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REINSTALL WINDOWS 10

RESTORE YOUR PC TO MINT CONDITION
WITH OUR IN-DEPTH **10-PAGE GUIDE**



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Welcome

No matter how careful you are about installing Windows updates or adding apps to your PC, over time your speed machine will slow down and even exhibit strange behaviours. That's why we suggest reinstalling Windows ever year or two to give it a fresh start – you'll be surprised by the huge difference it makes!

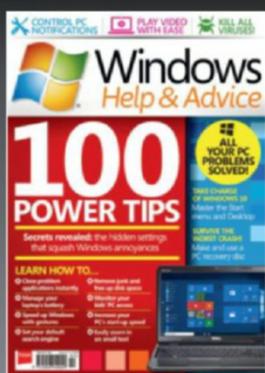
Starting on page 14 we'll walk you through the entire process – and also show you a great way to speed up reinstalling any version of Windows in future.

On page 32 you'll discover how to partition your hard drive and separate your personal files and data from your Windows install. While on page 54 you'll also learn how to make your PC run faster by streamlining the apps and processes that Windows runs.

On page 58 you'll find 10 great ways to save time by getting organised on your PC, giving you the space to play the latest games (page 64).

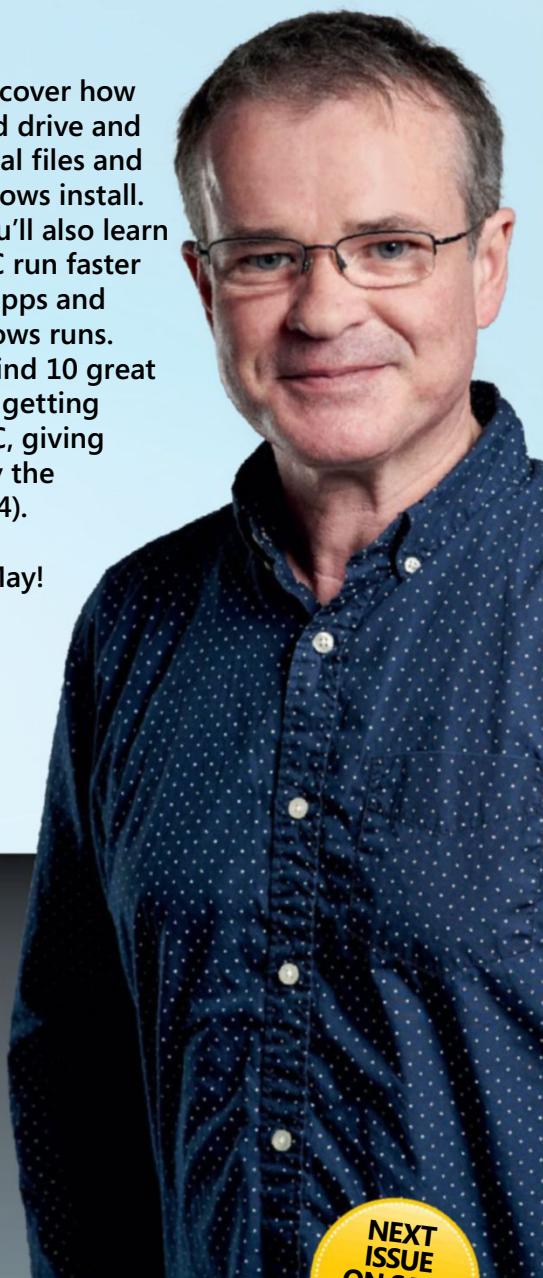
Enjoy the issue and join us again on 26 May!

Rob Mead-Green Editor
www.facebook.com/windowsmag



SUBSCRIBE TO THE MAG TODAY AND SAVE – JUST TURN TO PAGE 24!

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, smartphone or tablet.



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Windows Help & Advice

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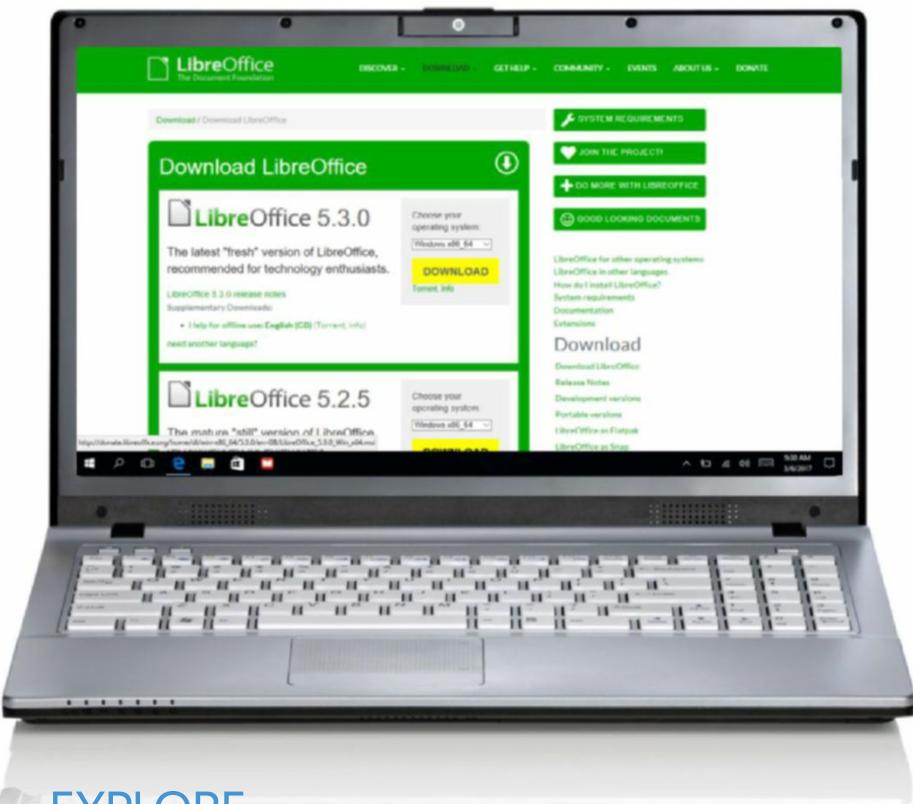
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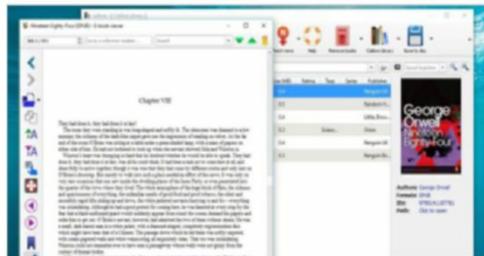
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DON'T GET LOST Find one geocache and you'll want to find another – how many can you collect?

See the hidden world Stretch your legs and solve real-world puzzles

You can get started with Geocaching using only your computer and phone – it's a worldwide treasure hunt

As hobbies go, you could do much worse than Geocaching. A combination of orienteering, puzzle solving and treasure hunting, Geocaching is a rapidly evolving activity – since its formal inception in May 2000, millions of individual caches have been hidden across the world. They're in idyllic countryside locations, they're tucked away in the urban sprawl. There's even on – there's a good chance there's one in easy walking distance from you right now. And, of course, there are plenty to find in world-famous locations – and even on the Moon!

To find out where all these caches are you'll need to sign up at geocaching.com, which is the central hub of the hobby. If you have a Facebook account, you can sign up in just a few clicks; once you're in, scroll down a little and click 'Find Geocaches Nearby'. The site will automatically gather together close caches based on your computer's address – click 'map the nearest 1000 caches', then you'll be asked

You can use your phone to seek out caches and see the clues you need

to set your home location manually, since the one that it's guessed at is likely to be some distance away.

The map will reveal the true extent of what's out there; all those thousands of dots represent a hidden box or film canister somewhere in the wild. Click one of them and you'll see a short description of its difficulty, then click the title to see a full description and clues as to how to find it. The real magic comes when you download the free Geocaching app on your smartphone. You'll be able to use its GPS functions to seek out the precise

location of caches, follow trails, see the clues you need, and mark them off as found once you've opened them up and written your name in the logbook.

It's a great way to get to know your local area and see the great outdoors, with a welcoming and respectful community. And for many geocachers, it's the key reason they own a computer at all. Imagine the things you'll see!

SAMSUNG IS BACK The 'long phone' is here

Samsung's new handset, the flagship Galaxy S8, is its first major phone release since the worldwide scandal of the highly-flammable Galaxy Note 7, and it's a big one. Or, to be more accurate, a tall one: the 5.8" screen ditches the standard 16:9 phone screen ratio for an extended 18.5:9 variety. It's definitely not cheap – to buy the handset outright costs a staggering £689 – so let's hope the Korean company has now sorted out its battery issues once and for all.



DUNK IT We wouldn't take it deep-sea diving, but the Samsung Galaxy S8 is completely waterproof.



CURVY BODY The S8's rounded body has been sculpted to match its beautiful curved screen.



MEET BIXBY Samsung's dapper new digital personal assistant debuts on this handset.

The Knowledge... + | ▶



Orbi

What is it?

Orbi is Netgear's new kind of router – it uses a system called mesh networking to send Wi-Fi all over your home, blanketing it with signal and eliminating any potential dark spots caused by thick walls, floors, or tiles. It's also rather attractively designed, much more aesthetically pleasing than the usual spiky black router.

