JUST TURN TO PAGE 14!

We pride ourselves in being the only magazine on the shelves to show you exactly how to get the very best from the Windows operating system, whether you're using Windows 10 or Windows 8.1. Also, don't forget to take a look at how you can read the magazine on your laptop, phone or tablet.



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Windows Help & Advice

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EXPLORE

The best PC tutorials



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"If you're looking for better ways to use your home computer, then this is the place to start. We'll show you all the tips and tricks the experts use and more!"

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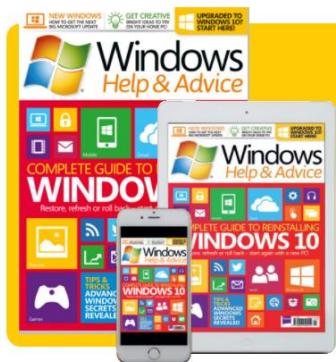
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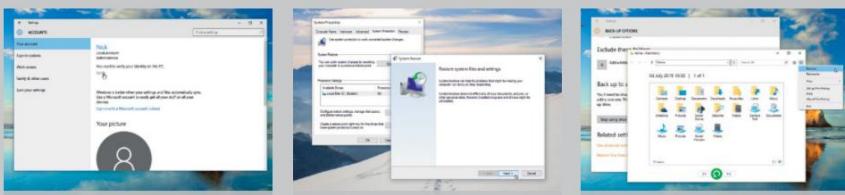
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ON THE COVER

RESTORE, REFRESH OR REINSTALL WINDOWS

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ON THE COVER

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ON THE COVER

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UPGRADE

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GAMEPLAY Digital versions
of games can be just as
compulsive as their
real-world counterparts



Not-so-bored games

Play traditional games on your PC

Love board and card games? You can play most from the comfort of your computer. Here we show you how

Away from the loud, explosive world of videogames, computers can provide interesting twists on familiar games, and their interactive nature means you don't have to worry about losing pieces. Here we look at some of the best conversions of real-life games in the world of Windows.

Of course, no list would be complete without a mention of Solitaire. The time-sinking card game has been part of Windows since the early-90s, and you can find its latest, turbo-charged edition, Solitaire Collection, in the Windows Store on Windows 8 and Windows 10.

Other classic games lurking in the Windows store include Sudoku, Bingo, and even jigsaw puzzles. The latter work well on computers, with a nice selection of images and satisfying sound effects when the pieces snap into place.

For a more challenging experience, we recommend AlphaAjax, which is also

available on the Windows Store. It's essentially an online version of Scrabble, complete with a selection of letter tiles. But the advantage of having it on your computer is you can play online against anyone in the world, or take turns to play against family and friends.

There's also an official version of Scrabble online, and it's available by searching Facebook. Other licensed games, such as Monopoly, Risk and Battleship, are published by EA and you'll find links to online versions at ea.com/online/hassbro.

Christmas wouldn't be complete without trying to figure out what on earth your drunken relatives have just drawn in Pictionary. There are online versions of this, too, and attempting to draw with a mouse or touchpad is a little like playing drunk. The best version we've found is Draw & Guess, which combines illustrative skills with Scrabble-like anagrams. Odog kluc!

The Windows store includes Sudoku, Bingo and jigsaw puzzles

SNAP ATTACK It's Scrabble on steroids

Microsoft has made a name for itself in the word-puzzle genre – first with anagram wordsearch Wordament, and now with Snap Attack, which is available in the Store for Windows 8 and 10. It works a lot like Scrabble, only you're given a limited board and a few pre-defined words. It's now up to you to use your eight letters to create as many words as possible in three minutes. Here are some tips to get you started on this frenetic word game.



WORD UP Keep as many tiles on the board as you can, and drag them around to find two-letter words

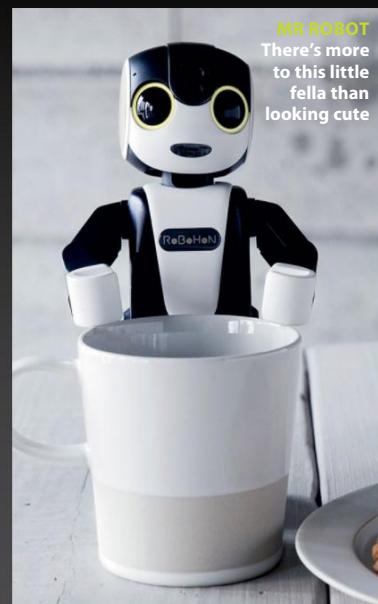


FULL SCREEN Give Snap Attack the attention it deserves by flicking to full-screen mode with the double arrow in the upper right



SCORES ON THE DOORS Check the scoreboard to see the biggest words you may have missed

The Knowledge... + | ▶



MR ROBOT
There's more to this little fella than looking cute

RoboHon

Have my robot butler dreams finally come true?!

Not quite, I'm afraid. This little guy is the RoboHon, a cute bipedal robot created by Japanese tech-company Sharp. But he can't serve you drinks, answer the door, or attempt to bump off rich relatives in the 1920s.

So what can he do?

RoboHon can walk, talk and even dance. He's basically an Android smartphone with arms and legs, which means he can listen to your voice, recognise your face, and understand commands.

So what's the point?

Sharp reckons the robot could become an essential part of any home or office. As well as looking pretty cute, and providing a crunchy plaything for confused pets, he can remind you of upcoming tasks, take down memos, and take photos with the cameras embedded in his eyes.

Anything else?

The big hole in his forehead is a projector, which means you can point him at a wall and he'll play back videos and photos he's recorded. There's a 2-inch screen embedded in his back, too, so he can be used as a traditional – if unwieldy – smartphone.

OK, I definitely want one. How much is it, and when can I get it?

The RoboHon will be released in Japan soon, but there are no plans to sell it anywhere else, for now. It'll set you back 198,000 yen, which is about £1,280. No, really. And yes, you could probably hire a human butler for that.



HENRY WINCHESTER
TECH EXPERT

Windows 7

Search smarter

The little search box in the top right-hand corner of Windows 7's Explorer is a great way to find files quickly, and there are a few ways to make it even more powerful and efficient. It includes 'AND', 'OR' and 'NOT' operators, so you can search for 'beach AND sea' (to find files with both words in their names), 'beach OR sea' (for files with either word in their name), or 'beach NOT sea' (for files without the latter word). It gets even better in your pictures library – type **datetaken:** in the search box and you can find photos taken on a specific date, or look them up using tags from 'Yesterday' to 'A long time ago'.



Windows 8

On-screen keyboard

Windows 8 comes with a built-in touchscreen keyboard, and if you use a tablet you already type with it everyday. However, it comes in handy on more conventional computers, too, especially on a media centre PC without a keyboard. To access it, right-click on the Windows taskbar at the bottom of the screen, then choose 'Toolbars', followed by 'Touch Keyboard'. You'll now see a small keyboard icon to the left of your clock – click this to bring up the keyboard. You can now use your mouse to select letters, enter words, and do just about everything you could with a proper physical keyboard.

Struggling to get something to work? Need a tip?

Then email us your woes (to windowsmagazine@futurenet.com with the subject line 'Windows Insider') and we'll share your perfect Windows tweaks in a future issue.

Tip of the month

The Quick... and the Dead

Get rid of QuickTime

Apple's video playback software is no longer supported. Here's how to uninstall it

Apple's QuickTime used to be one of the only ways you could watch certain video content online – we have fond memories of waiting an eternity to see a low-res *Matrix* trailer. Now, of course, everything is available via YouTube, or in-browser streaming, so Apple has pulled the plug on QuickTime for Windows. It's a good idea to uninstall QuickTime if you still have it on your computer, as it's no longer updated by

Apple and could make your computer vulnerable to attacks. To delete it, click the start button, then type **Programs and Features**. Scroll down the list until you see 'QuickTime', then click it and choose 'Uninstall'. You may now have some orphaned QuickTime files lurking on your computer, but these are compatible with VLC's free media player, which you can download from videolan.org.

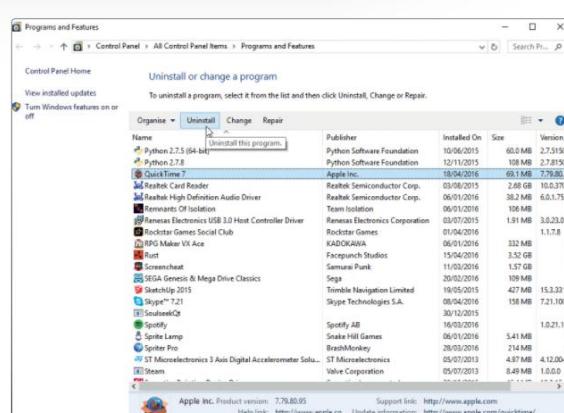
WINDOWS INSIDER

EXPOSING YOUR PC'S SECRETS



Print multiple images as a PDF

Adobe's PDF (portable document format) is the fastest and easiest way to send documents across the web, as they don't use up much space, and you can read them on most devices. Windows 10 includes the ability to make your own PDFs from programs such as Word or Notepad, but you can also create them with multiple image files from Windows Explorer. Find the images you wish to turn into a PDF, then hold [Ctrl] and click them to select them. Next, right-click on one of the files, and choose 'Print'. Under 'Printer' choose 'Microsoft Print to PDF', set the paper size and quality, then click 'Print', and save.



TIME TO DIE Goodbye forever QuickTime – it was fun. We'll miss your strange brushed-aluminium interface....

Make or Break

Microsoft plays up

How the Windows company is bringing consoles and PCs closer together than ever before

Microsoft's Xbox games consoles and Windows PCs have always had an on/off relationship. The first Xbox was developed to capitalise on the success of PC gaming in the late-90s, using the same programming language as Windows computers. There have been crossover games developed by Microsoft, such as Fable III and Gears of War. But for the most part Microsoft's consoles and PCs have been treated as two distinct divisions – until now.

The Xbox One, the latest version of Microsoft's games console, isn't doing quite as well as Microsoft hoped it would. 36 million PlayStation 4s have been sold to date, while Microsoft has shifted just 19 million Xbox Ones. It's a bitter pill for Microsoft to swallow, as the two consoles have never been more similar – both, essentially, are custom-made PCs.

Microsoft is aiming to give the Xbox One a shot in the arm by uniting it with Windows. Quantum Break, the company's latest blockbuster video game, was released across both platforms, with pre-orders of the Xbox One copy getting access to the PC version of the game. It

was an unprecedented move, and a bold statement of the company's approach to gaming going forwards.

That's in addition to Xbox One updates, which will allow Windows 10 apps to run on the console, cross-platform saving (progress on one platform will continue on the other), and game streaming between console and PC. It *sounds* like a more democratic approach – but not everyone's happy.

To create such cross-compatible games, developers must use Microsoft's bespoke Universal Windows Platform. As games are locked to the store you can't buy them from other services, nor can you get them from the developer.

Of course, such a system is easier to use and program for, but it's a little like Microsoft building a fortress in the middle of the vibrant – if chaotic – PC gaming ecosystem. But that's the very same chaotic ecosystem that gave Microsoft Minecraft, one of its biggest assets. For current Xbox users this cross-compatibility makes a lot of sense, but we can't see it tempting PC gamers from Steam – Valve's hugely successful games distribution system – anytime soon.



Download this...

CaptionBot

[captionbot.ai](#)

Earlier this year, Microsoft caused some controversy by unleashing Tay, an artificial-intelligence-powered chatbot which, apparently, reflected the thoughts and feelings of young people around the world. As it turned out, a lot of those thoughts and feelings were racist and/or sexist, and Microsoft quickly took the bot offline.

CaptionBot, Microsoft's latest venture into AI, is a lot less offensive. Upload a photo, and it will analyse its content, and try to tell you what it sees. We tried it with a few images and it's surprisingly accurate – it recognised people in front of a building, a cup of coffee, and a smartphone screenshot. It's not perfect, and it seems to have a preference for describing everyday objects as giraffes, but as it employs machine-learning, it will get more accurate as it develops. By using it and rating its responses you can help Microsoft improve it, too.



MISTAKEN IDENTITY CaptionBot incorrectly identifies a Mac as a flatscreen TV

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THE 60-SECOND QUIZ

Pens at the ready, your time starts now!

1 For how long does Apple expect an average iPhone to last?
A. 18 months
B. 3 years
C. 5 years

2 Three million units of which ageing music format were sold in the UK last year?
A. Cassettes
B. Records
C. Minidiscs

3 Which title recently bagged the Bafta for best game?
A. Fallout 4
B. Everyone's Gone to the Rapture
C. Rocket League

4 Microsoft's new smartphones will be known as what?
A. Word Phone
B. Phone 10
C. Surface Phone

5 Google has used a powerful camera to photograph what?
A. The Eiffel Tower
B. St Paul's Cathedral
C. The Apprentice cafe

6 Some of Fisher Price's activity toys will include mounts for what piece of tech?
A. Virtual Reality headsets
B. GoPros
C. E-cigarettes

Answers: 1B, 2B, 3A, 4C, 5C, 6B

NEXT ISSUE ON SALE

June

24

Friday

Facts & figures

Henry Winchester reveals a host of fascinating digital facts

64.8 MILLION

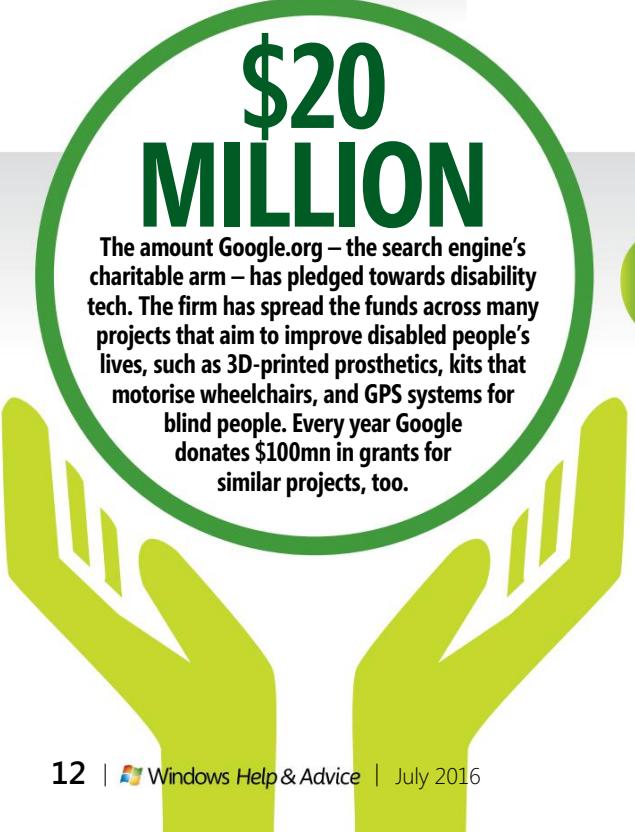
is the number of PCs sold in the first quarter of 2016. While it sounds like a lot, the figure is down 9.6% on last year. Lenovo is the best-selling PC manufacturer, with a 19.3% share of the market, the HP and Dell taking second and third place. There is hope for PCs, too – and the impending Windows 10 refresh is hoped to reinvigorate the market.



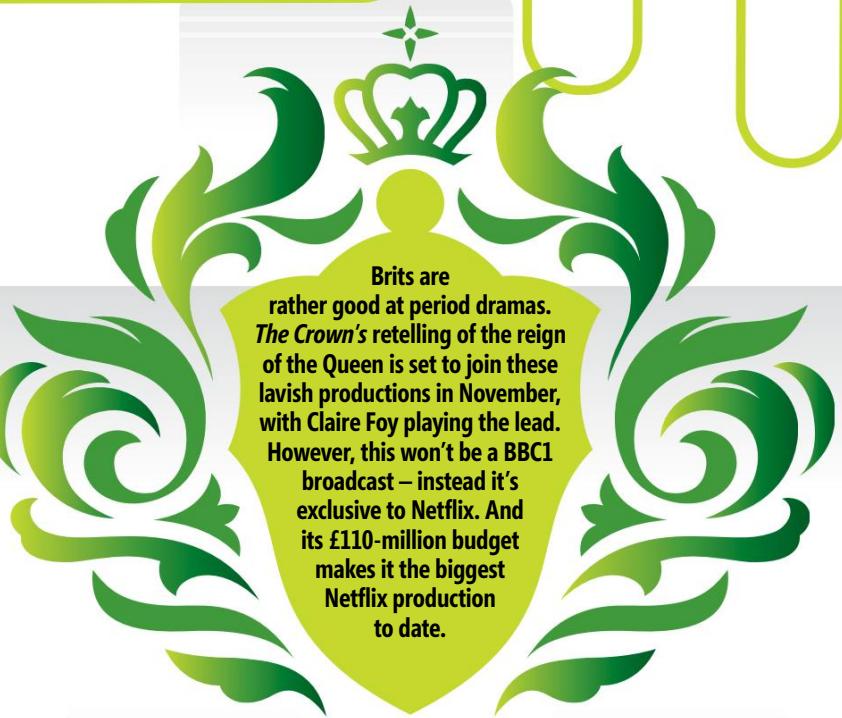
WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOU FOUND A USB STICK LYING ON THE STREET?

While it's tempting to see what's on it, this is never a good idea – such devices are used by hackers to compromise the security of networks via trojan horse software. Researchers dropped USB sticks in a car park, and found 48% of the drives were picked up and plugged in. And only a mere 16% of would-be victims scanned the drives with anti-virus software, too.

\$20 MILLION



The amount Google.org – the search engine's charitable arm – has pledged towards disability tech. The firm has spread the funds across many projects that aim to improve disabled people's lives, such as 3D-printed prosthetics, kits that motorise wheelchairs, and GPS systems for blind people. Every year Google donates \$100mn in grants for similar projects, too.

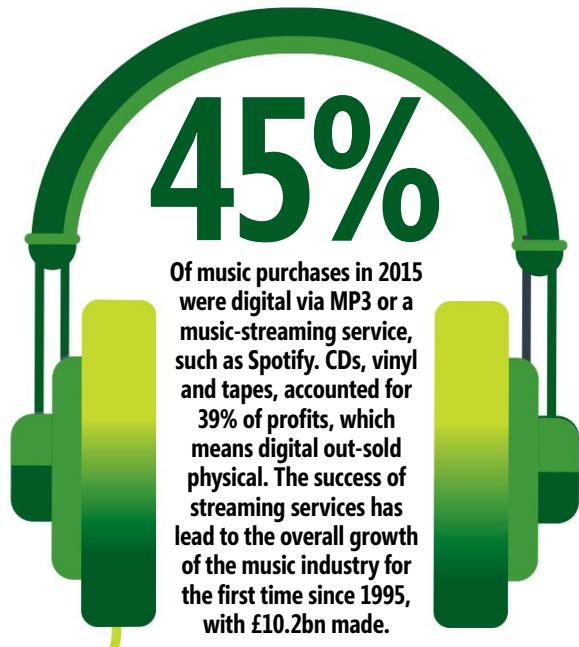


Brits are rather good at period dramas. *The Crown*'s retelling of the reign of the Queen is set to join these lavish productions in November, with Claire Foy playing the lead. However, this won't be a BBC1 broadcast – instead it's exclusive to Netflix. And its £110-million budget makes it the biggest Netflix production to date.

WILL YOU BE WATCHING THE CROWN?



DNA could be used to store data. The University of Washington and Microsoft Research have coded digital images onto molecules, which can last more than 500 years. A square millimetre of DNA could hold an exabyte of data, which would usually take up a warehouse-sized data centre. However, for now, reading data from DNA takes about 10 hours.

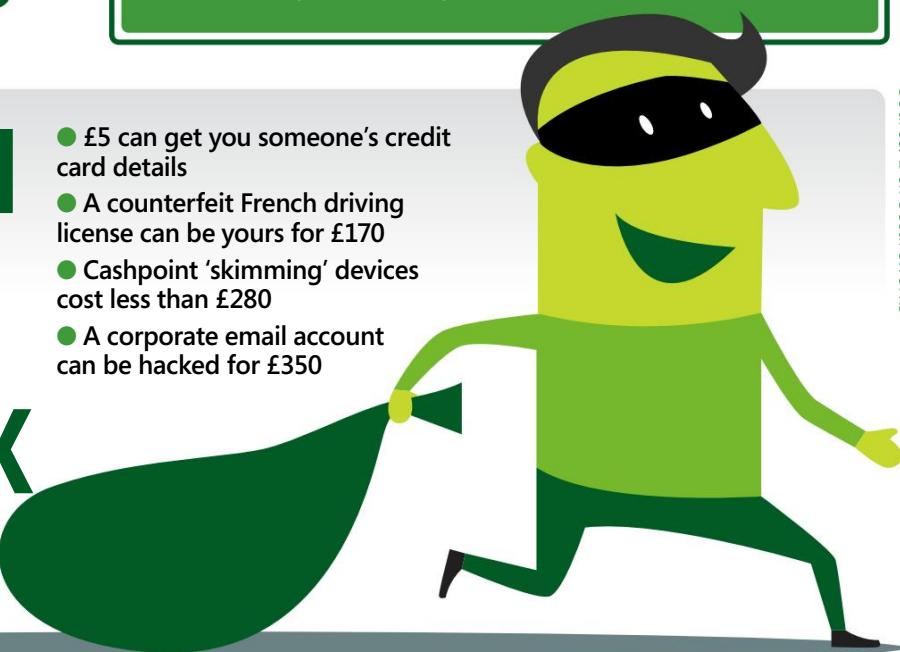


TOP OCULUS RIFT FACTS

- In 2011, at the age of 18, Rift inventor Palmer Luckey hacked together a prototype virtual reality headset in his parents' garage.
- A year later Luckey launched Oculus, to create and market the Rift headset. The company was originally going to be called StepN2theGAME.
- Later that year, Oculus launched a Kickstarter campaign so enthusiasts could buy a developer version (devkit) of the headset for \$300 each.
- Within 36 hours the devkit had accumulated \$1 million in funding.
- The Rift's success caught the attention of Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg, who bought Oculus for \$2 billion in March 2014.
- A second devkit, dubbed DK2, was launched in July 2014. It made refinements on the earlier model – and shipped over 100,000 units.
- The consumer edition of the Oculus Rift, which costs \$599, started shipping earlier this year.
- However, to run the Rift you'll need a decent PC, which could add up to an extra \$999 (£700).
- 212 games are compatible with the Oculus Rift, and the consumer version comes with 200,000 virtual-reality photographs.
- The Rift has received great reviews. TechRadar describe it as "an outstanding device that delivers the kind of virtual reality we've only ever dreamed of".

HOW MUCH ARE ITEMS ON THE TECH BLACK MARKET?

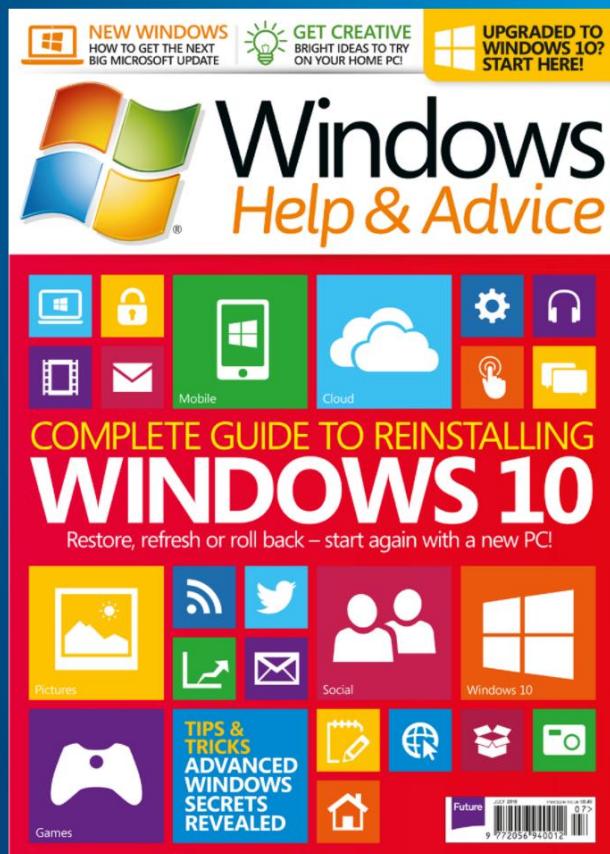
- £5 can get you someone's credit card details
- A counterfeit French driving license can be yours for £170
- Cashpoint 'skimming' devices cost less than £280
- A corporate email account can be hacked for £350





Windows Help & Advice

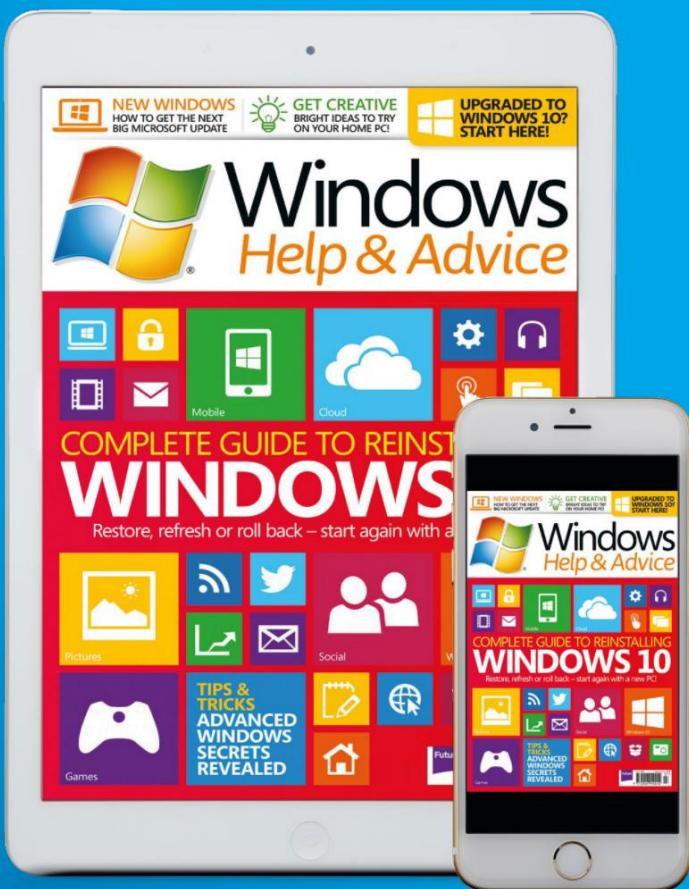
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The image shows the front cover of the Windows Help & Advice magazine. At the top, there are three promotional banners: 'NEW WINDOWS HOW TO GET THE NEXT BIG MICROSOFT UPDATE', 'GET CREATIVE BRIGHT IDEAS TO TRY ON YOUR HOME PC!', and 'UPGRADED TO WINDOWS 10? START HERE!'. Below these is the magazine title 'Windows Help & Advice' with a large orange 'Help & Advice' subtitle. To the right of the title is a red circular badge with the text 'SAVE 31%'. Below the title is a grid of colorful icons representing various Windows features like mobile, cloud, and social media. The main headline on the cover is 'COMPLETE GUIDE TO REINSTALLING WINDOWS'. Below it, a sub-headline reads 'Restore, refresh or roll back – start again with a new PC!' followed by a section titled 'TIPS & TRICKS ADVANCED WINDOWS SECRETS REVEALED'. In the center foreground, there is a smartphone displaying the same magazine cover, and behind it is a tablet also showing the magazine's digital version.

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Restore, refresh or reinstall Windows

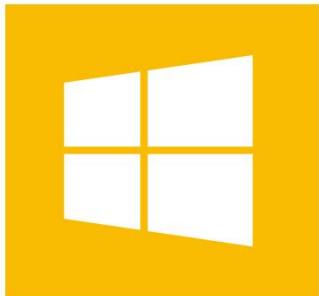


Is your PC behaving strangely or sluggishly? Read on to discover your options for restoring Windows 10 to its absolute best

Windows 10 is pretty tough, but if you find yourself in a situation where something has gone wrong, what can you do to get your machine back up and running?

Thankfully, the latest version of Windows comes with everything you need to take charge of various problem and fix them using a combination of

different tools. In this feature, we'll show you how to make sure your important data is backed up first, and then we'll investigate the utilities that can bring your device back to life, from a simple rollback of key system files and settings, to a full-blown reinstall of Windows itself. It could be that a restore will do the trick instead of a more radical reinstalling of Windows.



Take a backup of Windows

Keep your work safe with the File History feature

Taking the steps required to protect your files is crucial. Think about the photos, home movies, music, work documents and other files and settings that would be lost in the event of a disaster! The good news is backing up files couldn't be easier, and the tools you need are provided in Windows 10 itself.

When it comes to backing up files, the File History tool is your first port of call. To access it, click 'Start > Settings > Update & security > Backup', then follow the step-by-step guide on page 22 to set it up to work with your backup drive, whether that's an external USB drive, a network share or network attached drive.

By default, the built-in File History tool backs up all the content from your libraries, contacts, favourites, OneDrive folder and desktop. If you want to back up any folders, as well, you can do so by adding them to a library, and you can

choose 'Exclude folders' from File History's 'More options' screen if you want to remove specific folders from the backup.

Once you've set everything up, click 'Turn on' and File History starts backing up your files, including the different versions, enabling you to roll back to earlier revisions.

Quick recovery

There are two ways to recover files. Firstly, if you want to restore lost or deleted files, click 'Restore files from a current backup' in the 'More options' section of File History. From here, you can browse your backups by location or library, or search for specific content.

If you want to restore an earlier version of a file, browse for it, select the file and click 'History' on the Home tab to see the versions you want.

When it comes to backing up other key settings and files, the guide on page 22 shows you how.

The screenshot shows a Windows File History window titled 'OWV108.ex0_fileexpl - File History'. It displays a grid of files with their names and extensions, such as 'OWV108.ex0_fileexpl.no.png', 'OWV108.ex0_fileexpl.p1.png', and 'OWV108.ex0_fileexpl.p3.pr'. A context menu is open over the file 'OWV108.ex0_fileexpl.p3.pr', with options 'Preview' and 'Restore' visible. Below the grid, a note reads: 'File History enables you to back up key files automatically'.

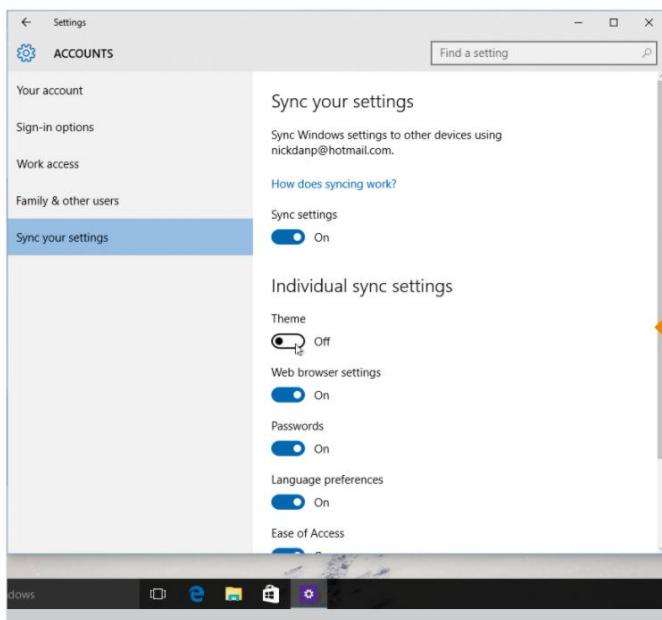
Back up your files online

Add an extra layer to your emergency recovery plan

As anyone who's experienced a hardware failure will know, you can never have too many backups, so even after using File History to back up your files, you should explore another option, just in case. We recommend using an online backup, because it means there's a copy of your files stored in a separate physical location for extra protection.

The obvious choice for Windows 10 users is to use the free OneDrive desktop app, which enables you to sync up to 5GB of files to the cloud for absolutely nothing. You'll find it on your Start screen – just click (or tap) on the OneDrive title to launch it.

If you need more storage space, you can purchase additional gigabytes in the 'Manage storage > Upgrade' area of OneDrive online. The 50GB plan is £1.99 per month, or you can get 1TB plus Office 365 for £5.99 a month for one user. Pay £7.99 a month, however, and you'll get Office 365 plus a whopping 1TB of storage each for 5 users.



Back up your settings

Use Windows 10's Sync Your Settings tool for extra protection if disaster strikes

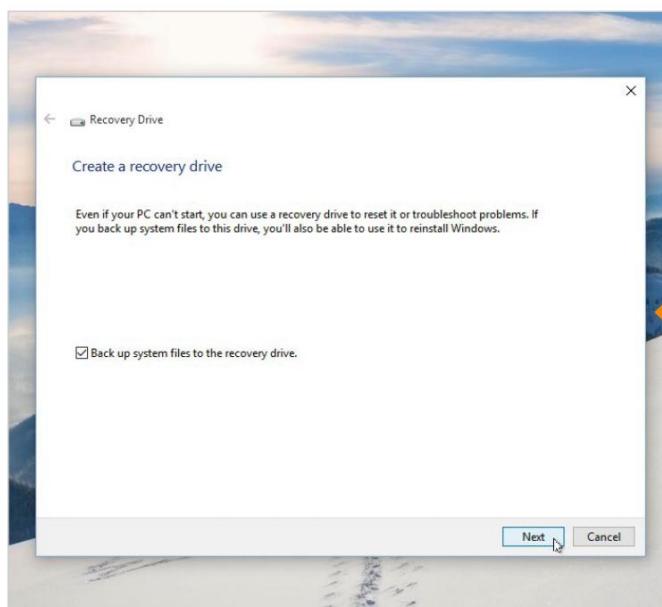
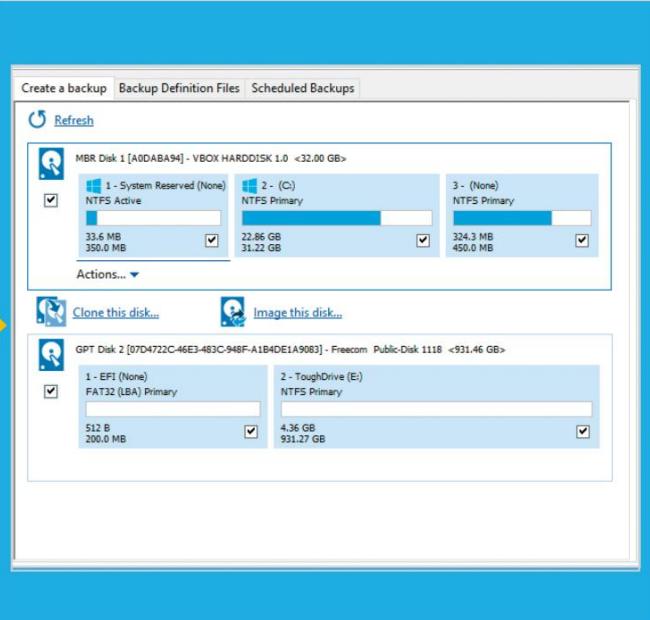
If you log into your Windows 10 PC using your Microsoft account, you can take advantage of Windows' built-in Sync Your Settings feature. Although this tool is designed to synchronise personal settings across your Windows devices, it also serves as a backup for key preferences so you don't have to set them up again should disaster strike. Make sure 'Sync Your Settings' is on and choose the settings you wish to back up – to do this open Settings from the Start menu, select 'Accounts' followed by 'Sync your settings'. You'll find switches to turn the feature on and off, and you can also exclude settings from the backup, such as passwords or browser settings.

Take a drive image

Make a complete backup of your computer's hard drive with Macrium Reflect Free

Having a backup of your entire system enables you to quickly restore your PC to exactly how it once was. Windows 10 has a built-in drive image tool, but you can get better, more efficient results with Macrium Reflect Free. Download it at www.macrium.com/reflectfree.aspx.

There are two basic back-up options, but we're going to choose 'Create an image of the partition(s) required to backup and restore Windows'. Make sure the correct drives have been selected, then click the '...' button next to 'Folder' to select a location on your back-up drive. Finally, click 'Finish > OK' and the backup will be created. Once complete, check that the backup is not corrupt by switching to the Restore tab and clicking 'Verify image' next to it. Finally, select 'Other tasks > Create rescue media' to create a Macrium recovery disc or USB drive.

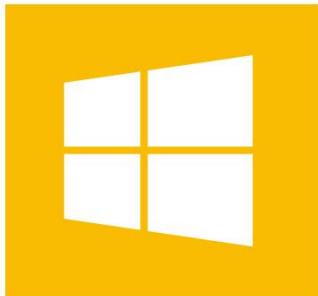


Create rescue media

Taking a few minutes to make a recovery USB drive could save you hassle in the future

A recovery USB flash drive lets you access essential repair and recovery options that can save the day if your PC or tablet fails to boot. If your Windows 8.1 device has a recovery partition, you can store that on the drive, too. A basic recovery drive without a recovery partition requires a 256MB USB flash drive, but you'll need a drive at least 4GB in size if you plan to make a backup of the recovery partition, too (recommended).

To create the drive, plug in your USB flash drive, then type the word **recovery** into the search box. Select the 'Create a recovery drive' option under 'Settings', then follow the prompts to create your recovery stick. After the process has finished, select the option to delete the recovery partition only if you're low on storage space.



Restore or roll back your PC

If the problem with your device is only relatively minor, then you can often fix it without affecting your data

Your PC has run into problems and you have exhausted all troubleshooting angles, so what can you do to try to get things working properly again? The next step in Windows 10, like earlier versions of Windows, is to investigate the System Restore tool. System Restore works in a similar way to File History, only it affects system and program files instead of your personal data. Snapshots of these files, known as Restore Points, are taken at key moments during general use, and if you run into problems, you can try rolling back to a previous Restore Point to see whether it fixes the problem.

System Restore usually works best when your problem has been caused by a recent change to your computer, typically through installing or updating new hardware, software or Windows itself. The step-by-step guide opposite reveals how to go about accessing and using System Restore, either from within Windows or via your computer's recovery menu.

Roll back your PC

If System Restore doesn't do enough to fix the problem, then you can perform a more radical step – go back to the previous build of Windows 10.

When you perform a major update of Windows, or Windows 10 installs a major new version, it creates a backup of the previous build, just in case you run into any problems. This backup is stored in the Windows.old folder – it can take up a fair

bit of space, and can be removed using Disk Cleanup, but if you have the spare capacity, leave it in place in case you ever need to use it to fix a problem.

Rolling back your system in this way works in a similar fashion to System Restore – your data is unaffected, but any changes made since the new build was installed, such as changes to settings or programs, newly installed apps, and so on, will be undone.

If you need to use the rollback feature, and Windows is working well enough for you to access it normally, open Settings before selecting 'Update & security' followed by 'Go back to an earlier build'.

If Windows won't boot, use your recovery drive or select 'Troubleshoot > Advanced options' to access the option.

You'll see a message telling you Windows is getting things ready. You'll

then be asked to give a reason for why you're rolling back Windows – this helps highlight issues that may require an urgent fix.

You'll then be given a brief summary of the changes being made (no specific details are available, unlike with System Restore, sadly), with a prompt to back up for safety's sake (if File History is turned on, you're probably covered). Click 'Next', make a note of the warning about your logon password and click 'Next' again. Sit back and wait while your PC is restored.

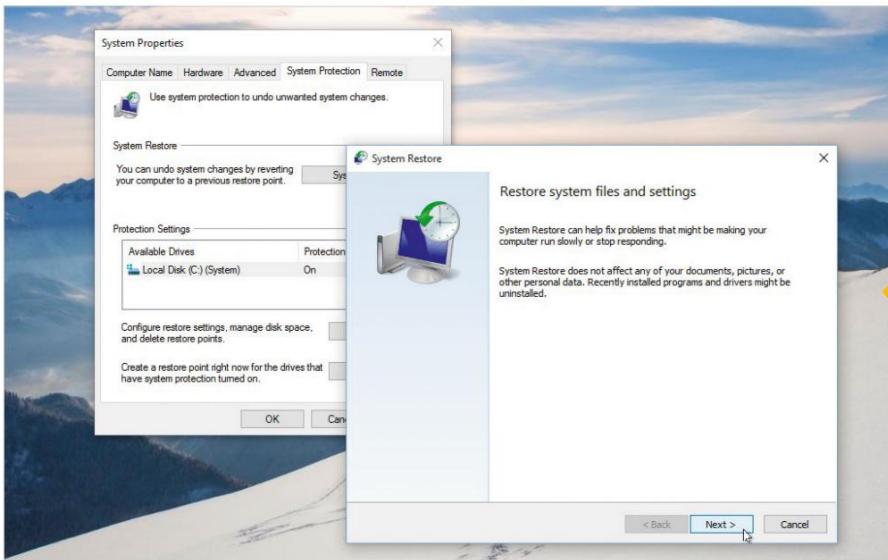
If all goes well, you should have a working version of Windows 10 again, with just a few maintenance tasks to perform (reinstalling programs, updating settings, and so on) before everything's back to normal.

Beyond a rollback

Unfortunately, rolling back your PC to the previous version of Windows 10 won't always cure *all* issues. You may find your device still doesn't function as it should after you've refreshed it, or the procedure might not work. If Windows comes across a problem, it'll inform you, try to resolve it and, if the fix fails, undo all the changes it's made, leaving you where you started.

If all else fails, fixing your PC will involve something more drastic – a complete wipe and reinstall of Windows itself in what is now termed a 'reset' of your PC. You can perform this without losing your data or by wiping the drive entirely, but the end result is the same and you'll lose all your settings and apps.

"If System Restore doesn't fix the problem you can perform a more radical step – roll back your PC"



System Restore

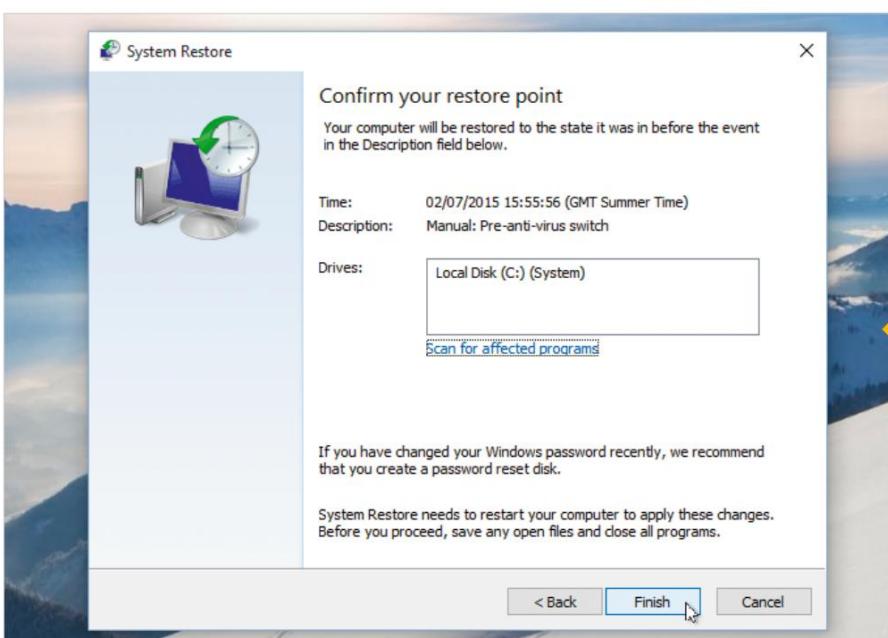
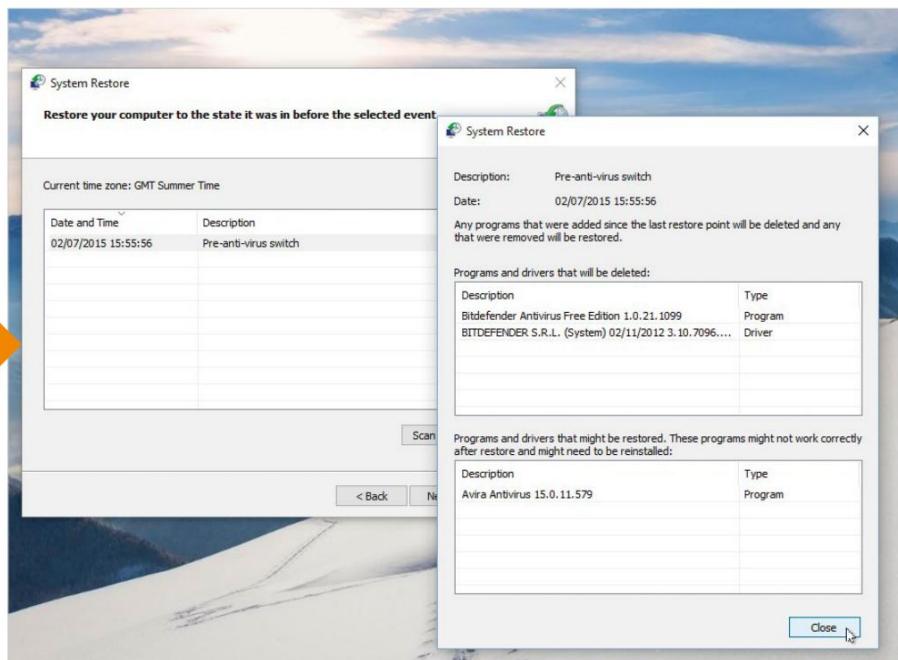
For when things go wrong

If you can boot into Windows, access System Restore via the desktop. Type 'System Protection' into the search bar and click 'Create a restore point' followed by 'System Restore...'. If Windows won't start, you can use System Restore automatically. Or, boot from your USB recovery disk, select 'Troubleshoot', 'Advanced options' and then 'System Restore'.

Restore Points

Decide how far Windows should turn back the clock

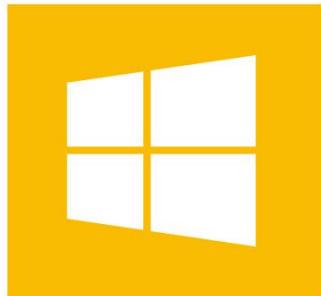
By default, Windows recommends you use the most recent Restore Point – in fact, you may even find it's the only Restore Point offered. Make a note of the time and date it was taken, and click 'Scan for affected programs' to see which programs and hardware drivers will be affected by rolling back your PC to this point. You'll see the programs that will be removed if you choose it, and others that will be restored. This should help you decide whether to use it or not.



Send your PC back in time

Choose a Restore Point to undo problematic changes

To restore a recommended Restore Point, click 'Next' and follow the prompts to roll back your PC. If this doesn't work, or you want to try an earlier Restore Point, select 'Choose a different Restore Point' and click 'Next'. Browse through the available points, noting what would be affected by choosing each one. After restoring, you can undo the process if it doesn't have the desired effect.



Reinstall or recover

If all else fails, a full recovery or reinstall will fix your problem – but make sure you've backed up first!

There's no need to tear your hair out if nothing seems to help with the troubleshooting. You can go the whole hog, wipe your hard drive clean and restore Windows to its factory settings. This approach will delete any personal data you have saved on the drive, so make sure it's fully backed up first using our guidelines earlier.

It's also a good idea to make a note of any programs you've installed on your

PC, so you can download and restore them after Windows has been reinstalled.

Reinstall Windows

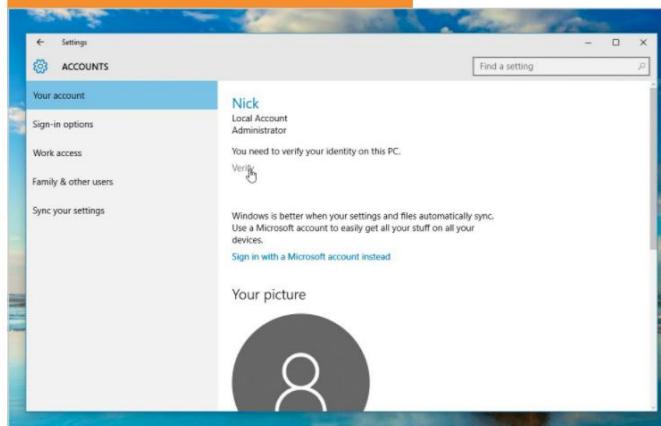
Microsoft knows how painful the reinstall process can be, which is why with Windows 10 it's gone out of its way to make the process easier than ever.

The simplest way to reinstall Windows is through Windows itself. Click 'Start > Settings > Update & security > Recovery' and then choose 'Get started' under

'Reset this PC'. A full reinstall wipes your entire drive, so select 'Remove everything' to ensure a clean reinstall is performed. If Windows fails to load, you should be shown the troubleshooting screen, which you can also access via your recovery drive if you created one. In these circumstances, select 'Troubleshoot' followed by 'Reset your PC'.

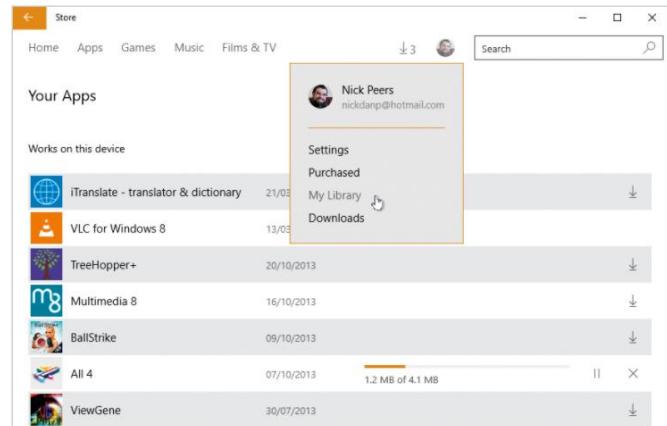
One of the benefits of this new approach is that Windows attempts to recover from a previously created

USE YOUR BACKUPS



1 Restore settings

You'll need to log into your Microsoft account in order to restore your synced settings and previously installed apps. Before these are all restored, you'll need to verify your account on this device. Click 'Start > Settings > Accounts > Your account' and click the 'Verify' link to get the code required to add your PC back into the trusted list.



2 Restore apps

Open the Windows Store ('Start > All Apps > Store'), click your user photo and choose 'My Library' to access all previously installed apps (and your settings). Click 'Show all' and then click the download button next to each app you wish to restore. Once done, click your user photo again, but this time choose 'Downloads' to update the built-in apps.

system image or – failing that – using a special series of install files that download the latest version of Windows during the reinstall process. In practical terms, this means you'll avoid a lengthy series of post-install updates to download and install in order to bring Windows itself back up to date. The reset process is simple – your PC reboots, then after a pause while things are being prepared, you may be confronted by a screen asking you if you want to remove files from all of your drives, or just the drive that Windows is installed on.

Unless you're disposing of the PC, select 'Only the drive where Windows is installed' to protect data files stored on other partitions or drives.

You'll also be given an option to 'clean the drive fully' – again, skip this unless you're selling on your PC. Finally, click 'Reset' and let your PC do the rest.

Post reinstall

Once restored you'll have a brand-new system and it's time to reinstall your apps, apply preferences and restore backed-up data. The step-by-step walkthrough shown below reveals everything you need to know. Of course, you'll need to reinstall your key desktop applications, too, after this has been done. Again, take the time to download the latest versions and set each one up. This can all take an hour or two – to speed up future reinstalls, check out the box below-right to create the perfect Windows image, complete with all your apps, programs and settings in place.



Belarc Advisor
Lost or forgotten your Windows or software product keys? Get them back before reinstalling with this. www.belarc.com



HANDY RECOVERY TOOLS

Five freebies to help you get going again in Windows 8.1

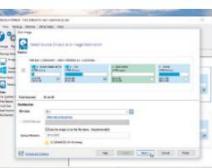
Comodo Backup
This tool gives you granular control over what you back up. www.comodo.com



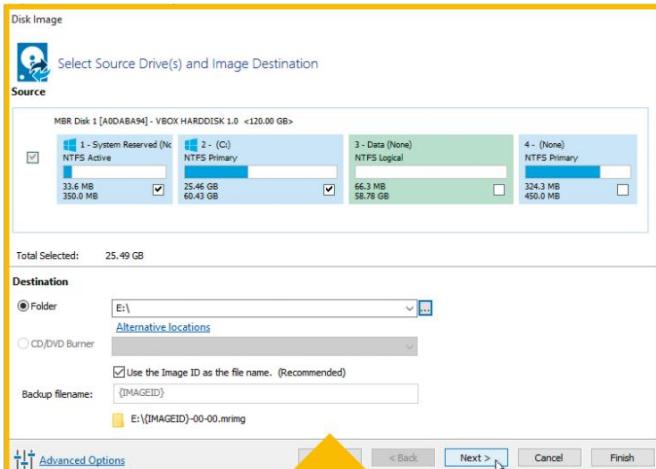
Partition Wizard Home Edition
Partitioning your hard drive lets you separate your data from your programs. www.partitionwizard.com



DriverEasy
This handy tool can find and install any hardware drivers you can't identify after reinstalling Windows. www.drivereeasy.com



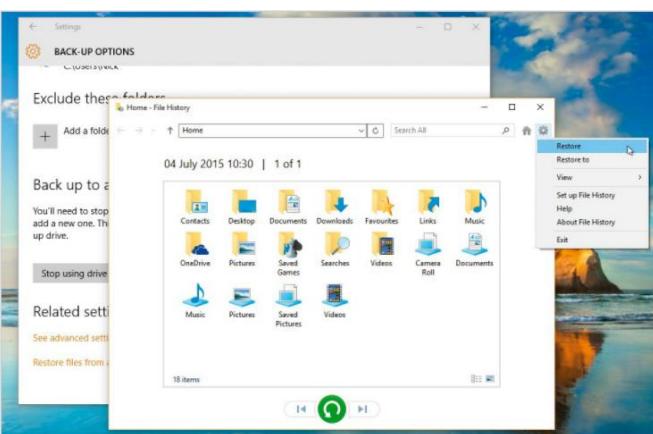
Ninite
This tool lets you select lots of popular apps, then download and install them all in a single package. www.ninite.com



Speed up future Windows reinstalls

Get your perfect Windows setup quickly and easily next time you have to reinstall

Reinstalling and setting up Windows again can be a chore, so speed up future reinstalls by creating a perfect recovery image. After reinstalling Windows and apps, reinstall your key programs and set them up as you like them. Then, before you restore your File History backup, launch Macrium Reflect Free and take a new drive image. Create a recovery CD or USB stick following the prompts, and next time you need to reinstall Windows, make sure your File History backup is up to date, then boot from your recovery media before restoring this drive image. All you'll need to do is bring Windows and your apps up to date, and reinstall new programs. Before restoring your File History backup, create a new drive image to use the next time you need to reinstall Windows.

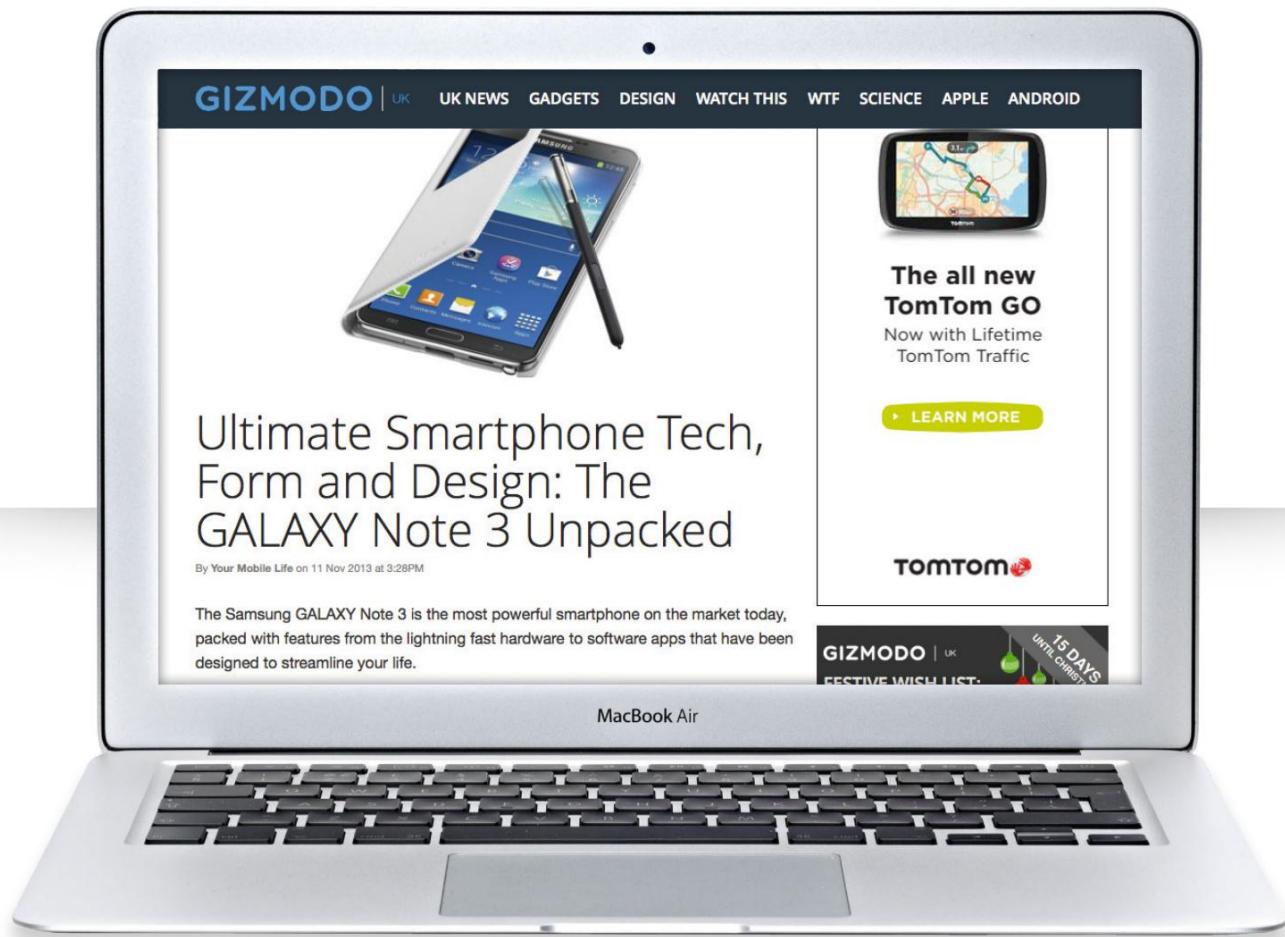


3 Restore files

Finally, restore your files using File History. With your back-up device plugged in, click 'Start > Settings > Update & security > Backup'. Click 'Add a drive' to select your back-up device, then click 'More Options' followed by 'Restore files from a current backup'. Click the Settings cog and choose 'Restore' to recover your data. This can take a little time, so be patient.

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Explore

► WINDOWS TIPS ► INTERNET ADVICE ► EXCITING NEW PROJECTS

Welcome



Whether you're stuck for inspiration or want to become a master of your

Windows computer, our Explore section is the place to come. Each month we pack in tutorials covering a range of subjects suitable for all levels of expertise.

This month we look at how to use iTunes in Windows, fix sound problems, and get more done on your PC than ever before with some great productivity advice. Enjoy our selection of tutorials and I'll see you next time, for more essential Windows hints, tips and advice.

Graham Barlow

Editor-in-chief

graham.barlow@futurenet.com

Full listing...

26 Learn how to use Apple's iTunes in Windows 10

30 Make your PC easier to use with the built-in accessibility tools

32 Fix sound problems in Windows 10 by following these simple steps

36 Prevent screen-time eyestrain with the brilliant f.lux program

38 Get more done on your PC with these productivity tips and tricks

40 Back up your files to Google Drive and keep them safe

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Your guide
Cat Ellis says...

"Windows 10's built-in accessibility tools are here to help"

Turn to page 30 for more



Our promise to you...

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Every issue, we guarantee to pack the magazine with great tutorials teaching you all the best things you can do with your PC. Each article features step-by-step instructions to make learning new skills fast and enjoyable.

Customise Windows to work your way

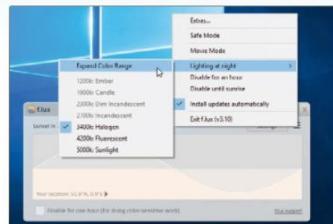
We all know how to do the basics but getting the most from Windows isn't always easy. Our dedication to the operating system means you get the very best tips and tricks for all versions of Windows.

Get more from your favourite websites

We all have our list of favourite sites but often we miss out on great features because they're difficult to use or hidden from sight. We'll show you how to do more online, for a more satisfying web life.

Discover new programs with our help

From speed-up and security software to superb photo apps, there's always something new to try on your PC. The Windows Store in Windows 10 and Windows 8.1 is packed with software to download.



Learn how to... Use iTunes in Windows 10



Your guide [Tim Hardwick](#) says...

"Give iTunes 12 a test drive on your PC – and learn how to downgrade if you don't get on"

At a glance

Skill level...

► Anyone can do it

Straightforward

Tricky in parts

Suitable for...

Windows 10

Windows 8.1

Windows 7

Apple's iTunes app allows you to access the iTunes Store and purchase new media, as well as keep your iOS device backed up and up to date. In this tutorial, we'll introduce you to the latest version, iTunes 12.

iTunes 12 enables you to use Apple's newest Store features, such as Family Sharing (which lets you share your purchases with up to six people in your family, without having to dole out accounts or share your passwords). It also brings a few changes to the interface compared to the previous version.

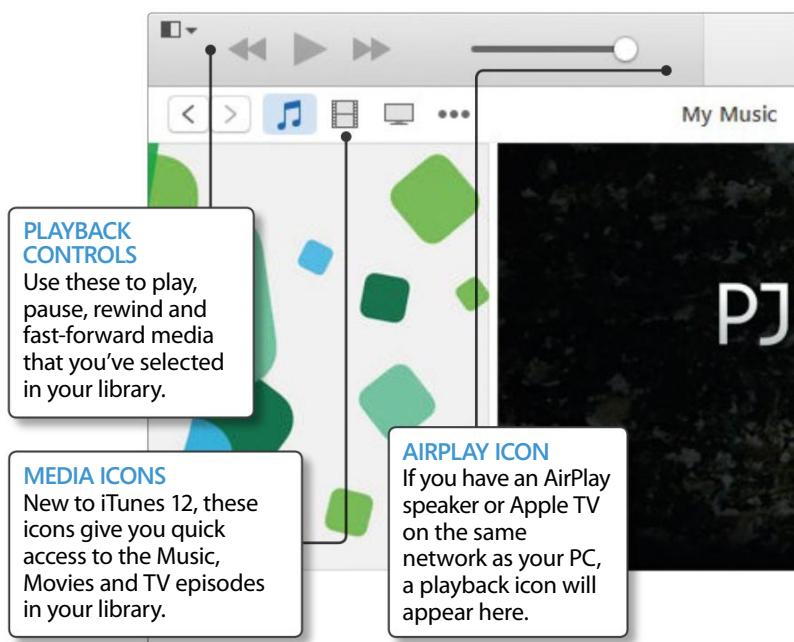
Of course, iTunes 12 isn't perfect by any means, and some Windows 10 users have experienced issues upgrading from iTunes 11. We'll show you the best way to install iTunes 12 to avoid those issues, and if you just don't like the new app, we'll also show you how to downgrade to the previous version. Let's get started!

Step-by-step | Try out iTunes 12

Name		Status	5% CPU	32% Memory	0% Disk	0% Network
Host Process for Windows Tasks			0%	4.9 MB	0 MB/s	0 Mbps
igfxCUIService Module			0%	1.0 MB	0 MB/s	0 Mbps
igfxEM Module			0%	1.9 MB	0 MB/s	0 Mbps
igfxHK Module			0%	1.3 MB	0 MB/s	0 Mbps
igfxTray.exe			0%	1.7 MB	0 MB/s	0 Mbps
InstallAgent			0%	6.8 MB	0 MB/s	0 Mbps
Intel(R) Local Management Serv...			0%	2.2 MB	0 MB/s	0 Mbps
iPodService Module (64-bit)			0%	1.8 MB	0 MB/s	0 Mbps
iTunesHelper			0%	3.1 MB	0 MB/s	0 Mbps
Microsoft Distributed Transactio...			0%	1.6 MB	0 MB/s	0 Mbps

1 Previous versions

If you have a previous version of iTunes running, close it. iTunes can stay resident in memory, so a restart is best. Also, disable the iTunes Helper that starts up with Windows – right-click on an empty area on the Taskbar and select 'Task Manager'. When Task Manager shows, click the 'Startup' tab, look through the list for 'iTunes Helper', right-click the item and select 'Disable'.



PLAYBACK CONTROLS
Use these to play, pause, rewind and fast-forward media that you've selected in your library.

MEDIA ICONS
New to iTunes 12, these icons give you quick access to the Music, Movies and TV episodes in your library.

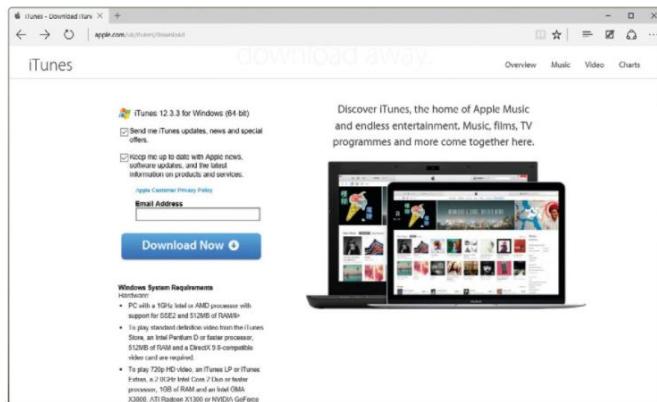
AIRPLAY ICON
If you have an AirPlay speaker or Apple TV on the same network as your PC, a playback icon will appear here.

Songs

	Man	Skepta - Konnichiwa	£0.79
	Roses (feat. ROZES)	The Chainsmokers - Bou...	£0.99
	Just Like Fire (From ...	P!NK - Just Like Fire (Fro...	£0.99
	Cheap Thrills (feat. ...	Sia - Cheap Thrills (feat. ...	£0.99

Start 3-Month Free Trial

ALTERNATIVE & ROCK HIT
Limited Time: Albums from £4



iTunes

Discover iTunes, the home of Apple Music and endless entertainment. Music, films, TV programmes and more come together here.

Windows System Requirements

- PC with a 1GHz Intel or AMD processor with support for SSE2 and 1GB of RAM.
- 4GB of available hard disk space for iTunes. An Intel Pentium 4 or faster processor, 512MB of RAM and a DirectX 9.0c compatible video card are required.
- For Mac OS X, an Intel Core 2 Duo or faster processor, 1GB of RAM and an Intel GMA X3100/ATI Radeon X1300 or NVIDIA GeForce

Download Now

2 Download and install

Download the latest version of iTunes at www.apple.com/itunes/download. Make sure to download the right version (32 or 64-bit) for your PC. The download page defaults to your PC, but if you were running a 32-bit version of Windows and then switched to Windows 10, the 32-bit installer might not work properly. Visit <https://support.apple.com/downloads/itunes> for all downloads.

Explore

Use iTunes in Windows 10

The screenshot shows the iTunes Store window. At the top, there are navigation buttons: Playlists, For You, New, Radio, Connect, and a blue 'iTunes Store' button. Below these are sections for 'HARVEY' (New Album + Albums at Great Prices) and 'RUNNING HITS for 59p'. The main area displays a grid of music tracks with their covers, names, and prices. A search bar is at the top right. On the right side, there's a sidebar with 'Music' and 'SEARCH BAR' sections, and a yellow 'TIM'S BEST TIP!' box.

Jargon buster!

► Apple ID
This is the email and password combination you use to log into your iTunes account, and shouldn't be shared with anyone.

► Scrobbing
The act of sending the artists and titles of the songs you're playing in iTunes to your Last.fm profile.

► Smart Playlists
iTunes can automatically create playlists based on track information such as artist, genre and year of release.

MAIN SECTIONS
You can switch between your music, playlists, radio stations and the iTunes Store by clicking these title buttons.

ACCOUNT SIGN-IN
This icon allows you to sign in and out of your account, redeem codes, and access wishlist and purchase history.

SEARCH BAR
You can search your personal media collection as well as the iTunes Store by typing into this field.

Music

All Genres ▾

MUSIC QUICK LINKS

Redeem Account
Send iTunes Gifts Support

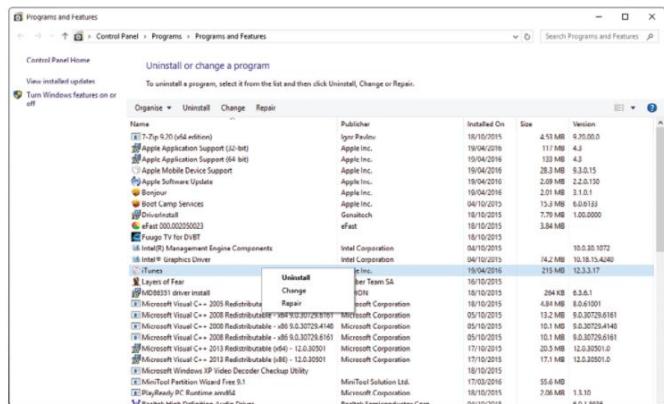
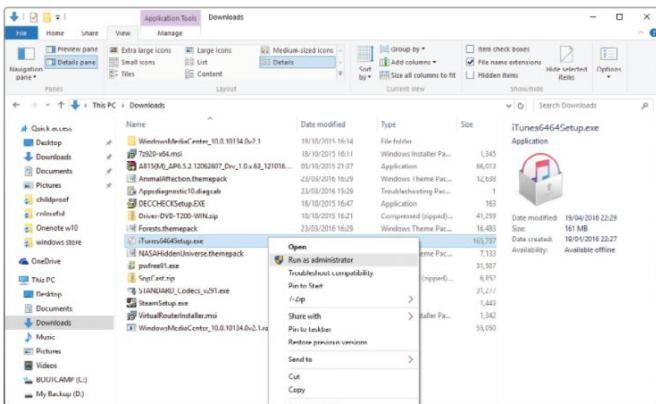
Beats 1
Apple Music Festival
iTunes Match

Purchased
Complete My Album
Recommended for You
My Wish List

New Artists 2016

+

TIM'S BEST TIP!
To enable 'Family Sharing', open the 'Settings' app on your iOS device, select 'iCloud' and tap 'Set up Family Sharing'.

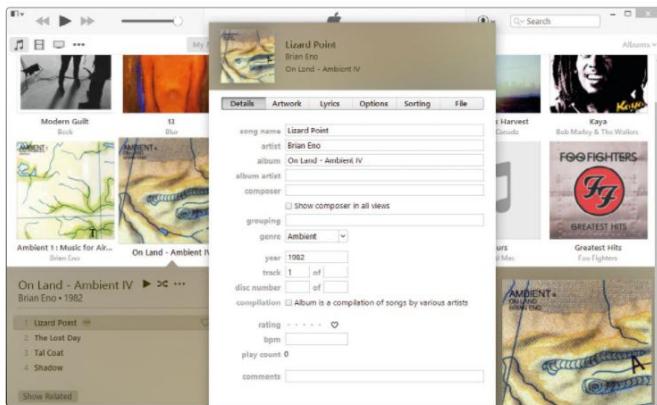


3 Launch iTunes

If you're upgrading from iTunes 11, don't run the setup file yet. Instead, right-click it and select 'Run as administrator'. Click 'Next' and then click 'Install'. If you're launching iTunes for the first time, launch the setup file and follow the on-screen instructions. iTunes will ask if you want to locate music on your PC. After iTunes has finished locating your music, it will add them to the library.

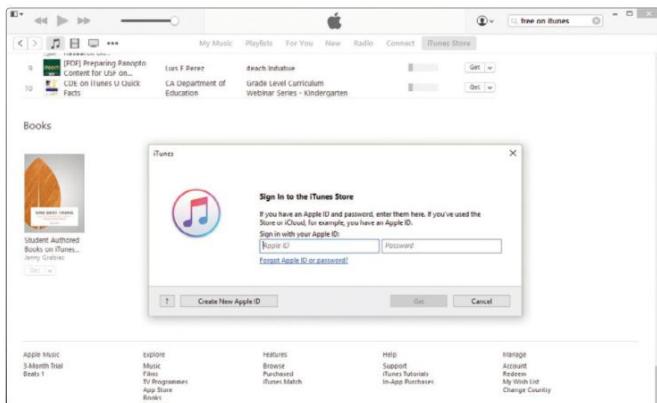
4 Installation issues

If you're upgrading to iTunes 12 and it doesn't install successfully, uninstall the existing version as follows: press [Win]+[R], type `appwiz.cpl` and hit [Enter]. Scroll down, select 'iTunes', right-click and select 'Uninstall'. Also, uninstall other Apple software components listed, such as Mobile Device Support, Software Update and Bonjour. Restart when the uninstall completes.



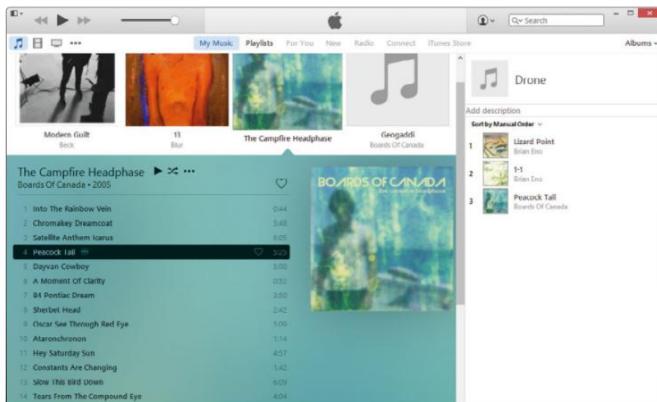
5 Organise music

If this is your first time using iTunes and you imported music, it's a good to get your library organised. As it grows, it gets more difficult to keep tidy. Labelling up your music will allow you to search through it more easily and enable **Smart Playlists** to function properly. To add information to a track, right-click it in your library, select 'Get Info', and click on the 'Details' tab.



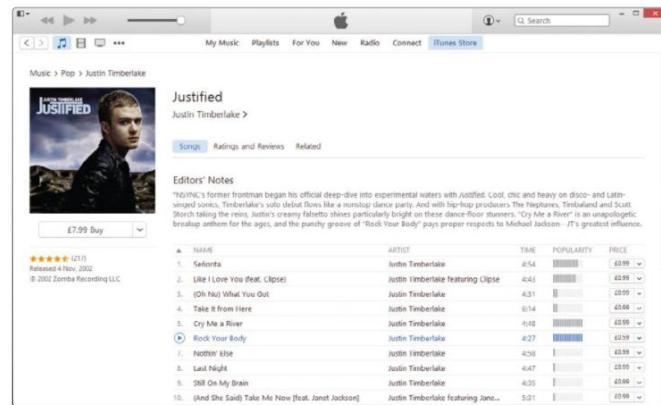
7 Get an account

To get an iTunes account without buying anything, download something free from the Store. To find free items, look in the right column of the window and click any link that includes the word 'Free'. When you find a free item, click 'Get' beneath its icon. When asked to sign in with an **Apple ID**, click 'Create Apple ID'. Choose 'None' as the payment type when prompted.



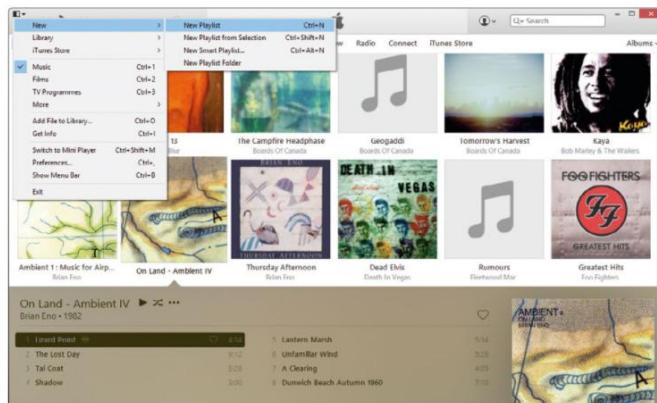
9 Edit a playlist

To make changes to a playlist at a later date, click the plus sign above the playlist and start dragging items to it, as before. You should be able to drag the songs in the list to reorder them; if you can't drag a song, click the column heading above the numbers. To remove an item, select it and press the Delete key (this won't remove the item from your library or hard disk).



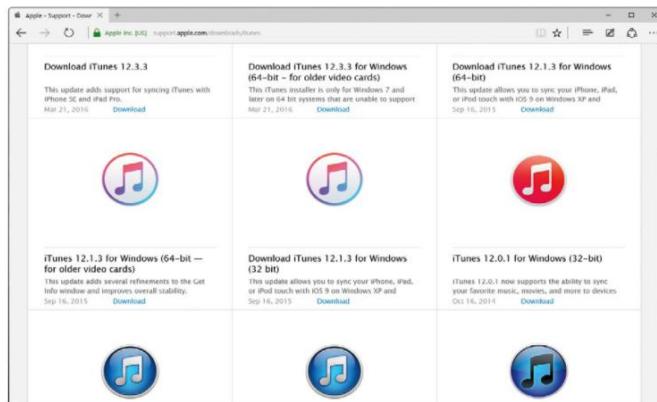
6 The iTunes Store

The iTunes Store is a great way to expand your music collection, as well as rent or buy movies and TV series for watching through iTunes or an Apple TV. Explore the Store by clicking its button or search within it by typing in the search bar and selecting the iTunes Store results tab. Preview music by hovering your mouse over the track name and clicking play.



8 Create a playlist

Playlists are useful for grouping tracks to suit a mood, to organise songs around a theme, or to group songs to burn to a CD. To create a playlist, select 'New > New Playlist' from the menu button, top-left of the window. Type a name for your playlist, hit [Enter], and you'll see it in the sidebar. Add tracks to it by dragging them onto the sidebar. When you're finished, click 'Done'.



10 Downgrading iTunes

If you preferred iTunes 11, you can downgrade. Open the Start menu and select 'Control Panel', and choose 'Programs and Features'. Find iTunes in the program list, right-click on the item and then click 'Uninstall'. Once that's done, open a web browser and visit <https://support.apple.com/downloads/itunes>. Click the correct version of iTunes for your PC and the download will begin. ■

SPECIAL 300TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

Mac FORMAT



Available from www.macformat.com

Learn how to... Make your PC easier to access



Your guide *Cat Ellis* says...

"Everyone should be able to enjoy their PC to the full, and Windows 10's built-in accessibility tools are here to help"

At a glance

Skill level...

- Anyone can do it
- Straightforward
- Tricky in parts

Suitable for...

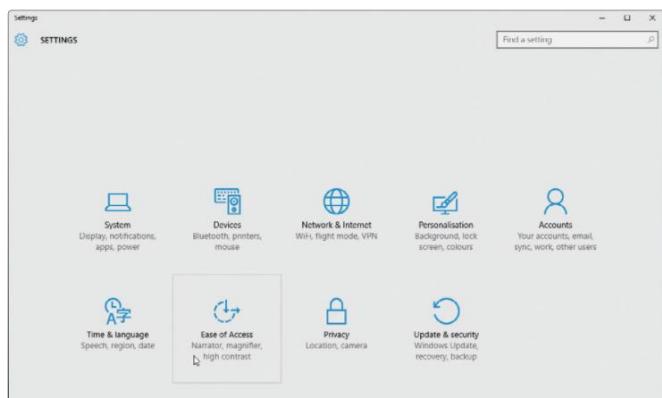
- Windows 10
- Windows 8.1
- Windows 7

With its combination of familiar features and intuitive new additions, Windows 10 is Microsoft's most user-friendly operating system to date. Its accessibility doesn't end with the new Start menu and straightforward Cortana search functions, though – Windows 10 also packs an impressive suite of extra tools to make using your PC as easy as possible.

In Windows 7, certain features (including the magnifier) were only available as part of the Aero display scheme, which put heavy demands on low-powered PCs. Other features, including the screen reader and audio descriptions were buried five menus deep. Not ideal if you're already having difficulty using your PC! Thankfully, with its new focus on accessibility, Microsoft has addressed all of these concerns – and done much more besides.

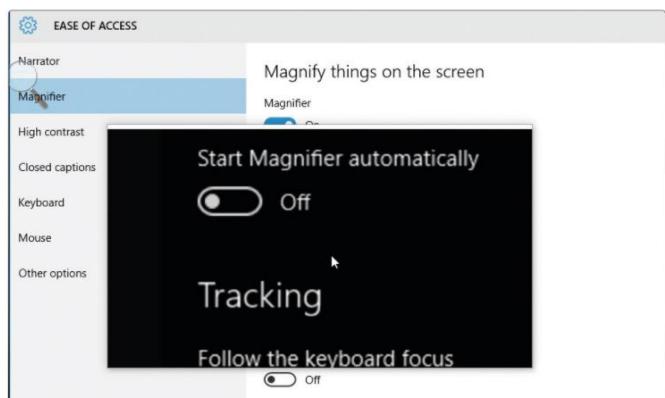


Step-by-step | Make Windows work for you



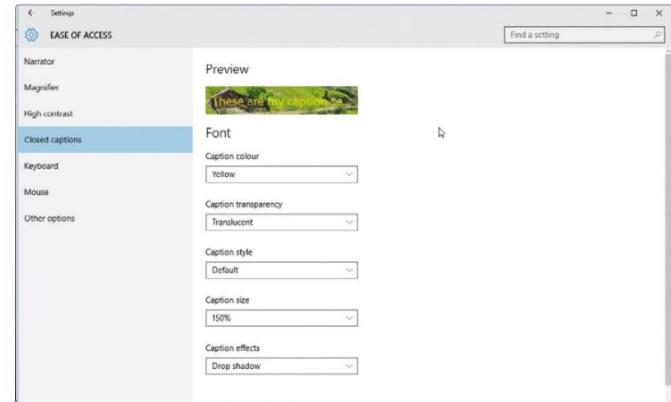
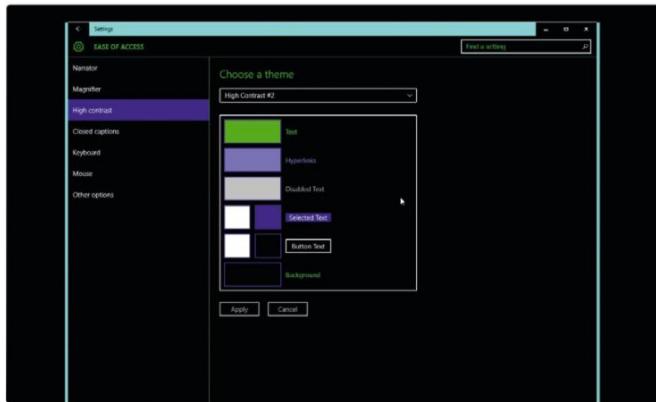
1 Read it aloud

Click 'Start > Settings > Ease of Access'. The first option is Narrator, which is ideal if you have difficulty reading text on screen. When activated, it reads text aloud when you move your mouse over a control, click or type text. Use the toggles below to decide which events should trigger it; turn all of them on to begin with, then deactivate any you find unnecessary.



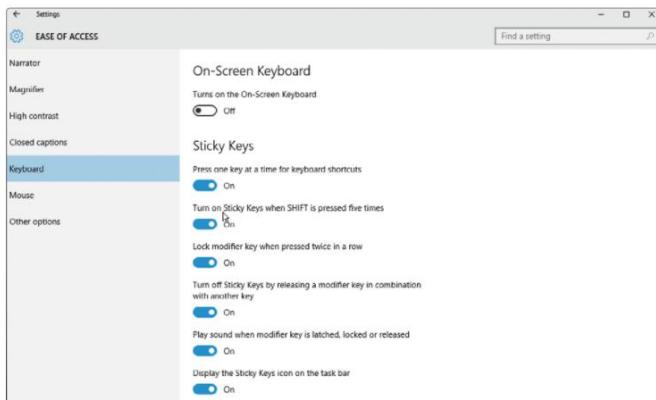
2 Get closer

If you sometimes have difficulty reading small text on your PC's screen, you might appreciate the Magnifier, which does what its name suggests. Use the toggle switch to activate it, then tap [Win]+[+] and [Win]+[-] to zoom in and out respectively. The magnifier can also invert the colours on your screen, which can make text easier to read on coloured backgrounds.



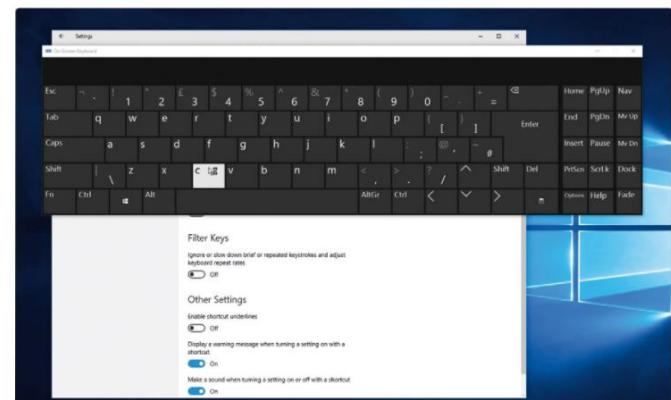
3 Bright and bold

If you'd rather make everything on screen more legible, or have trouble with colour blindness, take a look at the High Contrast setting. There are four options here – two with white backgrounds and two with black. These colour schemes make Windows itself much clearer visually, but websites and programs will be unaffected so you can choose to use the Magnifier as well.



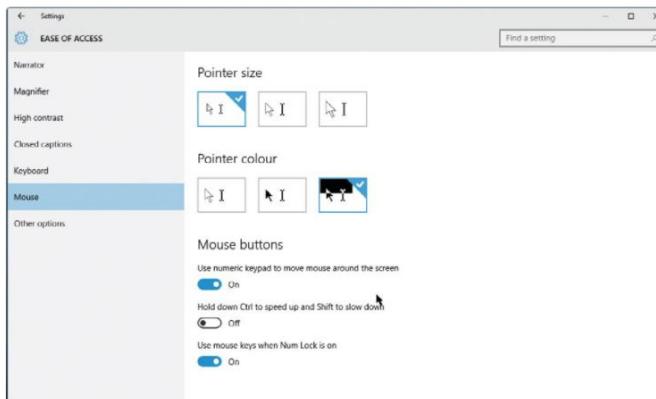
4 Clearer captions

Closed captions are displayed in many video programs for viewers who have limited hearing. Windows 10's Films and TV app supports closed captions; while a video is playing, right-click it and you'll see if the 'CC' option is available. Windows 10's Ease of Access centre let you customise the colour and size of the captions, and add effects to make them easier to see.