How does it work?

Mesh routing abandons the idea of a single Wi-Fi point, breaking your network seamlessly up between a central hub and several extension modules known as satellites, the smallest of which just sits in a wall socket. You don't need to worry about the precise makeup of the hardware, though: you only see a single network, and all precious bars of Wi-Fi signal all over your home.

Can I install it myself?

It shouldn't be a problem, even if your internet provider gives you a router as part of your package: just set that router to modem mode (which switches off its Wi-Fi portion), plug in the Orbi's central unit via a cable, and pop its sub-units around your home. You can set the whole lot up with a simple phone app.

Can it do anything else?

New Wi-Fi, new skills. Orbi's utilisation of a number of different radios means it's faster than you might be used to, and it also integrates with Amazon's Alexa home automation system, enabling you to control your Wi-Fi network using your voice as well as your phone.

What does it cost?

Right now, it's not cheap. A simple two-unit arrangement will set you back around £360, with additional modules obviously adding to the cost. But with competing mesh network systems such as Google Home and Eero breathing down its neck, we'd expect the price to drop soon – and for mesh networking to become the norm in the future.

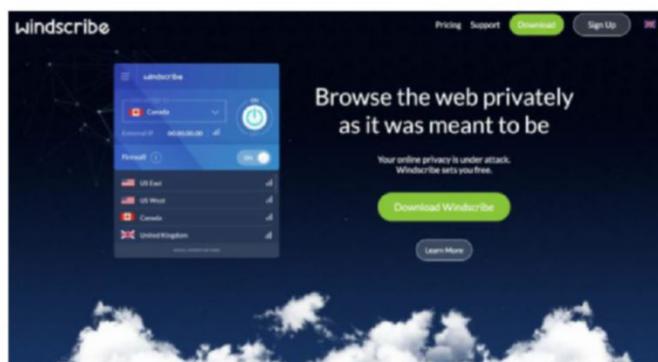
Everyone's talking about Protecting online privacy

Stop the government and others from seeing your internet traffic with help from a Virtual Private Network or VPN

Even if you're not doing anything wrong, the thought of the government snooping on your internet connection isn't a comforting one. If investigators were opening your post or tapping your telephone calls, you'd feel violated – but that's exactly what's going on in nations around the world. The UK's Investigatory Powers Act has recently given authorities licence to collect and intercept data *en masse*, which could include your bank details, your emails, or your private conversations. So what can you do?

VPNs then route your covered-up traffic through to a country with no monitoring laws, and send it back to you from the same place – thus denying anyone the chance of listening in. VPNs have exploded in popularity recently, and it pays to have one on standby.

There are free options out there which restrict the amount of traffic that you can send through them. While this limit is generally quite small, free VPNs should be fine for most light users; if you switch it on only when you're performing a sensitive action then deactivate it afterwards, you won't come close to exceeding your allocation. Bear in mind that only data that you actively send or receive is liable to be snooped on – things stored in the cloud, presuming the storage provider doesn't offer up its servers for inspection, are usually safe.



Sticking to the phone for sensitive matters isn't going to cut it – the IPA covers all communications – so you'll need something else. The solution is to subscribe to a VPN, or virtual private network. These take the internet traffic going from your PC and encrypt it, obfuscating it completely, before it makes its way to the internet at large. Most

The big irony here is that you'll need to trust your VPN provider not to sell you out. Go for a VPN that doesn't ask for any personal information and you should be relatively safe; you can sign up for the likes of Windscribe (<https://windscribe.com>) without even supplying an email address – though if you forget your password, you'll be out of luck.

Download this... + ▶

Thimbleweed Park

<https://thimbleweedpark.com/>

If you were around in the early days of the PC, it's likely you'll remember the rise of point-and-click adventures, particularly those which came from LucasArts. Those days are back: funded using Kickstarter in 2014, the newly-finished *Thimbleweed Park* (£14.99) is an adventure in the classic style, headed up by ex-LucasArts veterans Ron Gilbert and Gary Winnick – the designers behind *The Secret of Monkey Island* and *Maniac Mansion*.

It shares plenty of similarities with its ancestors, from its fourth-wall defying sense of humour to its winding, fiendish puzzles, but it's the graphical style – *Maniac Mansion* given a fresh coat of pixel paint, essentially – that will appeal to those put off by the 3D adventures of today. And how does it play? Kotaku UK call it "all you can ask for in an adventure game", which sounds good to us.



WHODUNNIT? *Thimbleweed Park* features five playable characters and a twisting plot.

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NEXT ISSUE ON SALE
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26
May

THE 60-SECOND QUIZ

Pens at the ready, your time starts now!

1 What's the name of Microsoft's precursor to Windows?

- A MS-DOS
- B MS-DOG
- C MS-BOB

2 Which app opens when you press [Ctrl] + [Shift] + [Esc]?

- A Control Panel
- B Paint
- C Task Manager

3 What is the name of the most recent Windows 10 update?

- A Curator's Update
- B Creator's Update
- C Crater Update

4 What are Nashville, Cairo and Neptune?

- A Microsoft office locations
- B Names of cancelled Windows prototypes
- C Surnames of former Microsoft executives

5 What was Windows originally going to be called?

- A Doors
- B Homescreen
- C Interface Manager

6 Which of these rival operating systems was co-developed by Microsoft in the 1980s?

- A BeOS
- B OS/2
- C macOS

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

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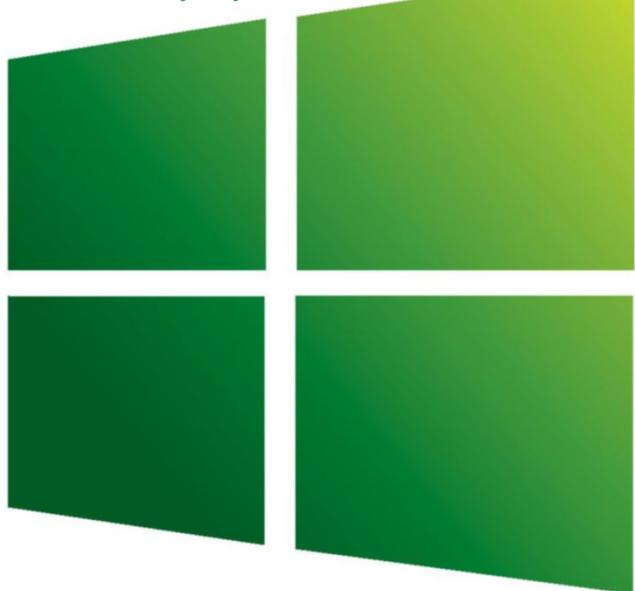
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Facts & figures

Rob Mead-Green reveals a wealth of fascinating digital facts

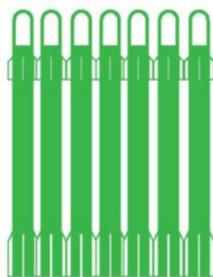
10,000,000

Number of people who are now helping Microsoft to test Windows 10 through its Windows Insider program. An estimated 400 million people use Windows every day.



4,999.99

Cost in dollars of Dell's new 8K UltraSharp UP3218K display. The 31.5-inch screen has a resolution of 7680 x 4320 pixels. It also boasts Dell PremierColor technology and is able to display 1.07 billion colours – that's 64 times more colour depth than standard monitors.



3.4 MIL

Cost in dollars of a Patriot missile, which was recently used to shoot down a \$200 consumer drone. Talk about overkill.



Payload capacity of the Pouncer, an edible – yes, edible – drone that's being developed by British company Windhorse Aerospace. The drone can be used to deliver humanitarian aid and can be made from edible foodstuffs such as honeycomb, compressed vegetables and salami.

15,000,000,000

(That's right, 15 billion!)

The amount of money, in dollars, that Intel has spent acquiring Mobileye – a company that specialises in self-driving car technology, including cameras, sensors and in-car networking tech.

>> Incoming

The hottest new Windows hardware on the horizon



Razer Blade Pro

From £3,799.99, www.razerzone.com

Razer has built its reputation on creating PC hardware "for gamers, by gamers," but its new Blade Pro is a different proposition. Sure, all the usual gaming chops are in place, but this 17.3-inch laptop is also the first to be certified by THX – the cinema sound and vision experts. The result is that the Blade Pro brooks no compromise when it comes to sound and pictures, offering both audiophile quality components and a 4K Ultra HD screen with 100% Adobe RGB colour accuracy – perfect for creating, editing and watching movies. The high-end spec includes an overclocked quad-core Intel Core i7-7820HK CPU, 32GB of super-fast 2667MHz RAM and Nvidia GeForce GTX 1080 graphics. It also offers up to 2TB of SSD storage and all the connectivity options you'd expect. Plus a Razer Chroma powered multi-coloured backlit programmable keyboard. Want.



REINSTALL WINDOWS 10



We reveal the tips and techniques that will make your next Windows reinstall go as smoothly as possible, with a little help from Nick Peers

Trditionally, we've suggested you reinstall Windows once every couple of years or so. It's tempting to leave things longer, but the fact is your PC accumulates clutter that even the most zealous cleaning regime can't keep on top of. And as time drags on, your install starts to feel its age, with major updates like the recently released Creator's Update unable to fix underlying problems or inject fresh speed into your system.