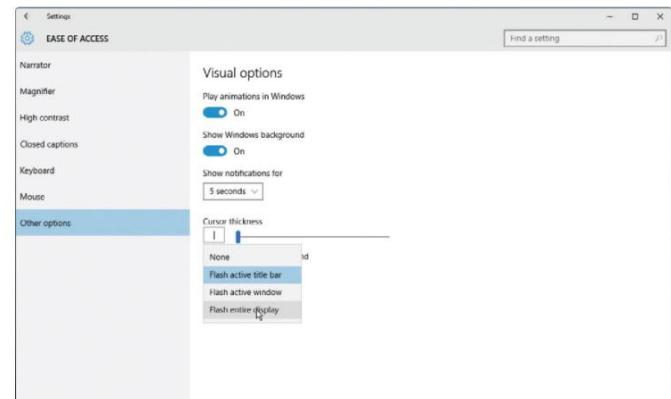
5 Shorter shortcuts

The Keyboard options are worth investigating even if you don't have any difficulty using Windows. One of the most useful is Sticky Keys, which removes the need for finger gymnastics when performing keyboard shortcuts – activate it, and you can tap each key in turn rather than reading across the board to press them simultaneously. Try it – tap [Ctrl], followed by [Alt] and [Delete].



6 Click to type

The on-screen keyboard is useful. You might choose to use it because you find using a regular keyboard difficult, or you may find it more convenient if you have a touchscreen. However, it isn't effective if you're worried about keyloggers – malicious programs that record what you type to steal your passwords and other information. An antivirus tool is your best bet here.



7 Mouse trap

The default mouse pointer can often be hard to see, particularly if your monitor has a high resolution. The Mouse settings in Ease of Access is therefore useful, letting you choose a size and colour that are easier to see and use. The option to move the cursor using the numeric keypad is handy if you find a mouse tricky to use, or if the battery in your cordless mouse has gone flat.

8 Crystal clear

Perhaps the most useful accessibility tool for writers is under 'Other options' – the ability to change the thickness of the text cursor to make it much easier to spot in your word processor of choice. We recommend experimenting with the other options here – particularly visual notifications for sound, which are helpful if you have limited hearing. ■

Learn how to...

Fix audio issues in Windows 10



Your guide [Tim Hardwick](#) says...

"Track down the source of your sound issues in Windows 10 by following these steps"

At a glance

Skill level...

► Anyone can do it

Straightforward

Tricky in parts

Suitable for...

Windows 10

Windows 8.1

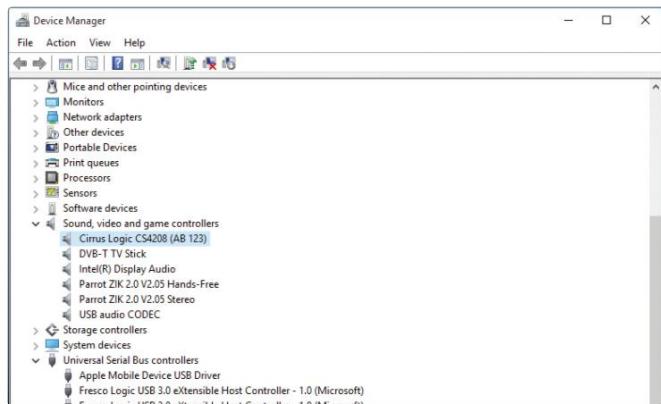
Windows 7

For all the benefits that come with upgrading to Windows 10, there have been reports that some people have experienced problems with sound output, leaving them unable to enjoy movies or hear anything at all from their PC's speakers.

For example, users whose PCs have VIA HD Audio have found they can only hear sound from certain apps. Fortunately, there's a workaround if you're affected by this issue. Right-click 'Playback Devices', right-click the audio output device and set it as the default device. Then select the device with your left mouse button, choose 'Properties', select the 'Enhancements' tab and check 'Disable all enhancements'. That should fix the problem.

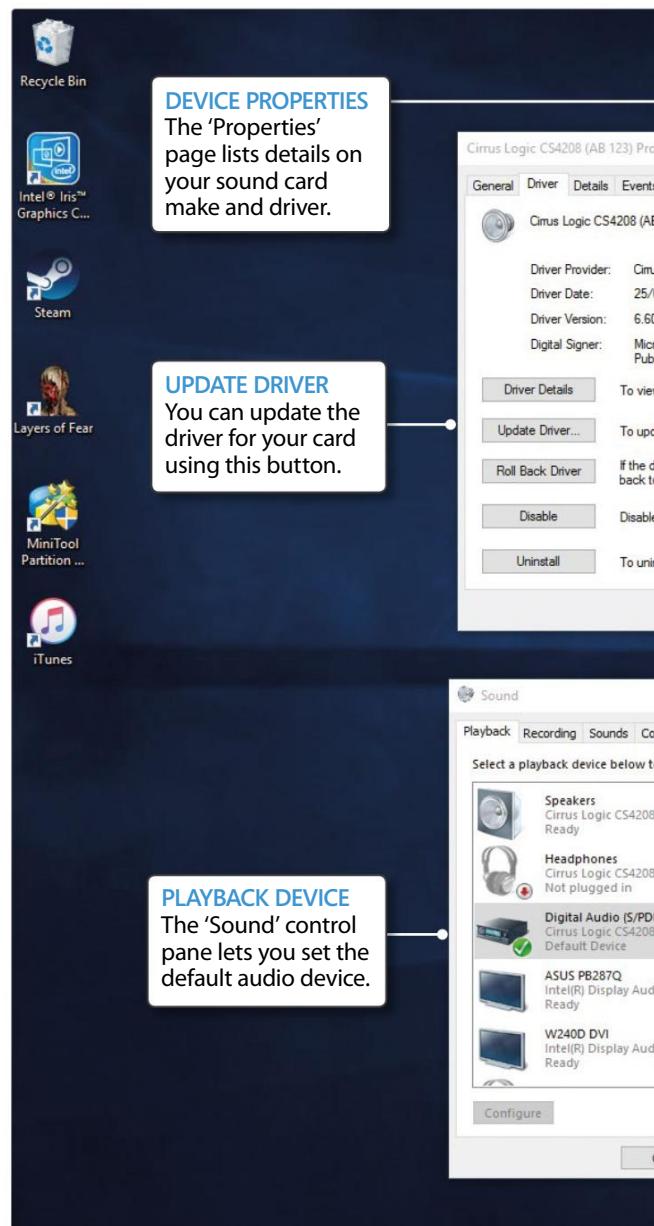
For everyone else with audio issues, try the following steps. You'd be surprised at how effective they can be.

Step-by-step | Get audio sounding great again in Windows



1 Driver issues

The most common sound problems are due to users not updating the device driver for their PC's **sound card** or audio chip. Open the Start menu and type **Device Manager** in the search field. Launch the utility by clicking it and you'll see a list of icon options. Choose 'Sound, video and game controllers'. If your PC has a sound card, you'll see it here. Click the card profile to open it.



DEVICE PROPERTIES

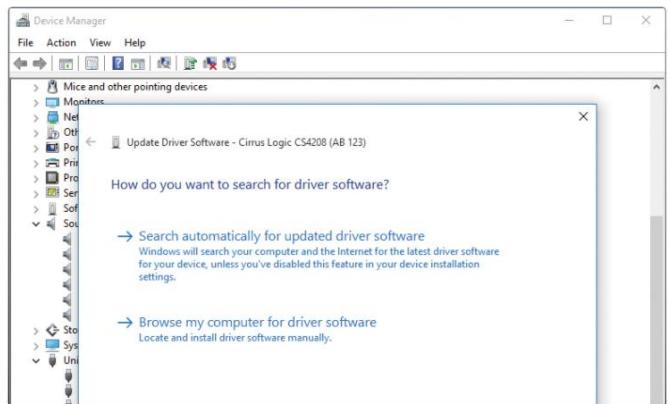
The 'Properties' page lists details on your sound card make and driver.

UPDATE DRIVER

You can update the driver for your card using this button.

PLAYBACK DEVICE

The 'Sound' control pane lets you set the default audio device.

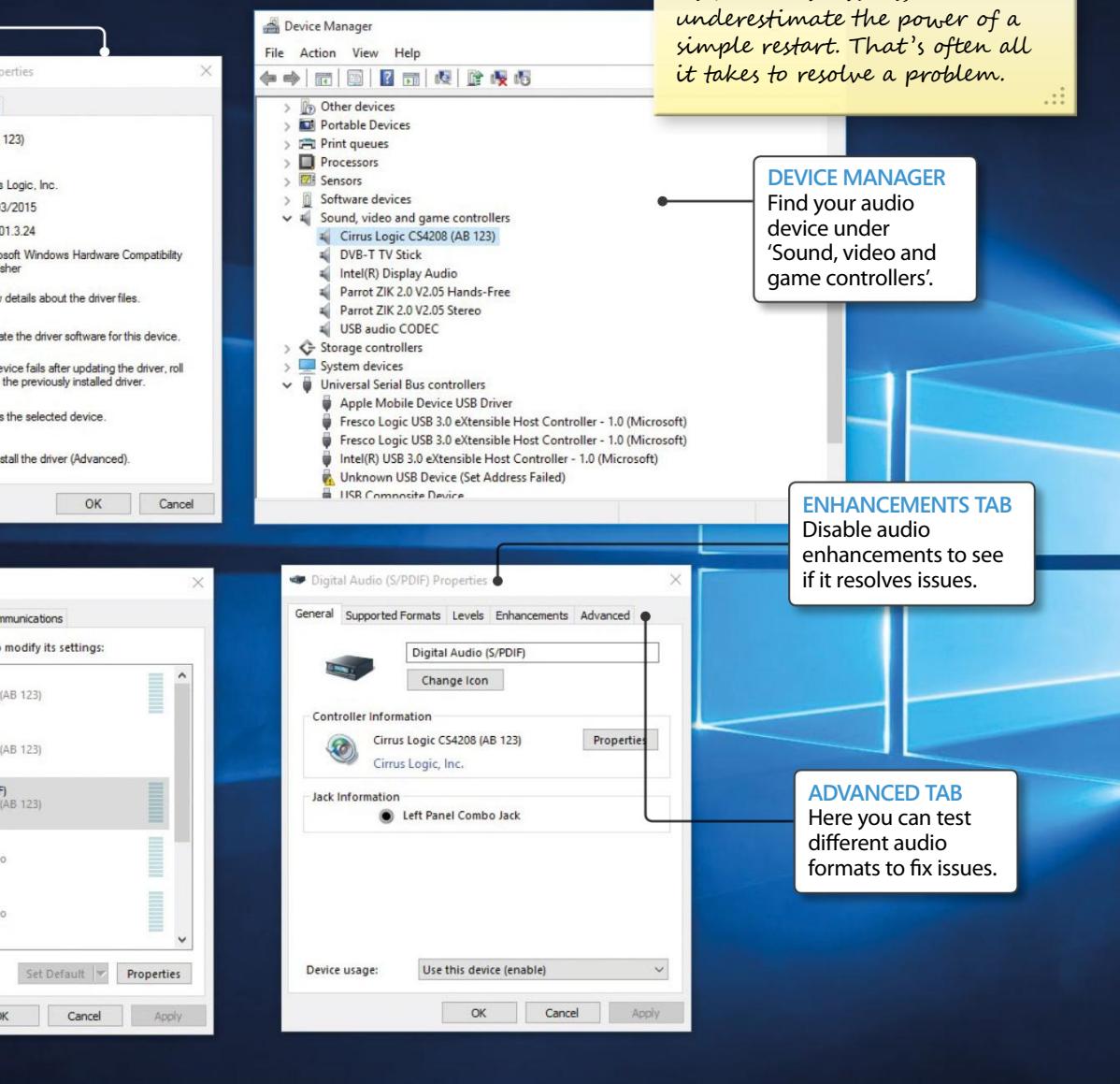


2 Update driver

Next, click on the 'Driver' tab and look for the option to 'Update Driver'. Select it and Windows will start to search for the correct driver online and download it. If the search comes up empty, visit your sound card manufacturer's website to find the applicable driver to download. Once the driver update is complete, restart your PC and check the issue has been resolved.

Explore

Fix audio issues in Windows 10



Jargon buster!

► Device Manager

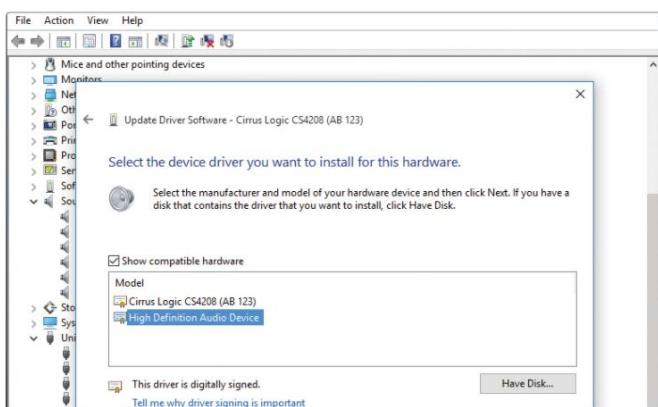
A native Windows utility that displays information about the driver profile for all the hardware present on your system.

► Audio driver

A piece of software specifically coded for your audio hardware that enables Windows to integrate it into the system.

► Sound card

A removable PCB that fits in a socket on your PC's motherboard if the latter doesn't have an onboard audio chip.

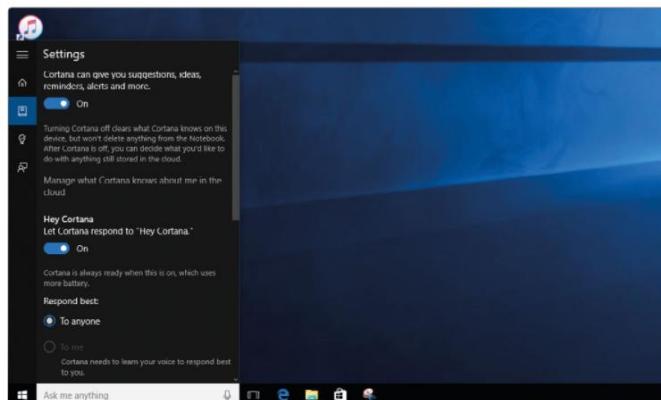


3 Generic driver

If updating your sound card driver fails to fix the problem, try Windows's generic **audio driver**. Open 'Device Manager', right-click your sound card and choose 'Update driver software...'. Choose 'Browse my computer for driver software', then select 'Let me pick from a list of device drivers on my computer'. Click 'High Definition Audio Device' from the list, click 'Install' and restart your PC.

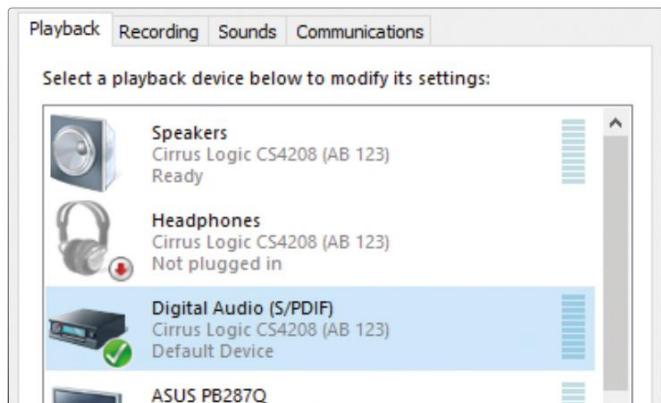
4 Browser issues

If your sound issue is restricted to not being able to hear sound online when using Edge, it could be a problem with Adobe Flash Player. Open the Edge browser and you'll see a button in the top corner of the window with three dots in it. Click this button, select 'Settings' and then 'Advanced Settings' at the bottom of the list. Ensure the toggle is on next to 'Adobe Flash Player'.



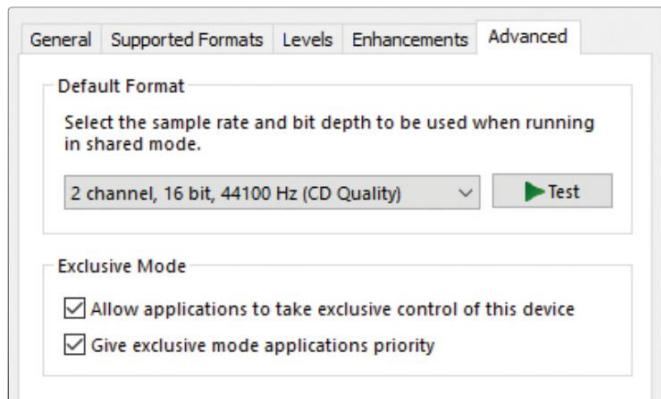
5 Cortana won't listen

When enabled, Microsoft voice assistant Cortana is meant to listen to your commands upon hearing the words 'Hey, Cortana'. If it isn't hearing you, make sure your PC's microphone is on. Also, check the settings – open Cortana, select the Notebook icon and then 'Settings'; make sure the option for Cortana to listen for 'Hey, Cortana' is turned on.



7 Set default device

If you're connecting to an audio device using USB or HDMI, you might need to set that device as the default before you hear anything. To do so, open the Start menu, type **Sound** into the search box and select it from the list of 'Settings' results. Next, click the 'Playback' tab, select the device you're trying to connect, and click 'Set Default'. If this doesn't work, connect the device to another port.



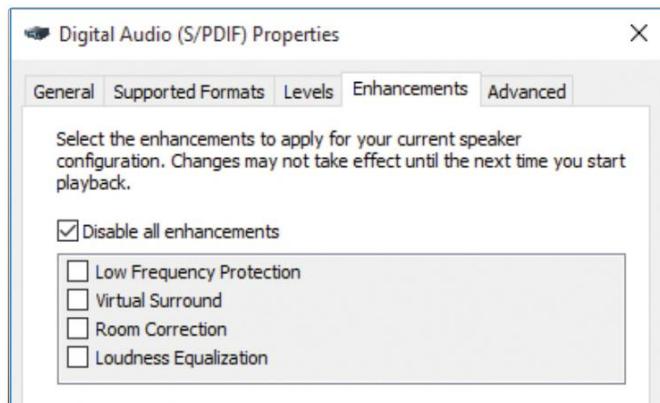
9 Change audio format

Sometimes, incompatible drivers or third-party audio software can affect playback, so check if an audio format is the source of your issue. In the 'Sound Control' panel, select 'Playback', right-click the 'Default Device' and choose 'Properties'. Select 'Advanced' and under 'Default Format', change the setting, then retest your audio. If that doesn't work, try another format.



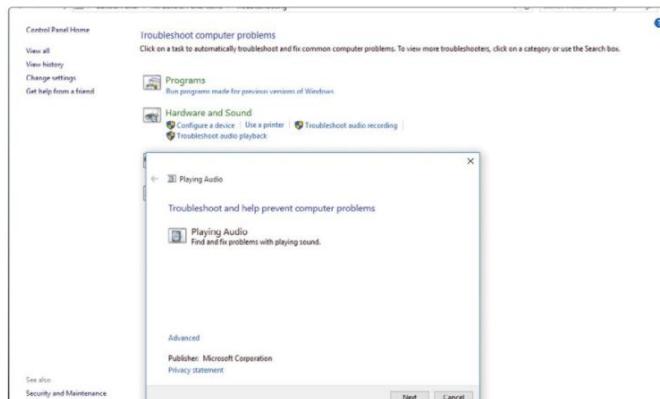
6 Check cables

Check your speaker and headphone ports for loose cables, the wrong jack and flex wires to see if there's a poor connection. Also, check your power and try turning the volume controls up. Some speakers and apps have their own volume controls, so you might have to check them all. Remember, your speakers are probably set to go off when your headphones are plugged in.



8 Bad Enhancements

Sometimes the issue can lie with the audio enhancements that Microsoft or third parties have designed. Happily, you can turn them off. Open Start, type **Sound** into the search and select 'Sound Control Panel' from the list of 'Settings' results. Select the 'Playback' tab, right-click the 'Default Device' and choose 'Properties'. On the 'Enhancements' tab, check 'Disable all enhancements'.



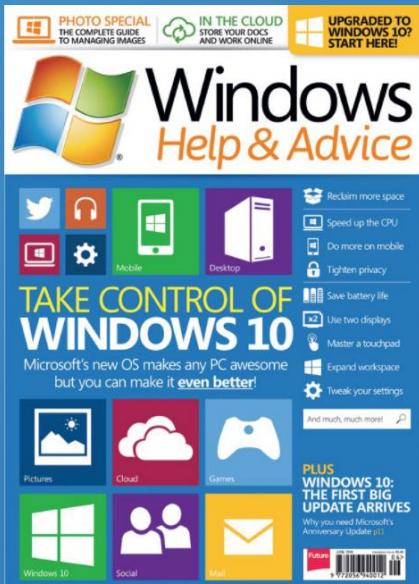
10 Troubleshooter

If all other efforts fail to solve the problem, try Windows 10's native audio troubleshooter. Occasionally, it can resolve an issue you're having. To run it, open Start, type **troubleshooting** into the search box and select it from the 'Settings' results. Then, under 'Hardware and Sound', click 'Troubleshoot audio playback' and click 'Next' in the window that appears. ■

Back issues
Don't miss out!

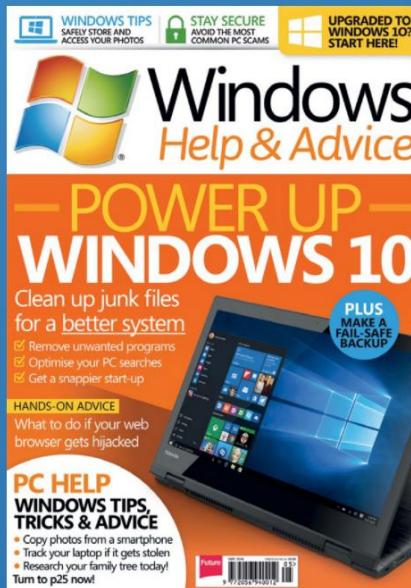
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Learn how to...

Prevent screen-time eyestrain with f.lux



Your guide **Nick Peers** says...

"Improve your sleep patterns and protect your eyes without banning the use of PCs after dark with the help of brilliant free utility"

At a glance

Skill level...

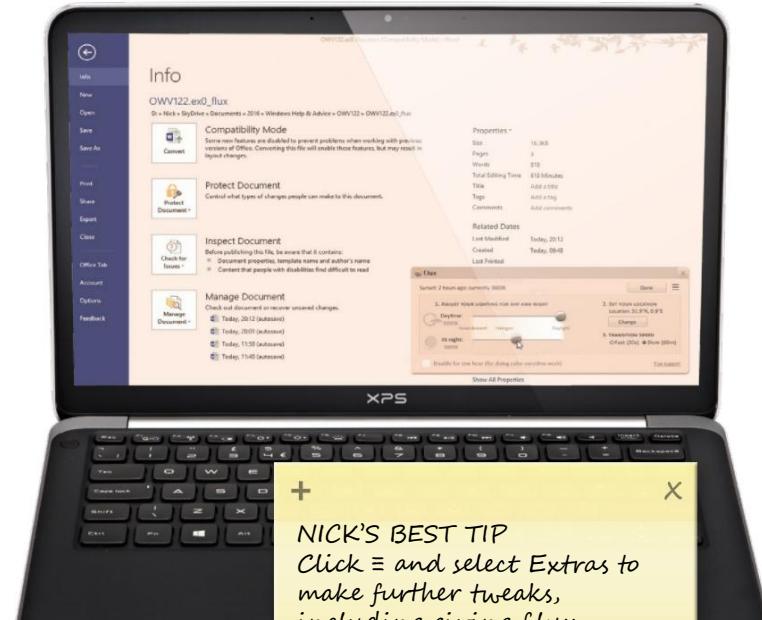
- Anyone can do it
- Straightforward
- Tricky in parts

Suitable for...

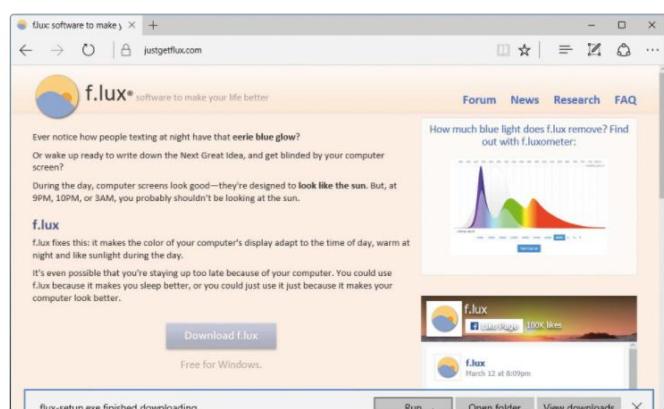
- Windows 10
- Windows 8.1
- Windows 7

Anyone who's had to work late at the office will know how staring at a bright monitor can affect your ability to sleep when you get home. Much of this problem is caused by your monitor's screen temperature – cool blues are great during the daytime when you want a bright, colour-accurate display, but as the sun goes down, continuing to stare at your display plays havoc with your body's melatonin production.

One way to fix this problem is to ban the use of your computer after dark, but that isn't always practical. Don't worry, though, because a free program called f.lux can adjust your monitor's screen temperature as the sun goes down, warming up the screen and helping reduce tiredness and eye strain, while giving you the chance to sleep afterwards. Read on to find out how.

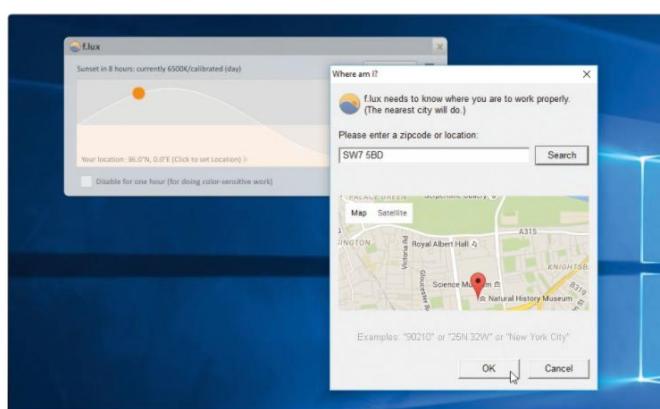


Step-by-step | Step-by-step: set up f.lux



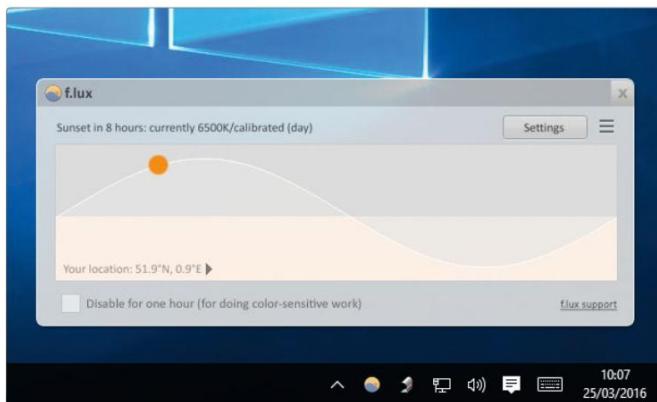
1 Get f.lux

Open your web browser and browse to www.justgetflux.com to get f.lux for your PC. Click the 'Download f.lux' button and save it to your Downloads folder. Once complete, click 'Run', if prompted or double-click 'flux-setup.exe' to start the installation process. Click 'I Agree' when asked and wait for the program to install itself. Click 'Close' when complete.



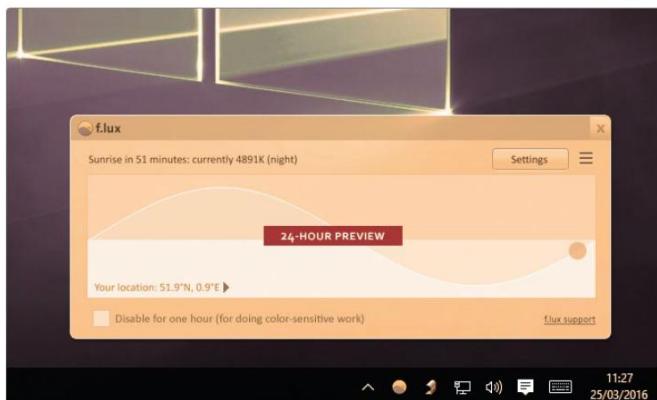
2 Set location

The program's main interface will appear above the Taskbar notification area, where you'll also see the f.lux icon now resides. Start by telling f.lux where you are so it can configure itself correctly – click the > button to the right of '(Click to set Location)'. Enter your post code and click 'Search'. Your location will be shown on Google Maps – if it's correct, click 'OK'.



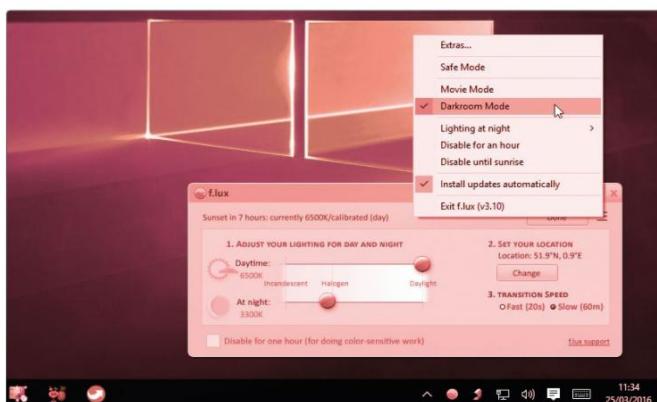
3 Access program interface

The main f.lux window will update to reflect your new location. f.lux uses a combination of time, date and where you are to determine when to change colour temperature, so you may find it alters immediately if it's after sunset. After a short pause, the main window will vanish. Bring it back by clicking the program's Taskbar notification area icon (click ^ if it's not visible).



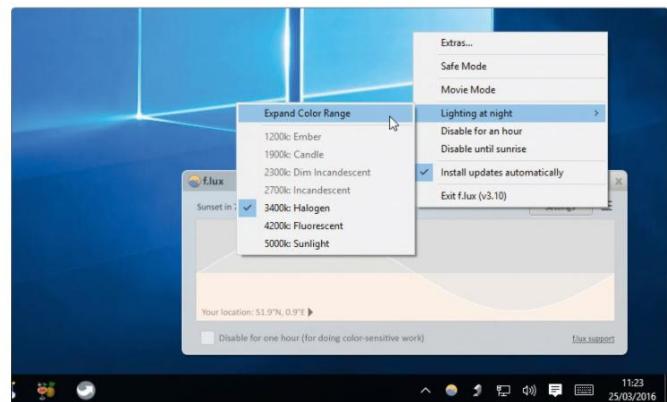
5 Tweak lighting

Return to the main menu and select 'Lighting at night' again. Pick one of the options on offer – f.lux will perform a quick 24-hour preview of how the screen will dim. Try different levels until you're happy with your choice. If you'd prefer finer control over the temperature settings, close the menu and click the 'Settings' button instead to reveal two temperature sliders.



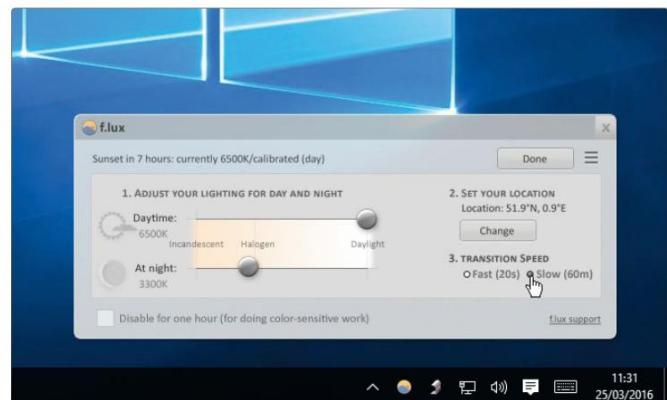
7 Movie and darkroom modes

Click the app's menu and you'll see two special modes. Choose 'Movie Mode' if you want to watch a video on your PC – the screen will dim to give you a more cinematic experience. 'Darkroom Mode' removes all blue colour to leave just red, white and black – it may help you eke out more working time late at night and your eyes are particularly tired. Select again to disable.



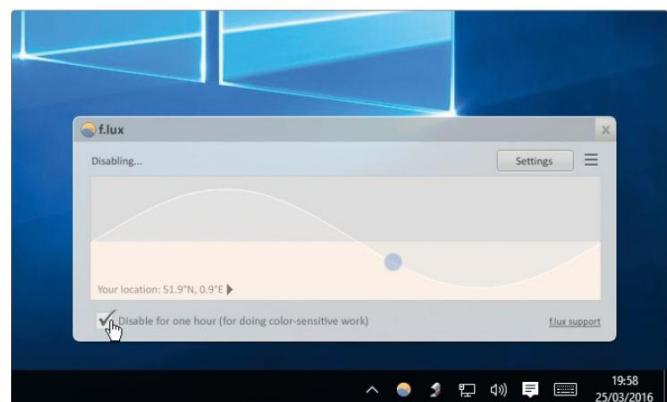
4 Expand colour range

f.lux will dim the screen to 3,400k – the equivalent of a warm, halogen light. To change this click the menu and roll your mouse over 'Lighting at night'. You'll see options ranging from 1,900k (ember) to 5,000k (sunlight) – however, some will be greyed out. Click 'Expand Color Range' and choose 'Yes', restarting when prompted.



6 Adjust temperatures

If you find the monitor screen too bright even during the day, use the top slider to reduce the colour temperature to a more comfortable level. Both this and the 'At night' slider allow you to adjust the temperature in 100k increments. By default, the temperature shifts at sunset and sunrise take 20 seconds – choose '60m' under 'Transition Speed' to extend this.



8 Your eyes, protected

There will be times when you don't want to use f.lux – changes in colour temperature produce inaccurate colours when editing images, for example. You can disable the program temporarily in two ways – tick 'Disable for one hour...' on the main screen, or click the menu for an option to disable until sunrise. And with that, you can now look forward to reduced eye strain. ■

Learn how to...

Get more done on your PC with our help



Your guide *Nick Odantzis* says...

"Get things done easily and maximise the potential of your PC with these smart productivity tips guaranteed to save you time!"

At a glance

Skill level...

- Anyone can do it
- Straightforward
- Tricky in parts

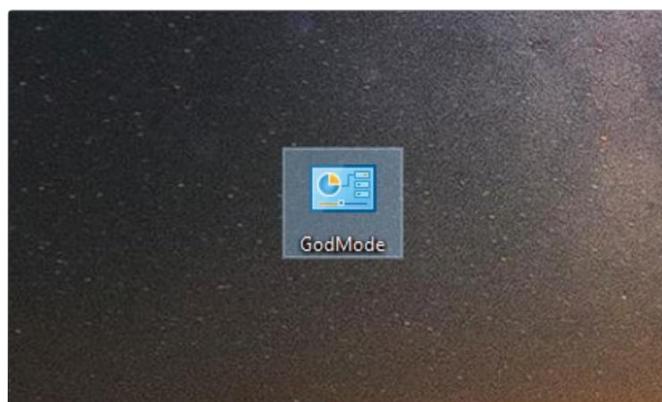
Suitable for...

- Windows 10
- Windows 8.1
- Windows 7

Back in last month's issue I revealed the first of my favourite productivity tips in Windows 10. Now, I'll show you the rest, so you can unleash the potential of your machine and make your life even easier, whether it's creating Virtual Desktops to give you the effect of having multiple PCs, tapping on secret shortcuts so you can see everything on your machine at once, or using the power of your voice to command your PC into work. And, don't forget – all these top tips are perfectly safe to do on your machine, so there's no need to backup your PC before you start this. Just get going – you'll wonder how you ever coped before!

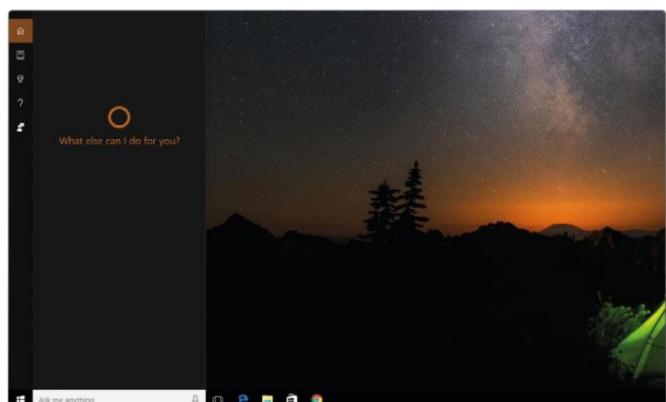


Step-by-step | Super-productivity tips



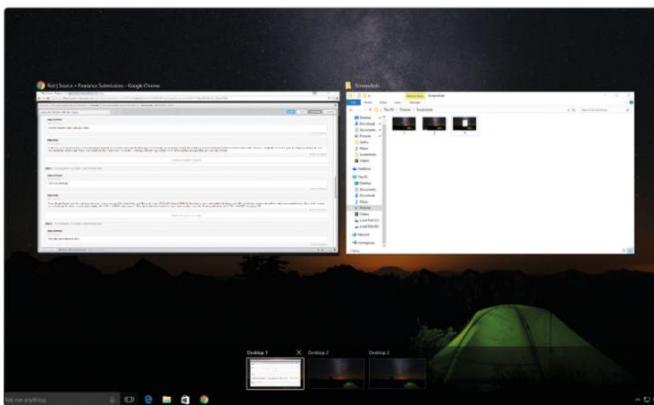
1 God mode!

Go to your desktop and right-click it. Now select 'New > Folder'. Right click the folder and choose 'Rename' and copy and paste the following text into it: **GodMode.{ED7BA470-8E54-465E-825C-99712043E01C}**. Hit [Enter] and you'll see the folder icon change along with the name to 'GodMode'. Double-click this icon and you'll have access to every function in Windows 10!



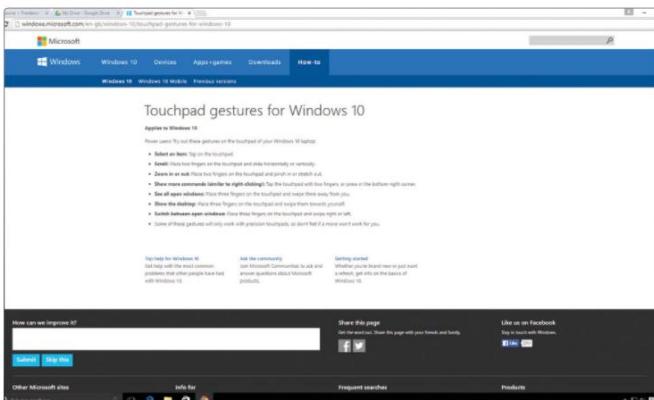
2 Use the power of voice, with your voice

In the last issue, we showed you how to leverage the power of Cortana's voice search, allowing you to do things just by asking. Well, if you want to employ Cortana's services more often, then just ask again. Click inside the Taskbar search box, click 'Notebook' (third option down on the left) > Settings' and turn 'Hey Cortana' to 'On'. Now Cortana will wake when you say 'Hey Cortana'.



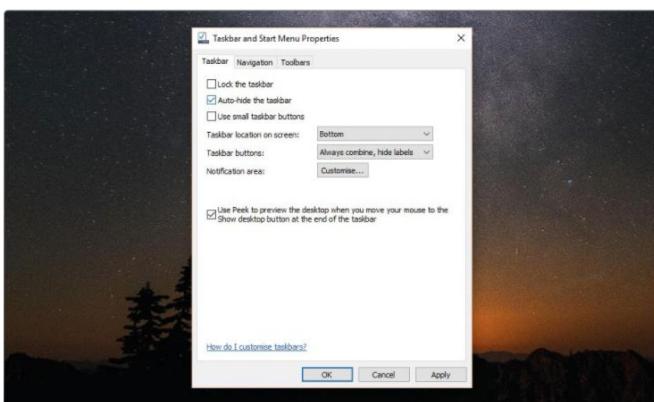
3 Get more desktops

With this function you can create multiple desktops, with different windows or apps on each one and easily swap between them, which is great for multitasking. To create a new desktop hold [Ctrl]+[Win] and press [D]. Put whatever you need onto it and create another if you like. To close a desktop, hold [Ctrl]+[Win] and press [F4].



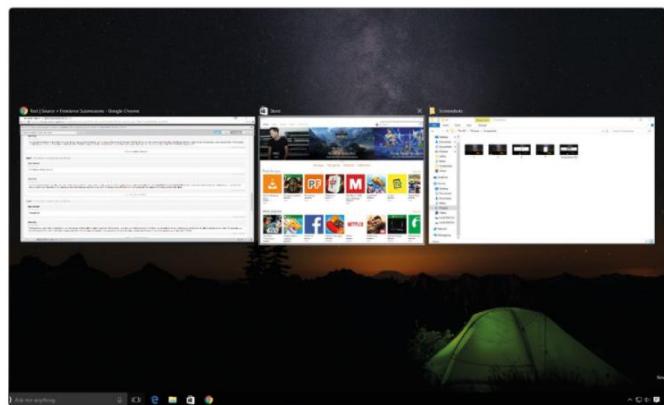
5 Use gestures

If your machine supports gestures on its mousepad, you can really go to town and boost your productivity with deft movements of your fingers. For example, you can scroll up or down in open windows by moving up and down with two fingers on the pad, or you can zoom in or out by pinching or expanding two fingers. To see more gestures, go to <http://bit.ly/1TKArA2>.



7 Streamline the Taskbar

If you prefer to use the Taskbar to get to where you need, this can be customised too. Add apps or folders by dragging them to the Taskbar to pin them in place. Or, right-click an app and select 'Pin to taskbar' to do this. One of our favourite features is the ability to hide the Taskbar when not in use. Right-click the Taskbar, select 'Properties' and tick the checkbox next to 'Auto-hide the Taskbar'.



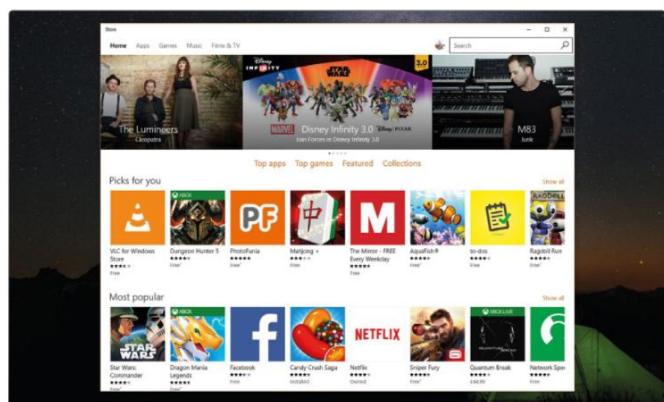
4 View all your windows at once

If you're working on several windows and apps at the same time, you can get an overview of everything using Task View. Press and hold the [Win] key and tap [Tab]. All your open windows will appear as thumbnails – just click on the one you want. To preview and switch between windows, hold [Alt] and press [Tab] to cycle through each one; release [Alt] to open one that's highlighted.