There's something wonderful about booting up a recently reinstalled PC – no more sluggish performance, erratic behaviour or clutter. But there's often a downside: you forget those carefully crafted program settings that need re-establishing from scratch – with no memory of how you did it. And what about your data? How can

you ensure that doesn't get affected by the reinstall process?

This is where we come in. This feature isn't simply about performing a desultory backup before wiping your drive and starting again – instead, we'll show you how to preserve every part of your old setup, so you can restore it (without the clutter) after you've reinstalled Windows. We'll reveal how to move data and other key files so they're no longer affected by future reinstalls, and – of course – we'll step you through the entire reinstall process itself.

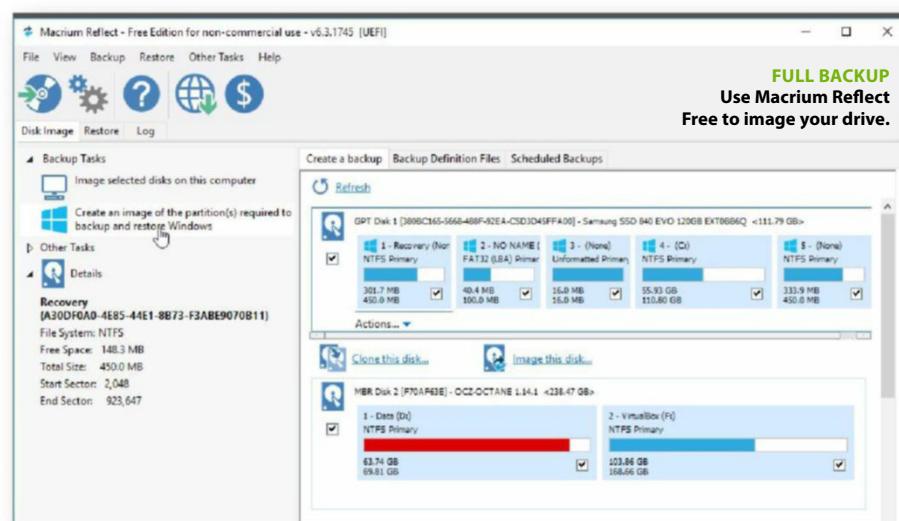
You'll end up with a computer that's as fresh as a daisy, plus you'll learn a streamlined method you can refer to the next time you come to reinstall Windows, transforming a process that traditionally takes a weekend into one you can perform in just a few hours. Let's get started...

Prepare to reinstall

Make sure your Windows 10 reinstall runs smoothly, by following these essential steps before you dive in...

An ounce of preparation is worth a pound of care, which is why you shouldn't start on the Windows 10 reinstall process without first taking suitable precautions. This involves taking three separate types of backup. The first is to back up your key data folders – typically everything stored inside your personal user folder found under C:\Users. If you're currently using either of Windows 10's built-in backup tools (File History or Windows Backup) then you're already one step ahead of the game; if not, go to Start > Settings > 'Update & security' > Backup to configure it now. Click 'Add a drive' and select your backup drive from the list provided, then click 'More options' to monitor its status and see which folders are being backed up (you can add and remove as required).

Once your file backup is sorted (and you'll need to wait for it to complete before reinstalling), it's time to take a full system image of your Windows drive. This might seem silly – aren't you about to wipe everything after all? – but it's sensible. You're basically taking a fail-safe backup that you can both restore in its entirety if something goes wrong with the reinstall process, and browse to recover individual files and settings. The best tool for the job is Macrium Reflect Free (www.macrium.com/reflectfree.aspx), and you can



follow a complete step-by-step guide to using it at www.techradar.com/1319885

The final backup allows you to record program settings using a free tool called CloneApp from www.mirinsoft.com (look under Download Resources > CloneApp – Portable). Right-click the cloneapp.zip file and choose Extract All. Extract it to your Downloads folder, then open the CloneApp folder, right-click CloneApp.exe and choose 'Run as administrator' to start. Use the step-by-step guide on the facing page to select and back up your chosen app settings.

If your settings aren't covered, check the program in question – some will

offer a backup or export option that saves your settings for restoring post-reinstall. Finally, if you're logged in with a Microsoft Account, and would like



PRODUCT KEYS Recover forgotten keys with the free Belarc Advisor.

Refresh, not reinstall

Many people see reinstalling Windows as the ultimate solution to a problem. While a fresh install should – in most cases – fix problems that aren't caused by underlying hardware issues, they're often overkill for less serious ones, particularly if your computer appears to be functioning perfectly other than for a few minor glitches.

Windows 8.1 provided a handy 'refresh' option, that allowed you to reinstall Windows on top of itself – it was the equivalent of a repair install from earlier versions of Windows. Programs, settings and other non-Windows files were left in place, so while

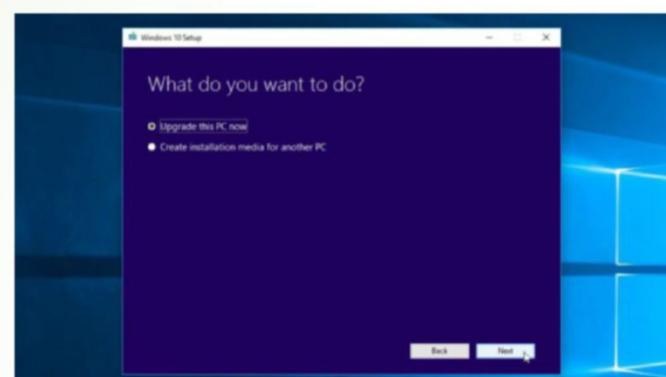
Windows replaced its own files with backups from your system, everything else was – technically – unaffected.

Windows 10 removed this option, but if you think a quick refresh is all your system needs, then download the latest version of the Media Creation Tool from www.microsoft.com/en-gb/software-download/windows10. Launch it, accept the licence agreement and then – when prompted – leave 'Upgrade this PC now' selected and click Next. Wait for the latest Windows installation files to be downloaded, along with any additional updates. Finally, check that 'Keep personal files

and apps' is selected before you click Install.

The installation process is identical to performing a full reinstall, but your apps and

data will be left untouched. Note it's a lengthy process, so be prepared to wait an hour or more depending on the speed and state of your PC.



to transfer your Windows desktop settings to your new installation, go to Start > Settings > Account > 'Sync your settings' and flick the 'Sync settings' switch to On, then choose what to sync.

Partition your drive

With everything safely backed up, it's time to partition your PC's storage drive. By default, Windows lumps your user folders on the same drive as Windows itself. If something happens to Windows, your data is at risk. If you have a second internal drive in your PC, move your data to this drive; otherwise, turn to our partition drives tutorial on page 32.

Either way, you should now have two drives: the C drive for Windows, and another for data. The next step (again see page 32) – is to move your user folders across to your new data drive.

One word of warning. These user folders may become temporarily inaccessible after you reinstall Windows. That's because they're 'owned' by your current user account, and when you

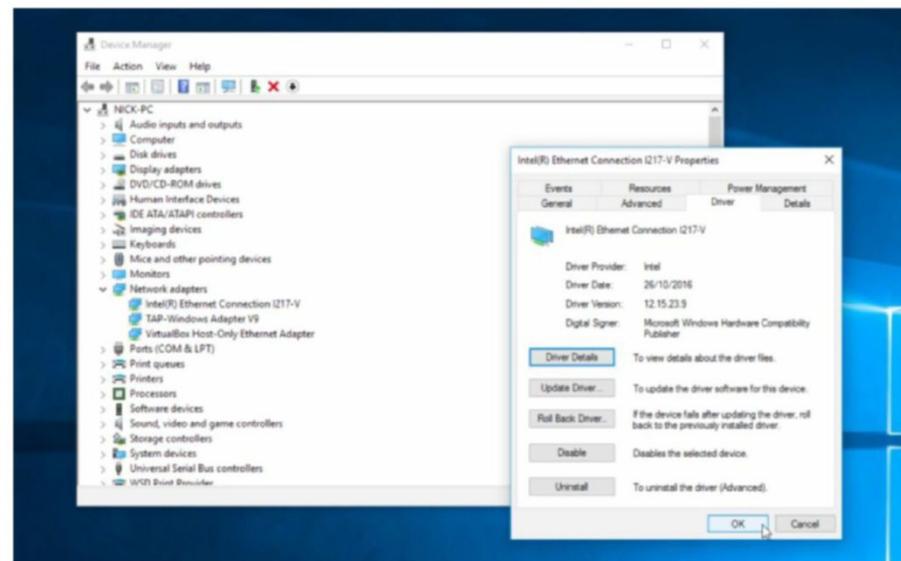
"One final consideration post-reinstall – will you be able to get back online?"

reinstall Windows you'll end up creating a new user account, even if it's identical to your old one. Don't worry, we'll deal with this later on page 20.

Gather more information

You've backed up your PC, separated your data from Windows – it's time to reinstall, right? Not quite. You may no longer need your Windows 10 product key if it's been activated with a digital licence (see Start > Settings > 'Update & security' > Activation, but what about your other programs?