6 Make more of the Start menu

If you use the Start menu to get around Windows 10, it's worth customising it to gain faster access to things. First, click on the Start menu and drag the tiles around to put them where you like. After you've done this, add more by clicking 'All Files', right-clicking an app or folder and selecting 'Pin to Start'. If it gets a bit busy, try resizing Start by clicking the edges and dragging it to size.



8 Quickly minimise windows

This is an easy tip (and one where you'll wonder how you managed without it)! If you have several windows taking up space on your screen and you want to get rid of them quickly to focus just on one window, left-click and hold the top of the window and quickly move your mouse from side to side. Any windows behind this will disappear; when you do this again they reappear. ■

Learn how to...

Back up to Google Drive



Your guide *Ian Evenden* says...

"Use the cloud service to keep your files and documents safe"

At a glance

Skill level...

Anyone can do it

- Straightforward
- Tricky in parts

Suitable for...

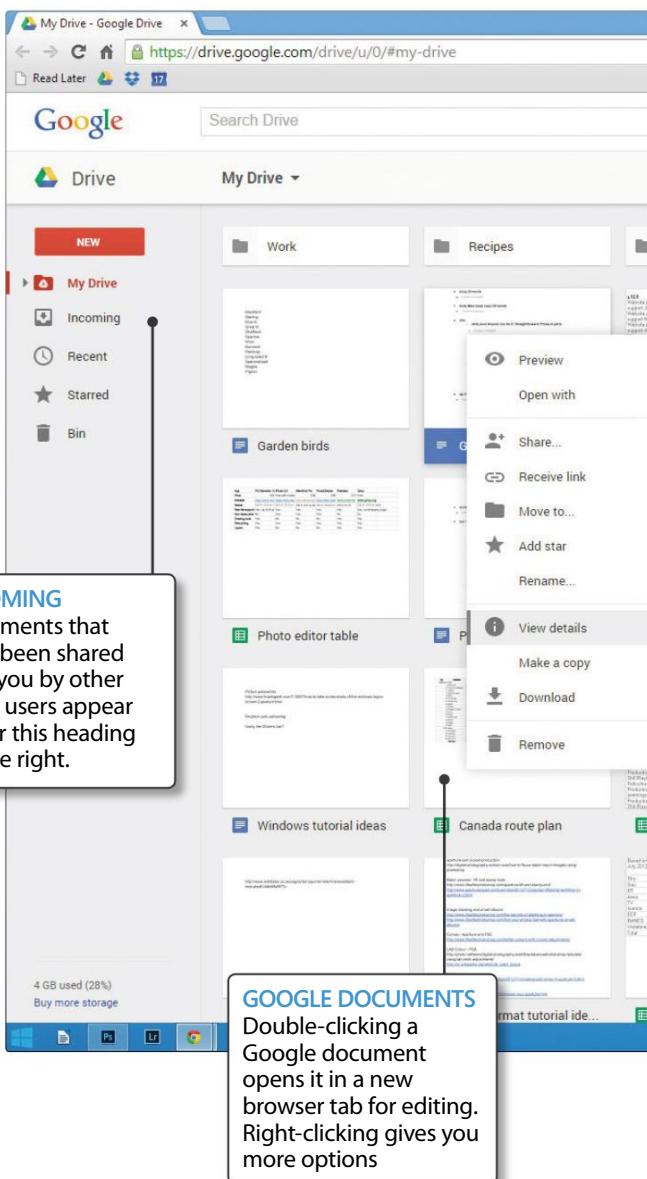
Windows 10

Windows 8.1

Windows 7

There are many cloud storage services available, and most of them do a decent job of backing up a few files. However, if you want to make sure all your documents are backed up in the cloud, you'll need a bit more than the 2GB that Dropbox offers for free. Google Drive's 15GB, for instance, looks a lot more attractive, and Microsoft's OneDrive offers the same.

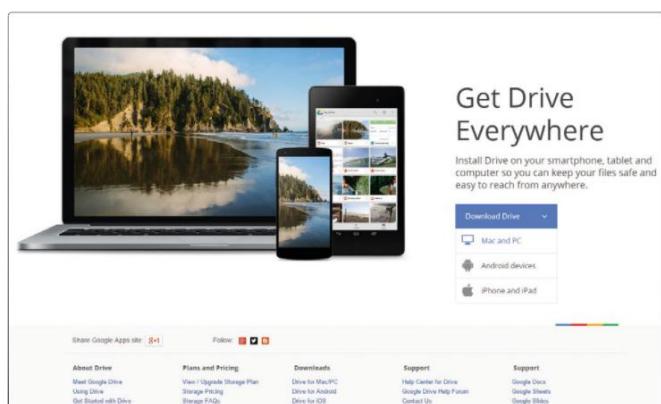
The tight integration between Google Docs and Google Drive is another point in the service's favour. The office suite, which runs in your web browser and in mobile apps, stores its files in Drive and, if they're saved in its native format, they don't count toward your storage total. Your email does, however, so it's worth creating a new Google account, and getting another 15GB of free space with it, to use as a backup location.



INCOMING
Documents that have been shared with you by other Drive users appear under this heading on the right.

GOOGLE DOCUMENTS
Double-clicking a Google document opens it in a new browser tab for editing. Right-clicking gives you more options

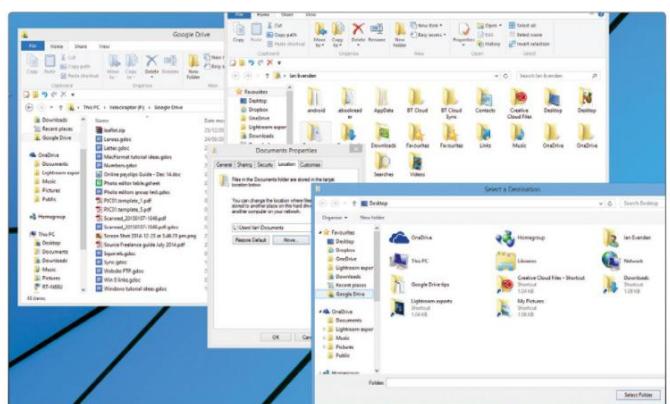
Step-by-step | Improve your Google Drive experience



Get Drive Everywhere
Install Drive on your smartphone, tablet and computer so you can keep your files safe and easy to reach from anywhere.

Download Drive

- Mac and PC
- Android devices
- iPhone and iPad

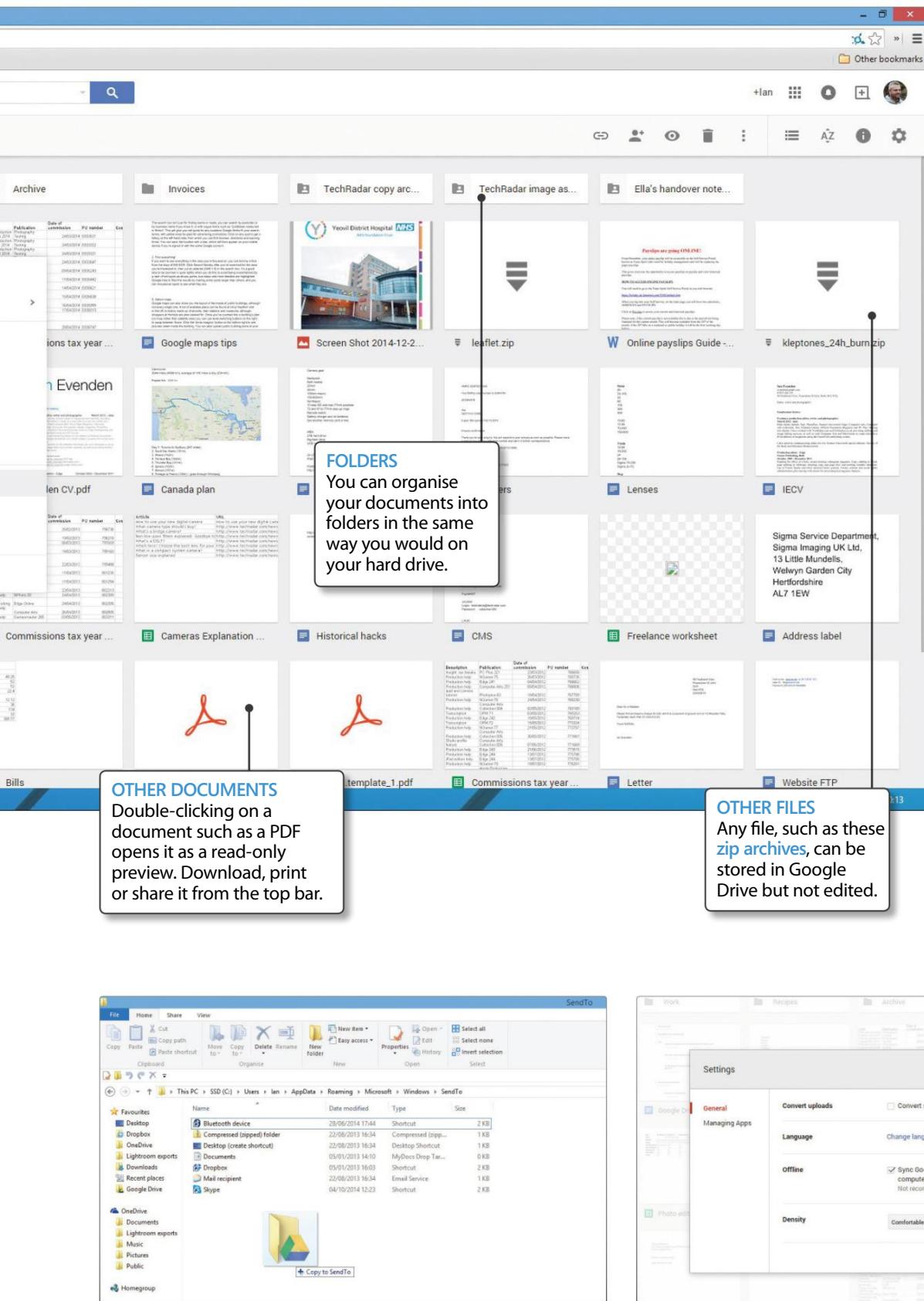


Move your Documents folder to Drive
Another way to make sure documents always get backed up is to move the default saving location to your Google Drive folder. Open your User folder and right-click the Documents folder. Select 'Location' in the Documents Properties window and click 'Move'. Find your Google Drive folder shortcut, click and hit 'OK'. Note, the Documents folder must be smaller than 15GB.

1 Synchronise

Head to drive.google.com and sign in with the Google account you want to use. Install the Drive app on your PC, and it will create a Google Drive folder in your User folder. The contents of this will always upload to the cloud, and be kept in sync across devices, so add any documents you want to back up to it. It can be a good idea to make it the default save location for your apps.

Explore Back up to Google Drive



Jargon buster!

► Zip archives

An archive file format that compresses a file or files into a smaller size so that it is easier to manage and send. These can be opened (or created) with a program such as Bandizip (find it at www.bandisoft.com).

3 Add to Send To

You can add documents to Drive in two clicks. Add a shortcut to the Send To menu by going to 'Users > [yourusername] > AppData > Roaming > Microsoft > Windows > SendTo'. Right-drag the Google Drive shortcut from 'Favorites' on the left of the Explorer window into the main part, select 'Copy Here'. Now, when you move a file to Drive, right-click and select 'Send To > Google Drive'.

4 Offline mode

Users of public transport and flaky coffee shop Wi-Fi will be pleased to know you don't need to be online all the time to use Google Drive. On the Drive webpage, click 'Settings [cog icon] > Offline' and tick the box next to 'Sync your work to this computer so that you can edit offline'. The Google Drive and Docs extensions for Chrome also allow you to work offline. ■

Learn how to...

Make a music score for free



Your guide **Nick Peers** says...

"MuseScore is a powerful free tool that makes sheet music incredibly easy to produce"

At a glance

Skill level...

► Anyone can do it

Straightforward

Tricky in parts

Suitable for...

Windows 10

Windows 8.1

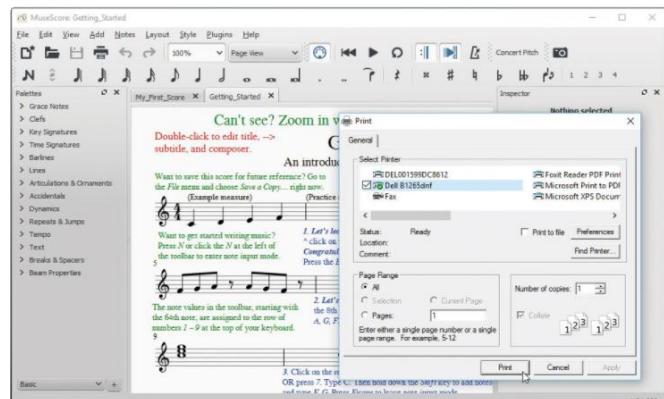
Windows 7

Any musician will know how painstaking, complicated and expensive it can be to produce **notation** by hand.

Thankfully, Windows is blessed with a number of music notation tools, and one of the best happens to be both free and open source.

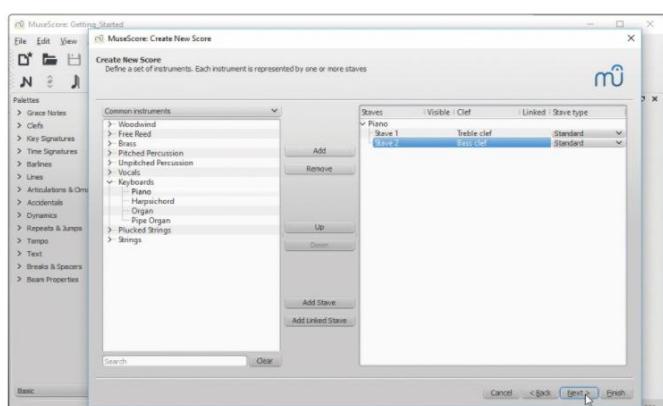
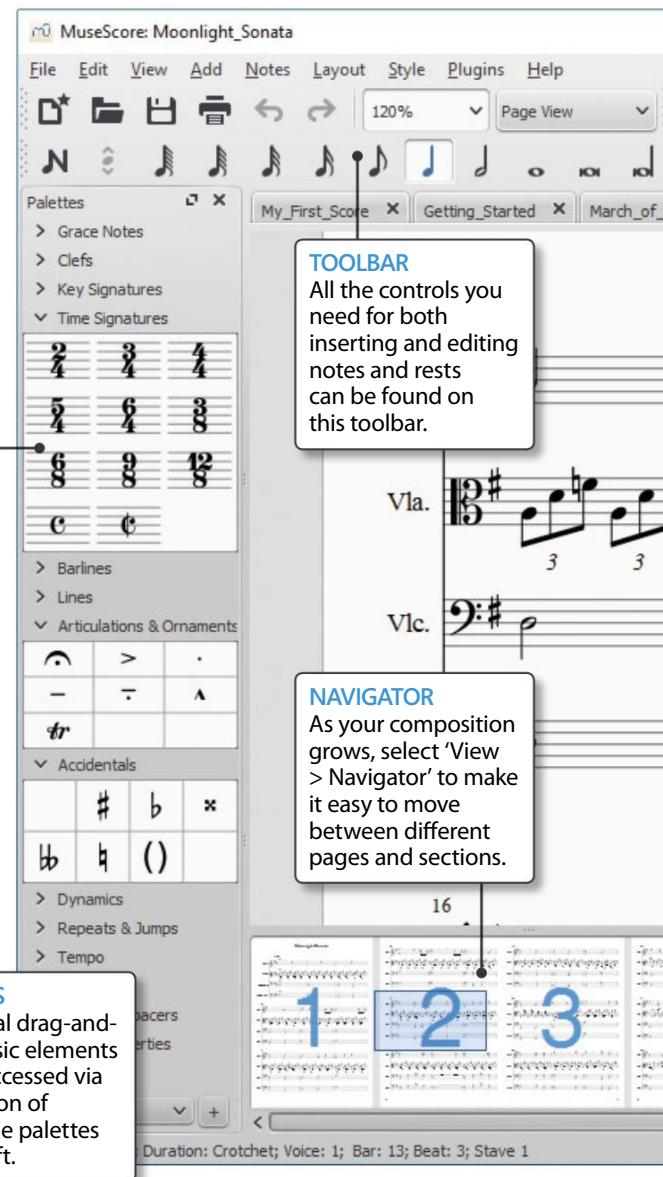
MuseScore 2 combines all the functionality you need to build simple or complex scores from scratch with a user interface that doesn't require a degree in music (or engineering) to understand. It's intuitively laid out, and you can build your score using drag-and-drop or keyboard shortcuts. You can even plug in a **MIDI** instrument and let MuseScore record you as you play, but for the purposes of this tutorial we'll be focusing on how to set your music to paper using only your PC's mouse and keyboard. Read on to find out more.

Step-by-step | Record your first musical score



1 First steps

Go to musescore.org in your web browser and click the 'Free Download' button. Once done, double-click 'MuseScore-2.0.2.msi' and follow the prompts to install the program. Leave 'Launch MuseScore 2' ticked and click 'Finish'. Select the 'Getting Started' score from the Start Centre, then click 'File > Print' to print the note entry guide. Once done, choose 'File > New' to create a new score.



2 Select instruments

Enter basic details (title, composer and so on) and click 'Next'. Select 'Choose Instruments' to add and select your instruments in the desired order. Click 'Next' again to select your key signature from the options provided, then click 'Next' to set the time signature, number of bars and – if applicable – the pickup measure (anacrusis). Click 'Finish' to create your blank sheet.

NOTATION VIEW
As your composition takes shape, you'll see MuseScore replicate it perfectly in the main window.

INSPECTOR
Use this to customise individual notes precisely to your needs – including re-colouring and positional tweaking.

NICK'S BEST TIP!
Look out for the playback controls, which will play your music score back to you as you create and edit it.

RIGHT-CLICK
All elements on the page are editable – to fine-tune them, right-click one to access a context-sensitive menu.

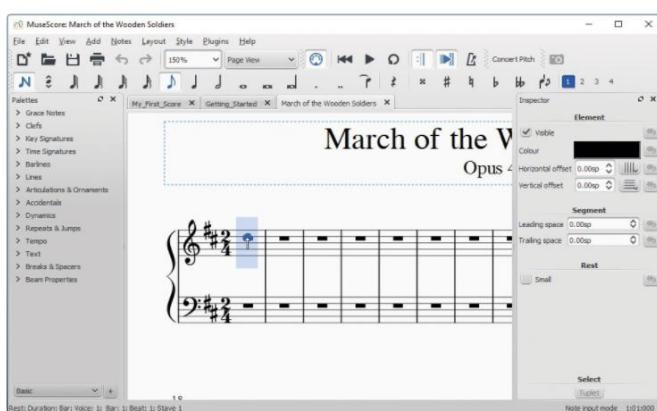
4 **5** **8**

Jargon buster!

► **MIDI**
A technical standard that ensures all digital musical instruments work in tandem with each other, either directly or through a computer.

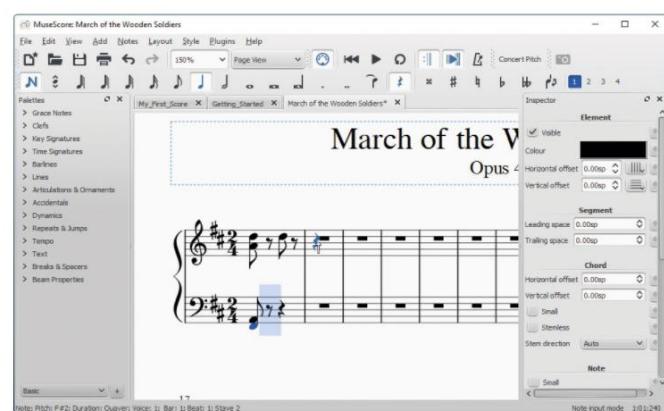
► **MusicXML**
A new standard for recording sheet music digitally. MusicXML makes it possible to share sheet music to and from other applications.

► **Notation**
The system – called Modern Staff Notation – that allows music to be presented in a form that can be read and interpreted by other musicians.



3 Input first note

The first bar and stave will be selected by default – note how it's highlighted in blue. Click the 'N' button next to 'Concert pitch' in the toolbar above the notation to switch to 'Note Entry Mode' (alternatively, press the [N] key). Select the length of note you wish to input from the selection to the right of the [N] button and place it on the stave in the desired position.



4 Complete bar

Repeat for the other notes in the bar – the additional notes of a chord can be placed directly underneath the first note. Rests will be inserted automatically after the first note, but if you want to set these manually, select the existing rest. Now select the note that corresponds to the length of rest you wish to insert from the toolbar before clicking the rest button and placing it on the page.



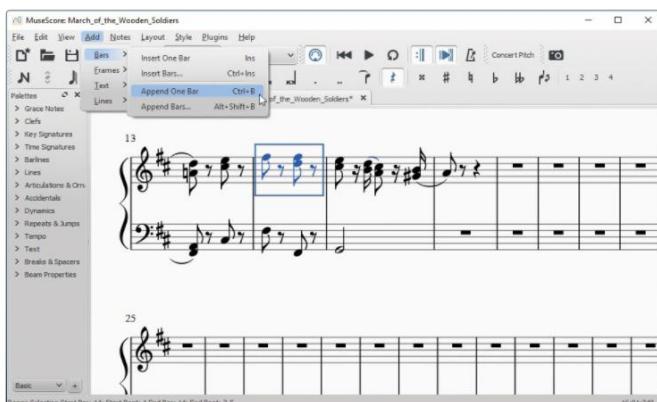
5 Add more notes

To insert dotted notes, first click the dot or double-dot to enable it, then insert your note as normal. To add a sharp, flat or natural note, first input the note and then click the relevant symbol on the toolbar. Tied notes are created automatically as required, but you can manually add these to an existing note by setting up the length of the following note and clicking the tie button.



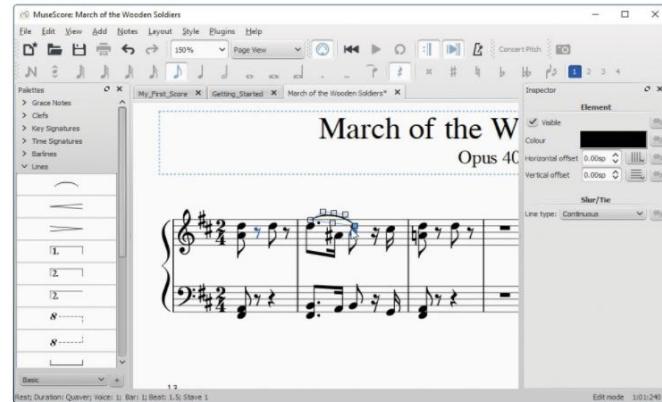
7 Copy chunks of music

Save time by copying and pasting repetitive bars: first, press [N] to disable 'Note Entry Mode', then select the first bar in your chosen selection by clicking on it, so it's surrounded by a blue box. Next, hold [Shift] and click on the last bar in your selection, then right-click and choose 'Copy'. Next, select the target bar for the selection, right-click again and this time choose 'Paste'.



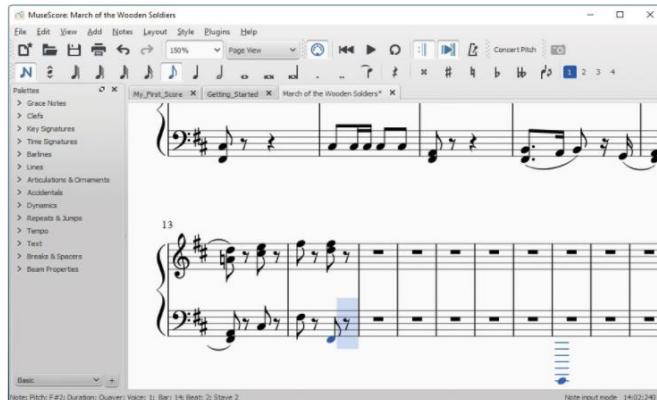
9 Add new elements

Need to extend your work? Open the 'Add' menu and select 'Bars' to add single or multiple bars – choose 'Append' to add them to the end of your composition. To add extra instruments (or lyrics) to your work, simply choose 'Edit > Instruments' to select more, which will subsequently appear above or beneath your existing score depending on how you arrange their order.



6 Insert other notation

Additional symbols can be inserted using the 'Palettes' tab on the left. To insert a slur, for example, expand the 'Lines' section, then click and drag the symbol onto the first note. A slur line will appear linking it to the next available note – click and drag on the final point of the slur to move it. Edit a slur by clicking it to highlight it, then double-click to select it.



8 Use the keyboard

Speed up note entry using your PC's keyboard. Use the numbers 1-9 to set the length of the note (4 is a quaver, 5 a crocheted note, and so on), then type the letter of the key. Use the up and down arrow keys to correct notes by half a note, or use them while holding [Ctrl] to move up or down an octave. Press [Backspace] to remove the last note.

10 Notation made easy

MuseScore makes creating your own compositions from scratch easy, but you can also download sheet music from other sources too: start by selecting 'View > Start Centre', then use the 'Search for sheet music' box to locate more music. You can also visit musicxml.com/music-in-musicxml/ for sites offering downloads in MusicXML format, which MuseScore supports. ■

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OF LIFE IN TODAY'S
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home entertainment



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LIFE'S BETTER WITH T3

Learn how to...

Repair Windows



Your guide **Mayank Sharma** says...

"Use this simple tool to fix any Windows annoyances quickly and without any fuss"

At a glance

Skill level...

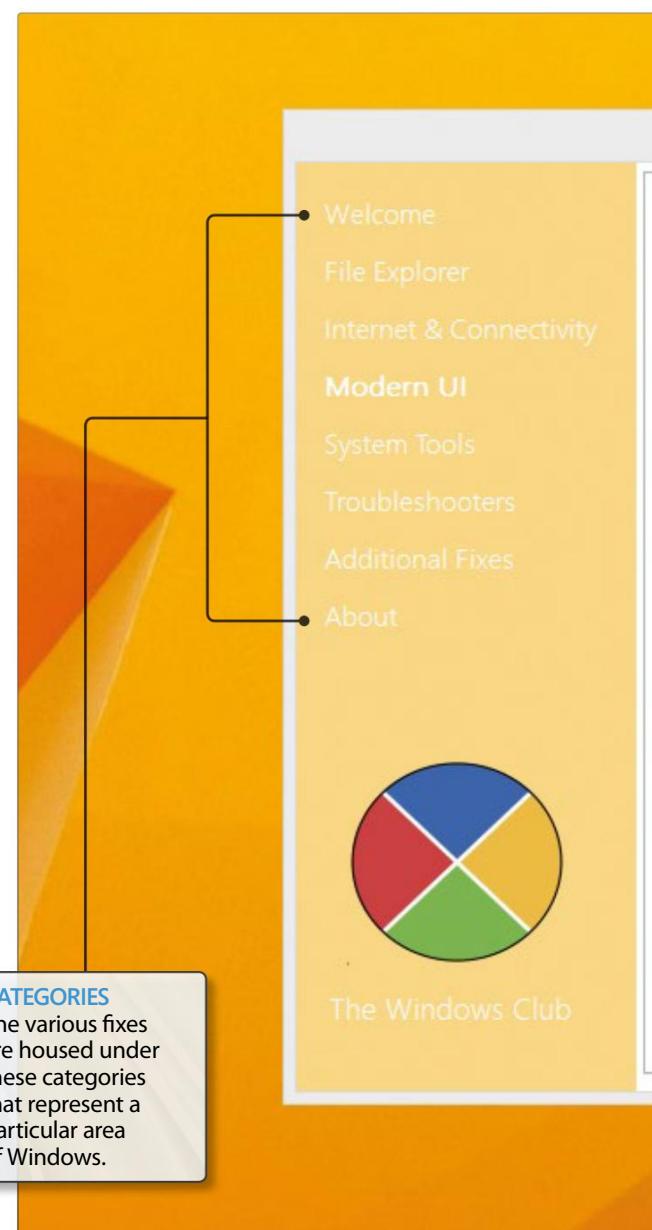
- Anyone can do it
- Straightforward
- Tricky in parts

Suitable for...

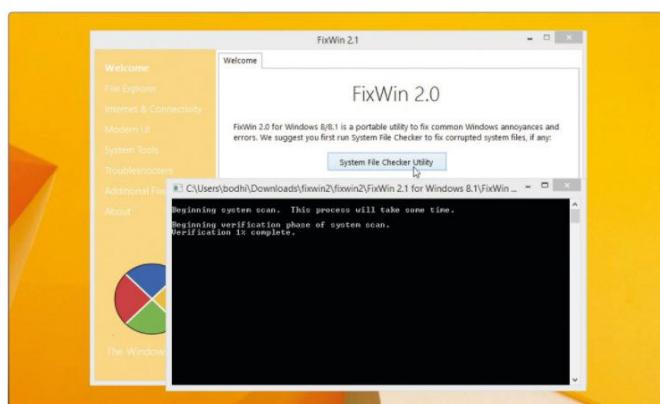
-  Windows 10
-  Windows 8.1
-  Windows 7

FixWin is a simple tool for troubleshooting your Windows installation. Using it you can fix dozens of Windows problems and annoyances that might be caused by [malware](#). Anti-malware scanners can help you remove these harmful programs, but that in itself will not always undo the changes to Windows caused by these pests, such as hiding the context menu, or disabling the [Registry Editor](#).

With FixWin, you can repair these unwanted modifications. The tool lists all its fixes and their symptoms across several categories. Every problem has a 'Fix' button that you click to apply the suggested solution. Remember that FixWin isn't a diagnostic tool, so it won't look inside your PC and uncover problems. You have to know you have a problem, and then use this program to fix it. With that in mind, let's get started.



Step-by-step | Fix Windows irritations



1 Download and use

FixWin 2.0 is designed to resolve issues with Windows 8.1. Get it from www.thewindowsclub.com/fixwin-windows-8. Save the program files to your hard disk and double-click on the executable file to launch the app. FixWin is a portable tool hence there is no setup process. We're using the Windows 8.1 version here, but there's also a version available for Windows 10.

2 Fix System Files

The Welcome screen of the program advises you to first run the System File Checker utility by clicking the button labelled as such. This utility is designed to detect and fix any corrupted Windows system files and help the program assess your PC and detect possible errors on the drive. Note, this may take some time to complete depending on the size of your disk.

MAYANK'S BEST TIP!
To make sure a fix doesn't affect Windows, it's best to apply one fix at a time and restart before applying another.

Having problem downloading Apps from Store. Clear and reset Store cache

The Application wasn't installed from Windows Store. Error Code: 0x8024001e

"Something happened and your purchase couldn't be completed"

"Something happened and Windows Store is no longer working"

"Something Happened and this app couldn't be installed" Error: 0x80080008

Fix Buttons
To apply a fix, simply press this button corresponding to the error you wish to resolve.

Fix Description
A brief explanation of the fix that explains the odd behaviour as well as what the action the fix will achieve.

Jargon buster!

► Troubleshooting

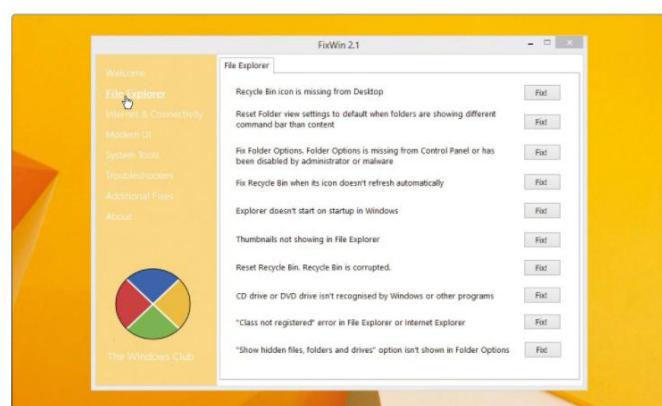
The process of identifying and then resolving an error or a problem by following a set of steps.

► Malware

The term is used to describe all sorts of malicious software that's designed to cause harm to a PC.

► Registry Editor

A Windows tool designed for advanced users that's used for changing settings in the Windows Registry.

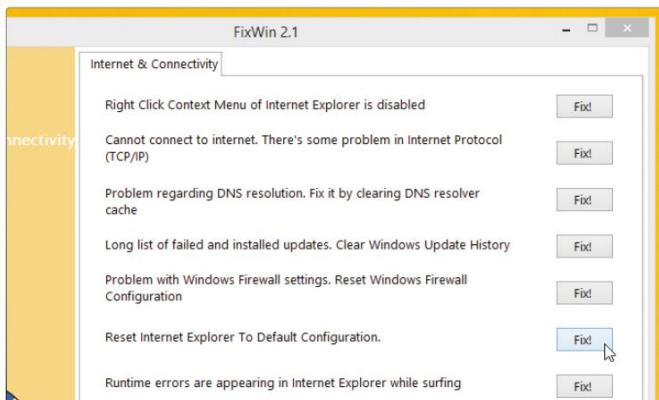


3 Create a System Restore point

Once the System File Checker utility has scanned your system, you should create a restore point by clicking on the button. You can continue using the program without a restore point, but it isn't recommended. Since the FixWin solutions are modifying the Windows registry, a restore point will help revert any changes if the fix introduces unwanted stability issues.

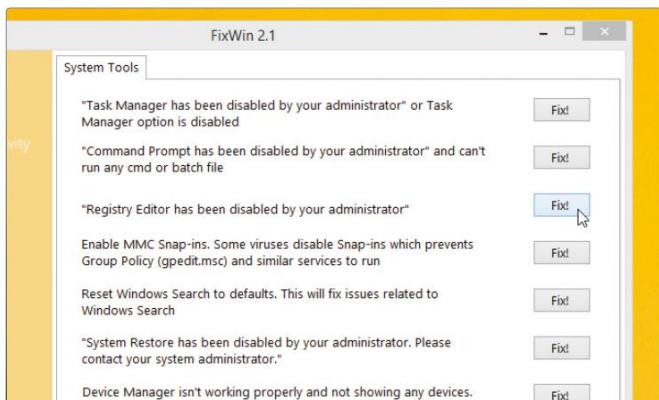
4 Fix File Explorer

You can now start resolving your PC issues. Click on the File Explorer link in the left-hand bar to view all the fixes related to the Windows Explorer. The fixes listed can help restore the Recycle Bin icon to the desktop and the 'Folder Options' settings under the Control Panel. You can also fix the infamous 'Class not registered' error encountered when launching apps, from under this section.



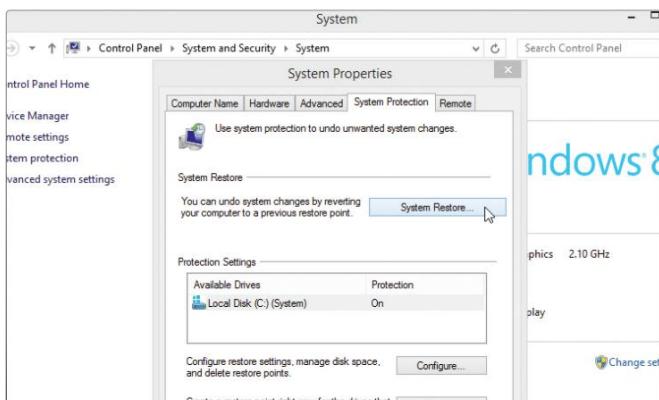
5 | Restore internet connectivity

Now switch to the 'Internet & Connectivity' section to fix any issues related to network connectivity. Here you can get rid of any runtime errors thrown by IE. You can also reset IE and the Windows Firewall to their default configuration if they've been modified accidentally or by another program. There's also an option to optimise IE for concurrently downloading multiple files.



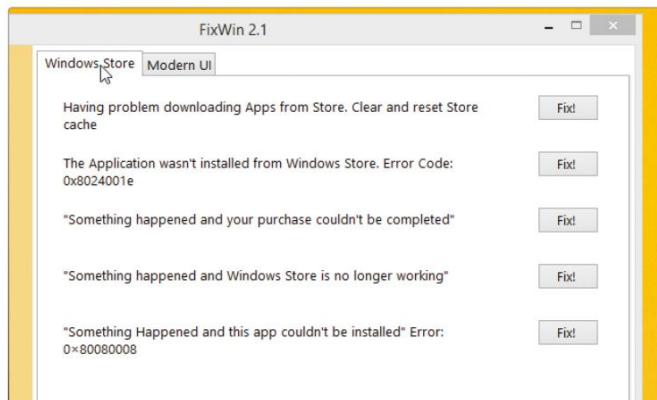
7 | Fix system tools

Some malware can disable access to Windows tools. FixWin can restore access to these tools and help you take charge of your PC. The 'System Tools' section lists fixes around the Task Manager, Registry Editor, Command Prompt, Windows Defender, System Restore, Windows Action Center and more. This section helps restore access to these tools or reset them to the default configuration.



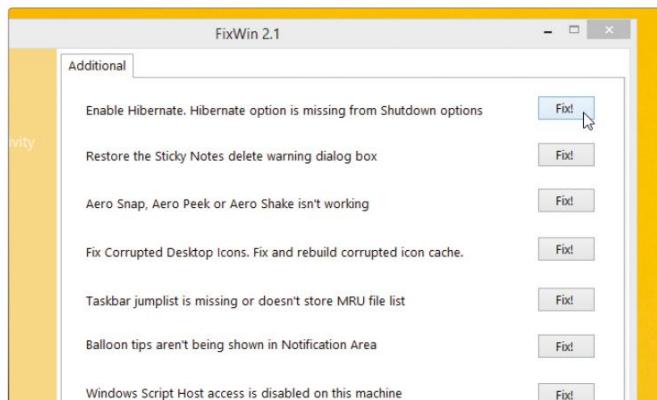
9 | Revert changes

In the off chance a fix destabilises your PC, you can restore your computer to its previous state by reverting all the changes made since the previous restore point. Launch Control Panel and head to 'System and Security > System'. Click on 'System Protection' and click the 'System Restore' button in the window that pops open to launch the 'System Restore' wizard.



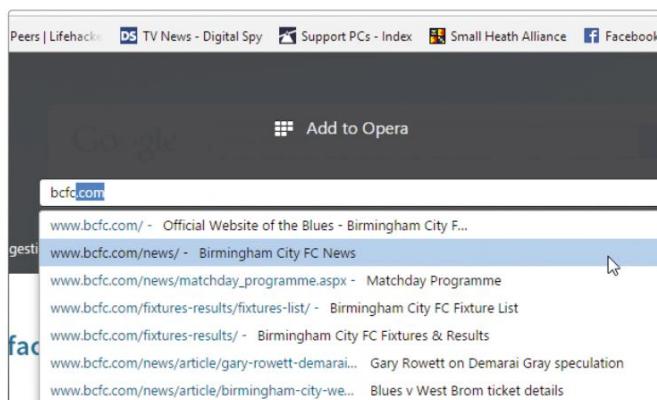
6 | Fix Windows Store

The Windows Store is an essential component to the Windows 8 experience. If you have issues downloading or purchasing apps from here, head to the Modern UI section in FixWin. This section lists fixes under two tabs. The Windows Store tab resolves issues related to the store. You can clear and reset the store's cache as well as apply fixes to common error messages.



8 | Miscellaneous fixes

Fixes that can't be classified under the other sections mentioned above are listed under the 'Additional Fixes' section. Here you can enable the hibernate feature if it's missing from the Shutdown menu. You can also fix and rebuild the icons cache if the icons aren't rendering properly, and restore Aero features. This section also helps you prevent Windows Media Player from crashing.



10 | Restore system

The wizard will show you a list of restore points. The last system restore point will automatically be selected. If this isn't the one created by FixWin, toggle the 'Choose a different restore point' option to list the available restore points. Select the restore point that was created by FixWin and click on 'Finish'. This will exit the wizard, restart Windows and begin the restoration process. ■

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Learn how to...

Slim down Windows 7 for faster performance



Your guide **Christian Hall** says...

"If you're in search of a leaner, cleaner and ultimately faster machine, follow these handy tips for keeping Windows 7 working at peak performance"

At a glance

Skill level...

Anyone can do it
Straightforward

► Tricky in parts

Suitable for...

Windows 10
Windows 8.1
Windows 7

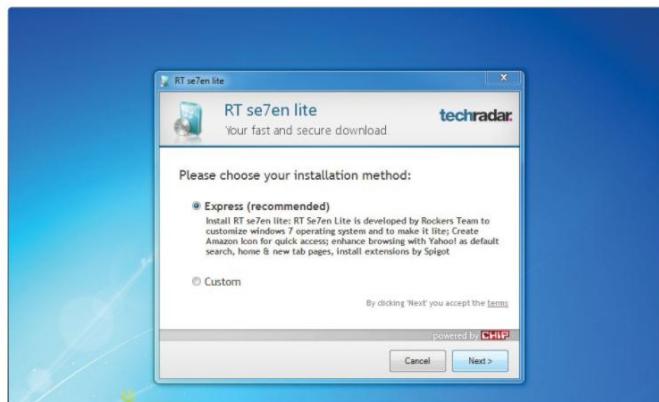
When it launched Windows 7, Microsoft prided itself on having made the new operating system far less bloated than Windows Vista and XP. This meant it ran better than those earlier versions, but there's still lots of room for improvement. Whether you think it's time you reinstalled your operating system for improved performance, or you want to help speed it up after a reinstall, we'll guide you through a variety of methods that will ensure you're using a lean, fast version of Windows 7 for as long as possible.

We'll start with making a slimmed down installation for those who want to take the plunge and reinstall everything on their PC. This will ensure that from the start you get a smaller footprint than you would if you simply got out your original Windows 7 installation disc and reinstalled from there. We'll then move on to some more general decluttering tips that will help keep your trimmed Windows 7 install in check. Let's get cracking...



CHRISTIAN'S BEST TIP
To include wallpapers, themes and more with your RT Seven Lite installation, add them under 'Customization'.

Step-by-step | Declutter your Windows 7 installation



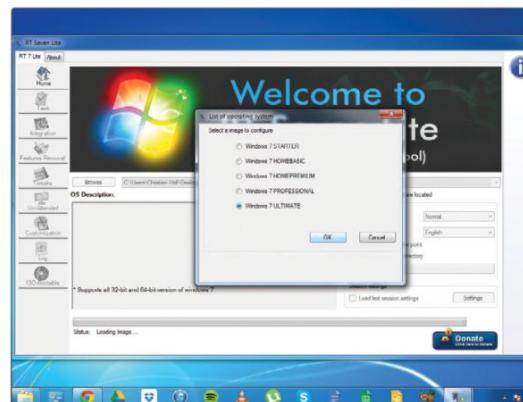
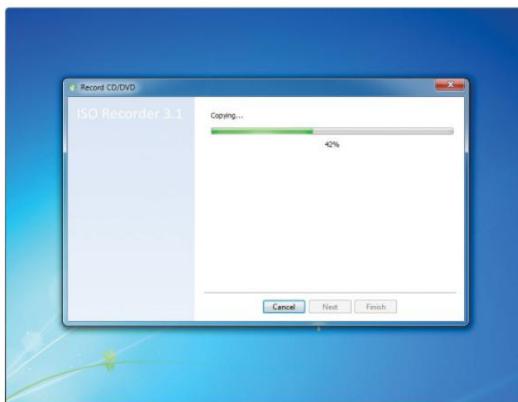
1 Trim your reinstall

There are many tools that can help create a slimmer Windows install for you, but we're going to use RT Seven Lite (<http://se7en.software.informer.com/downloads/>). Download and run it. Choose 'Express' as the install option, then click 'Next' on each following screen to complete the process. Now it's time to grab that Windows installation disc.



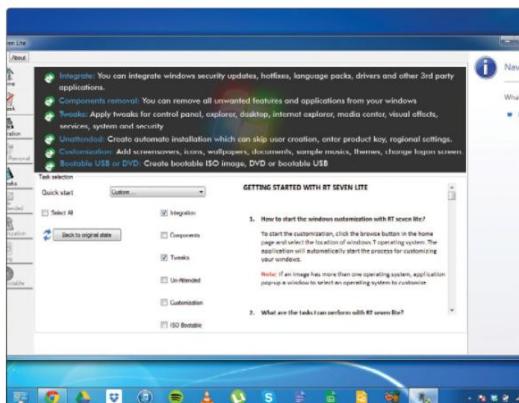
2 Create temporary folder

You'll now be presented with the RT Seven Lite interface. You will need to extract your Windows 7 disc files somewhere in order to use the program to edit them, so before you create your slim install, make a temporary folder on your desktop called Win7 Lite (or similar). Don't worry about making extra clutter – you'll be able to delete this folder when you've finished.



3 Create an ISO

Click the 'Browse' button on the main page and find your Windows 7 ISO. If you have a physical Windows 7 disc, you'll need to create an ISO using ISO Recorder (<http://bit.ly/1qlb4kO>). Install it, then right-click your DVD drive and choose 'Create image from CD/DVD', pick a path and click 'Next'.

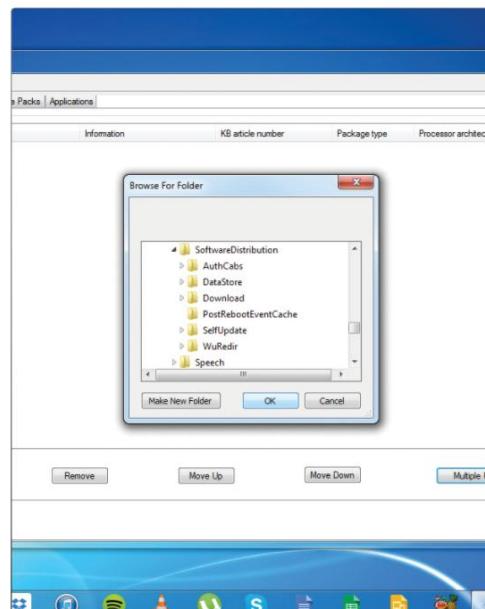


5 Tweak the install

When the process is complete, you can begin tweaking. Click the 'Task' button in the left sidebar. From here, you can choose which portions of Windows you want to customise. You have six checkboxes on this page, which correspond to the six sections on the left sidebar of the app.

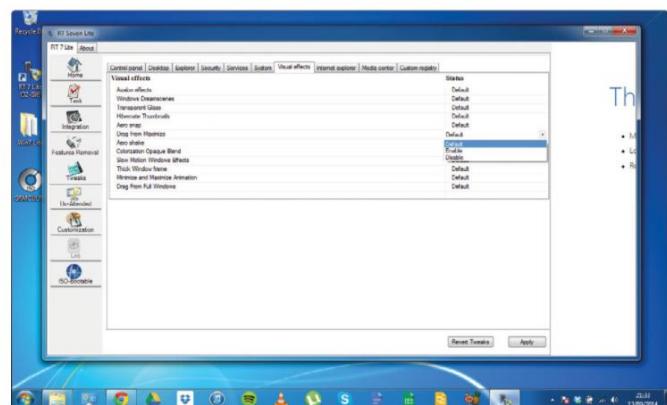
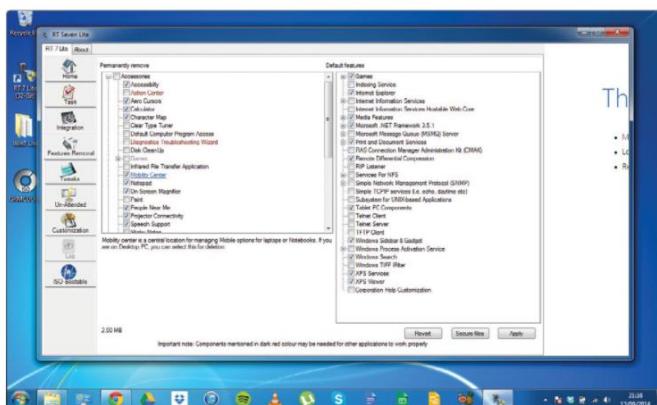
4 Slipstream the Service Pack

Back in RT Seven Lite, select your temporary folder as the extract path and click 'OK'. When it asks which image to configure, choose the correct Windows version. If you want to **slipstream** Service Pack 1 into your disc, check the 'Slipstream Service Pack' box at this step – it can't be done later.



6 Integration

Only the options selected will be highlighted in the left sidebar. The first (if you've chosen it) is 'Integration'. If there are certain updates that you really need in the original installation, you can choose them here. 'Updates' is the most important, so go to the appropriate tab, choose 'Add' and then navigate to C:\Windows\SoftwareDistribution\Download to select it.



7 Remove features

This is a very important section, which lets you remove applications and other features from Windows to make it more lightweight. The left box lets you check boxes to permanently remove apps, while the right box lets you uncheck boxes to merely disable certain features. If you're not sure what a program or feature does, a description is given for each.

8 Final tweaks

Click on the 'Tweaks' tab to make further changes. There are 10 different categories to choose from here. The worst offenders in terms of 'bloat' are under the heading Services. Before you burn the disc, visit the 'Un-attended' tab, where you can enter your product key so it activates automatically after you install Windows, saving you time and hassle.

Jargon buster!

► ISO

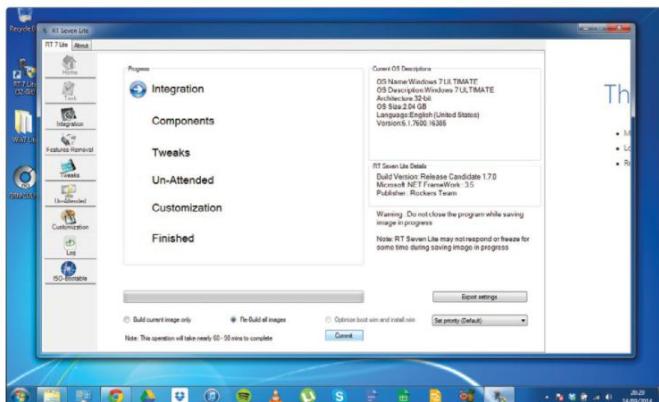
ISO files are archive files on a disc, which are bootable. You can copy ISOs to USB sticks to boot from as well.

► Slipstreaming

This term refers to packaging up a services of updates in a Windows Service Pack together into one disc image (see ISO, above).

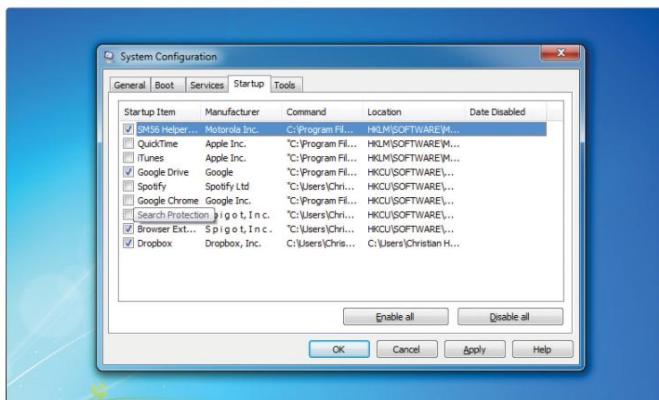
► Hibernation

This saves your current system state to a file on your hard drive before powering off so it starts more quickly next time.



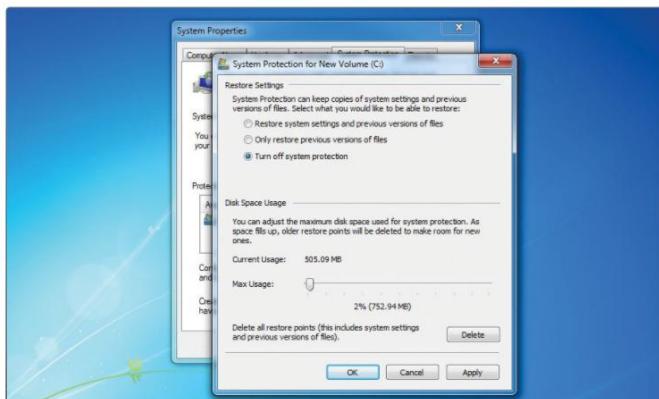
9 Prepare to burn

When you're done, go to the Log section and click 'Commit'. This will make all your changes in the temporary folder you created on the desktop. The process could take up to an hour or more, depending on how much you've tweaked. You can also click 'Export settings' before 'Commit', which will save the tweaks in case you want to come back and edit them later.



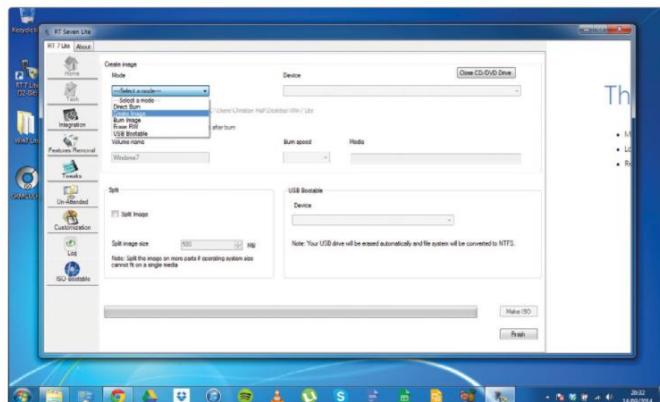
11 Start menu items

Once you've installed your new, slim version of Windows, you can make some post-install adjustments. Speeding up boot processes is a classic. To do this, open System Configuration (type **msconfig** in the Start Menu's search box and press [Enter]) and go to the 'Startup' tab. Simply uncheck any items you don't want and click 'Apply' when you've finished.



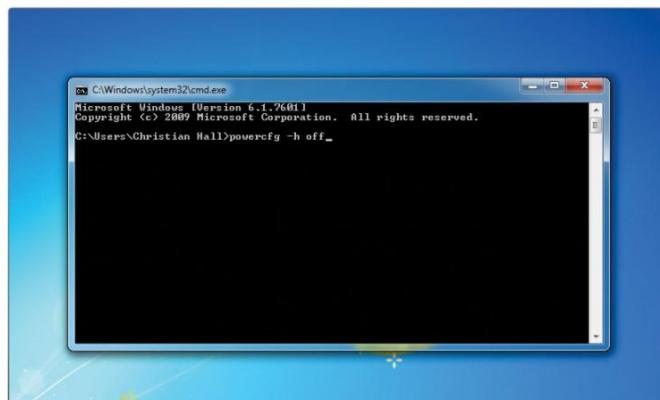
13 Switch off System Restore

Another way to save space is to turn off System Restore completely. Open the Start menu, right-click and choose 'Properties > System Protection'. In the new window that appears, click 'Configure' and in the next Window select 'Turn off system protection' and then click 'OK' followed by 'Apply'. You can go back here to re-enable it if you change your mind.



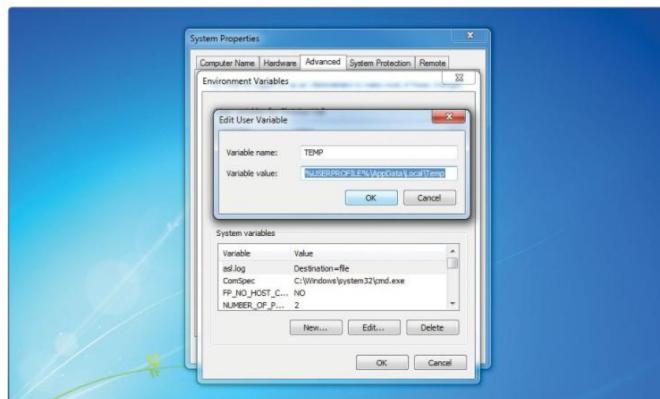
10 Choose install version

Now you're ready to head to the ISO-Bootable section and create your custom installation disc (or USB stick, if you prefer). Under Mode, you can choose 'Direct burn (DVD)', 'Create image (ISO file)' or 'USB bootable'. Give the volume a name, then hit 'Finish'. You can split the install across discs or USB sticks if it's too large for the one you have.



12 Disable hibernation

If you have a Windows 7 laptop and don't tend to use its **hibernation** feature, you can type **powercfg -h off** into the command prompt (type **cmd** in the Search box and hit [Enter]). Doing this will disable hibernation and delete the hiberfil.sys file, which can be a few gigabytes in size depending on the amount of RAM installed in your system.



14 Slim the Windows 7 partition

You're almost finished, but there's one more simple trick you can try. You can move some Windows system files to a new partition without reinstalling. Go to 'Control Panel > System > Advanced system settings' and click 'Environmental Variables'. Now just point the value of the variables TEMP and TMP to another partition on your PC and hit 'OK'. ■

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Technology
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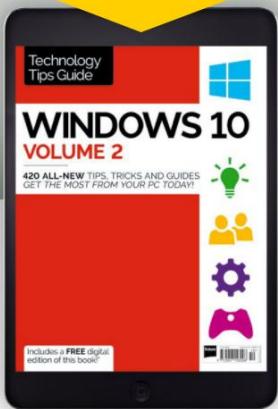


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Future







Advanced Windows secrets

Tweak your PC with the help of Windows 10's Registry Editor



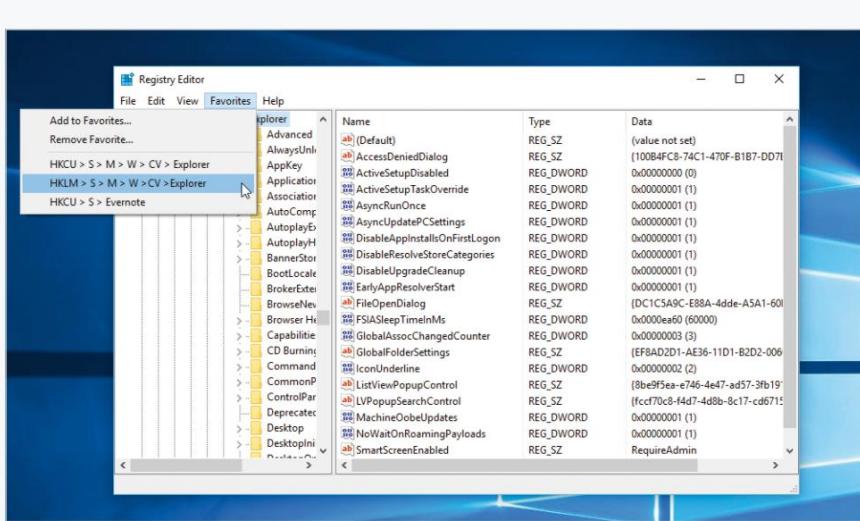
The Registry has been a vital component of Windows for the last 20 years. It's a central database, where settings and preferences are stored, and not just by Windows, either. The majority of applications installed on your PC store their own data in the Registry, too, as do many hardware devices.

In this feature, we'll look at how the Registry is constructed, plus reveal how you can access its data – not just to view its contents, but also to tweak settings. Why do this? It all boils down to preference, and the fact that Windows is built with a wide range of hardware in mind, so many settings are configured to just work, rather than push your PC's performance, or give you control over how it works.

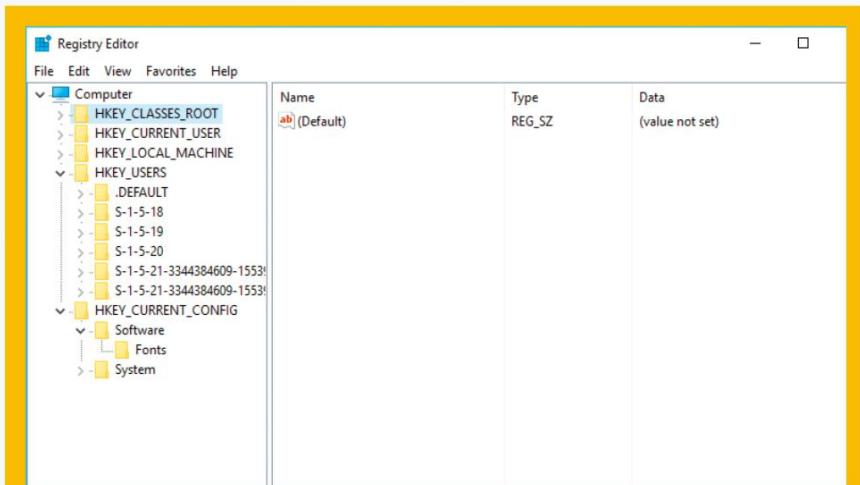
The Registry is also a useful beast for those unhappy with how Windows 10 looks and operates – that's because

lurking behind some of the less appealing parts of the new user interface are settings you can tweak that restore classic functionality. We'll examine some of these tweaks in this feature. We'll also reveal a number of tweaks that may help you boost your gaming performance. Plus we show how you can use the Registry to tweak various security and privacy settings that are normally reserved for Windows 10 Professional users.

All of this can sound frightfully (or delightfully) meddlesome, so it's a good idea to back up your Registry before you start to mess around. We'll reveal what you need to do (plus how to restore your backup if things go wrong). Finally, jumping around different parts of the Registry can be time-consuming, so we'll reveal how you can quickly build scripts using Notepad to change multiple parts of the Registry with relative ease.



It's a good idea to create quick links to frequently accessed keys



What goes where?

The Registry is divided into five keys or 'hives' – here's what goes where.

HKEY_CLASSES_ROOT: This is where file extension association information is stored, with individual sub-keys for each file type. It basically tells Windows what to do when you open or view anything, from a specific file to a drive on your PC.

HKEY_CURRENT_USER: This contains per-user settings and options, for Windows and applications. It's actually an alias that points to your user's sub-key that's stored under HKEY_USERS, which is created when you log into Windows. Note, you can still edit its contents, but you're effectively editing the contents of the HKEY_USERS sub-key.

HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE: This is where most application and

Windows settings can be found, and corresponds to preferences and options that apply to all users. If a program is installed for all users, its data is stored here. If it's installed for just one user, then its settings are instead found under HKEY_CURRENT_USER.

HKEY_USERS: This is the actual location of all individual user settings and options. Each sub-key corresponds to a user profile's security ID, which begins 'S-1-5-xx'.

HKEY_CURRENT_CONFIG: This is another alias. This key points to the HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE > SYSTEM > CurrentControlSet > CurrentControlSet > Hardware Profiles > Current key, which stores information about the current hardware profile in use. It's basically a convenient shortcut to these settings.

Let's open with a bit of Registry 101. The Registry is made up of a group of files called 'hives' (see box, left), which are stored in two folders on your hard drive: 'Windows > System32 > Config' for system-wide settings, and your personal User folder for settings associated with your user account.

Each hive consists of a different set of preferences and configuration data – for example, the system-wide software settings are stored in a file called SOFTWARE. This information is organised into sub-folders known as 'keys.' Each key contains one or more 'values' with their associated 'value data,' which are the actual configuration settings for your PC.

There are numerous types of value, depending on the data they contain. The most common include REG_DWORD values, which contain binary or hexadecimal numbers in 32-bit format (the 64-bit equivalent is REG_QWORD), and REG_SZ, which contains text-like drive labels, context menu options, or the path to a particular folder or file on your hard drive.

Whenever Windows, a program, or hardware device needs certain settings or information, it consults the Registry for the specific values it needs, enabling it to function correctly. These keys, sub-keys, and values are usually added when the software or hardware is first installed, and organised in such a way as to be accessible (many software and Windows settings are found inside the HKEY_CURRENT_USER > SOFTWARE key, for example).

Access and edit the Registry

The best tool for accessing the Registry is Registry Editor (regedit.exe). This is built into Windows, and has all the tools you need for editing the Registry. The quickest way to access it is by pressing [Win]+[R], or typing regedit and hitting [Enter], or you can open the Windows folder and create a shortcut to regedit.exe from there, for pinning wherever you want. Regedit requires administrator access, so click 'Yes' when prompted after launching it.

You'll see a two-panned window – in the left are the keys and sub-keys, while the right-hand window displays the values currently associated with the selected key. In terms of Windows and application settings, the best key to start looking inside is the HKEY_CURRENT_USER key. Double-click this, and you'll see its sub-keys. Double-click one of these, and its sub-keys will appear, and so on. Select a key to see its associated values appear in the right-hand window.

Navigating the Registry can be a time-consuming process as you move between keys, sub-keys, and values. One way to speed up access to frequently viewed sub-keys is to make use of Regedit's Favorites feature – select the key you want easy access to, and choose 'Favorites > Add to Favorites.' By default, the sub-key name is given as its entry – you might want to tweak this to make it easier to link (tip: use abbreviations such as HKLM for HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE to keep things relatively short), and click 'OK'. In future, jump back to the key by selecting it from the Favorites menu.

There are other useful shortcuts when navigating Registry Editor. For instance, open a key containing dozens of sub-keys, and you can quickly jump to one of these by typing the first two or three letters of its name. Or use the cursor keys to navigate.

Tweak Windows 10

Many Registry tweaks can be performed outside of Registry Editor, by using Windows' own tools and dialog boxes – for example, choosing whether or not to show hidden files is best done from File Explorer's 'Options' dialog (select the 'View' tab). We'll focus on tweaks you can't make using Windows' own tools.

Let's start by creating a Registry value that enables the hidden Dark Theme in Windows 10, which provides light text on a dark background for those who need it. This will change all widgets, menus, and apps such as Edge and Mail, and can be toggled on or off as required. First, browse to the following key:

'HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE > SOFTWARE > Microsoft > Windows > CurrentVersion > Themes > Personalize'

If 'Personalize' doesn't exist, right-click the 'Themes' key, and choose 'New > Key' to create it. Once done, select 'Personalize' in the left-hand pane, then right-click on some blank space in the right-hand pane, and choose 'New > DWORD (32-bit) Value'. Name the value 'AppsUseLightTheme', then double-click it, and verify its value is 0. Next, you need to switch to the corresponding folder in the HKEY_CURRENT_USER branch – the swiftest way to do this is to right-click the 'Personalize' key, and choose 'Go to HKEY_CURRENT_USER'. Once there, create 'AppsUseLightTheme' there, too, again with a value of 0.

Conventional wisdom tells you to reboot your PC (or log off Windows) to enable most tweaks, but in this case, the change is immediate – just click 'Start > Settings' to see the new theme in action. How do you undo this particular tweak? You have two options – one, simply delete both values you created, or you

can double-click each one in turn, and change them to 1, enabling you to switch back and forth easily.

When you are expected to reboot, try restarting the Explorer process first. To do this, right-click 'Task Manager', click 'More details' if necessary, then scroll down to the bottom of the 'Processes' tab, where you'll find 'Explorer' in the 'Windows Processes' section. Right-click 'Explorer', and choose 'Restart', and the tweak should – in most cases – be applied.

More great tweaks

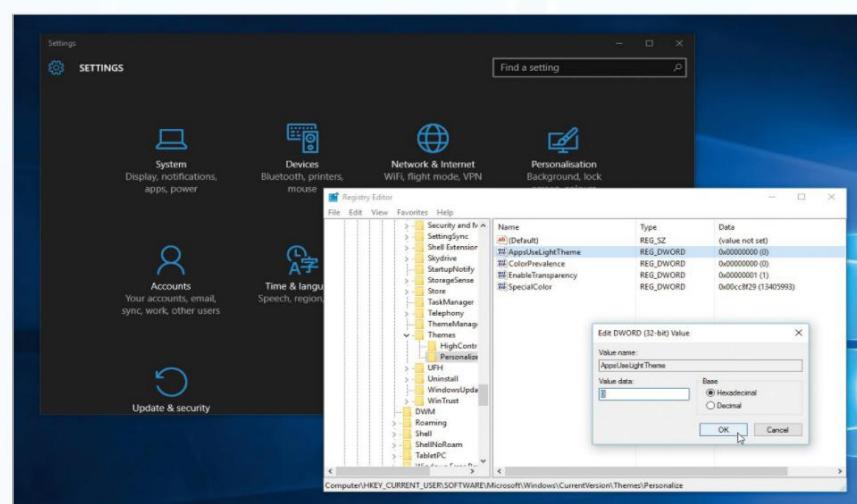
The next tweak enables you to increase the transparency on the Taskbar. Go to 'HKLM (HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE) > SOFTWARE > Microsoft > Windows > CurrentVersion > Advanced', and create a new DWORD (32-bit) Value called 'UseOLEDTaskbarTransparency'. Give it a value of 1, then select 'Start > Settings > Personalization > Colors', and flick the 'Make Start, taskbar, and Action Center transparent' switch on (or off and on again, if it's enabled) to see the tweak in

action. Changing the value to 0, or deleting it, will remove the tweak.

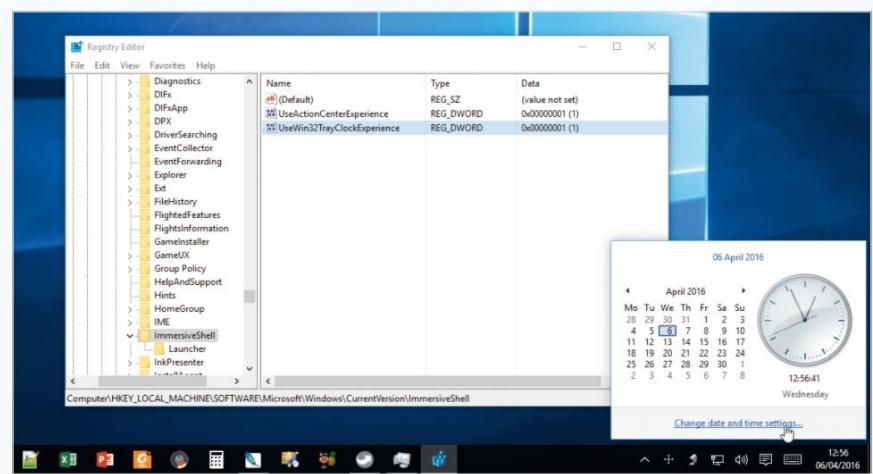
The next three tweaks enable you to restore Taskbar notification area user interfaces from Windows 7 and 8.1. First, the volume – browse to 'HKLM > SOFTWARE > Microsoft > Windows NT > CurrentVersion', then create a key called 'MTCUVC' under 'CurrentVersion'. From here, create a new DWORD value called 'EnableMtcUvc', and set to 0.

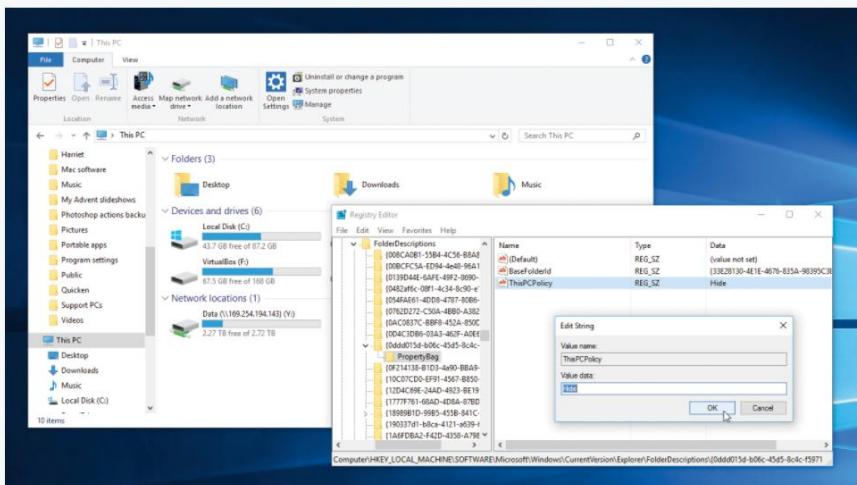
To restore the Windows 7 classic UI for both Date and Time, and Battery, browse to 'HKLM > SOFTWARE > Microsoft > Windows > CurrentVersion > ImmersiveShell'. Restore the UIs by creating two DWORD values called 'UseWin32TrayClockExperience' and 'UseWin32BatteryFlyout', then set to 1.

Don't like the way Windows has removed balloon notifications in favour of slide-in 'toasts'? Go to 'HKCU (HKEY_CURRENT_USER) > SOFTWARE > Policies > Microsoft > Windows > Explorer', create a new DWORD value called 'EnableLegacyBalloonNotifications' and give it a value of 1.

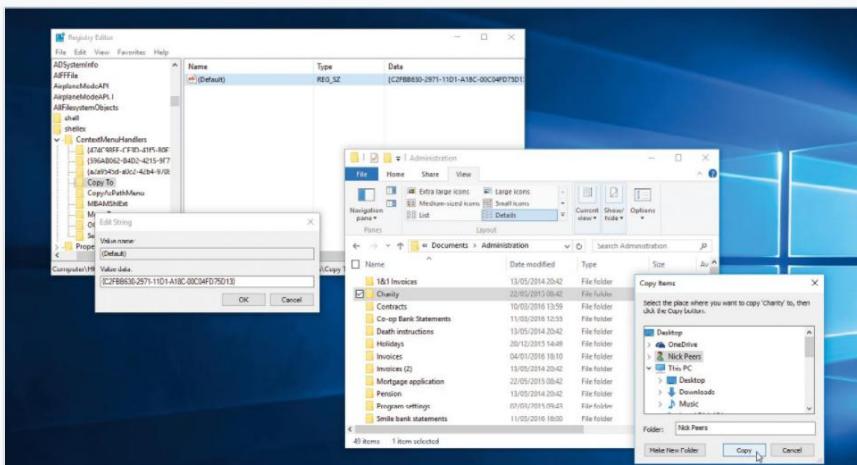


This relatively simple tweak enables a hidden dark theme in Windows 10





Streamline the 'This PC' folder view by removing unused folders



You can customise right-click menus through the Registry

Want to hide selected user folders from view when browsing 'This PC'? Browse to 'HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Explorer\FolderDescriptions'. You'll see a string of strangely named keys, each pointing to a different shell folder. Restrict your search to those keys with '>' next to them, indicating they have sub-keys. Select each one in turn, and use the 'Name' value to help identify them as Local Pictures, Desktop, Documents, Downloads, Music, and Videos folders – the 'Local' reference confirms they're your personal user folders. Expand the key and select the 'PropertyBag' key inside it. You'll see a REG_SZ value called 'ThisPCPolicy' in the right-hand pane. Double-click this and change it from 'Show' to 'Hide'. This will hide the folder in 'This PC' view after you've restarted Explorer.

Add more to context menu

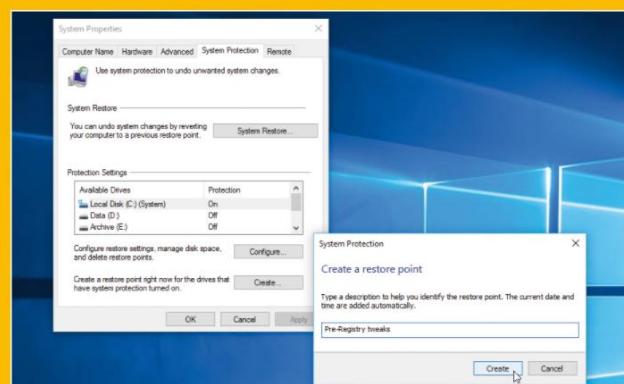
Save time moving and copying files by adding two options to the context menu that appears when you right-click a file or folder. Browse to 'HKEY_CLASSES_ROOT\AllFilesystemObjects\ShellEx\ContextMenuHandlers', then create two sub-keys beneath this called 'Move To' and 'Copy To' respectively. Select the 'Move To' key, then double-click the '(Default)' value and change it to: {C2FBB631-2971-11D1-A18C-00C04FD75D1}. Now double-click '(Default)' under the 'Copy To' key, and change it to {C2FBB630-2971-11D1-

Back up the Registry

Before you start tweaking the Registry, ask yourself what you'll do if something goes wrong. Most tweaks won't bring your system to a halt, but they may render apps unusable, or result in strange behaviour. Some Registry edits are easier to undo than others, as well – so make things easier by using a multi-layered approach to taking precautions. Before you begin, take a System Restore point, which backs up the Registry in its current state, as well as other system files. Type **system protection** into the Cortana search box, and select 'Create a restore

point'. Verify System Restore is switched on for your system drive (click 'Configure...' if it's not), then click 'Create'. Give your Restore point a suitable name, such as 'Pre-Registry tweaks', and click 'Create' again.

This is your fall-back backup. If all else goes wrong, you can access System Restore from within Windows itself, or from the recovery options if Windows won't boot – choose 'Troubleshoot', then 'Advanced', and 'System Restore' to select the Restore point you created. It's also a good idea to back up individual Registry



Take a fail-safe backup of your Registry before editing it

keys before you start changing them – this is done from within Registry Editor. Right-click the target key in the left-hand pane, and choose 'Export'. Again, give your backup a name (and save it to your backup drive) before

clicking 'Save'. Backed-up settings are stored in the .reg format – restore them via 'File > Import' inside Registry Editor, or by double-clicking the file and clicking 'Yes' twice. These settings will overwrite your changes and restore things.

A18C-00C04FD75D13}. The change is immediate – right-click a file or folder in File Explorer to see the options appear.

The following tweak makes it easy to open files in Notepad to view and edit. Browse to 'HKEY_CLASSES_ROOT > * > Shell'. Create a new sub-key called 'Open with Notepad', and create another sub-key inside called 'command'. With 'command' selected, double-click '(Default)', and change its value to 'notepad.exe %1'. If you have another text editor installed in your Program Files folder, you can use that instead – for example, 'notepad++.exe'. Change the 'Open with...' sub-key's name to suit – it's what's displayed on the context menu when you right-click a file.

Boost performance

Registry tweaks aren't just about wresting back control over the interface – dig deeply, and you can even make certain aspects of Windows run faster, too. And we're not just talking about visual tricks, such as making menu entries appear quicker (although if you'd like to do that, navigate to 'HKCU > Control Panel > Desktop', and experiment with the 'MenuShowDelay' value – try a setting of 20, and reboot to feel the effects).

Windows 10 has a built-in delay before it starts loading programs from the Startup folder, to give itself time to load. If you're running Windows on a fast PC, you can try eliminating the delay to see if it speeds up the overall startup time. Navigate to 'HKCU > SOFTWARE > Microsoft > Windows > CurrentVersion > Explorer'. Create a new sub-key called 'Serialise', then create a new DWORD value inside 'Serialise' called 'StartupDelayInMSec'. Leave its value set

Build Registry Scripts

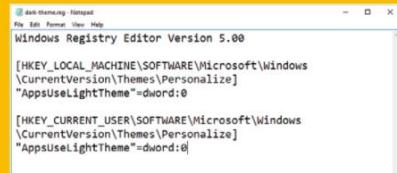
Why get your hands messy with Registry Editor when you can make changes to the Registry directly from Notepad? By creating script files using a text editor, then saving them with a .reg file extension, just double-click the .reg file to merge your changes into the Registry.

To do this, open a blank document in Notepad. Type the following line at the top: **Windows Registry Editor Version 5.00**

This identifies the script as a Registry file. Add a blank line, then type below that: **[Regpath]**

Keep the square brackets, but replace Regpath with the Registry key you wish to edit. Beneath, type each value you wish to create or modify on separate lines using:

'ValueName'=Valuetype:Value



Ignore Valuetype if the value is a string; otherwise, enter 'binary' for hexadecimal values, or 'dword' for dword values.

You can edit multiple Registry keys within a single document – just leave a blank line between each '[Regpath]' entry. Once done, choose 'File > Save', change 'Save as type:' to 'All Files', and save with a .reg extension. Back up, then double-click the file to merge it into the Registry, or right-click it and choose 'Edit' to make changes.

at 0, reboot, and see if there's a difference (remove it if it slows things down).

The following tweaks may help speed up your gaming performance. The first may reduce latency and ping in some games. Browse to 'HKLM > SYSTEM > CurrentControlSet > Services > Tcpip > Parameters > Interfaces'. You'll see a list of keys relating to different network interfaces – identify your Wi-Fi or Ethernet adapter from the IPAddress value, then create three new DWORD values: 'TcpAckFrequency', 'TCPNoDelay', and 'TcpDelAckTicks'. Set the first two to 1, and leave the last one at 0.

Next, try disabling network throttling. Browse to 'HKLM > SOFTWARE >

Microsoft > Windows NT > CurrentVersion > Multimedia > SystemProfile'. Double-click or create a DWORD called 'NetworkThrottlingIndex', and set its Hexadecimal value to ffffffff. While here, edit/create the 'SystemResponsiveness' DWORD value, set to 00000000 for maximum streaming.

Browse from here to the 'Tasks > Games' sub-key. Verify 'GPU Priority' is set to 8, and change the Priority value to 6, which will throw more system resources at games.

Find more tweaks

You'll find the internet is littered with Registry tweaks, but always take precautions before you follow any. Tweaks from older versions of Windows should also work in Windows 10, but it's not always guaranteed.

When surfing the net for useful tweaks – particularly when it comes to securing your PC – you'll often find a reference to gpedit.msc, or Group Policy Editor. This tool makes it easy to set security and privacy policies in Windows, and while it's aimed at business users, it's often handy for us mere mortals, too.

The only problem with gpedit.msc is it's not available in Home editions of Windows. But don't worry, because Group Policy Editor is a neat front end for various Registry settings – all you need to know is which tweak applies to which Registry setting, and thanks to a handy Excel file from Microsoft, you can do just that. Download the Windows 10 ADMX spreadsheet.xlsx file from bit.ly/1Khm0c.

Policy Path	Description
HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Policies\Uninstall\DefaultCategory	Specifies the category of program
HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Policies\Uninstall\DefaultCategory	Removes the "Add a program from my computer" link
HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Policies\Uninstall\DefaultCategory	Prevents users from viewing or editing the "Add a program from my computer" link
HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Policies\Uninstall\DefaultCategory	Prevents users from using Add or Remove Programs
HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Policies\Uninstall\DefaultCategory	Prevents users from using Add or Remove Programs
HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Policies\Uninstall\DefaultCategory	Prevents users from using Add or Remove Programs
HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Policies\Uninstall\DefaultCategory	Removes links to the Support Inf
HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Policies\Uninstall\DefaultCategory	This setting allows you to display the Add or Remove link
HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Policies\Uninstall\DefaultCategory	This policy setting controls the display of the Add or Remove link
HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Policies\Uninstall\DefaultCategory	Disables all Control Panel programs
HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Policies\Uninstall\DefaultCategory	This policy setting controls which Control Panel items are displayed
HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Policies\Uninstall\DefaultCategory	Disables the Display Control Panel
HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Policies\Uninstall\DefaultCategory	Removes the Settings tab from Control Panel
HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Policies\Uninstall\DefaultCategory	Disables the Color (or Window) Control Panel
HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Policies\Uninstall\DefaultCategory	Prevents the Screen Saver dialog
HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Policies\Uninstall\DefaultCategory	Enables desktop screen savers
HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Policies\Uninstall\DefaultCategory	Specifies the screen saver for the desktop
HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Policies\Uninstall\DefaultCategory	Determines whether screen savers are enabled
HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Policies\Uninstall\DefaultCategory	Specifies how much idle time is required before the screen saver is activated
HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Policies\Uninstall\DefaultCategory	Prevents users from adding or changing screen savers

Who needs gpedit.msc when you have the Registry?

32



FUN THINGS YOUR PC CAN DO

Push your PC to the limit to discover the breadth of tasks it can perform. You might be surprised...

Suitable for all versions of Windows

Sometimes we have a tendency to get caught up in the mundane. It's easy to spend days entire days pushing messages to and from social media, typing up long important documents, or organising countless photos of friends and family.

These things are all useful, and we're not about to suggest you pack in work or abandon your loved ones, but you have in front of you an amazing thing – a computer far more powerful than those that originally sent man to the moon. And what are you doing with it? Not as much as you could be doing! And that's a shame.

This is why we've decided to find some of the smartest things your computer is capable of and bring them to your attention. Things you probably hadn't even thought were possible. Because your PC isn't just a computer. It's a musical instrument. It's an Android phone. It's a teacher, an explorer, a sculptor and even a time machine. And what's more, it is all these things right now. No extra hardware or costly software needed.

So why not check out our list (and tell us how you get on). It's time to broaden your horizons, do something special with your PC, and go beyond the day-to-day of Windows. Enjoy!

1 ENJOY SHORT WAVE RADIO

A software-defined radio is a clever tool that captures an entire slice of radio bands and allows you to tune into whichever frequency you like in real time. There are plenty of aerials hooked up to web-based receivers the world over. Visit <http://websdr.org> to find the best of them, and have fun exploring the vast array of short wave transmissions out there. If you're interested in making your own, you can do so with a fairly standard USB TV receiver – check out <http://bit.ly/1u2Zl8B> to find out how.



LISTEN UP Just drag WebSDR's yellow marker along the 'waterfall' display to tune into interesting signals



PLAY AROUND AudioSauna has a keyboard and everything else you need to start making tunes

2 CREATE YOUR OWN MUSIC

You don't need to download or install anything to start making cool electronic music. AudioSauna Studio (www.audios sauna.com/studio) gives you all the tools you need in a web browser. There's everything from configurable analogue synths and FM synths to samplers, along with an easy-to-use virtual keyboard and piano roll layout. Whether you're sketching out your next magnum opus or just after a simple beat, you can make it here.

3 SLOW DOWN SONGS

Paul's Extreme Sound Stretch (<http://hypermammut.sourceforge.net/paulstretch>)

is an amazing bit of software that takes an audio file, stretches it to an extreme length, adds something called spectral smoothing, then spits out amazing ambient masterpieces. Make a tune 800 per cent longer and barely a whisper of it will be retained, but the end product will be fascinating and awesome.

4 LEARN A NEW LANGUAGE

Fancy brushing up on your secondary school French? Feel like picking up an entirely new language, or learning something else entirely? Memrise (www.memrise.com) mixes science, fun and a big community to create an innovative way to learn just about everything. It's all based around tried-and-tested memory-improvement techniques, and you can track your progress on any of the huge number of courses as you go.

5 SEE THE WORLD FROM HOME

The very first webcam was set up pointing at a pot of coffee at the University of Cambridge, so engineers could know how much of their precious caffeine remained. Now webcams are pointing at just about everything, everywhere. If you fancy taking a live sightseeing tour from your desk, just jump onto



OLD SCHOOL QAOP's default control scheme is, of course, the classic Spectrum QAOP

www.earthcamtv.com to see a live feed of webcams from around the world, or visit www.earthcam.com to be a bit more selective about your viewing.

6 TRY ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

We all already know that *Dungeons and Dragons* is a brilliant and immersive game, but did you there's an alternative way to get your tabletop RPG fix: <http://roll20.net> has all the dice, tools, maps and tokens required for an online adventure. All you need to do is find a dungeon master.