First, dig out all the product keys you may need for certain programs – also, if



VERIFY DRIVERS Check your network drivers are provided by Windows.

you had to digitally activate programs (Office 365 is one such example), then it pays to deactivate them now, typically

by uninstalling the program. This should free up the activation slot for your new installation. If you're struggling to locate product keys for certain programs (or indeed Windows), then download and install Belarc Advisor (www.belarc.com), which creates a detailed profile of your installed software. If this doesn't work, try Recover Keys (\$29.95 after free demo, <https://recover-keys.com/>) having scoured your email or contacted the manufacturer to see if it can help.

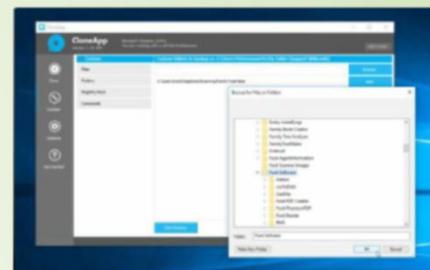
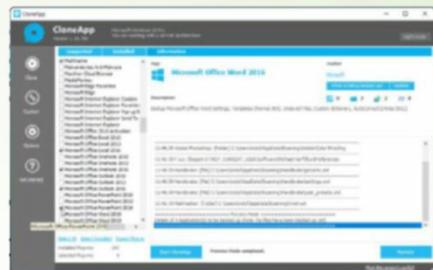
One final consideration post-reinstall – will you be able to get back online? That's a redundant question for most modern PCs since Windows 10 includes

a wide range of wired and wireless drivers baked into the operating system. But that won't be true of computers with older network devices, such as USB Wi-Fi adapters.

To find out where you stand, press [Win] + [X] and select Device Manager. Expand 'Network adapters' and double-click your network adapter. Switch to the Driver tab – if the driver has been signed 'Microsoft Windows Hardware Compatibility Publisher' then you're fine, but if not, we'd recommend that you visit the manufacturer's website and downloading the latest drivers, just to be on the safe side.

In some extreme cases, you won't be able to source Windows 10 drivers. Windows 8 (or even 7) drivers should work okay, but make sure the system type – 32-bit or 64-bit – matches your version of Windows, which you can find out by pressing [Win] + [Pause/Break] to open System Properties.

Back up program settings using CloneApp



1 Choose your apps

Download and install CloneApp (www.mirinsoft.com) and you'll see a list of supported apps. Go through the list ticking the boxes of any whose settings you wish to preserve. To see what's being backed up, select the item and click 'What is being backed up?'. Click Installed to see what's currently installed on your PC.

2 Customise settings

If your app isn't included in the CloneApp list, but you know where its settings are stored (typically under C:\User\<username>\AppData, or in the HKEY_CURRENT_USER\SOFTWARE Registry key), select Custom on the left, then use the tools to manually add the required folders, files and keys.

3 Tweak, then backup

Choose Options, then verify where you want to save your app settings backup (by default this is inside the same folder as CloneApp itself, so make sure CloneApp is on either your data partition or backup drive). Once done, switch back to CloneApp and click 'Start CloneApp' to back up your chosen program settings.

Reinstall Windows

The preparation's done. Here's everything you need to know about reinstalling Windows 10 on your PC

You're backed up, with everything you need to hand. It's now time to reinstall Windows. Just to recap: this process is a full, destructive install. Everything on your C drive will be lost, but that's not a problem because you have it all backed up, and you've moved your data to another drive or partition.

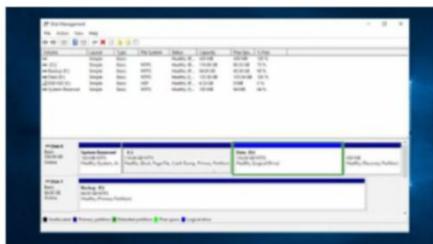
There are several different ways to trigger a reinstall. Traditionally, if you bought your PC with Windows pre-installed, we'd have advised that you restart your PC and press the key required to access your manufacturer's boot or recovery options, which would have included an option to restore your PC to its factory settings.

These days, you can trigger the same process from within Windows itself – click Start > Settings and navigate to 'Update & security' > Recovery, then click Reset. If your manufacturer has followed procedure, you'll see an option to 'Restore factory settings'.

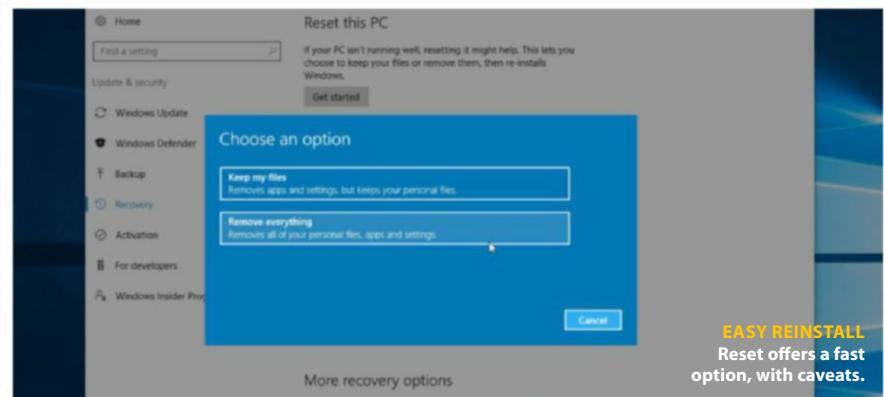
This option should be avoided for two principal reasons. First, it will install whichever version of Windows was originally shipped with your PC – if you've subsequently upgraded to Windows 10, that might mean going back to Windows 8.1, for example. Even if your PC came with Windows 10 pre-installed, it will still be an earlier version, which means a lot of updating will be required post-installation. And second, it also restores any software that came pre-installed, including bloatware and trialware.

The nuclear option

There are two other options that appear with Reset. The first is 'Keep my files', which removes everything except the files stored in your user folder. You'll be shown a list of programs that will be removed – basically anything not installed through the Microsoft Store (these will be reinstalled automatically)



IDENTIFY DRIVE Use Windows' Disk Management tool to identify your Windows partition.



after Windows), then you click Next and Windows reinstalls itself.

This option is a halfway house between a simple 'refresh' and a full reinstall, which makes it unsatisfactory: you don't get to keep your programs; and you don't get a fresh install either.

The second option is to 'Remove everything' – this is a full-blown reinstall of Windows, and the next option you see is critical: a choice between only wiping the drive Windows is installed on, and a nuclear option to wipe 'All drives', including your data partition and any backup drives you have. You should avoid this at all costs.

The Reset option has its uses: 'Remove everything' enables you to reinstall Windows from scratch without having to create your own installation media, but it doesn't always work – you may get an error message about a missing recovery partition, for example. And if your PC came with Windows 10 pre-installed, it'll restore any bloatware too.

Create reinstall media

If you bought Windows 10 as a boxed product, you'll understandably be tempted to reinstall from that. The issue here is similar to that with the factory reset option – you'll be installing an older version of Windows 10 that will require a post-install update. If you have the boxed product, there's only one thing you need from it: the product key.

Our favoured option is to reinstall Windows with the latest possible version, saving you the hassle of updating it afterwards and ensuring your new installation is as clean as possible. To do that, you'll need to create your own reinstall disc or USB flash drive using the Media Creation Tool from www.microsoft.com/en-gb/software-download/windows10 –

download and launch the tool, then click Accept. When prompted, select 'Create installation media for another PC' and click Next. Leave 'Use the recommended options for this PC' ticked, then click Next again.

Now choose whether to create a USB flash drive (use a spare one that has at least 4GB free) or select 'ISO file' to create an ISO disk image you'll subsequently burn to a blank DVD by right-clicking the ISO file and choosing 'Burn disk image'.

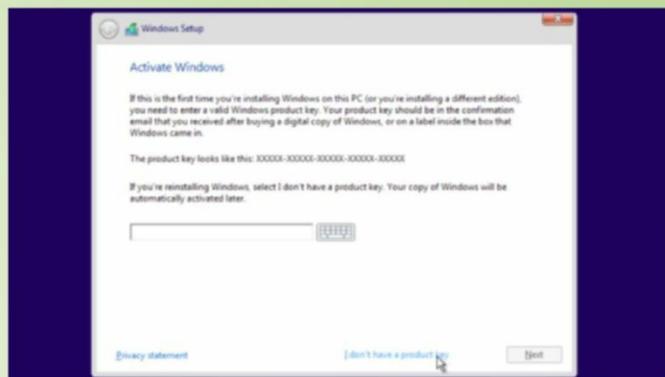
"There are several different ways to trigger a reinstall"

Once the process is complete, you're ready to boot from the drive and reinstall Windows 10. The step-by-step guide opposite reveals the process you'll follow – one key thing to consider is which drive Windows will be installed on to (see Step 4). In most cases, this will be automatically selected and be Disk 0, Partition 1, but not always.

If you're unsure which drive to choose, cancel the installation now and return to your existing Windows install. Press [Win] + [X], then click Disk Management. Use the graphical view at the bottom to identify the disk and partition Windows is on (the disk will be numbered; you can then work out the partition number by counting from left to right).

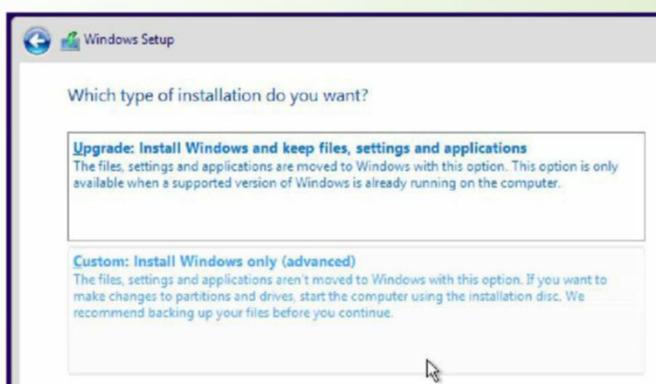
The step-by-step guide on the facing page will take you to the end of the installation process, at which point you'll be ready to follow the setup wizard through to configure Windows 10 to your personal needs – turn to page 20 to find out what you need to do then, and what happens next.

Reinstall Windows from installation media



1 Boot from installation media

Insert the DVD or USB flash drive you created containing the Windows 10 installer, then restart your PC. Now look for a message inviting you to press a key to access the boot menu – press this and select the drive containing Windows (if two entries – say USB and UEFI – exist, try the UEFI option first).

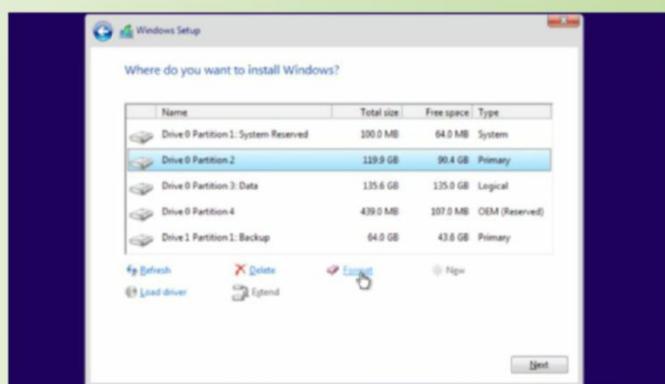


3 Set basic options

If prompted to choose a Windows 10 edition (Home, Pro and so on), choose the one you're currently running – typically Windows 10 Home. Click Next, tick to agree to the licence agreement and click Next again. Now select 'Custom: Install Windows only (advanced)' by clicking it.

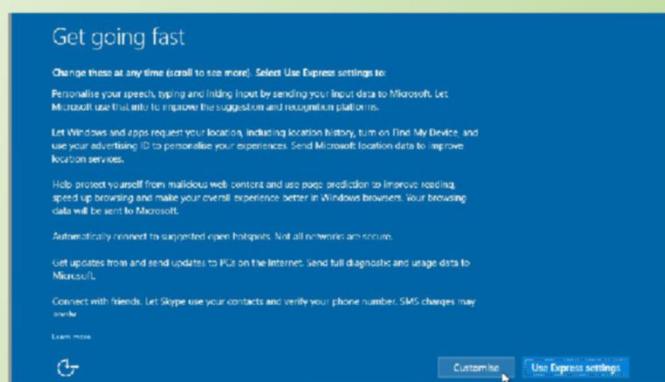
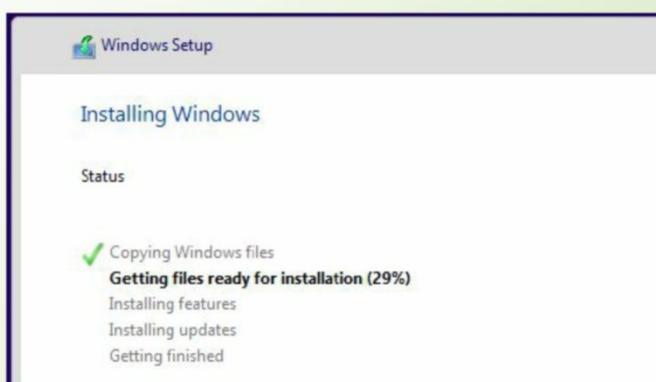
2 First steps

When the Windows Setup wizard starts, verify that the language, time and currency, and keyboard are set to United Kingdom (or your chosen language). Choose Next followed by Install Now. Click 'I don't have a product key' when prompted to enter one if your licence is digital.



4 Format drive

A list of available drives will appear – your current Windows partition should be selected by default, but check the size, type (Primary) and free space match what you expect it to be. Click Format to wipe the drive, then click OK to confirm the warning. With the drive selected, click Next.



5 Sit back

There are two distinct phases to the Windows 10 installation process. First, files are copied and prepared for installation. Then Windows will start installing features and updates. It will then inform you it needs to restart – this will happen automatically, or you can click Restart Now.

6 Installation complete

If prompted to boot from CD or DVD, don't press anything. You'll see the Windows 10 logo appear for the first time, then a series of messages about preparing devices and getting ready will pop up. Windows may restart several times. When done, the above screen will appear. Turn the page!

Post-install setup

Windows has been reinstalled, now you need to set up again

Once the main install process finishes, you'll find yourself at a 'Get Going Fast' screen. Microsoft would like you to click 'Use Express Settings', but unless you're happy to take liberties with your privacy, we suggest you choose Customise instead.

The first screen is littered with switches that determine what kind of personal data you send to Microsoft. Switch them all off and click Next for maximum privacy. On the next screen, switch off the first two settings – related to open hotspots. Click Next.

Under 'Browser, protection and update' leave only the first switch on – switch off both 'page prediction' and 'get updates' (the latter will stop your internet connection being used to distribute Windows Updates). Click Next.

If you connect to the internet via Wi-Fi, you'll be asked to select your network and connect to it, then enter your network password when asked for



FAST LOGIN Windows Hello lets you to login to your PC faster – you enter a PIN, not a password.

Customise settings

TIGHTEN PRIVACY Don't be tempted into selecting Express Settings.

Send typing and inking data to Microsoft to improve the recognition and suggestion platform.

Off

Let apps use your advertising ID for experiences across apps.

Off

Let Skype (if installed) help you connect with friends in your address book and verify your mobile number. SMS and data charges may apply.

Off

Location

Turn on Find My Device and let Windows and apps request your location, including location history, and send Microsoft location data to improve location services.

Off

Learn more

Back

Next 

it. If you connect via Ethernet instead, you'll skip this step and your connection will be established automatically.

Set up user account

You'll now be prompted to enter your Microsoft Account credentials – if you previously signed into Windows using a Microsoft account, enter those details here and click 'Sign in'. If you plan to stick with a local user account (the sort used in Windows 7 and earlier), click 'Skip this step' to set up a traditional account (username, password and password hint).

If you choose the Microsoft Account option, you'll be offered Windows Hello

as an alternative form of logging on to your PC. You'll need a compatible device (one with a fingerprint reader, such as the latest generation of Microsoft Surface tablets) for the biometrics portion of this to work, but you can also use this step to log in with a numerical PIN (at least four digits long) instead of your password. This is something we recommend – if you forget your PIN, you can always use your password instead.

The next step prompts you to use Cortana, Microsoft's virtual personal assistant. If you're happy with the privacy ramifications of using it, click Use Cortana; otherwise click 'Not now'. The Search box on the Taskbar will

Recover backups

If there's data you need to recover from a backup, now is the time to do so. Start with File History – go to Settings > 'Update & security' > Backup and click 'More options' followed by 'See advanced settings' to switch to the File History control panel. Click Select Drive to see available drives, then select your existing backup drive and you'll either see a box marked 'I want to use a previous back-up on this File History drive' (tick it if so) or a list of previous backups from the system (select the most recent one to continue using it). Once selected, you'll be able to recover data from

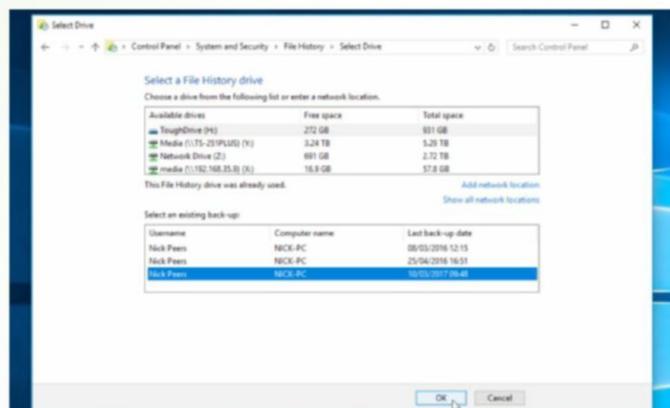
the backup in the usual way: type 'file history' into the Search box and click 'Restore your files with File History' to get started.

If you're looking for a file from your previous Windows installation – perhaps because it's not in File History or you forgot something from an obscure user folder – then the Macrium Reflect disk image you took prior to reinstalling will ride to your rescue.

Make sure Macrium is reinstalled, then browse for the image. Double-click it to open a Backup Selection window. Tick the drive you want access to, then tick 'Enable access to

restricted folders', assign it a drive letter and click OK. You can now browse this image via File Explorer like any other

drive – now simply copy any files that you need from the drive to their new location to restore them.



remain regardless, along with all the key functionality you need for finding apps, documents, settings and web pages.

Windows will now configure itself based on your choices and you'll see a series of messages appear on-screen. When all is ready, you'll find yourself back at the Windows 10 desktop!