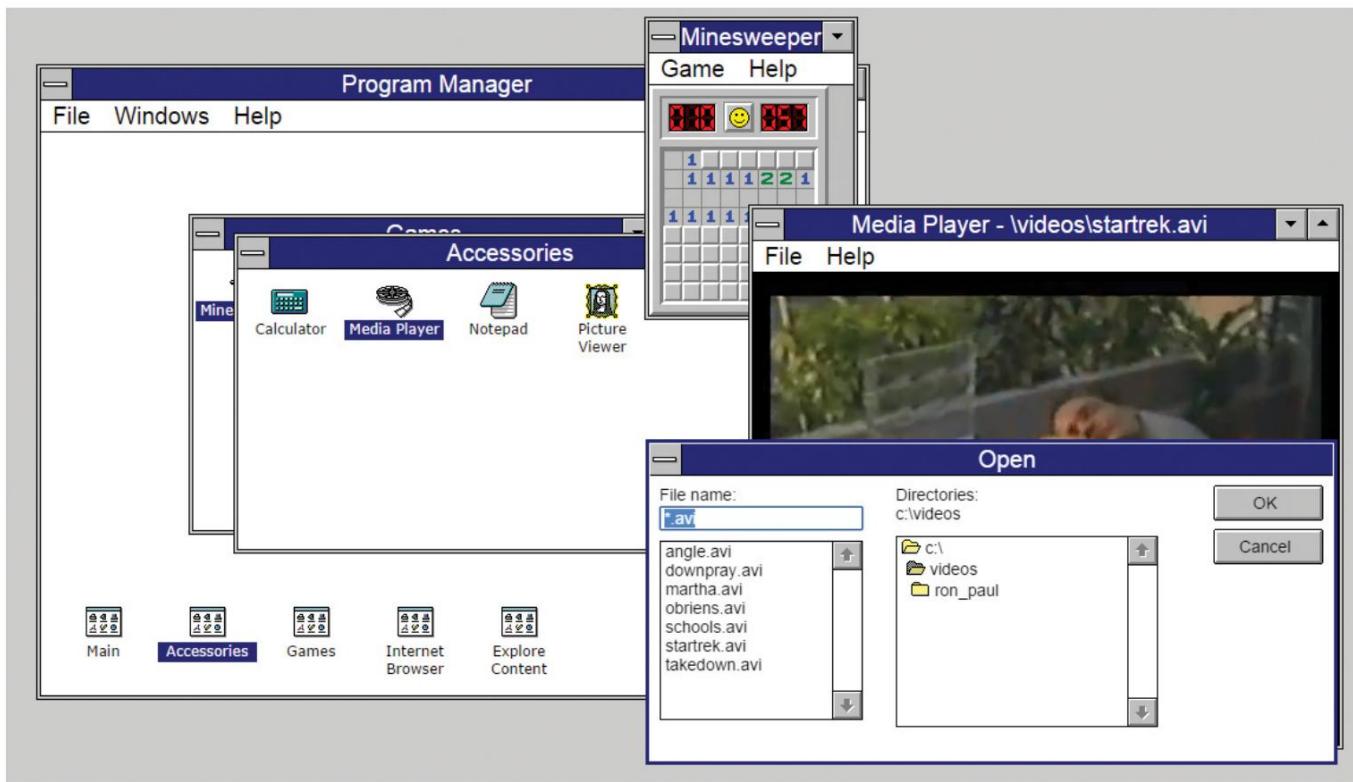
LOOK OUT What will you see on Earthcam TV? Be on the lookout for suspicious activity!

7 CREATE A BOARD GAME

Vassal (www.vassalengine.org) is similar to roll20, which we have just mentioned, but there's one big difference – it's focused exclusively on the world of board gaming. Users have generated rule sets that let you play just about every popular board game online against your friends, and, with a bit of effort, you'll even be able to make your own. It's perfect for testing out those game ideas you've had rolling around in your head like so many six-sided dice.

8 PLAY CLASSIC GAMES

If you've been around computers for a while, you'll probably remember the familiar and haunting skirl of the Sinclair ZX Spectrum, as it took five minutes to load a game that may or may not be awful. Well, you can relive those days – and skip the interminable loading – with QAOP, an online Speccy emulator available to download free at <http://torinak.com/qaop>. Or if you're after a more specific title, World of Spectrum (www.worldofspectrum.org) has an extensive archive of just about everything ever released for Sir Clive's little wonder, all playable on desktop emulators, which are also available from the site.



NINETIES CHARM MichaelV's emulation of Windows 3.1 even includes a spot of *Minesweeper*

9 GO BACK IN TIME

Telehack (www.telehack.com) is wonderful – it's a simulation of the old days of online communication, with a ton of emulated bulletin boards that you can dial into manually, and even a little hacking game built in. Once you get the hang of what you're doing (perhaps with the help of the wiki at <http://telehack.org>) you'll be hooked. If that feels like going back a little too far, check out Michael Vincent's amazing website at www.michaelv.org, where he's emulated Windows 3.1 to a tee.

10 DISCOVER NEW MUSIC

There are hundreds of new bands and artists putting out music every day, but how do you find the next big hit and look cool before it's cool? There's <http://musicrobot.co.uk>, a site dedicated to digging up the hottest new tunes for you. Or you could try going straight to the source; many of today's brightest stars make themselves heard by putting up music on either www.soundcloud.com or www.bandcamp.com, where you can listen for free.

11 REDISCOVER OLD MUSIC

There's plenty of free music around, but recorded music has been around long enough that there's a vast swath of previously commercial audio that has outlived its copyright period. The Open

Music Archive (www.openmusicarchive.org) collects much of this classic public domain content together, so you can download it and listen at your leisure. If you're looking for a good lightweight player, we heartily recommend Foobar2000, which you can grab for free from www.foobar2000.org.

12 SEE THE OLD WEB

Many websites have been online, untouched, since they were first launched. Warner Brothers' *Space Jam* site (www.warnerbros.com/spacejam/movie/jam.htm) is a shining example of classic web design, with its brutal repeating starfield

background and innovative-for-1996 layout. But you don't have to rely on things being left online; the Internet Archive's Wayback Machine (<http://archive.org/web>) will show you sites as they existed in years past.

13 EXPLORE THE GALAXY

Celestia (www.shatters.net/celestia/news.html) is a great-if-basic planetarium. Synchronised in real time, it lets you jump to any object in the night sky and check it out. We'd also recommend checking out its rival Stellarium (www.stellarium.org/en_GB), which is slightly more complex and much more visually attractive. But if you really



IN THE STARS You can set free, open-source planetarium Stellarium to display constellations from other countries. It's fascinating – Korea seems to have one known as 'Toilet of Sky'

want to feel how big space is, check out <http://joshworth.com/dev/pixelspace>. Its creator calls it "a tediously accurate scale model of the solar system", and we're not about to argue.

14 VISIT ANOTHER PLANET

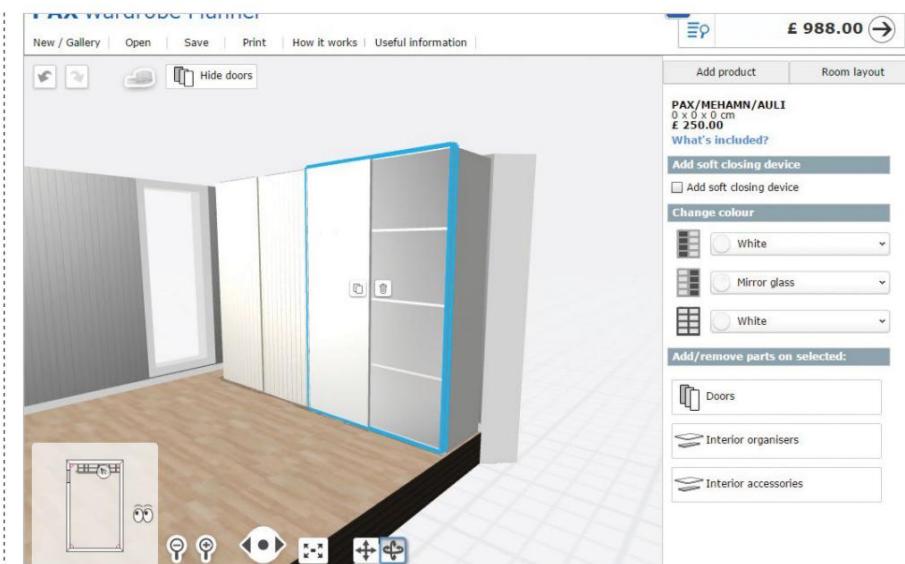
Google Maps is not merely limited to this planet. At <http://google.com/moon> you can find full maps of the Moon, with details of the Apollo landing sites; at <http://google.com/mars>, you'll get the same for the red planet. Install the increasingly misnamed Google Earth (<http://google.com/earth>) and you can explore both extraterrestrial bodies in three dimensions. As you'd expect, the satellite imagery isn't as detailed as that of our own planet, but it's still decent enough.

15 SCULPT IN DIGITAL CLAY

Sculptris (<http://pixologic.com/sculptris>) is an easy-to-use, free version of the professional 3D-modelling tool ZBrush. You start with a simple ball of 'clay', and prod, pull and tweak it until you've made something presumably amazing but most likely terrifying and unsettling. It's great fun to play with, and you might be surprised at the results you can achieve with no prior training or practice. Or you might be scared by them. One or the other.

16 APPRAISE YOUR HOME

Okay, you can't get an exact valuation of your property without the intervention of an estate agent or two, but you can at least



DIY SOS You can choose all sorts of options with IKEA's tools. How ugly can you make your room?

get an idea of what your home is worth (and what you might make if you were to sell it) by checking out recent sales on your street using sites such as www.zoopla.co.uk or www.rightmove.com. There's also the official Land Registry site (<http://houseprices.landregistry.gov.uk>), which gives you an even more comprehensive look at house prices, with a heat map of popular areas.

17 REDECORATE VIRTUALLY

The Dulux Mousepainter site at www.dulux.co.uk/web/visualizer cleverly allows you to upload a photo of your tattiest room and give it a fresh lick of paint. Yes, it's all part of Dulux's mission to sell you paint – who'd have thought – but it's a great way to see if

puce really does go with lime. IKEA offers similar tools; visit www.ikea.com/ms/en_GB/rooms_ideas/splashplanners.html and install the plug-in to start designing your new kitchen or filling your virtual rooms with digital flat-pack shelves.

18 NAME YOUR OFFSPRING

Who wants to follow the crowd? If you don't want your newborn to get lost in a sea of other Olivers or Amelias in their class, check out <http://names.darkgreener.com> for a historical perspective on the most – and least – used names in recent years according to data from the Office of National Statistics. If you want to find naming trends in the USA, check out



CLAY TERROR It can create amazing models in the right hands, but everything we've made with Sculptris has prevented us from sleeping at night

www.babynamewizard.com/voyager – this site goes back much further in time, too.

19 BECOME A GOURMET

If you want to try making something special – and who doesn't fancy a nice crocodile burger or a good handful of chocolate ant wafers every once in a while – www.findthatingredient.com is well worth a visit. Simply type in your postcode and the particular ingredient you're hankering for, and it'll find your nearest bricks-and-mortar or online stockist. And if you can't even be bothered to look for a fancy ingredient, try www.hellofresh.co.uk, a subscription service that will deliver a regular recipe, and all the ingredients you need to make it, direct to your door.

20 GET YOURSELF ON TV

There are plenty of websites you can visit if you're interested in watching a show live as it's being recorded – www.bbc.co.uk/showsandtours/tickets, for example – but it's just as easy to apply for a spot on the shows themselves; try www.bbc.co.uk/beanashow or www.itv.com/beontv to try your luck. Alternatively, if you have a webcam, why not get involved with the on-demand future of TV and record straight to YouTube? Just visit www.youtube.com/my_webcam, allow the site access, and you can record footage from your PC's camera without any additional software.

EAT UP We'd have to travel 100 miles to get hold of fresh crocodile meat. Perhaps we'll give it a miss for now



21 FILL YOUR MAILBOX

Subscription services have exploded recently, and there are loads to try, many of which have sign-up offers, which mean you can sample them without committing to a long-term contract. Graze boxes (www.graze.com) contain tasty snacks and

fit through your letterbox. Toucan (www.toucanbox.com) supplies fortnightly craft projects to keep your kids out of mischief. Trunkclub (www.trunkclub.com) is a service that sends you a personalised wardrobe selected by your own stylist. And why not subscribe to this fine magazine at www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk? You'll save money and be the first to get every issue.

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A young girl wearing a white knitted hat and coat is looking through a magnifying glass at a small jar of craft materials.

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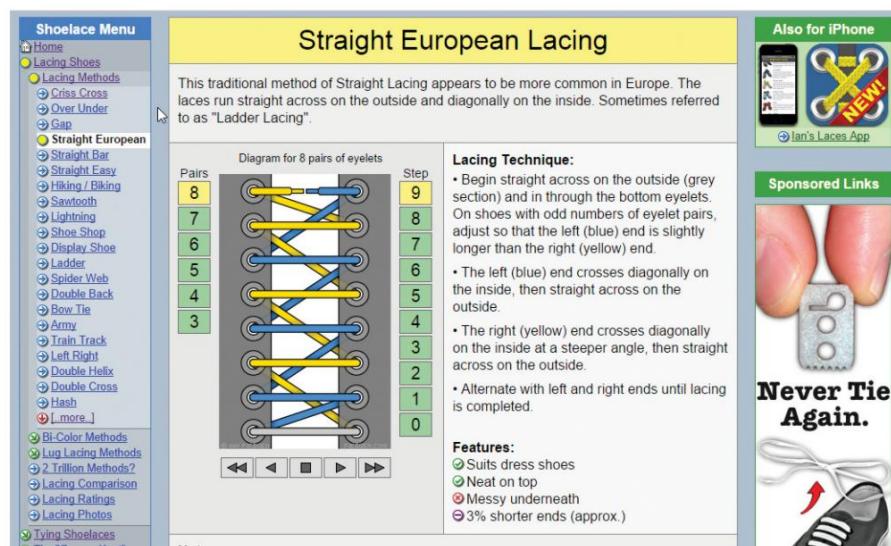
DOOR TO DOOR Whatever you're interested in – food, fashion or fun ideas – there's a service online that will deliver it straight to your home

22 SEARCH FOR ALIEN LIFE

SETI – the Search for Extra Terrestrial Intelligence – employs gigantic radio telescopes pointed at the most interesting areas of the sky, but they capture so much data, there's no way to process it all centrally. That's where you come in. Download BOINC using the instructions at <http://setiathome.ssl.berkeley.edu>, and you can use your computer's spare power to join over three million people in one of the world's largest distributed computing projects. Maybe your PC will be the first to hear a message from another world...

23 BREAK THE ENIGMA CODE

Bletchley Park in Buckinghamshire will always be remembered for housing Britain's crack team of codebreakers – including Alan Turing – during the Second World War. If you fancy encrypting and decrypting messages using the most secure code of the time, you can download an authentic Enigma simulator from <http://users.telenet.be/d.rijmenants/en/enigmasim.htm>. The simulation includes removable rotors with authentic wiring, and is as baffling as you might expect, but there are instructions included and even a full gallery of different models of the Enigma machine.



Straight European Lacing

This traditional method of Straight Lacing appears to be more common in Europe. The laces run straight across on the outside and diagonally on the inside. Sometimes referred to as "Ladder Lacing".

Lacing Technique:

- Begin straight across on the outside (grey section) and in through the bottom eyelets. On shoes with odd numbers of eyelet pairs, adjust so that the left (blue) end is slightly longer than the right (yellow) end.
- The left (blue) end crosses diagonally on the inside, then straight across on the outside.
- The right (yellow) end crosses diagonally on the inside at a steeper angle, then straight across on the outside.
- Alternate with left and right ends until lacing is completed.

Features:

- Suits dress shoes
- Neat on top
- Messy underneath
- 3% shorter ends (approx.)

Also for iPhone



Sponsored Links



Never Tie Again.

LOOSE ENDS Ian's Shoelace Site is just about the best site on the internet. Seriously

24 ABUSE A STICKMAN

It's okay – Mr Dismount doesn't mind if he takes a tumble. In Stair Dismount (<http://secretexit.com/freeware>), a classic early display of ragdoll physics, it's up to you to give your poor hapless soul a good shove and score points depending on just how brutally he falls. The same site also offers Truck Dismount, where you're tasked with

smashing Mr Dismount's vehicle to cause him the most damage possible.

25 WATCH WORLDWIDE TV

Don't fall for the scam hardware you might see advertised on less reputable websites – you don't need a magical USB stick to tune into TV from around the world – you just need the right source. <http://wwtv.com> will point you towards hundreds of free live streams of TV stations, although bear in mind these are of variable quality, usually fluctuating between interesting and awful.

26 LEARN HOW TO CODE

There are plenty of resources online that can teach you to write your own programs, and even if you're not intending on getting into coding as a job, it's a great way to focus on joined-up thinking. www.code.org hosts a string of kid-friendly online tutorials, but if you want something a bit meatier, we recommend www.codecademy.com. This site offers free courses that will teach you a variety of programming languages from the ground up.

27 TIE YOUR SHOELACES

Well, not quite – your computer won't actually fasten your laces for you.

DOWN YOU GO Mr Dismount, we're assured, is fully insured and completely indestructible



ACCOUNTKILLER

Do you care about your personal data? We provide instructions to remove your account or public profile on most popular websites, including Skype, Facebook, Windows Live, Hotmail / Live, Twitter, MSN / Messenger, Google and many more. Want to create an account somewhere? Check our Blacklist first to see if it's even possible to remove your profile!

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TWITTER Ease of service: white Delete twitter account	Groupon Ease of service: grey Delete groupon account	GOOGLE Ease of service: white Delete google account	WHATSAPP Ease of service: white Delete whatsapp account	YAHOO Ease of service: white Delete yahoo account

GET GONE We've found the perfect antidote to websites that really try hard to not let you remove your account for good

Technology has not yet advanced that far. But we're sure you've never thought of as many creative ways to lace up your footwear as Ian of Ian's Shoelace Site (www.fiegen.com/shoelace). No matter how many pairs of eyelets your shoes have, there's comprehensive instructions for looping your laces, and even a guide to the Ian Knot, which the site's owner claims is the 'world's fastest shoelace knot'.

28 GIVE SOMEONE A LOAN

It's very unlikely to make you a substantial profit, but you can apply your spare resources to help others who find themselves in need of some financial help – www.zopa.com uses a system called peer-to-peer lending to match you with an individual seeking a loan, allowing you to invest from £10 upwards. The system is also known as lend-to-save, perhaps by way of apology for the low returns, but also to reflect the fact that your investment will trickle back to you gradually as it is repaid.

29 READ COMIC BOOKS

There's a huge community online dedicated to preserving and enjoying classic comic books from the past, and many present-day titles are released online too. Start by equipping yourself with a reader – www.cdisplayex.com is a good option – then check out <http://digitalcomicmuseum.com> and <http://comicbookplus.com> to find free out-of-copyright titles to enjoy.

30 RUN ANDROID APPS

Nifty games and apps aren't just for smartphones and tablets. With the BlueStacks App Player (www.bluestacks.com) you can run the latest mobile software from your desktop. It's not perfect – emulating a phone's touchscreen with your mouse doesn't always give good results – but with the Google Play Store built in, you can even download new apps easily.

31 HIDE YOURSELF ONLINE

Social media is lovely. Sometimes too lovely. Perhaps it's got you into trouble, or attracted

unwanted attention, or are wasting too much time. Sites such as Facebook seem unwilling to actually delete your accounts, because your data makes them money. That is unless you follow the expert guides at www.accountkiller.com, which shows you how to rid yourself of social menaces.

32 PRINT A GIANT POSTER

Your printer can probably only manage A4 pages, but this website – www.rasterbator.net – can convert an image into a series of circles, then create a PDF that splits it between multiple A4 sheets. You'll need scissors, a steady hand and a lot of Blu-tack, but the results can be great. ■

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Paper and size

Paper settings

Order prints from kissprinting.com
You decide the profit, of which 50% goes to charity

Print yourself

A4
210x297 mm Portrait

Add margin of: 10 mm each side Overlap pages by 5 mm

Output size

9 sheets wide

For extra accuracy, use decimal numbers such as 4.7

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Original | Preview [Enlarge preview](#)

With margins Margins cut away
Paper size: 21 x 29.7 cm 19 x 27.7 cm
Poster size: 1.89 x 1.49 m 1.71 x 1.28 m
Paper consumption: 45 sheets
Human figure in preview is 180 cm tall

THE BIG PICTURE The grey figure in the background illustrates how large your poster will be

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Windows 10 Anniversary Edition

Why July will be a happy anniversary for everybody with a Windows PC

This summer, something big is happening that will make a huge difference to your PC if you're running Windows 10. The Windows Anniversary Edition is a massive update to Windows 10 and will introduce some brand new features and make many of your favourite features even better.

The Anniversary Edition sees a fresh approach. In the past, Microsoft

would put all its new features into the latest version of Windows – so if you were on Windows Vista when Windows 7 came out, you would need to buy Windows 7 to get its features. That's changed. The Anniversary Edition brings lots of exciting new stuff to Windows 10, and you can get it automatically without paying a penny.

The Windows Anniversary Update isn't just about PCs, though. It will also transform the Xbox One, and make

Windows work better with Android devices, such as smartphones.

Windows 10 is the most highly rated Windows ever made, and with the Anniversary Edition we think Microsoft is making a great thing even greater. Over the next few pages, we'll discover what the Anniversary Edition means for you, and why you need to upgrade to Windows 10 if you haven't done so already. This is one anniversary you won't want to miss!



PERSONAL COMPUTING

Why the Anniversary Edition is the best Windows yet

Let's begin with the Start Menu, which has been redesigned to put your apps at the forefront and the settings and account details just a click away.

There's a new dark theme too, which is good news for anyone who finds Windows' use of white space a little too garish.

However, the most interesting things about the Anniversary Update aren't how Windows looks. It's how Windows works for you. Take Windows Hello, for example, which many of us already use to unlock our PCs

with our faces or fingerprints. In the Anniversary Update, Windows Hello will work on the Microsoft Edge browser and in apps too, so you'll be able to securely log into apps and websites using biometric security, which is much harder to hack than usernames and passwords.

Microsoft has also improved another touch feature, Windows Ink. It enables you to scribble on your screen in all kinds of useful ways. Scribble a word such as 'tomorrow' in a note and Windows will recognise it and create a reminder or perform a

The Anniversary Update has plenty of new exciting features

"Log into apps and websites using biometric security"

THE CLOCK IS TICKING

How to get the Anniversary Edition without paying a penny

The Anniversary Edition is completely free for Windows 10 users, but there's still a ticking clock – if you haven't yet taken advantage of Microsoft's free Windows 10 upgrade for Windows 7 and Windows 8 users, do so now. The freebie period ends on 29 July, and from then on you'll need to pay

if you want Windows 10. It probably won't be very expensive, but why spend money if you don't have to?

However, if you want Windows 10 but don't have Windows 7 or Windows 8 you'll need to buy a copy. Microsoft offers it as a download or on a USB stick. At the time of writing Windows 10 Home was £99.99.

Don't worry if your PC is getting on a bit, it should still run Windows 10. Windows 10's system requirements are modest – it needs a 1GHz processor, 2GB of RAM, 16GB of free disk space and internet access. If your PC is more powerful than that then Windows 10 should run happily on your device.

task at a particular time. Similarly, in Maps you can draw a line to discover the distance between two points or in Office you can use a pen to annotate documents and strike out text. We particularly like the way we can start drawing a graph or chart and see it turn into a proper one right before our eyes. In a nice touch Windows Ink remains active when your device is locked, so you can still scribble notes without waking the system.

Cortana's even cooler

And then there's Cortana, the useful personal digital assistant we first saw in Windows Phone and whose help is baked into Windows 10. In the Anniversary

HOLO EVERYBODY!

Say hello to holographic computing and the biggest screens you've ever seen

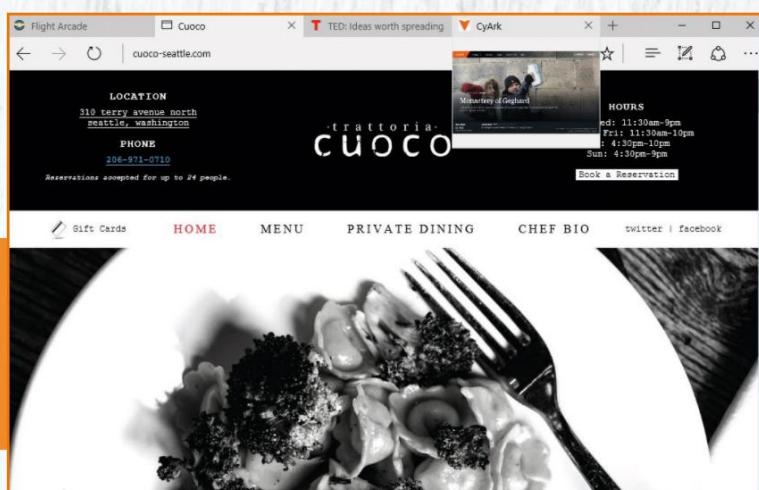
One of the things we're excited about is HoloLens, Microsoft's technology for 'Holographic Computing'. With HoloLens, you will see a blend of the real world and computer graphics (such as Minecraft) in your living room, and you'll be able to stream Xbox One games and media too. This means you can play games or movies on virtual screens in HoloLens that are bigger than the biggest flat-screen TV you can imagine. We've seen HoloLens apps for space

exploration, for medical studies and for engineering, and of course there will be lots of games too.

HoloLens might look like a crash helmet but it's actually a Windows 10 computer, and that means it's part of the Universal Windows Platform just like any other PC. As a result, it should be able to run any universal Windows or Xbox apps. The consumer version won't be available for some time, but the developer versions are already shipping, and from what we've seen so far, the potential is limitless.



It isn't quite ready for the home market for now, but when it's here HoloLens might just be the future of computing



Edition, Cortana gains superpowers – it can carry out tasks without you waking up your device, so, for example, you can ask it to play music while your laptop sleeps. It can understand a lot more too, acting on phrases such as: "What shop did I visit in London last week?" or "Send Karen the PowerPoint I did yesterday". Where things get really clever though is when Cortana becomes proactive, so if you promised Karen that presentation in an email, Cortana will pop up at the appropriate time to make sure you send it. Microsoft is also making Cortana available to third-party app developers, so it'll be able to help with even more of your everyday activities.

The Edge browser also gets some useful improvements in the Anniversary Edition. You can make Flash content click-to-play,

which is a bonus for anybody who'd rather not see auto-playing videos when they're browsing for information (or who just hates Flash's tendency to drain mobile device batteries). And the browser now supports Extensions, which add new features or block particular kinds of content – including advertising, which is great news for users but potentially terrible news for the websites that rely on ads for their income. In a sensible move Microsoft has created a tool to help Google Chrome developers convert their extensions to Edge extensions, so the number of available extensions should increase rapidly as developers bring their most popular extensions over to Edge.

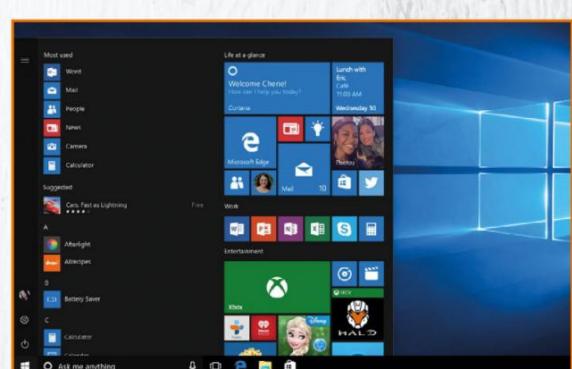
Android

Microsoft isn't daft – it knows that more people have Android

The Anniversary Edition gives the Edge browser extensions to make your online life easier

smartphones than Windows phones. And, in the Anniversary Edition, Windows will work more closely with Android. Cortana will be able to send information to and get information from the Cortana app on Android phones, and you'll be able to mirror your Android phone's notifications to your PC – including low-battery warnings. You'll be able to track down a lost phone via Cortana or get it to send directions to your phone, and you'll be able to use your PC to send and receive texts via your phone.

There are lots of other improvements too. You can tell Windows Update what hours tend to be too busy for installing updates, set the priority of notifications in Action Center, discover which apps are draining your battery the most and close them accordingly, and you can pin windows in Task view so they'll appear on all desktops. And there are new emojis to make your messages more colourful than ever before.



GET YOUR GAME ON

What the Anniversary Edition means for gaming

The Anniversary Edition is great news for gamers – it boosts Windows' gaming power, increases the range of must-have games and will make a difference to the Xbox One too. The Xbox One will get the best bits from Windows, and Windows will get the best bits from the Xbox One.

The biggest new feature is DirectX 12. DirectX is Microsoft's engine for gaming and imaging, and each new version brings better performance and more realistic graphics. DirectX 12 can take full advantage of the latest graphics cards, delivering stunning video and smooth performance. As AMD puts it, it's "like going from a two-lane country road to an eight-lane superhighway". Whether you're running a super-powered gaming

rig or a budget laptop, DirectX 12 can squeeze every drop of gaming power from your system.

Here comes the flood

DirectX 12 is already in the Xbox One, and, with the Anniversary Edition, it's coming to Windows 10 too. That means some Xbox One games will be crossing over to Windows. You'll even get a game for free – the forthcoming Forza Motorsport: Apex will be given away to Windows 10 users.

The traffic between Windows 10 and the Xbox One isn't one way, though. Cortana's coming to Xbox One to become "your personal gaming assistant" by helping you find games, challenges and tips, and you'll be able to use the same kind of natural language commands you're already used to on Windows. One of the most

With the Anniversary Edition, Windows 10 and the Xbox One are closer than ever before



Thanks to the Universal Windows Platform, Windows users will get triple-A Xbox One games such as Deus Ex: Mankind Divided

significant changes is the Xbox app store and the Windows Store will be merged into a single storefront. Xbox owners will be able to play multiplayer with Windows users and vice-versa. You'll also be able to play Xbox games remotely from your PC and play saved games from your console on your PC and from your PC on your console. In other words, if you buy a Windows 10 or Xbox One game you should be able to play it on either device.

Always innovate

The glue that's bringing Windows 10 and the Xbox One together is Universal Windows Platform (UWP). With this, developers will be able to write

WHAT ABOUT WINDOWS PHONE?

More about Microsoft's own mobile OS

The Anniversary Edition brings lots of goodies for Windows Phone users too. You can still read notifications, answer calls and send and receive messages via your PC, but you also benefit from Continuum,

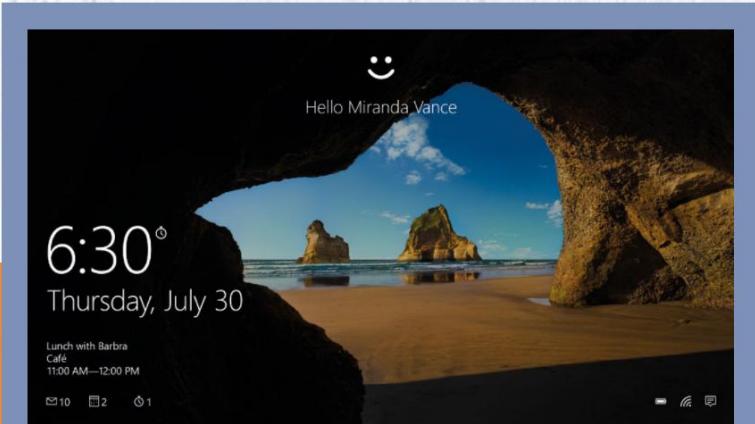
which blurs the lines between phone and PC.

Continuum makes apps aware of what they're connected to, so for example, Outlook on a phone transforms into a PC-like experience when you

connect it to a monitor, keyboard and mouse. The Anniversary Edition makes that even better with a new app, Connect, which enables you to connect without a dock or cable. You can use it to mirror your phone's

display on a PC, or access your phone's features from your PC.

There's another feature involving Windows Phone called Windows Unlock. It enables you to unlock your PC from your phone.



OLD DOGS, NEW TRICKS

Is Windows 10 really worth upgrading to?

Windows 10 is the slickest, safest, most secure Windows ever made, and the Anniversary Edition makes it even better. It's faster, smarter and more fun to use than any Windows you've experienced, and if you're eligible for a free upgrade we think you should get it.

Things are a bit more complicated on older machines, because you have to pay to get Windows 10 if your copy of Windows predates Windows 7. If your PC was a fairly modest one then upgrading might not make your life any happier – but we'd still recommend

getting Windows 10, perhaps by keeping the £99.99 and putting it towards the cost of a new Windows 10 PC. Microsoft no longer releases security updates for old versions of Windows and app developers are following suit, so for example Google no longer supports the Chrome browser on Windows XP or Windows Vista. With decent PCs available for well under £300 you don't need to spend much for a machine that will be much faster than your current one and whose apps will be supported for many years to come.

"We could see even more hardware innovation..."

Universal Windows Apps (UWAs) that are able to run on any Windows 10 device. That means not just PCs but phones, tablets and the Xbox One too.

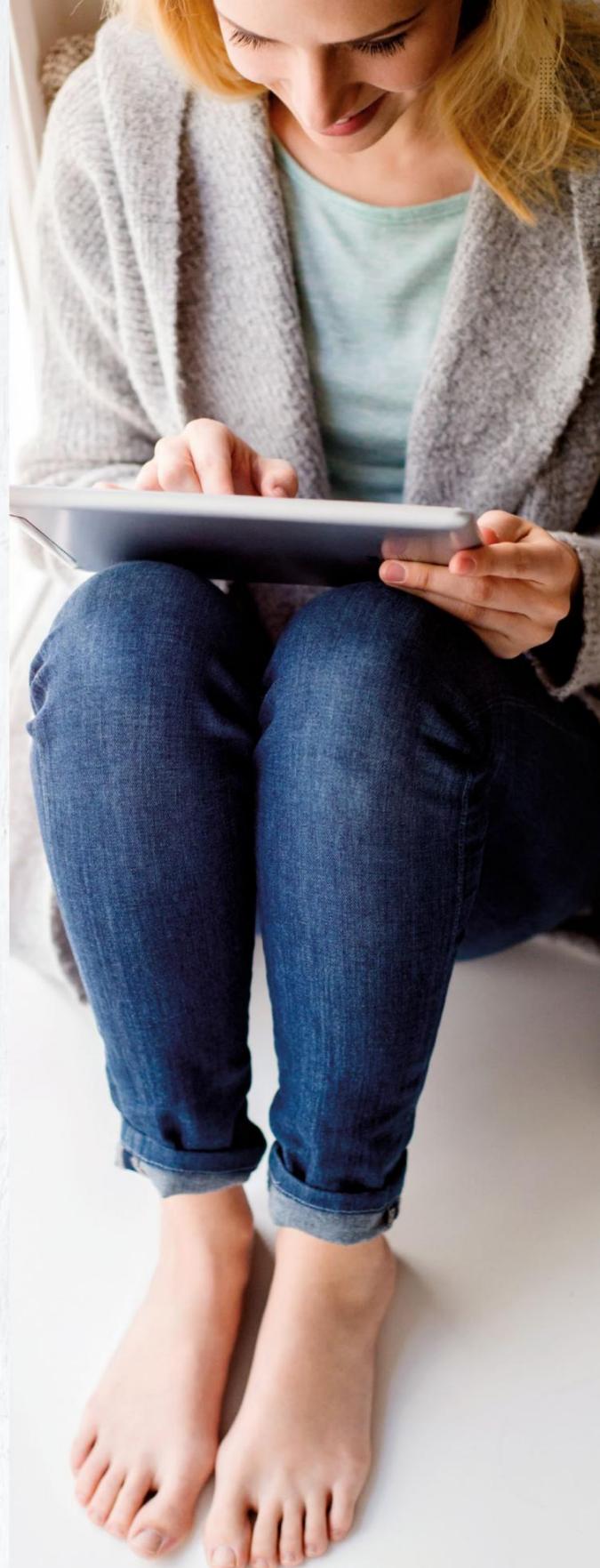
One of the potential effects of UWP is it could make the Xbox One more like a PC. According to Xbox boss Phil Spencer, "We could see more hardware innovation in the console space than ever."

Instead of waiting for the next generation of console technology, the Xbox will evolve to become more powerful so you can buy the latest gaming technology without sacrificing your games library.

As Spencer explains: "I can still go back and run my old games, but then I can also see the best 4K games coming out. Hardware innovation continues and software takes advantage. I don't have to

jump generation and lose everything I played before."

It's exciting but there are potential issues. When a games company makes something for the Xbox One today they know what hardware we'll have. What happens when there are multiple Xbox Ones out there with different graphics cards, different amounts of memory and different processors? By trying to make the Xbox One more like a PC, Microsoft runs the risk of making it as complicated for gaming as a PC can be – so instead of just buying an Xbox One game and expecting it to work, we'll need to pore over the system requirements as we would with a Windows game. We're not sure that's progress. However, one area where



Get gaming
Xbox-style on your
Windows 10 device

Microsoft is making progress with virtual reality. Windows 10 is the first operating system to have built-in hooks for developers to write virtual-reality apps, and apps such as Minecraft for the Oculus VR headset are worth getting excited about. If virtual reality is really the next big thing in gaming and entertainment, Windows is ready for it. ■

Meet the... Support Squad



Support

► WINDOWS HELP ► HARDWARE FIXES ► SOFTWARE SOLUTIONS ► INTERNET TIPS



Do you have a
PC problem?
Get in touch...

Email full details of your
problem to the
support team and we'll
do our best to help
[windowsmagazine@
futurenet.com](mailto:windowsmagazine@futurenet.com)

Microsoft Edge CAN'T USE DASHLANE

Q I'm very satisfied with using Windows 10 and Microsoft Edge for my browser. I'd like to install the password manager Dashlane, but I can't because I need an extension for Edge and there is none. What can I do, and when will Edge allow extensions?

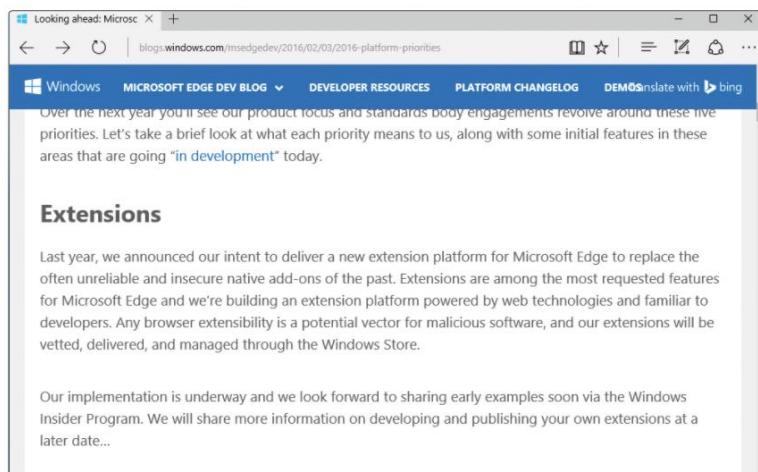
Walter Tuchschmid



Cat's solution

The good news is Edge will – eventually – support **browser extensions**. Microsoft recently revealed it's building a suitable platform that will allow you to install supported extensions via the Windows Store – this enables it to vet any potential extensions before they're built. No timescale has been

given, but Windows Insiders may soon be able to try out the feature, although it will be a while before developers like Dashlane can start building and releasing these extensions. While you wait for Edge to support extensions, you'll have to consider using Dashlane with another browser – it supports Internet Explorer, Firefox (getfirefox.com) and Chrome (chrome.google.com).



A screenshot of a Microsoft Edge browser window displaying the Microsoft Edge Dev Blog. The page title is "Looking ahead: Microsoft Edge". The main content discusses the future focus of Microsoft Edge, mentioning the development of a new extension platform to replace native add-ons. It highlights the importance of web technologies and developer support. A sidebar on the right shows a "DEVELOPER RESOURCES" section with links to "PLATFORM CHANGELOG" and "DEMOS". Below the main content, there is a section titled "Extensions" with a paragraph about the replacement of native add-ons with a new extension platform.

COMING SOON
Support for
extensions in
Edge is finally
being developed

Software MY SLUGGISH PC IS PRETTY MUCH UNUSABLE

Q After installing a program in Windows 10, my computer has slowed to a crawl. How can I get this off my PC when everything keeps hanging and crashing?

Jake Palmer

Nick O's solution
Click the Start button, then hold the [Shift] key as you select 'Power > Restart'. This will bring up the 'Choose an option' screen. Select 'Troubleshoot' followed by

FIND THE SOLUTION! Get old programs

Need to run an older version of a program for compatibility purposes? Start your search at www.oldversion.com



Support
Technical help

Programs and Features

Control Panel Home Uninstall or change a program

View installed updates To uninstall a program, select it from the list and then click Uninstall, Change or Repair.

Turn Windows features on or off

Organise

Name	Publisher	Installed On	Size	Version
Adobe Photoshop CS2	Adobe Systems, Inc.	16/03/2016	71.3 MB	9.0
AirPort	Apple Inc.	09/03/2016	23.2 MB	5.6.1.2
Apple Software Update	Apple Inc.	09/03/2016	4.76 MB	2.1.3.127
BCL easyConverter SDK 3 (Word Version) 64	BCL Technologies	17/03/2016	19.9 MB	3.0.64
Bonjour	Apple Inc.	09/03/2016	4.00 MB	3.0.0.10
Dell B1265dnf Laser MFP	Dell Inc.	09/03/2016	1.06 MB	(18/11/2013)
DiskCheckup v3.4	PassMark Software	11/03/2016	3.15 MB	3.4.1001
Driver Booster 3.3	IObit	14/04/2016	52.1 MB	3.3
Evernote v. 6.0.2	Evernote Corp.	30/03/2016	221 MB	6.0.2.1349
f.lux		25/03/2016		
Family Historian 6.2	Calico Pie Limited	15/04/2016	28.8 MB	
Family Historian PDF (novaPDF 7.7 printer)	Softland	15/04/2016	19.6 MB	
Family Tree Maker 2014	Ancestry.com, Inc.	19/03/2016	360 MB	22.0.207
Foxit Reader	Foxit Software Inc.	29/03/2016	149 MB	7.3.4311
Google Chrome	Google Inc.	15/04/2016	50.2661.75	
Google Drive	Google, Inc.	13/04/2016	35.2 MB	1.29.1862.0513
HandBrake 0.10.5		08/03/2016	0.10.5	
IObit Uninstaller	IObit	05/04/2016	38.8 MB	5.3.0.138
Java 8 Update 77 (64-bit)	Oracle Corporation	25/03/2016	204 MB	8.0.770.3
Macrium Reflect Free Edition	Paramount Software (UK) Ltd.	09/03/2016	6.1	

Currently installed programs Total size: 5.31 GB
59 programs installed

FIX PROBLEMS Discover how to reboot into Safe mode from Windows 10

'Advanced options' and finally 'Startup Settings'. Click 'Restart' and the boot menu will appear – press [F5] to access 'Safe mode with Networking'.

Once in Safe mode, remove the programs you suspect are cluttering up your PC by right-clicking the Start button and choosing 'Programs and Features'. While you're here, we'd also suggest you run full scans with your security tools to verify there's nothing nasty going on behind the scenes – note, they won't be running automatically, so you'll need to launch them from the 'Start > All apps' menu. One final check – open File Explorer, right-click your system drive and choose 'Properties > Tools' tab. Click 'Check' followed by 'Scan drive'. If any issues are found, they should be fixed on the next reboot.