Re-configure Windows

If you've signed in with a Microsoft Account and opted to sync your settings, most of your desktop

"There should be no need to check for Windows Updates – these were added as part of the reinstall process"

preferences should be set up for you, but if not you'll want to click Start > Settings and work your way through the Personalisation section.

Activation should be handled automatically – verify this by switching to 'Update & security' > Activation. There should be no need to check for Windows Updates – these were added as part of the reinstall process. Other sections under Settings to work your way through include System (for display, power and multi-tasking options involving snapping windows and virtual desktops), Network (for configuring some sharing options) and Privacy.

Once done, press [Win] + [X] and choose Device Manager to see which hardware devices still need setting up – look for those listed with a yellow exclamation mark. You'll hopefully recognise the hardware they refer to, in which case visit the manufacturer's website to download the latest drivers. If you're struggling to identify components, a tool such as IObit Driver Booster Free (www.iobit.com) may help.

Reconnect data folders

Windows will have reset your user folders to the C:\Users\<username> folder, so the next step is to link your new user account to the folders now residing on your data drive.

Before doing so, open drive D and double-click your username folder – you may get a warning telling you that you don't have permission to access the folder, just click Continue to get access.

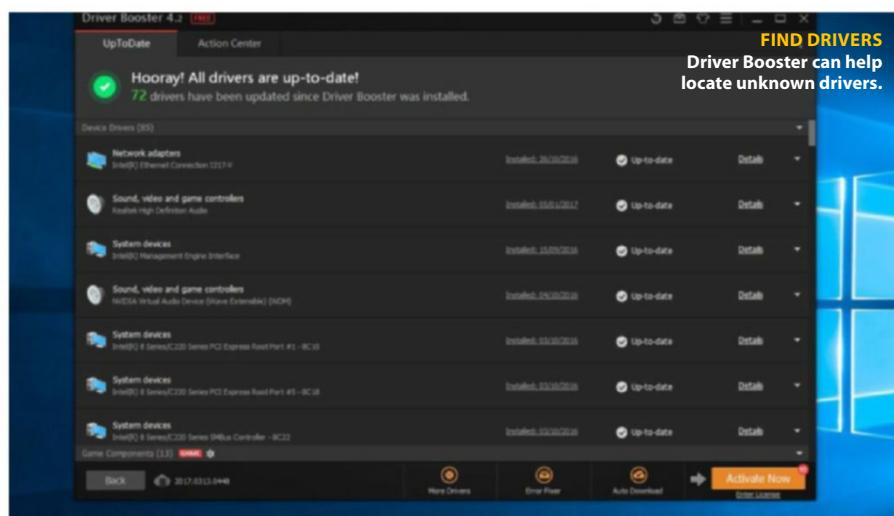
It's a good idea to take ownership of this folder from your previous user

account. To do this, right-click the folder and choose Properties > Security tab. Click the Advanced button to open the Advanced Security Settings screen. You should see a name beginning S-1-5 is currently listed as owner – click the Change link. Click Advanced followed by

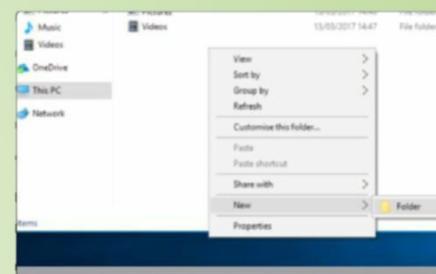
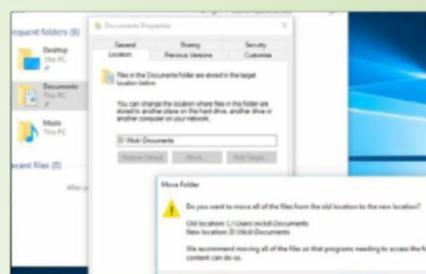
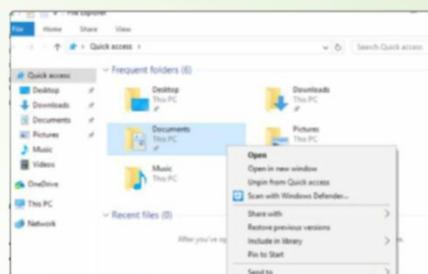
Find Now. Scroll through the list that appears until you spot your username – select it, then click OK twice. Tick 'Replace owner on subcontainers and objects' and click Apply. Wait for the changes to be applied, then click OK twice to exit.

If this all seems like a bit of a faff, and you are the only user of your computer, then there is a simpler solution. You could surrender ownership to the Administrators group instead; select 'Administrators' (not Administrator) instead of your username and repeat the process. You won't have to keep reclaiming ownership each time you reinstall Windows from now on.

Once you've fixed permissions, you can now link the folders on your data drive with your user account – the step-by-step guide at the foot of this page explains how to do this. Once that's done, you're ready to turn over to page 22 to complete the setup process – and discover some surprisingly simple ways to speed up the Windows reinstallation process in future.



Link user account to your data drive



1 Select folder

Head to the Taskbar and open File Explorer, then click 'This PC' to reveal six of your user folders (or browse to C:\Users\<Username> to reveal more folders, including both Searches and Favourites). Start by right-clicking the Documents folder and choosing Properties.

2 Move folders

Switch to the Location tab and click the Move... button. Head to the named folder you created in Step 1, select the Documents folder and click Select Folder followed by Apply. You'll be prompted to move data from the current folder to the new one – click Yes, then OK.

3 Rinse, repeat

Now simply repeat the same process for all the other user folders you wish to transfer across – if necessary, create additional folders on your data drive inside your username folder to accommodate the different settings and folders you wish to transfer across to it.

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Finish post-install setup

Complete the job, then discover how to avoid reinstalling in future

You're now ready to start reinstalling your key apps. Now is a good time to pare back what you had installed before – it's best to focus on reinstalling essentials like your security software, office suite and image editor for now. Leave non-essential apps until you need them for the first time. Be sure to launch and activate or register any apps before moving on to the next.

If you've installed any apps from the Windows Store, click the Store icon on the Taskbar. Click your user photo next to the Search bar to reveal a drop-down list. Select My Library to view your previous app and game purchases and installs – click 'Show all' to view a complete list, then click the Download button next to those apps you wish to reinstall. They'll be restored along with any user settings.

If you're a Microsoft OneDrive user, you may be prompted to download and install an update. Once done, look for a prompt to set up the OneDrive folder – click it. Start by clicking Change to move the OneDrive folder off your system drive and into your username folder on your data drive. Then choose which folders to sync. The same applies if you use a different cloud backup provider such as Dropbox or Google Drive – point them to your data drive.

Restore program settings

After you've reinstalled your core apps, it's time to restore your key app settings.

The screenshot shows the CloneApp application window. On the left, there's a sidebar with icons for Clone, Custom, Options, and Get started. The main area has tabs for Supported, Installed, and Information. The Supported tab is active, displaying a list of various applications like 7-Zip, AbiWord, and Adobe Photoshop. A context menu is open over the entry for Adobe Photoshop, with options like Preview, Backup, Restore (which is highlighted), Select all, Unselect all, List selected, Send, Copy, Share, and Advanced. To the right of the menu, there's a preview window for Adobe Photoshop showing its logo and a 'Compatible with CSS' message. Below the preview is a detailed description of the app. At the bottom, there are buttons for Select All, Select Installed, Import Plug-in, Start CloneApp, and a large blue Restore button. The status bar at the bottom right says 'Find this project useful?'. The top status bar indicates 'Microsoft Windows 10 Pro' and 'You are working with a x64-bit Architecture'. The top right corner shows 'night mode' and a user icon.

If you stored these using CloneApp, locate its program folder on your data drive, then launch the program with administrator privileges and click the Restore button to recover all program settings you backed up previously.

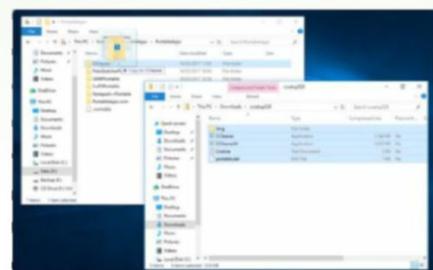
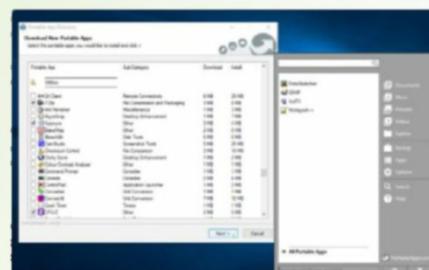
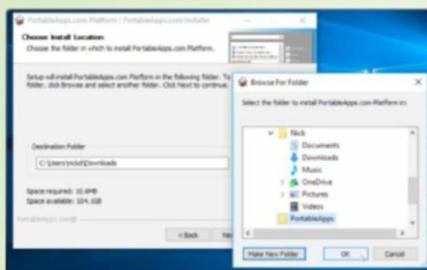
If you'd prefer to restore individual program settings, locate previously backed up programs (they'll be marked with a tick), click to select the app, then right-click and choose Restore. Program settings you backed up independently can now be restored too – consult the program's documentation or look in the same place you exported them for an import or restore option.

Go portable

Before reinstalling your core apps, now might be a good time to see if any come in portable form. Portable apps are self-contained within a single folder – store them on your data drive and not only do they not clutter up your system drive (or the Registry), they'll also survive future reinstalls, leaving both app and settings untouched.

The best tool for managing these apps is the PortableApps Platform. This provides you with a tool for installing, managing and accessing your portable apps from a simple Start menu-like launcher. The step-by-step guide below

Set up a portable apps toolkit



1 First steps

Create a PortableApps folder inside your user folder on your data drive. Go to www.portableapps.com/download to obtain and run the PortableApps Platform setup file. Follow the wizard through, choosing 'Select a custom installation' and pointing the installer to a PortableApps folder on your data drive.

2 Install some apps

Open the Platform app and wait for the Portable App Directory to open (or select Apps > Get More Apps). Go through the list of available portable apps, ticking those you'd like to add, then click Next and wait for them to install. You can run any portable apps you've installed from the Platform app's Start menu.

3 Add other apps

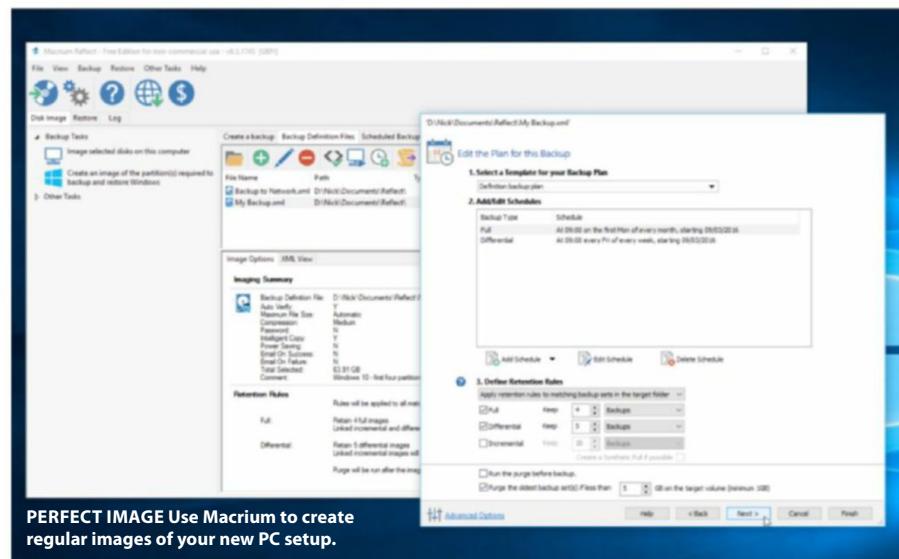
Other apps can be added too: download and extract the portable application and its files to a folder inside the PortableApps folder (containing your other apps). Once done, select Apps > Refresh App Icons – it'll appear under Other in Category view. Right-click it and choose Category to recategorise it.

reveals the core principles you need to follow – both for installing apps provided by the Platform itself, and for third-party programs you download from elsewhere.

Never reinstall again

The reinstall process can be a fiddly one, taking hours to carefully set up your perfect Windows setup, complete with favourite apps, settings and folders all properly configured. Do you really want to go through that whole process again – particularly in a couple of days when you suddenly mess something up?

The answer – of course! – is no, and here's the good news. Why not create your own custom recovery image, one with all your customisations in place, using Macrium? We recommend making it one of the first programs you install, because then you can take system images at different stages of the setup process: immediately after installing the program, then after you've restored key Windows settings and linked back up your data folders, and finally when you



a recent botched update or program). When setting up the backup, click Add Schedule, then configure one full image backup for every month, and one differential backup every week.

"When setting up the backup, click Add Schedule, then configure one full image backup for every month"

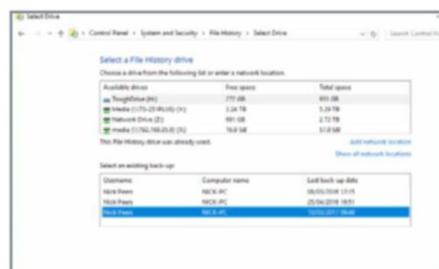
have all of your favourite programs and apps reinstalled and everything running just the way you like it. Think of this final snapshot as your 'perfect PC' – giving you an easy way to roll back to this pristine, customised setup whenever you want to.

After you've created this backup, we recommend you make use of Macrium's scheduling capabilities to take regular backups of your hard drive going forward, so you can perform less drastic rollbacks when required (say to remove

Differential backups contain only the changes made since the last backup was taken, so are much smaller than full image backups, enabling you to store a wider range of snapshots of your Windows installation, and giving you more options when you come to roll back to correct recent problems. Note you can also limit the number of scheduled backups you keep to preserve precious backup space.

More critically, when you come to next reinstall Windows, save yourself a

bit of time and restore the 'perfect PC' snapshot you took at the end of this reinstall process. All that needs to be done then is allow to Windows and your apps to update themselves, plus add any key apps you've come to rely on since taking the original snapshot to bring it bang up to date. Finally, take a full image of this new 'perfect PC' snapshot, delete the old one and then roll back to it the next time that you come to reinstall Windows. ■



FILE HISTORY You can easily link File History to your previous Windows 10 backup.

Look after your new install

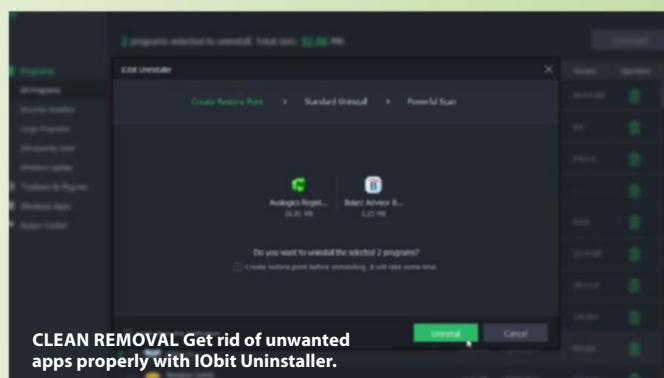
Windows is now reinstalled, and everything is just as you like it. But how can you keep it that way? Firstly, get into the habit of looking for portable versions of any applications that you are thinking of adding to your system. Secondly, when you've finished with a program, look to clear it out more thoroughly with the help of a third-party program such as IObit Uninstaller (www.iobit.com/en/advanceduninstaller.php), making use of its powerful scanning tools to remove leftover files and Registry entries. For more cleaning tips, check out our lead feature from issue 132.

It's also important you keep your PC safe from harm – make sure you install some form of anti-malware tool (Windows Defender offers only basic protection), and again comb past issues looking for tips to help lock down your computer and home network – start your search at page 14 of issue 133.

You should also keep your hardware in tip-top shape – keep an eye out for updated drivers, and run regular tests on your memory and hard drive to ensure they're running smoothly. Use a tool like Piriform's Speccy (yes, a portable version is available from www.piriform.com) to

perform a hardware audit too, plus monitor your PC's core temperatures – desktops should run under 50-degrees Celsius and laptops under 60.

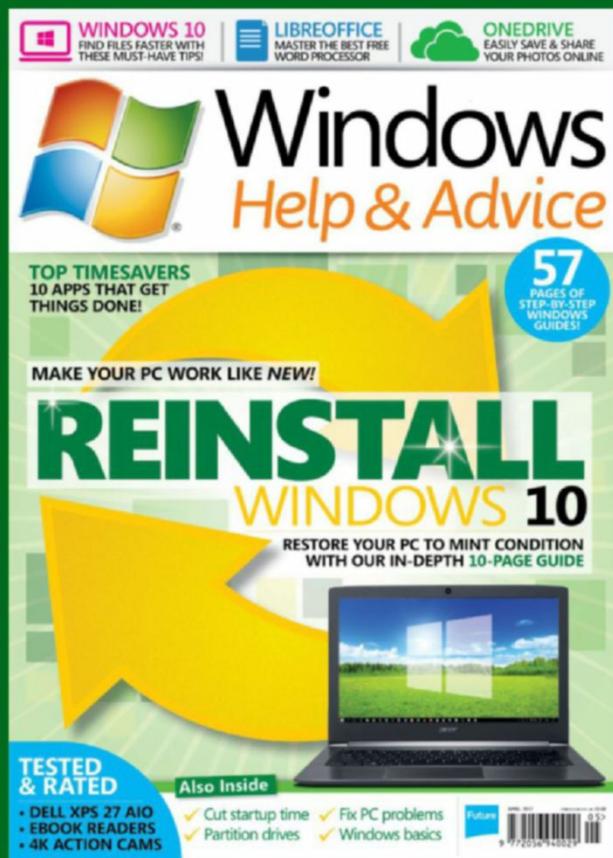
Armed with these tips, you'll ensure your fresh Windows install gives you excellent service – until the next time you want to reinstall all over again...