Windows

REMOVE MICROSOFT ACCOUNT FROM PC

Q I have a simple problem – how do I remove my account from one PC which I am giving away, without removing my Microsoft Account all together? I have other PCs that use my account.

Ian Brighton

Graham's solution

Removing a Microsoft Account from your PC has no effect on your Microsoft Account in general, other than to remove the association between it and your PC. In theory, it should work in the same way as removing a regular user account.

First, we asked Ian who he was passing the PC on to – if you're selling it or giving it to charity, it's a good idea to revert it to factory settings first using your PC's recovery partition or disc, and if there's sensitive data on the drive, use a free program like CCleaner (www.piriform.com) to securely wipe the free space so all traces of documents and other data are removed.

Ian was passing the PC on to his grandson, so this isn't necessary. What you need to do in this instance is first click 'Start > Settings > Accounts'. Choose 'Family & other users'. While it's tempting to use the option to add a family member, if you're no longer using the PC the best thing to do is click 'Add someone else to this PC'. You can then link this to an existing Microsoft account or click 'I don't have this person's sign-in information' followed by 'Add a user without a Microsoft account' to create a local user account. Once

"Edge will eventually be supporting browser extensions "

Jargon buster!

► Browser extension

Also referred to as add-on or plugin, this third-party tool adds extra functionality to your web browser.

► Newsgroup

A message board found exclusively on Usenet, a separate part of the internet to the World Wide Web, email and other protocols.



Quickfire questions

I have an Excel spreadsheet that consists of two sheets. I'd like to paste a reference to a cell from Sheet2 on Sheet1 – what's the quickest and simplest way to do this please?
Trevor Pickering

First select the cell in Sheet1 where you'd like this reference to go. Type = into that cell, then switch to Sheet2, select the cell you want to display and press [Enter].

I'm a little paranoid about my webcam being hijacked – is there any way I can keep an eye on this?

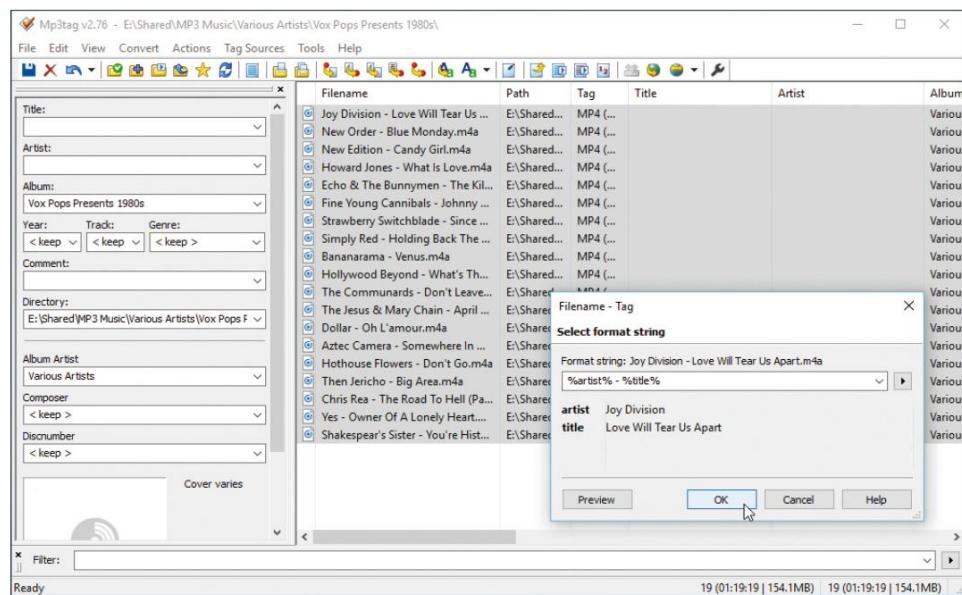
Elisa Medrano

Try the free Who Stalks My Cam tool (www.phrozensoft.com/freeware), which will monitor your webcam in the background and alert you whenever it detects suspicious activity involving the camera.

I've started getting a 'Server execution failed' error message in Windows Explorer. How do I fix this?

Reuben Wilson

This usually happens because the **shell user folders** are missing or have been changed. The simplest way to fix it is to download and run the FixIt tool found at support. microsoft.com/kb/886549.



created, click the user's new entry and choose 'Change account type' to switch them to administrator. Click 'OK'. When you're ready to remove your own account, log off and then log on as the new user. Return to the 'Settings > Accounts' screen where you'll be able to select your own account and remove it (with its files) from your PC, ready to hand over.

QUICK TAG Add useful metadata to your media files with MP3tag

Then when it's off (or apparently off), press and hold both power and volume-up buttons together for a minimum of 15 seconds. Once done, release the buttons, leave the Surface for 10 seconds, then power up normally – this should fix the problem. If it doesn't, try the full power off again, but after 10 seconds, hold the volume up button while you press and release the power button. When the Surface logo appears, release the volume button and you should enter the BIOS – from here, you should be able to verify that the stylus is working, and on rebooting from here the problem should be solved.

Hardware SURFACE STYLUS STOPPED WORKING

Q The stylus on my first-gen Surface tablet has stopped working. I've checked the power function for USB/HID connections, but can't seem to fix the problem.
Theresa McHugh



Matt's solution

If you've not performed a full power shutdown for a while, start by shutting down the Surface normally using its power button.

Monitors RED COLOUR DOESN'T WORK ON MONITOR

Q I have two PCs connected to a single monitor, but while one works perfectly the other (an Acer desktop) is giving me a colour

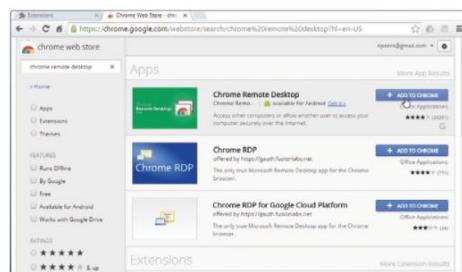
MANAGE A PC REMOTELY

Q How can I manage my mother's PC for her remotely using Google Chrome's Remote Access Desktop extension?
Rufus Cox



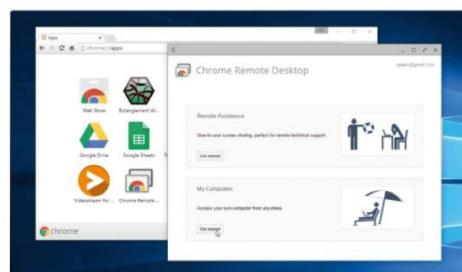
Nick P's solution

You'll need to install Chrome on your mum's PC (chrome.google.com), plus log into your own Google Account in Chrome on that PC – set up a separate user for yourself if necessary. Once set up, you won't need Chrome to be running or be logged into Chrome as your user for the feature to work.



1 Install extension

Sit at the PC you wish to control. Click the user name and choose 'Switch person' to sign into your Google Account. Type **chrome://extensions** into the Address Bar, then click 'Get more extensions' to find and add Chrome Remote Desktop.



2 Set up app

Type **chrome://apps** into the Address bar and select Chrome Remote Desktop. Follow the prompts to authorise it and link to your Google account. Once done, click 'Get started' under 'My Computers' followed by 'Enable remote connections'.



Do you have a PC problem? Get in touch...

Email full details of your problem to the support team and we'll do our best to help: windowsmagazine@futurenet.com Or write to the support team and we'll do our best to help: **Support Squad, Windows Help & Advice magazine, Future Publishing Ltd, Quay House, The Ambury, Bath BA1 1AU**

problem. I can't seem to get the red to display, and have tried many things in Windows, so am I right to assume the graphics card is the issue and needs replacing?

Harold Tokins

Nick P's solution

 While it's tempting to point the finger at hardware failure, there are some additional checks you need to perform before replacing the card. First, check the problem isn't with the connection – both the cable connecting your PC and the connector on the monitor itself. Harold revealed the PCs were sharing the same monitor input via a Belkin crossover switch. He reconnected the plugs and immediately discovered his affected PC was now showing far too much red – tweaking the settings back to normal using the NVIDIA Control Panel restored the display to its correct settings, and saved him the unnecessary cost of a graphics card replacement.

Software

QUICK-FIRE METADATA

 I've got a load of MP3 files I'd like to add the correct metadata (artist, track, album cover and so on) to. What's the best program for quickly adding this information?

Bob Collins

Cat's solution

 Download MP3tag from www.mp3tag.de/en/ – this allows you to add metadata for one or more tracks quickly and easily (for example, select all your tracks and quickly apply universal information such as album artist or title). There's also a handy tool should your filenames include the artist and

track information. Select 'Convert >Filename – Tag'. Adapt the 'Format string' box as required – use the '>' button to add extra elements. A handy preview quickly reveals if you've got the right data selected – click 'OK' to apply the tags.

Windows

ONEDRIVE SHARING QUANDARY

 I'm trying to find a way of sharing one of my OneDrive folders with a family member, but am struggling to get things set up. What's the best way to do this?

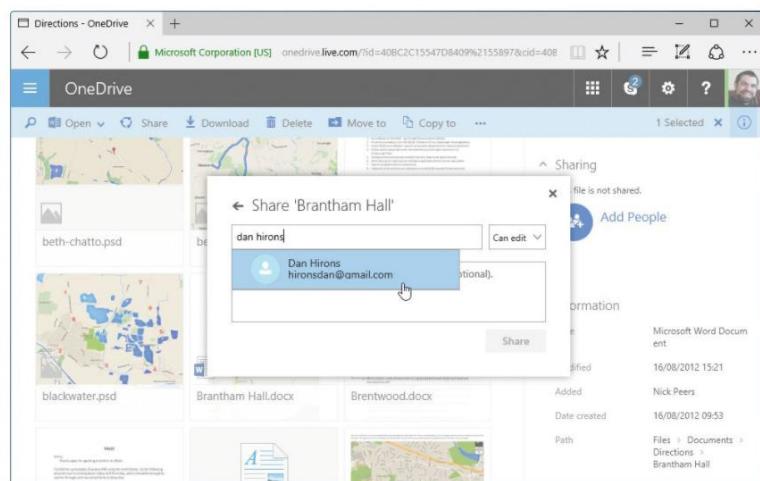
Colin Lester

Graham's solution

 The obvious way is to open OneDrive in your web browser and share through the web interface, but if you're running Windows 10 then

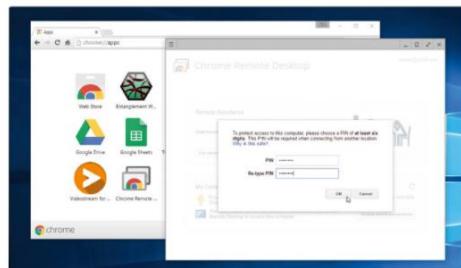
the good news is that you can create a shared link from within Windows itself. Simply navigate to the folder inside your OneDrive folder you wish to share, then right-click it. You'll see a number of OneDrive-related options – choose 'Share a OneDrive Link' and a web link will be created and sent to your clipboard (Windows should notify you of this). Simply paste this link in an email and the recipient will be able to access the shared folder.

If you want more granular control over the folder you share, such as sharing it with specific people, choose 'More OneDrive sharing options'. This will open your web browser – choose 'Manage permissions' when it pops up and you'll be able to choose exactly who has access to the file or folder, and whether that access is read-only or editable.



SHARE OPTIONS
Select exactly who gets access to a specific OneDrive file

"If you haven't performed a full power shutdown for a while, start by shutting down the Surface normally using its power button"



3 Install desktop host

Choose 'Accept and Install' to download the host installer. Double-click this and follow the prompts to install it and set up a six-digit PIN for secure access – you'll need this each time you attempt to connect from your PC.

4 Make connection

If you've set up sync on your own PC, the Chrome Remote Desktop will be installed automatically when you next open Chrome. Repeat step two, then click 'Enable remote connections' and select your remote PC to connect and take control.

Jargon buster!

► Metadata

Information – also referred to as 'tags' – that provide extra descriptive information about that media file, such as artist, episode name or album title.

► Shell folder

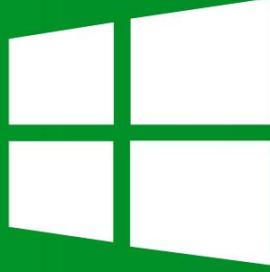
Special shortcuts to key user and system folders, such as Documents, Pictures, SendTo and the Start menu's Programs folder.

YOUR COMPLETE GUIDE TO THE PLANET'S MOST COMPLEX MACHINE



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Welcome to... Windows 10

► WINDOWS 10 TIPS ► FEATURES EXPLAINED ► NEW TIPS AND TRICKS

Welcome



In each issue of *Windows Help & Advice* we show you how to get to grips with

Windows 10, and master the basics. This month we look at setting up Family Sharing and how to make your passwords more secure.

Family Sharing is the best way to make sure all family members can enjoy your PC without having to worry about the kids deleting stuff, or them seeing or doing inappropriate things.

We look at passwords on page 83 – it's always tempting to use something basic, so we show you how to make your PC more secure without the hassle.

Matt Hanson
Associate Editor
www.facebook.com/windowsmag

Featuring...

80 Set up Family Sharing on your PC

83 Make Windows 10 tough to crack

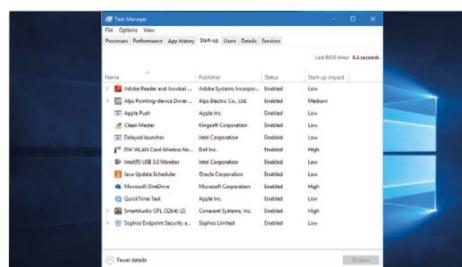
TURN TO PAGE 16 FOR MORE WINDOWS 10 HELP!



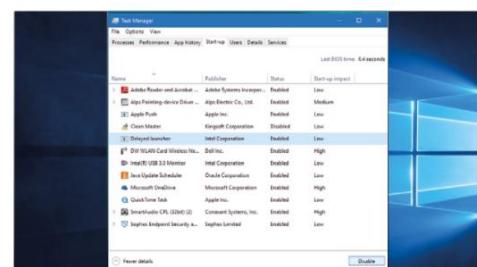
Windows 10 tip of the month Clear unwanted programs

Cut out unwanted programs

If you've upgraded your computer to Windows 10, but have had your machine for a while, there are probably all sorts of unwanted programs running when you start it up. You can use Task Manager to see what runs automatically when you fire up your computer. You're then safe to remove anything that isn't your anti-virus program. Restart your PC and if you find you want an app back, fear not – you can easily reinstate it.



RUNNING PROGRAMS Hit [Ctrl]+[Shift]+[Esc] to open Task Manager, click 'Startup' to see what's running



DISABLE PROGRAMS After disabling the programs, reboot your machine, and notice the difference...



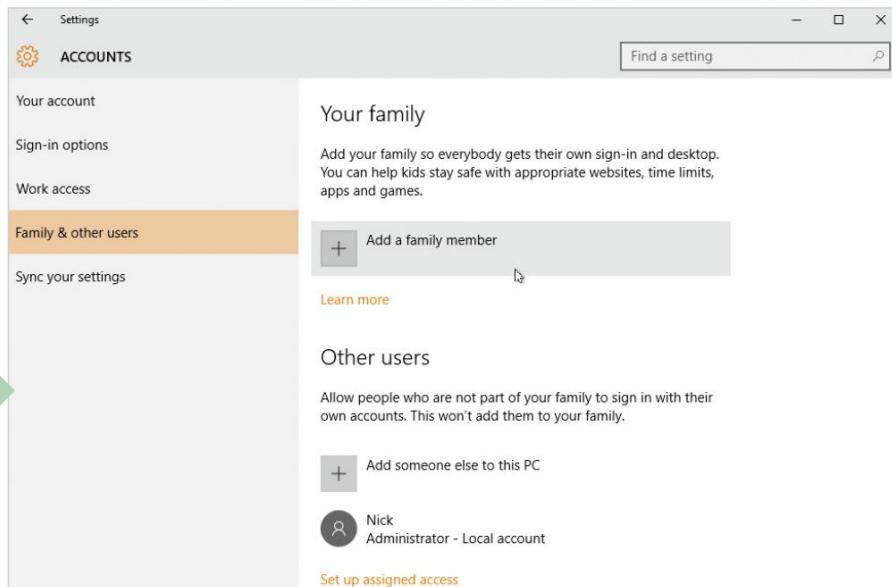
Learn how to...

Set up Family Safety

Keep your younger family members safe when they're online, even if you don't have time to watch them every second of the day

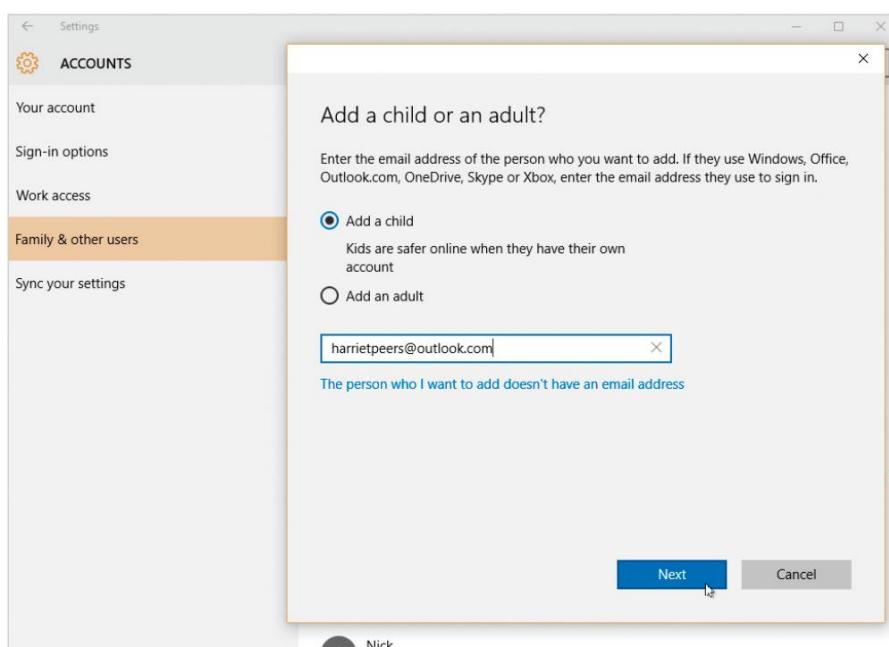
TIME TAKEN

20 minutes



Add users

Before starting with Family Safety, we need to make sure your computer is properly set up. If you're sharing a single user account between your family, it's time to change that and use one account each. Click the Start button at the bottom of the screen and choose 'Settings'. Select 'Accounts' followed by 'Family & other users'. You'll see user accounts are split into two sections – as we're adding younger family members, click the 'Add a family member' button to continue.



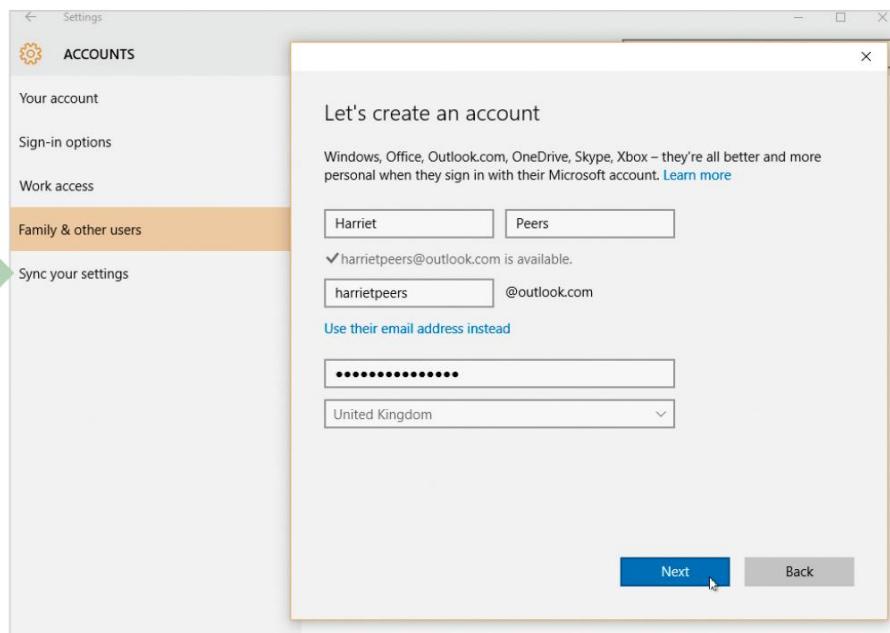
Set up a child user

Select 'Add a child'. Your child will need their own Microsoft account to continue – if it's already been set up, type the email address used to log into it and click 'Next' followed by 'Confirm'. Once the new account has been set up (your child will need to log in for the first time to do so), they should check their email and confirm the invitation in order to allow you to apply family settings to their new account on this device.

Set up a new Microsoft account

If your child doesn't have a Microsoft account, click 'The person who I want to add doesn't have an email address' to set up their account. When filling in their details, click 'Get a new email address' to give them an address with an @outlook.com domain (for example, childname@outlook.com).

When you assign them a password, this needs to be something they can remember, as they'll be using it to log into their own user account going forward. Once done, provide your own mobile or alternate email address as an additional form of security going forward.



ACCOUNTS

- Your account
- Sign-in options
- Work access
- Family & other users**
- Sync your settings

Your family

You can allow family members to sign in to this PC. Adults can manage family settings online and see recent activity to help kids stay safe.

Add a family member

harrieteers@outlook.com Can sign in
Child, Pending

Change account type Block

Manage family settings online

Other users

Allow people who are not part of your family to sign in with their own accounts. This won't add them to your family.

Add someone else to this PC

Access Family Safety

You'll see a list of all the children you've added to your device from the 'Family & other users' section – any marked as pending haven't yet accepted your invitation, so aren't protected by Family Safety settings. If you're having a hard time persuading them to accept the invitation, click 'Block' to temporarily prevent them from logging into this PC without family settings in place.

To set up, or adjust, your children's family settings, click the 'Manage family settings online' link to access the settings website from your browser.

Lock the web

To restrict web access, choose an account name, then click 'Settings' next to Web browsing. Flick the 'Block inappropriate websites' to 'On' to ensure adult content and InPrivate browsing sessions are both blocked, while Bing SafeSearch is on.

Scroll down and you'll find options for allowing specific websites, or alternatively blocking unwanted sites. Just type the relevant URLs into each box and click 'Allow' or 'Block' to add them to your child's white or blacklists.

Web browsing

Block inappropriate websites On

Adult content is blocked
InPrivate browsing is blocked
Bing SafeSearch is on

Applies to:
Windows 10 PC

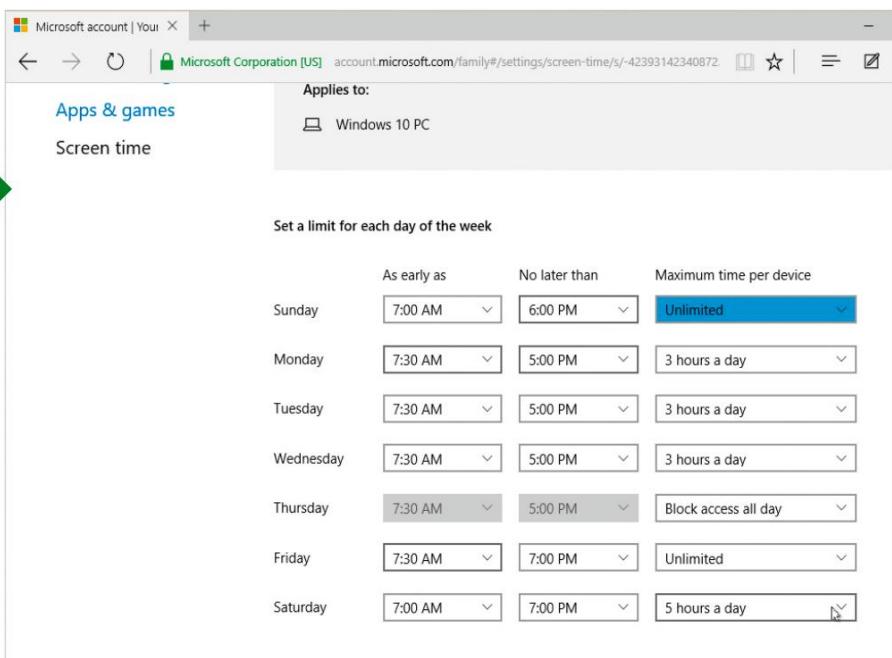
Always allow these

Enter the URL of a website you want to allow:
Example.com

Allow

Set the clock

Select 'Screen time' to limit the time your child has access to this PC. Flick the 'Set limits for when my child can use devices' switch to 'On', then set the earliest and latest times they're allowed to use the computer for each day of the week. You can also set a daily limit within those times to restrict their access further.

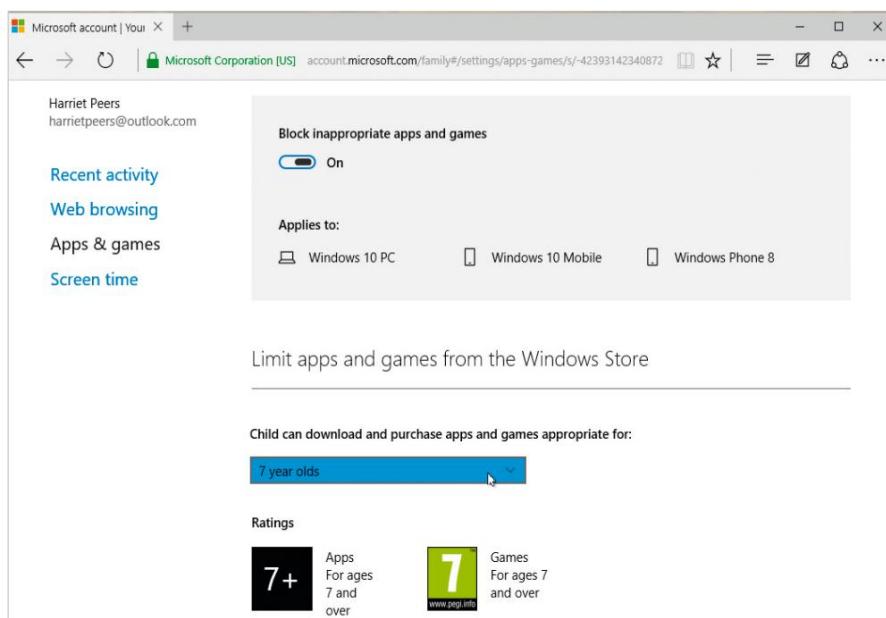


The screenshot shows the 'Screen time' settings for a Windows 10 PC. It allows setting access limits for each day of the week, including 'As early as' and 'No later than' times, and a 'Maximum time per device' limit. The table below shows the current settings:

	As early as	No later than	Maximum time per device
Sunday	7:00 AM	6:00 PM	Unlimited
Monday	7:30 AM	5:00 PM	3 hours a day
Tuesday	7:30 AM	5:00 PM	3 hours a day
Wednesday	7:30 AM	5:00 PM	3 hours a day
Thursday	7:30 AM	5:00 PM	Block access all day
Friday	7:30 AM	7:00 PM	Unlimited
Saturday	7:00 AM	7:00 PM	5 hours a day

Restrict apps

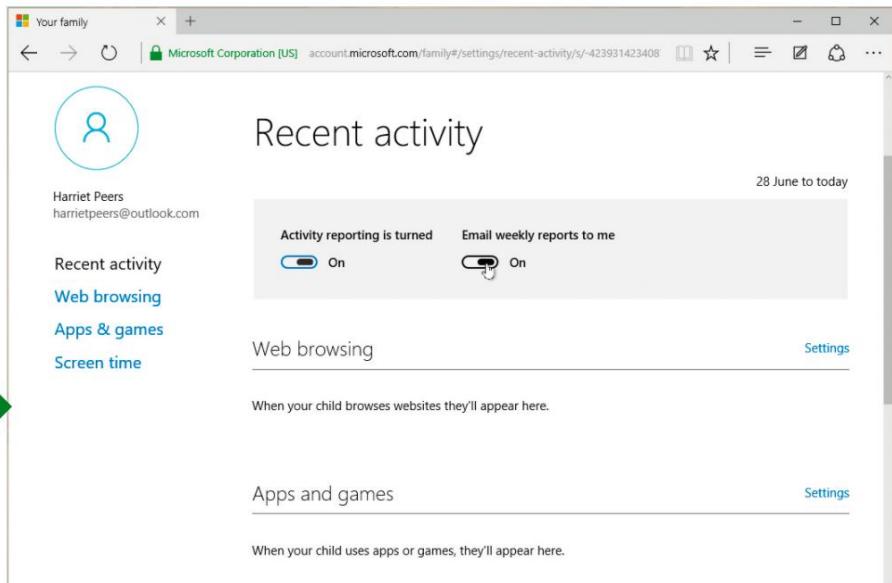
Select 'Apps & games' and flick the 'Block inappropriate apps and games' switch to 'On'. Scroll down and set a maximum age for your child, which allows them to only download and install apps and games in the Windows Store that have specifically been rated as suitable for their age.



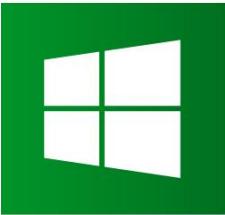
The screenshot shows the 'Apps & games' settings. It includes a section to 'Block inappropriate apps and games' (switched On) and a 'Child can download and purchase apps and games appropriate for:' dropdown set to '7 year olds'. Below this, it shows app and game ratings: '7+' (for ages 7 and over) and '7' (for ages 7 and over).

Watch the logs

Perhaps the most sneaky part of the Family Safety centre is on the child's main screen. Two switches – enabled by default – let you view your child's activity through this screen and receive weekly email reports of their usage, app installs and browsing habits. If there's something there that shouldn't be, then it's probably time for a little chat... ■



The screenshot shows the 'Recent activity' and 'Web browsing' sections. It displays activity reporting status ('Activity reporting is turned On') and an option to 'Email weekly reports to me' (also On). Below this, it shows a summary of recent web browsing and app usage.



Learn how to...

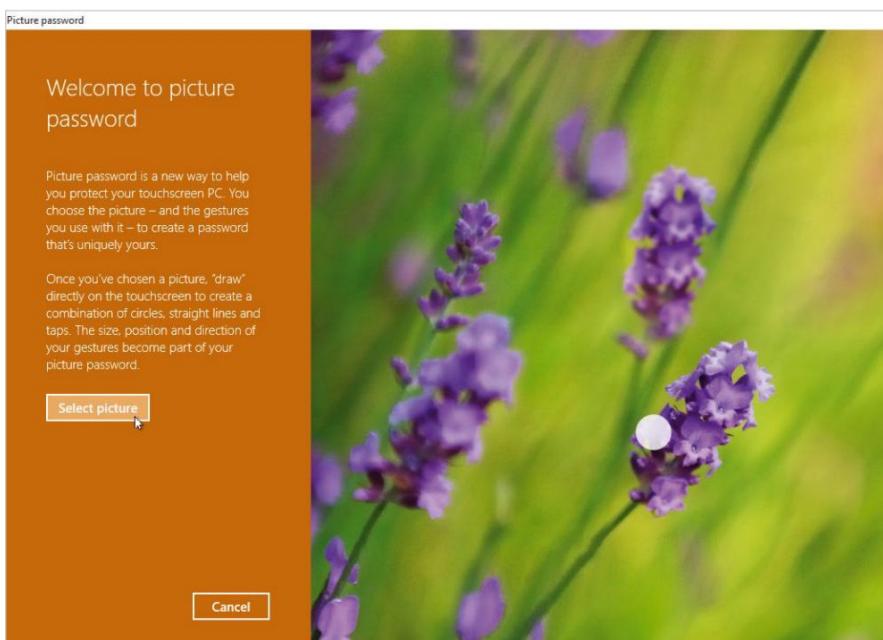
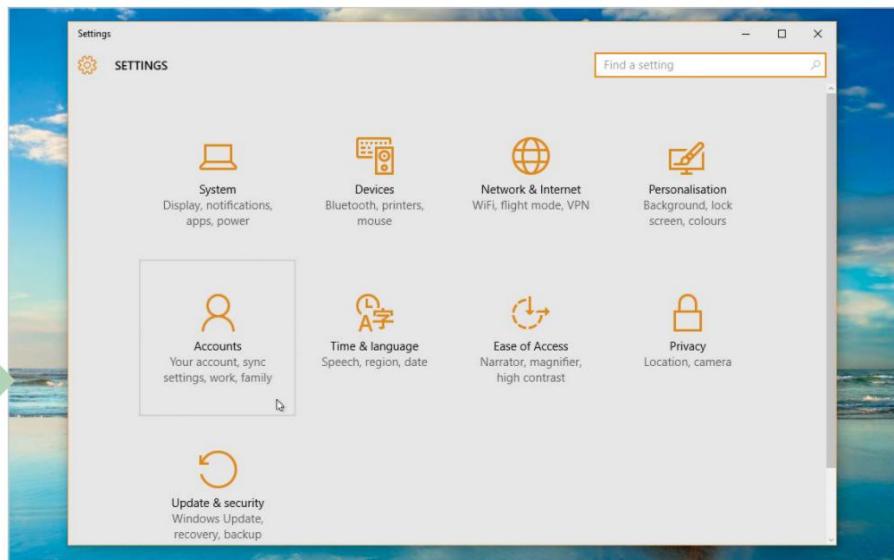
Make Windows 10 tough to crack

Increase your password strength and keep files and information secure

TIME TAKEN
40 minutes

Open Settings

You log into your Windows PC every day, but you might not want anyone to be able to access your personal account, even if it's just a partner or your kids. Therefore it's a good idea to create a picture password, which will save you typing an uncrackable series of letters and numbers every time you want to log in. To begin, click the Start button and select 'Settings' followed by 'Accounts'.



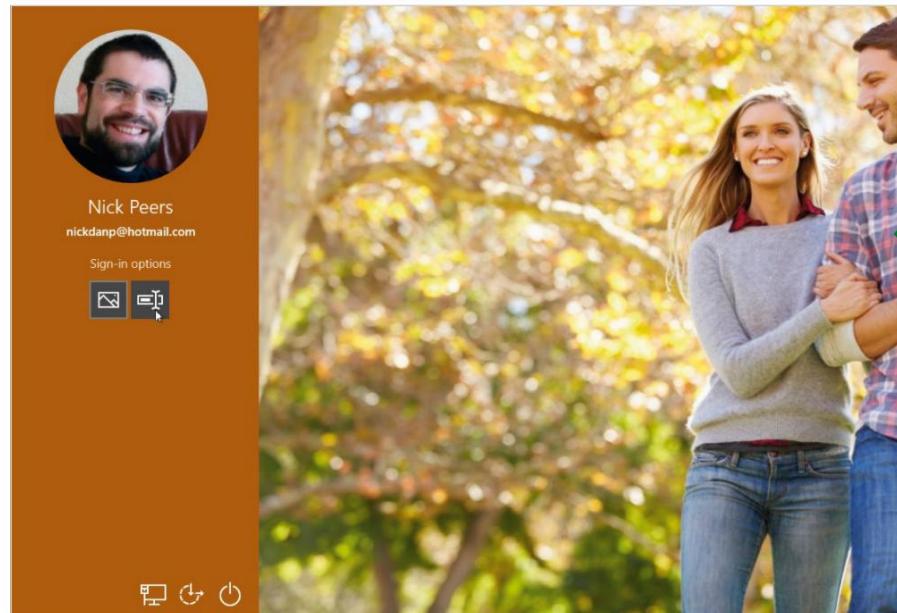
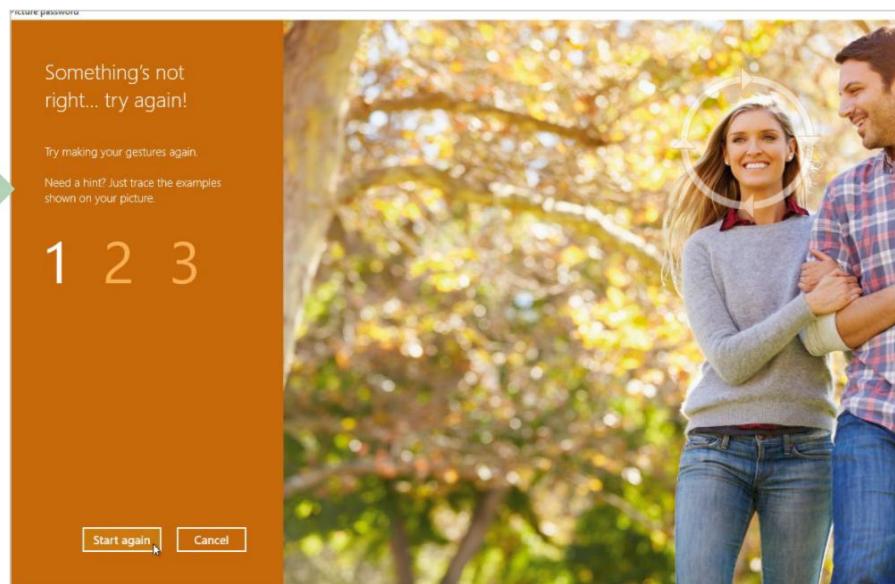
Picture perfect

Now select 'Sign-in options' and then click 'Add' under 'Picture Password'. Enter your account password (if you have a local account without a password assigned to it, you'll first need to create one). Once done, click 'Select picture' to choose a picture from the ones stored on your PC. This will form the basis of your new secure login, so make sure it's one you like.

Get drawing

Once you've located a suitable photo, select 'Use this picture' and then you can start building your picture password.

Doing this is a three-step process. To begin, choose a part of the picture and draw three things. These can be circles, simple taps (using your mouse or your device's touchscreen), lines, or any combination of the three.



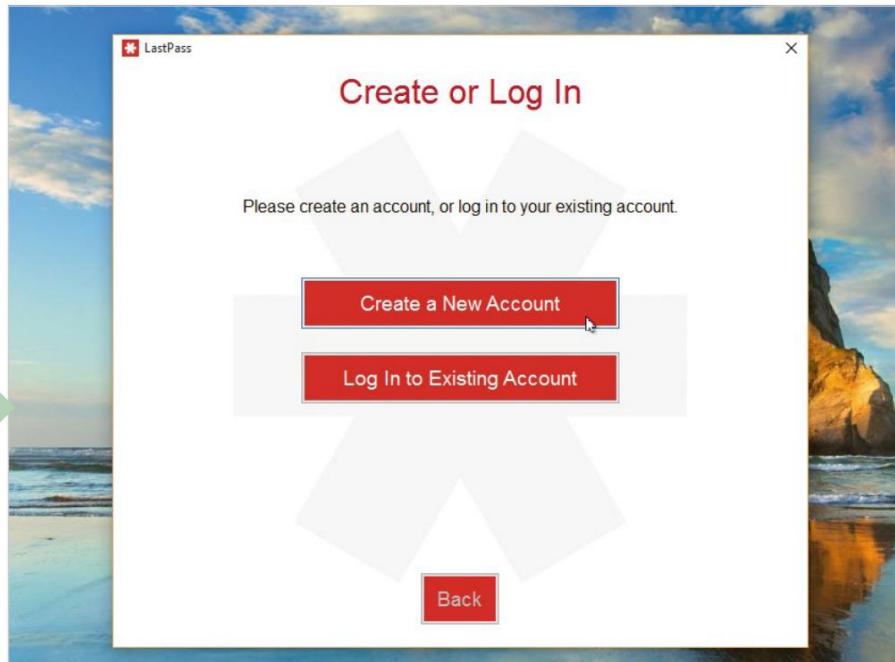
Log in quickly

Hit 'Finish' and your picture password is complete – try restarting your PC (or signing out) to try it. If you ever forget your picture password, simply click 'Sign-in options' to select the option to enter your password manually.

Note, however, that you can't use this picture password on other devices (unless you set the picture password up again manually for each one) – Windows won't let you sync picture or PIN passwords between devices, again for security reasons.

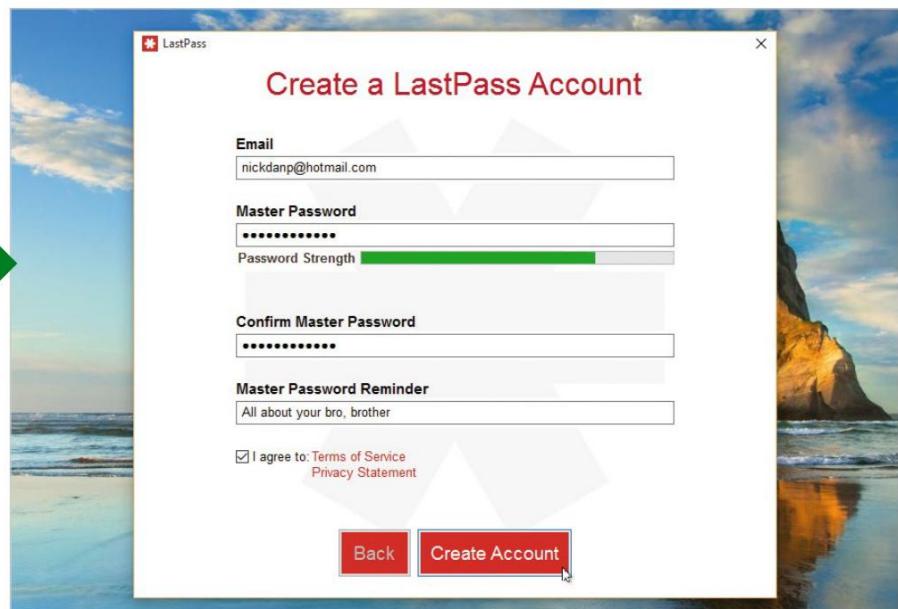
Online accounts

Now that your PC is secure, you can improve the way you log into favourite websites and services. Using LastPass, life is much easier because you don't have to type in all your login details each time you start your PC – the app does the hard work for you. Go to lastpass.com and click 'Download Free'. Download the recommended 'Universal Windows installer' package, which automatically installs the required browser add-ons for you to access and use LastPass through your web browser. You'll be prompted to create an account during the install process – click the button to do so.



Your master

The master password is the one you need to enter every time you log into LastPass. It's therefore sensible to make it as strong as possible by using a mixture of upper and lower case letters and numbers, and make sure it's at least eight characters long. The meter below the text box indicates how strong your master password is. The longer it is, the more secure your password will be. Include a password reminder to help you should you forget it – if the password is lost, that's it: there's no way of retrieving it.



Secure Your Passwords

LastPass found the following passwords stored insecurely on your computer. Importing these passwords into your LastPass vault helps secure them. Once they have been safely imported into LastPass, we'll delete them from your computer. Remember: they will always be available in your LastPass vault!

Source	Website	Username	Password
Internet Explorer	login.live.com	harrietpeers@outlook....	*****

Reveal Passwords

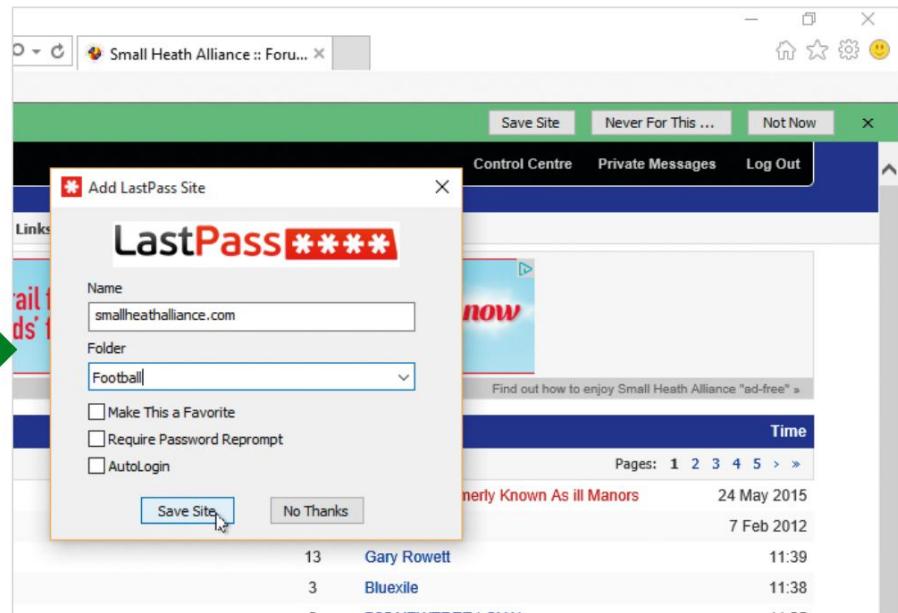
[Back](#) [No Thanks](#) [Import](#)

Add sites

If you've been saving passwords insecurely into your browser, LastPass will offer to import them into its secure vault before deleting them – click 'Import' to do so, or 'No Thanks' to leave them as they are. Look for the red LastPass icon in your browser toolbar. Click this to log in and review your list of saved sites – unsurprisingly it's empty at present, but that will soon change.

Add sites quickly

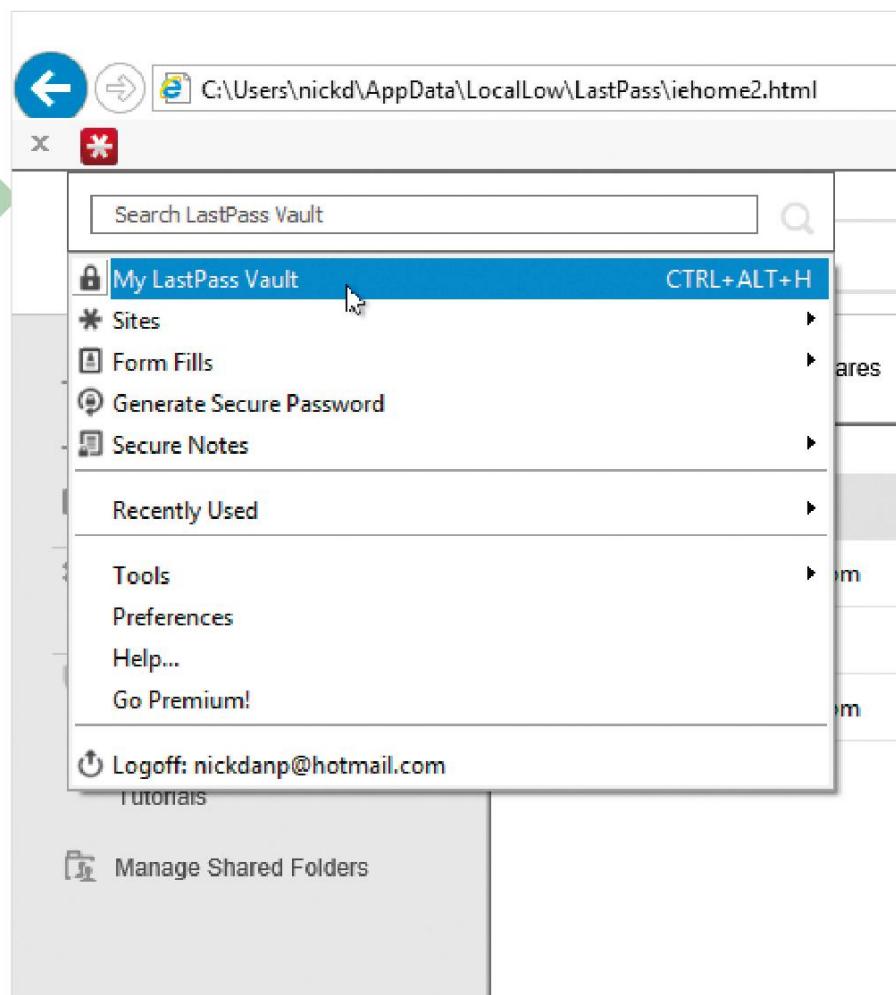
You can add sites manually – click the 'Add Site' button to do so – but by far the quickest way to add a site to LastPass is to browse to it and log in as you would normally. LastPass should detect this and offer to save the login details in your vault – look for the green bar appearing at the top of the web page and click 'Save Site'. Review the name, choose (or type) a folder if you wish to organise your sites logically, then use the tick boxes to determine if the site is a favourite or requires you to provide your LastPass master password before revealing the site password. Finally, tick 'AutoLogin' to have LastPass attempt to automatically log you in whenever you access the site. Click 'Save Site' again when done.



Log in quickly

Now, whenever you want to use one of your favourite online accounts, simply open your browser, make sure you're logged into LastPass (if its icon is grey, click to log in) and then browse to the site in question. When you come to log in, you may see your credentials pre-filled for you, or you can click the LastPass asterisk that appears in either username or password box to select your account.

If you click the LastPass icon and choose 'My LastPass Vault', you can also browse your existing logins and click its name to log in directly from there. Explore the rest of the vault – you can store other sensitive information as Secure Notes, and create Form Fill profiles too.



Password Strength:

New Password: Improve your password?

Repeat:

Old Password:

Nectar Card No:

Cancel

Generate

>Password: mF1QJ6gPYICV

>Password Length: 12

Allow All Character Types

Make Pronounceable

A-Zupper a-zlower 0-9 !\$%#@#

Minimum Digit Count 1

Avoid Ambiguous Characters

Cancel Use Password

Safe and Sound

You've now made your passwords a lot safer and no longer need to remember anything but your master password. Take full advantage of this by allowing LastPass to generate super-strong, unique passwords for each account: browse to the account, log in, then go to your account page and choose to change the password. Look for the security lock icon in the new password box – click this to have LastPass generate a new password for you using a mixture of letters, numbers and (if you require them) special characters too. ■



Upgrade

► NEW HARDWARE ► ESSENTIAL ACCESSORIES ► LATEST GADGETS

Welcome



It's the battle of the smartphones that's dominating the Upgrade section this month.

On the one hand, we have Microsoft's Lumia 650, which is by far the best Windows 10 phone we've used, and on the other, there's the new Samsung Galaxy S7, which exudes style and smartness. Which one should you choose? Well, we don't think you can go wrong with either!

Also this month we take a look at the Chuwi Hi12 Tablet, which is a budget version of the Surface 3. But can it hold a candle to the Microsoft original? Turn to page 88 now to find out!

Nick Odantzis deputy editor
windowsmagazine@futurenet.com

Our promise to you...

The Upgrade section is your key to finding out about the latest products, all designed to help you get more from your PC

You can trust our reviews

Our reviewers are 100 per cent independent, with years of experience in the world of computing. Our rigorous testing procedures mean that only genuine, high-quality products are awarded high star ratings. If you see an item of hardware bearing a high score, you can be confident that it is an excellent product.

We choose the best products

Thousands of new PC products are released every year and choosing between them can be an impossible task. Our experts select only the best hardware and software to feature in this magazine. Even better, our star rating system makes it simple to find the best products, giving you a fast, trustworthy guide.

How we review

Our expert reviewers guarantee to test every piece of hardware rigorously and thoroughly, using only acknowledged experts to establish the worth of a product. We always review from the viewpoint of our readers; the day-to-day practicality and quality of a product is paramount.

RATING EXPLAINED ★★★★★ Superb ★★★★★ Very good ★★★★★ Good ★★★★★ Disappointing ★★★★★ Poor

This issue's highlights

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Has Microsoft's Surface 3 tablet finally met its match with the Chuwi Hi12?

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We take the brand-new Canon SLR out for a spin, and we like what we see

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The new Galaxy S7 takes last year's S6 and improves on every detail

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It's the slimmest Lumia phone and the best Windows 10 mobile experience yet

96 Mini test In-ear headphones



Chuwi Hi12 Tablet

From \$250 en.chuwi.com

Has the Surface 3 finally met its match?

The Chuwi Hi12 is the bigger brother of the Chuwi Hi10 which we reviewed in Issue 121. While the latter makes no bones about its target – the Microsoft Surface 3, a product that is far more expensive – the Hi12 finds itself in a different situation.

It is essentially a Hi10 with a bigger display (12-inch, 2160 x 1440 pixels versus 10-inch, 1920 x 1200 pixels), a different aspect ratio (3:2 as opposed to 16:10) a larger battery (11,000mAh plays 6,600mAh), different material (all-metal unibody versus all-plastic), a 5-megapixel rear camera and a much higher price tag (a 40% premium).

Both sport the same processor (an Intel Atom Z8300 CPU based on the Cherry Trail architecture), the same amount of system memory and storage (4GB/64GB), the same connectivity/expansion capabilities (microSD card, micro-USB, micro-HDMI, USB 2.0, USB 3.0, audio, Wi-Fi and Bluetooth 4.0) and front cameras with the same pixel count.

When we got hold of the Chuwi Hi12, it had a power adapter (a 2.5A

model rather than the usual 2A ones), a leaflet, a USB cable and a keyboard (which is an optional add-on).

We tested the Hi12 as a docked device since, in theory, its larger 12-inch screen diagonal would allow for a much larger keyboard and hopefully a better typing experience. However, attaching the tablet to the keyboard docking station is a true plug-and-play experience which is both a good and a bad thing.

You don't have to toggle any switch in order to plug in or remove the accessory – and this means that the tablet could become loose far too easily for our tastes (it attaches magnetically).

Once assembled, the 2-in-1 convertible lacked the stability and the finesse of more expensive models. It is a tad wobbly and a little unsteady, due partly to the weight of the tablet, which shifts the centre of gravity high. That said, the hinge is reasonably solid and can accommodate the tablet face up (if you want to use it as a tablet) or down (as a normal laptop). Opening it up raises the rear of the

device slightly, which provides a gently angled typing surface.

Material world

The tablet itself is a far cry from the Hi10, which is made of plastic and is designed to be held in landscape mode; not a surprise here given its size. It's just under 9.5mm thick and weighs around 840g.

Adding the keyboard docking station roughly doubles the weight and thickness of the device and adds two full-size USB 2.0 ports, bringing the total to four, comparable to much larger traditional laptops. There are two speakers, one on each side of the tablet; useful for a presentation but don't expect them to fill a room.

The Hi12 adopts an all-metal unibody design (either in gold champagne or gunmetal) that veritably shouts high-end. Look closer though and you will see tiny imperfections such as trapped air bubbles on the screen, and in general there isn't the attention to detail that usually characterises more expensive products (although it does use Torx screws to secure the chassis).



Switching the device on displayed a boot screen with Chinese characters. Chuwi's not very good at language localisation it seems. Things were about to get worse though: the OS on the device (Windows 10 Home) was not activated and was in Spanish which was disconcerting and could certainly confuse novice users.

But all is not bad, the IPS screen is gorgeous even in broad daylight. It is bright (Chuwi quotes 400 cd/m²) and colours are well-balanced, not overly saturated. Given the pixel density (216ppi), everything

points out that it is a dual-channel configuration (i.e. two memory modules). The problem is the Z8300 supports only single channel according to Intel so is bandwidth-constrained as was the case with the Z3735F. We've reached out to Chuwi for comment.

You won't struggle with light workloads especially with the on-board RAM. Just make sure you don't open an excessive amount of tabs in Chrome. We didn't use the Hi12 extensively but didn't notice any heat dissipation issues. The fact that the entire

"Attaching the tablet to the keyboard docking station is a true plug-and-play experience"

looked sharp, but it is unlikely you will use Windows 10 with the default 100% scaling given how tiny the icons look.

Performance power

Performance is what you'd expect from a Z8300, which is essentially a faster, rebadged Atom Z3735F with a better graphics sub-system. The fact the Hi12 has 4GB of RAM and 64GB eMMC storage means it has a bit more legroom.

A quick note these parts: Chuwi claims the eMMC reaches 150MB/s in read speed, which is not that far from the truth, at least on Crystal DiskMark. For the memory, Chuwi

tablet chassis is made of metal means it acts as a giant heatsink – bear in mind though that throttling may happen depending on the workload.

As for the keyboard dock, it is a tale of two input peripherals. The keyboard per se was great to use, bearing in mind this is an entry-level device. There's a decent amount of travel with little of what we call the "scrabble effect" – when keys seem to be a tad loose when typing. Touch typing is a very real possibility thanks to generously sized keys.

The touchpad, on the other hand, was appalling. At times, the

KEY FEATURES

Chuwi Hi12

Operating system Windows 10

Processor CPU Brand Intel, Cherry Trail Z8300

GPU Intel HD Graphic(Gen8)

Core 1.44GHz,Quad Core

RAM 4GB

Connectivity TF Card slot, Micro USB slot, USB slot (USB 2.0, USB 3.0), Micro HDMI, 3.5mm headphone jack

Screen 12 inch, IPS,Capacitive (10-Point)

Weight 852g

Size 29.670 x 20.280 x 0.890 cm

cursor had a life of its own and the fact it is quite small meant it was difficult to control the pointer. Note to Chuwi: pushing the keys away from the touchpad would increase the palm rest surface area and would allow for a much bigger touchpad. Oh and try to make the surface of the touchpad flush with the palm rest.

Sure, it would cost more but we'd end up with a very good product rather than an above-average one. Oh and while you're at it, why not shove a battery inside that docking station to turn the Hi12 into an excellent convertible. Speaking of battery life, out of the box, we reached around a six-hour longevity although – as usual – your mileage will doubtless vary.

Final verdict

This tablet is excellent with a great display, some superb components, a decent build quality and an incredibly low price tag. The docking station is what lets the Hi12 down but then you can always buy the tablet alone.

However, do bear in mind that because you have to purchase this product from outside the UK, you will have to pay for the postage should you want to get it repaired. And there's always the risk of being stung by handling fees and VAT when you have it shipped over, too. ■

This is a tempting budget tablet indeed, but the optional base lets the side down.

 Windows
Help & Advice
Verdict





Canon EOS 80D

From £1,120 | \$1,349 www.canon.co.uk

Canon's new 80D looks great on paper, and the real thing's not too bad either

The new 80D sits right in the middle of Canon's SLR line-up, above the 760D and below the 7D Mark II.

That puts it in prime enthusiast territory, which means it needs to appeal if you want to shoot a range of subjects in a variety of conditions, and want an extensive feature set with plenty of control options, but don't need a full-on professional-grade camera.

Modern SLRs have two autofocus systems, one for when using the camera conventionally and composing images in the viewfinder (i.e. in reflex mode) and the second for use in Live View and video mode. Canon has improved both of these systems for the 80D.

The reflex mode system has 45 AF points, all of which are cross-type, whereas the 70D has 19 points. This means the camera has better AF point coverage, making it more able to find and follow subjects around the frame.

Turning to the Live View and video autofocus system, the 80D uses Dual Pixel CMOS AF technology like the 70D, which

means it has phase detection points on the imaging sensor itself.

A sensitive subject

According to Canon, the new system is more sensitive and faster than the 70D, but because fast autofocusing often isn't desirable when you're shooting video, it's possible to vary the speed of the 80D's system over seven steps for slower focus changes.

Although the 80D lacks one of the most in-vogue video features – 4K recording – it improves upon the 70D's video offering with a headphone port for audio monitoring and the ability to record Full HD (1980 x 1020) footage at 50fps for 2x slow-motion playback.

Canon introduced an Anti-flicker system with the 7D Mark II to help produce predictable exposure and colour when shooting under a light source that's prone to flickering. This clever technology, which detects the frequency of the flicker and times shots so they're taken when the impact on exposure and colour is minimal, has now made it into the 80D.

The majority of the button controls are located on the right side of the camera, either on the back or the top-plate and are within easy reach as you hold the camera for use.

Some, like the AF, Drive and Metering buttons, are designed for use in conjunction with the Main Dial or Quick Control Dial while you look at the secondary LCD screen on the camera's top-plate rather than through the viewfinder.

It's a tried-and-tested approach that works well, but many will find the touch control afforded by the main screen on the back of the camera more intuitive to use.

Unlike some other manufacturers, Canon gives touch-control over both the main and Quick Menus and it can really speed up use. It also makes light work of scrolling through images and setting AF point or tripping the shutter in Live View mode.

The Quick Menu is useful, providing a speedy route to some of the most commonly used features. It would be nice, however, if this was customisable so that it



KEY FEATURES

Canon EOS 80D

Image Sensor 22.3mm x 14.9 mm CMOS
Pixels Approx. 24.20 megapixels (effective), Approx. 25.80 megapixel (total)

Aspect ratio 3:2

Image processor DIGIC 6

RAM Focusing type TTL-CT-SIR with a CMOS sensor

AF System/ Points 45 cross-type AF points (45 f/5.6 cross-type AF points, 27 f/8 points [9 cross-type], centre point is f/2.8 and f/5.6 dual cross-type)

Shutter Electronically controlled focal-plane shutter, 30-1/8000 sec (1/2 or 1/3 stop increments)

LCD monitor Touch screen Vari angle 7.7cm (3.0") 3:2 Clear View II TFT, approx. 1040K dots

Weight (body only) Approx. 730g

Dimensions 139.0 x 105.2 x 78.5mm

only contained those features that you use on a frequent basis.

Some photographers, for example, may never change the file format that they shoot. It would be even better if there were two customisable Quick Menus, one for stills and one for video.

As with Canon's other touch-enabled SLRs, the touch-control works well. Menu items can be selected by a tap and options chosen either by a second tap or by using the navigation keys, the

In bright sunlight, however, it's necessary to turn the screen's brightness up to the maximum setting to give a clear view. We found it useful to assign the LCD Brightness control to one of the six customisable My Menu screens so we could access it quickly.

Although the 80D's screen is good, the viewfinder is still the more natural option for most photographers to use when shooting stills, especially if the subject is moving.

"Canon gives touch-control over both the main and Quick Menus and it can really speed up use"

mini-joystick or a control dial, whichever you prefer.

Screen time

The 3-inch 1,040,000-dot Clear View II screen deserves a mention because it provides a detailed, crisp view. When the target area is magnified on-screen in Live View mode, it makes focusing manually much easier than when using the viewfinder. Its vari-angle hinge also makes the screen useful when shooting from awkward angles in either landscape or portrait orientation, saving you from crawling around on the ground to get a worm's eye view. It's at these times that the ability to set AF point and trip the shutter with a tap on the screen comes into its own.

Until recently, Canon had been wedded to using 18Mp sensors in its APS-C format cameras, but the 750D and 760D marked a switch to 24Mp devices. One of the reasons that higher pixel count cameras are so enticing is that they have the potential to capture more detail than a competing lower res model.

Canon has also given the 80D a significantly better autofocus (AF) system for use with the viewfinder than the 70D, so naturally we were keen to put it to test. It didn't disappoint, getting stationary subjects sharp in a flash and keeping fast-moving subjects sharp even in low light.

While much of the buzz in the camera market at the moment centres around mirrorless or

compact system models, the Canon 80D typifies the attraction that SLRs can still hold for enthusiast photographers. Its viewfinder may not show images as they will be captured, but it has a fast and effective autofocus system that CSC manufacturers aspire to emulate. It also has a touch-sensitive vari-angle screen that can help with image composition when shooting from all manner of angles, with a secondary AF system that can get subjects sharp quickly in Live View and with varying speed as required in video mode.

Thanks to its 24Mp sensor the 80D captures far more detail than the 70D for most of its sensitivity range and noise is controlled well. Its reflex autofocus system is also extremely capable even in low light and the metering and white balance systems are both reliable. In addition, the camera's handling is excellent, promoting creative shooting as well as making setting adjustments quick and easy.

Final verdict

The Canon 80D is an excellent choice of camera for enthusiast photographers. It has a high-quality sensor that is able to capture good detail while keeping noise under control and its autofocus is swift. ■

An excellent camera for enthusiast photographers and a worthwhile upgrade from the 70D.

 Windows
Help & Advice
Verdict





Samsung Galaxy S7

£569 SIM-free | \$199 (as a two-year contract) www.samsung.com

Could this phone actually be perfect?

You'd be forgiven for thinking the Samsung Galaxy S7 looks almost identical to the Galaxy S6. And that's because it is. Samsung has reused the premium glass and metal finish it employed on the S6. But on closer inspection, you'll notice differences that make the Samsung Galaxy S7 better looking and feeling.

While the Galaxy S7 sports the same size 5.1-inch display as the S6, Samsung has managed to shave off a fraction of the bezel around the screen, reducing the handset's height and width slightly.

The power/lock key on the right and volume keys on the left fall nicely under thumb and finger, although you'll still have to juggle the device a bit to reach the fingerprint scanner, which is embedded under the physical home key. At the rear of the S7, the square camera bulge is still there, but this time around it's less protruding. Alongside it you'll find

the LED flash and heart rate monitor – a feature Samsung insists on putting on its top-tier handsets, even though a smartwatch or fitness tracker is much better placed for this tech. It also measures stress and oxygen saturation levels, although it's unclear how accurate the sensors are.

Samsung has resurrected two features from the Galaxy S5 – a microSD slot, as well as dust- and water-resistance. The microSD port shares a tray with the nanoSIM, which slides out from the top of the handset. This lets you build on the 32GB of internal storage by up to 200GB, giving you lots of space.

Meanwhile, the IP68 water resistance allows submersion of up to five feet for 30 minutes, plus there's no annoying flap covering the charging port.

Screen time

At first glance, the S7's screen appears to be the same as the

5.1-inch, QHD Super AMOLED offering on the S6. The resolution is still 2,560 x 1,440, giving you a pin-sharp 577ppi pixel density.

The screen also boasts always-on functionality, a feature that both Samsung and LG (on the G5) have employed on their flagship handsets in 2016. When the handset is lying idle, the default option shows the clock, date and battery level, plus counters for new text messages and missed calls will also display (if you have any).

With the screen always on (disable this, if you prefer), there is an additional drain on the battery. Samsung claims it consumes less than 1% every hour. As we spent more time with the S7, we became accustomed to glancing at it to see the time and date, and check if it needed charging.

Talking of which, if you know you're going to be away from a charger, the Galaxy S7 has options to make the battery last longer.



First is the standard power-saving mode, which limits performance, vibrations and background data without cutting off functionality.

If you're really up against it, then Samsung's ultra-power-saving mode takes battery conservation to the extreme. This strips out all the fancy features and gives you a stripped down, black-and-white interface with access to only a handful of functions including calls, texts and a web browser.

Photographic perfection

The Galaxy S7 and Galaxy S7 Edge are the first smartphones to feature a dual-pixel sensor, a technology initially built for DSLR cameras. This gives the S7 faster autofocus, again improving the brightness and overall quality of your shots.

The difference is clear to see when you fire up the camera app

Keep HDR on auto too, and the S7 will take some cracking shots. However, what really stood out for us was the low-light performance. There has been clear improvement in this department, and the camera does an excellent job of taking in as much light as possible for blur-free, detailed photos.

If you're looking for more control, the Pro Mode offers up a whole range of controls including shutter speed, white balance, contrast, brightness and ISO. You can also choose to save images as uncompressed RAW files alongside the standard JPEGs.

There's a wide range of other modes too, such as panorama, selective focus and slow-motion video joined by new additions including Food and Hyperlapse.

The former provides a meal-friendly filter to help you document

"Colours are bright, detail is good (considering the drop in megapixels), and lighting is top notch"

and hold it up to your subject. Staring at the viewfinder on the screen, your subject appears brighter, lighter and clearer.

Double-clicking the home button triggers the camera app quick launch, swiftly accessing the snapper without you having to close another app first. Once the app has loaded you can use the volume keys, as well as the on-screen shutter key, to snap a pic.

The volume keys can also be programmed to zoom or to start video recording if you prefer easy access to either of those instead.

There are plenty of modes and effects to play with on the Galaxy S7, but Samsung's auto mode is excellent for those just wanting a good quality point-and-shoot.

culinary adventures, and the latter improves the stability and visibility of timelapse video, while minimising the file size.

General picture quality is superb. Colours are bright and vibrant, detail is good (considering there has been a drop in megapixels), and lighting is top notch thanks to the improved low-light capabilities.

Round the front, Samsung has kept things at 5MP. The beauty mode is here again, ready to make you look like an alien – it's best turned off, or dialled down.

A useful feature is the front-facing flash – although there's no LED mounted on the front. Instead it uses the display to flash a light at you for an illuminated selfie in low-light surroundings.

KEY FEATURES

Samsung Galaxy S7

OS Android OS, v6.0 (Marshmallow)

Chipset Qualcomm MSM8996

Snapdragon 820, Exynos 8890 Octa

SIM Single SIM (Nano-SIM) or Dual SIM (Nano-SIM, dual stand-by)

Memory (Card slot) microSD, up to 200 GB (dedicated slot) – single-SIM model; microSD, up to 200 GB (uses SIM 2 slot) – dual-SIM model. (Internal) 32/64 GB, 4 GB RAM

Primary camera 12 MP, f/1.7, 26mm, phase detection autofocus, OIS, LED flash. 1.26" sensor size, 1.4 µm pixel size, geo-tagging, simultaneous 4K video and 9MP image recording, touch focus, face/smile detection, Auto HDR, panorama,

Secondary camera 5 MP, f/1.7, 22mm, dual video call, Auto HDR

Video 2160p@30fps, 1080p@60fps, 720p@240fps, HDR, dual-video rec

Battery Non-removable Li-Ion 3000 mAh battery

Talk time Up to 22 h (3G)

Music play Up to 62 h

Dimensions 142.4 x 69.6 x 7.9 mm

Weight 152g

Images from the front snapper are good, but lack the detail of rival offerings. It's serviceable, but you'll want to keep your serious snaps for the excellent rear camera.

Final verdict

Is it worth the upgrade? If you're coming out of a two-year contract and you're looking for a flagship smartphone, then absolutely. As long as you're comfortable with the price, then you won't look back. ■

Samsung has tweaked the design of the S6 and made a phone you won't want to put down.

 Windows
Help & Advice
Verdict





Microsoft Lumia 650

£150 | \$199 www.microsoft.com

Another enterprising offering from Microsoft

Microsoft claims the Lumia 650 is the slimmest Lumia yet, and with a soft-touch matte plastic rear, 5-inch Gorilla Glass-strengthened screen and aluminium frame, it feels great. And it only weighs a mere 122g.

While not quite up to the standards set by higher-end phones with near-perfect fits and finishes, the Lumia 650 is one of the nicest Windows Phone we've held.

On the top of the device is the 3.5mm headphone jack and a microphone, while the right side of the device is home to the volume rocker and power key. On the bottom of the device is the micro USB port, for charging and connecting the device to a PC.

The back of the device houses the rear-facing 8MP camera, flanked by a single LED flash and a subtle Windows logo.

On the front of the device, the 5MP wide-angle front-facing camera is positioned above the 5-inch, 720p screen, with the

front-firing speaker (which is really rather decent) at the bottom edge.

Display

The screen hits the mark resolution-wise. Although it has a PPI count of 'only' 297, it packs enough pixels to please. More important than the resolution, however, is the rest of the tech powering the screen.

The Lumia 650 has an OLED screen, which delivers much better contrast and has a great deal more 'punch' than all but the best LCD efforts. The panel on the 650 also has excellent colour accuracy and nice viewing angles.

But beyond the screen, there are some great changes with this phone. For instance, the settings menu is easier to navigate than it once was, and the new level of control afforded is welcome.

Also with Truecaller installed you will be able to identify spam numbers and ignore the call, something we could never have done on the more locked-down Windows Phone.

Some other changes take a bit more getting used to though. What was formerly 'Music' is now 'Groove Music', and 'Calendar' is now 'Outlook Calendar'.

Also Outlook Mail takes forever to open even the smallest of attachments and many apps still do not 'talk' to each other properly.

This device, for its price bracket, is well specced in almost every category – design, camera, screen, speaker. And yet it lags behind in one crucial area – the processor.

While even the cheapest of the Android competition come sporting, at the very least, the likes of the Qualcomm Snapdragon 410, the Lumia 650 boasts the relatively anaemic Snapdragon 212. It comes from the lowest end of Qualcomm's product line, and its shortcomings are obvious.

When you're swiping through the operating system, and opening and closing 'normal' apps (email, messaging, etc), the Lumia 650 doesn't miss a beat. Aside from some extended load times and an



KEY FEATURES

Microsoft Lumia 650

OS Windows 10
CPU name Qualcomm® Snapdragon™ 212
Display 5 " HD720 (1280 x 720)
Touch screen technology Capacitive multipoint-touch
Memory 16 GB, 1 GB RAM, 200GB maximum memory card, takes MicroSD
Battery 2000 mAh, replaceable
Maximum standby time: 26 days
Maximum talk time (4G) 16 h
Camera 8.0MP
Height 142mm
Width 70.9mm
Thickness 6.9mm
Weight 122g

look flat and muted. It's a similar story with video, with footage appearing crisp, if over-sharpened.

Verdict

The 600 series within the Lumia line-up has always been where the best of budget and premium combine to offer something distinctive. The Lumia 650 is a different beast. It's the experience of using this phone that sets it apart. The lovely in-hand feel, the dependable camera, the decent battery life, the surprisingly good speakers and the mostly smooth day-to-day operation are all key to what a good smartphone experience should be.

When it comes to battery life the Lumia 650 was able to last through a solid day of use. Waking up at 7am, listening to some music via Bluetooth on the commute and reading some articles during lunch, all the while answering emails and sending messages along with around an hour of calls, generally saw the battery drop to around 45% by 6pm, which is acceptable.

However, the poor processor selection is all that holds this device back from real greatness. If Microsoft had followed the competition, and gone with the likes of a Snapdragon 616, 652 or 617, and maybe doubled the RAM, the Lumia 650 would fly. ■

With a great display, a nice design and a capable camera, it makes a strong first impression.

 **Windows Help & Advice**
Verdict



unusually long app 'hydration' period (waking from sleep), performance is tolerable.

Launch any vaguely demanding application, however, and things change for the worse. Take the Maps application, for instance, where loading directions and changing areas takes a while.

Using the Lumia 650 will challenge the power user's notion of what a smartphone should be. For those buying their first smartphone, those looking for a solid budget option and for

this is true of the Lumia 650. Images shot in good light are sharp and colours are well reproduced, and the handset displays an acceptable dynamic range. One odd quirk is that images have a tendency to be quite dark, although this can be remedied courtesy of the Windows Camera app, a legacy of the former Windows phone-builder Nokia's smartphone-camera dominance.

The app offers easy access to settings such as white balance, ISO,

"This device, considering its price bracket, is well spec'd in almost every category..."

business users attached to the Microsoft ecosystem, it's a reasonably attractive proposition.

Although performance on many games and some apps is inadequate, the overall experience of using the handset is mostly satisfying, aided in no small part by the 1GB of included RAM.

Camera savvy

Smartphone cameras are getting better all the time, helped by the availability of cheap high-megapixel BSI sensors from the likes of Sony and OmniVision. Although generally still lacking when it comes to low-light photography, they're generally capable in most situations. And

shutter speed and manual focus, and exposure compensation is also easily applied.

As ever, the Rich Capture mode is welcome, and at this price-point having such an easy access to usually hidden features is a bonus. The only weakness of the camera (apart from a lack of resolution) is its low-light performance, which isn't up to the job.

The lack of a two-stage camera button is a letdown, as there's no convenient way to launch a camera, while providing tactile feedback.

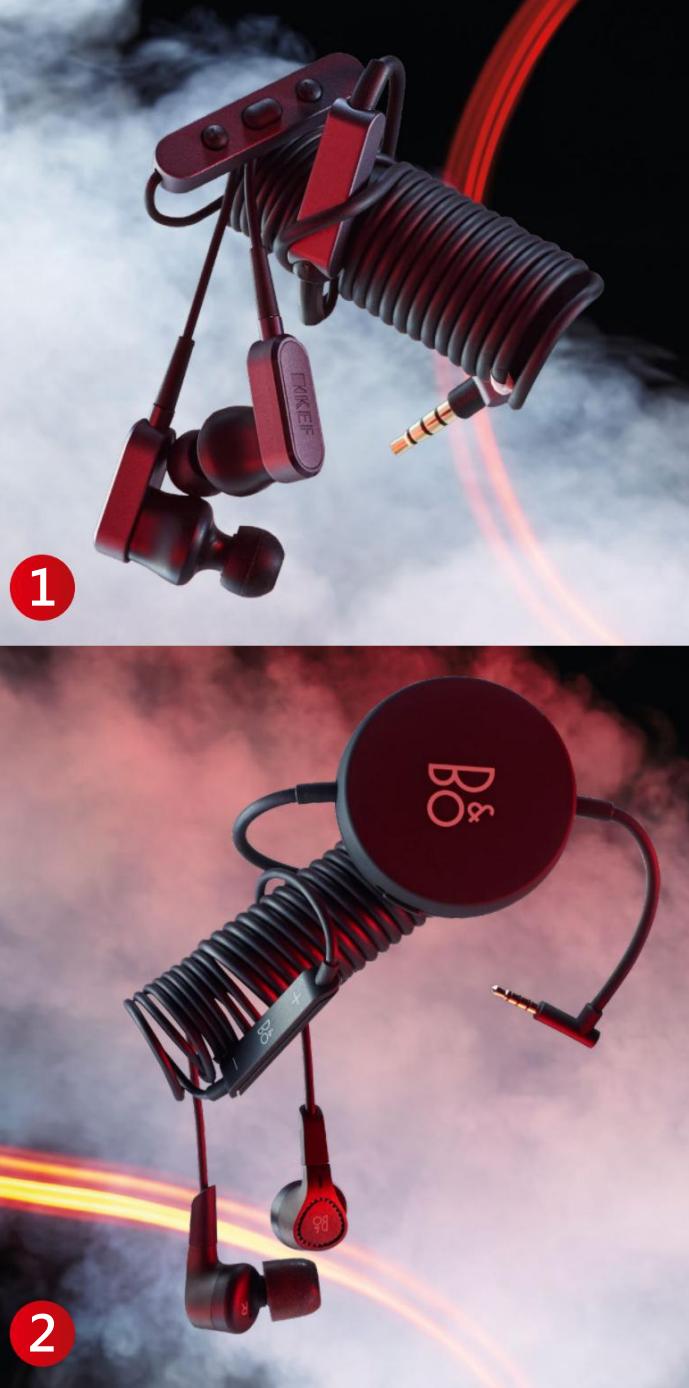
For the selfie-lovers out there, the 5MP wide-angle front-facing camera is capable enough. There is some detail in the shots produced, although as you might expect they

IN-EAR HEADPHONES

Ditch the free headphones pronto – these luxury in-ears will add some sonic finesse to music on your travels

Whether you like to listen to your own music library, internet radio or catch up on your favourite podcasts when you're on the go, there's no need to ruin the experience by using a rubbish pair of headphones. Also, if you're anything like us, a huge pair of over-ear headphones doesn't always look great, and they're not always practical for stashing away.

So, the in-ear option is the perfect solution. Not only can they sound great, they're simple to use, discreet and easy to carry too. Here, we'll be focusing on the premium end of the market, where refined build-quality meets superior speaker technology. These are the closest you'll get to a true hi-fi experience while you're out and about.



1 KEF M100

£119 www.kef.com

Available in four cool colours, KEF's entry-level in-ears are stylish, lightweight and comfortable – the headphone holy trinity. Build quality is deceptively good, thanks to the solid aluminium racetrack casing, while in-line controls let you pause playback and adjust volume. Their angled design and three-size silicon tips fit securely, and at 18g you barely know they're in. The 10mm neodymium drivers deliver a crisp, well-balanced sound, neither too bright nor too thick. They lack the authority and finesse of pricier rivals, but the M100s are superb performers for the cash.



2 B&O H3 ANC

£199 www.beoplay.com

The H3 ANCs kill ambient noise at the flick of a switch. A rechargeable battery offers around 20 hours of noise cancellation, powerful enough to quell the hum of a microwave. There are in-line controls, and Comply foam tips that form a tight seal in the ears. The lightweight, gunmetal-grey design oozes class, and when playing music we like their neutral tone. The smooth, detailed treble doesn't harden up at high volumes, while warm bass injects depth without suffocating the mid-range – although some tighter low-frequency control wouldn't go amiss.



3 Audio-Technica ATH-CKR10

£240 www.audio-technica.com

These use the world's first 'push-pull driver system' to reduce distortion and push high frequencies up to the magic 40kHz mark, making them capable for hi-res-audi. Construction is exquisite, with rigid titanium housing lending a premium feel – although they're bulky and it's a shame the cable isn't detachable should it get damaged. In action, they offer a detail-drenched sound with a confident mid-range and muscular bass. It might be too thick for some, but it's impressive nonetheless.





3



5



4



6

4 Grado GR10e

£400 www.gradolabs.com

The GR10es are the coolest of the bunch. The light, streamlined metal bodies are beautifully built and dressed in a green/copper colour scheme. The rubberised cable feels a little fragile, though, and you can't easily replace it. Extras are minimal – you only get three pairs of silicon tips (not foam) and some filters in the box. But find the right fit and the GR10es produce a big sound with bags of tightly weaved bass, resulting in a deeper, warmer listen than some rivals, while smooth, accurate high frequencies and superb imaging immerse you in the music.



5 Shure SE846

£799 www.shure.co.uk

With their hefty price tag, four balanced armature drivers and 'True Subwoofer' tech, the SE846s are the Rolls-Royce of in-ear headphones, although you wouldn't know it from the lacklustre design. Their light, ergonomic bodywork and stiff over-ear cables make them extremely comfortable to wear, with a wide range of plugs ensuring a snug fit. Play some music and that price suddenly makes sense – the SE846s offer a refined, illuminating listen, drawing you into the music with precise, natural detail and authoritative bass. Hands down the best-sounding in-ears around.



6 Noble Audio Savant

£399 www.nobleaudio.co.uk

Believe it or not, the £400 Savants are one of Noble Audio's more affordable models. For the money, we expected better build quality, as the black plastic bodywork doesn't scream 'premium'. However, they're light, comfy and fitted with a high-quality, twisted detachable cable. Bendable over-ear hooks keep them in place, while a choice of 12 rubber tips make it easy to find a snug, sound-isolating fit. Any design misgivings are forgiven once you hear the transparent and detailed sound.



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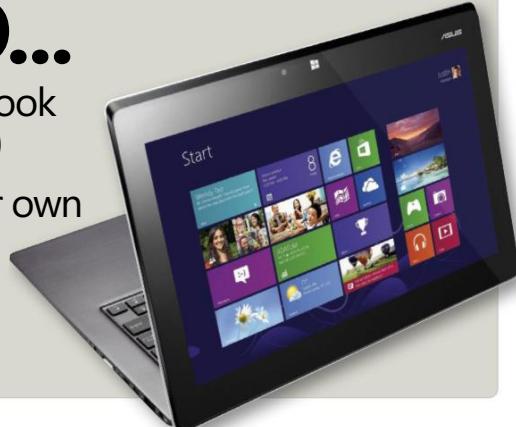
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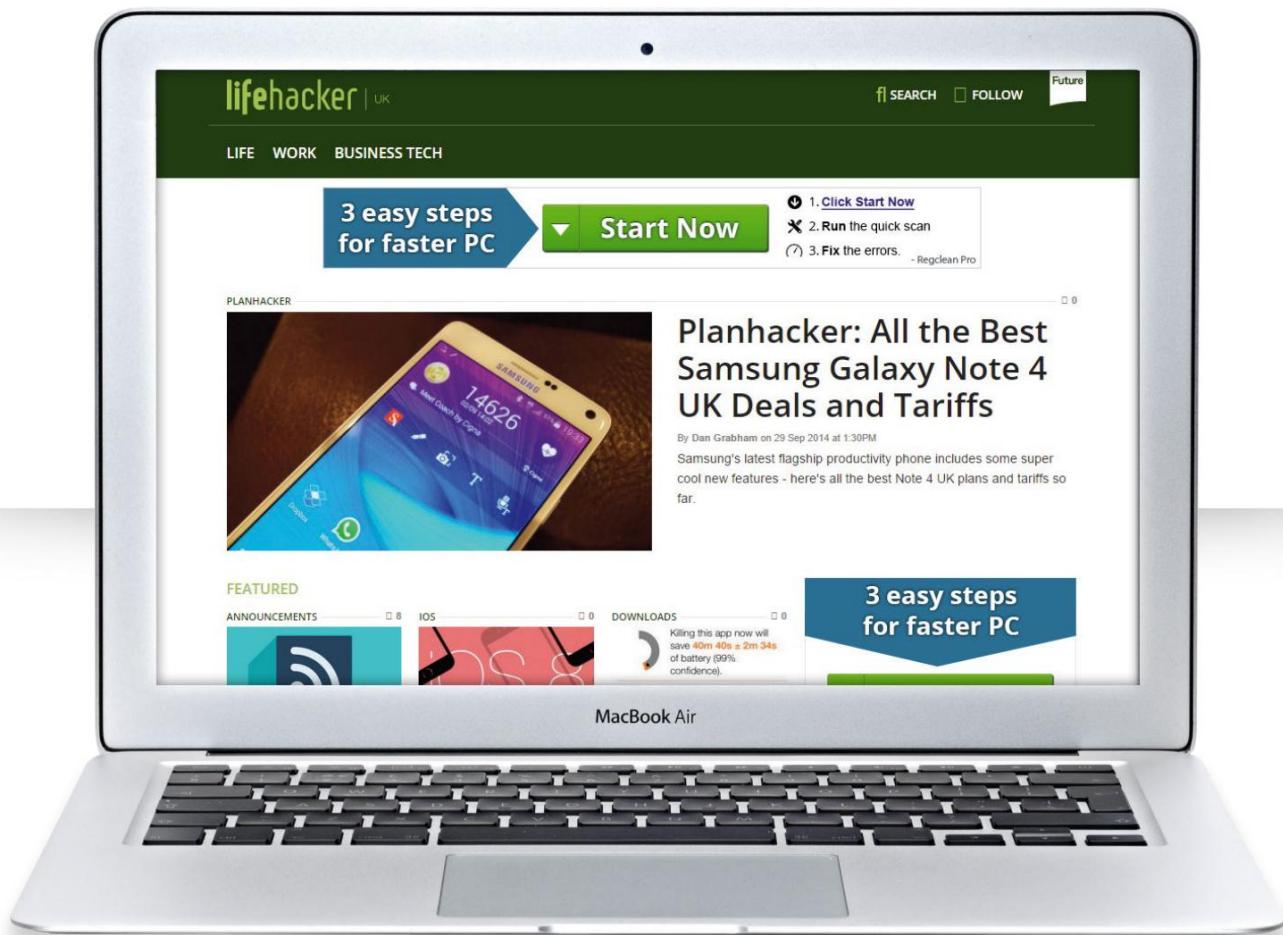


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