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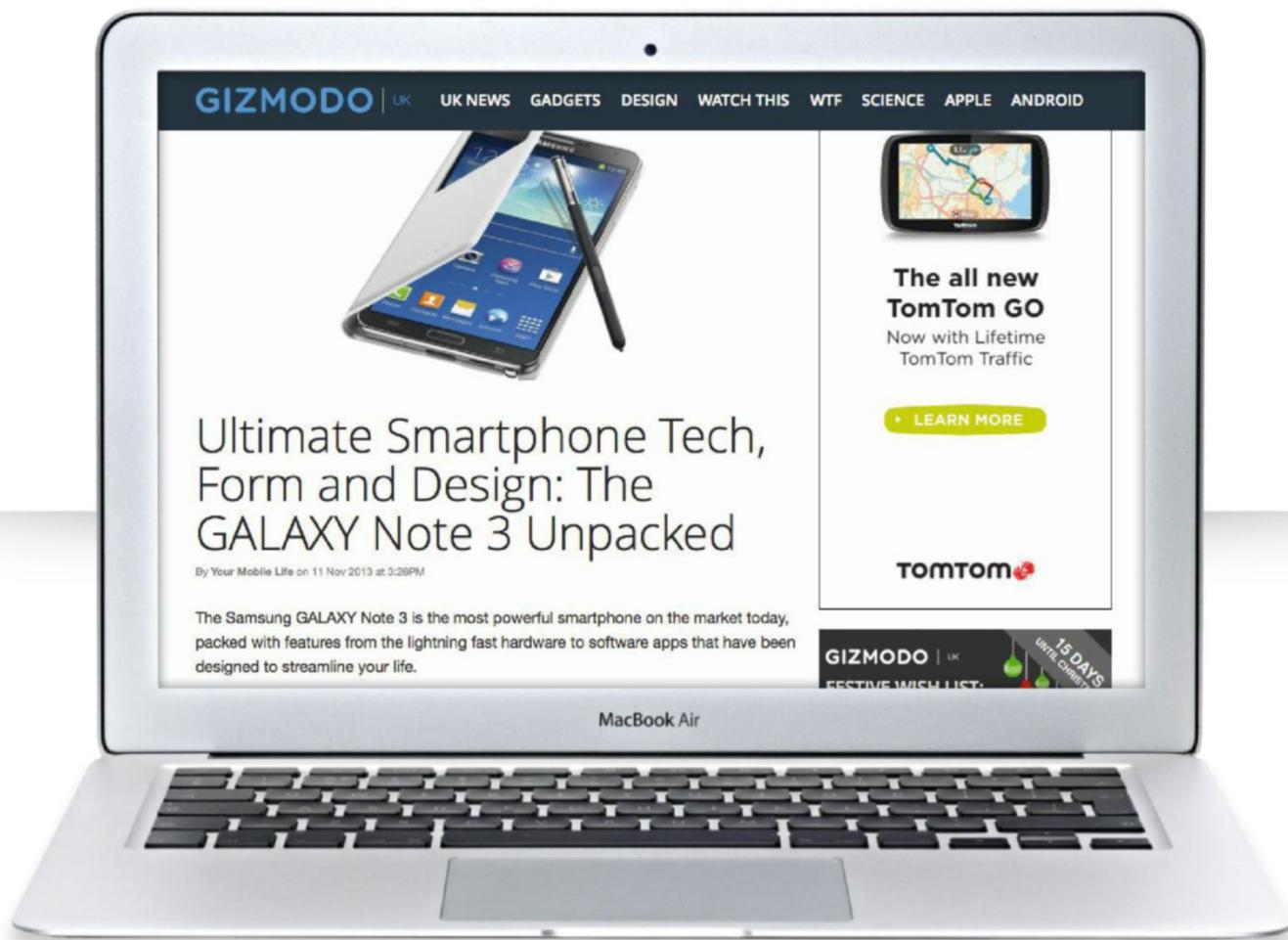
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Welcome



In this month's Explore section we're going to show you how you to get more done on your PC – whether you're at work, rest or play.

On page 28 we'll explain how to create a stylish newsletter using desktop publishing app, Scribus; while on page 38 we'll show you how to get started with LibreOffice – the amazing free productivity suite. We also explain how you can make the most of your photos using the built-in app in Windows 10 (page 44); and how to make any PC run slicker and quicker by trimming non-essential features – see page 54.

Rob Mead-Green

Editor

rob.mead-green@futurenet.com

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Your guide
Nick Odantzis says...

"LibreOffice is a free and fully-featured alternative to Microsoft Office"

*Turn to page 38
to find out more*

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Customise Windows to work your way

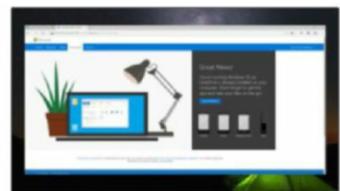
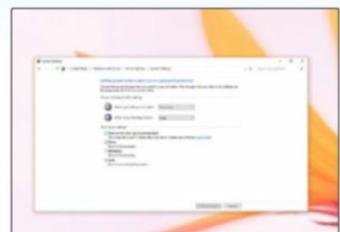
We all know how to do the basics but getting the most from Windows isn't always easy. Our dedication to the operating system means you get the very best tips and tricks for all versions of Windows.

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...

Easily create a newsletter



Your guide [Gary Marshall](#) says...

"Scribus gives you the power of a professional desktop publishing app – completely free. It's great!"

At a glance

Skill level...

► Anyone can do it

Straightforward

Tricky in parts

Suitable for...

 Windows 10

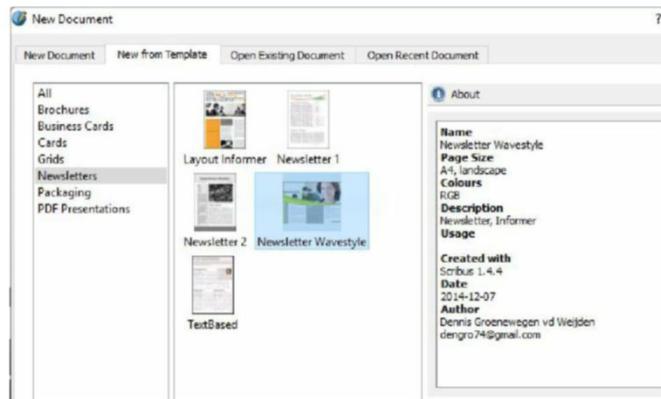
 Windows 8.1

 Windows 7

Desktop publishing – using a computer to make printed publications – is as magic today as it was when it was invented, because it means anybody can make really good-looking documents. From newsletters to brochures, magazines to books, if it can be read you can make it in a desktop publishing app.

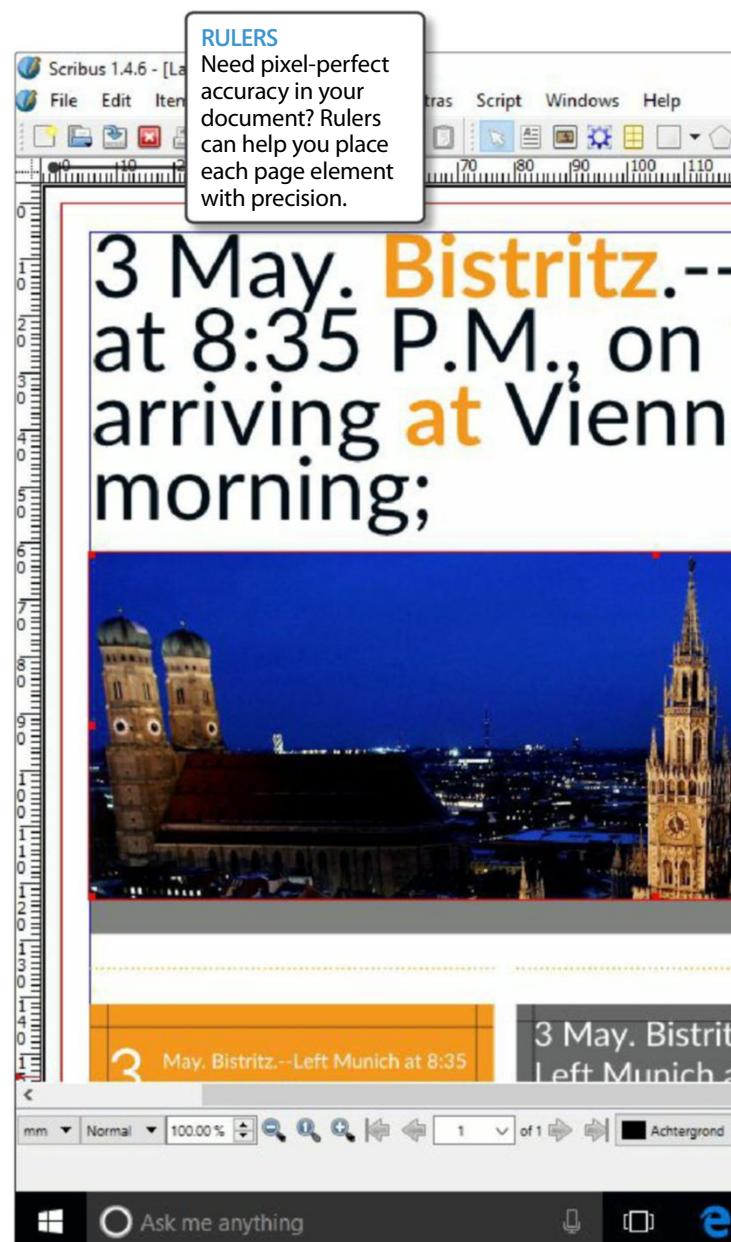
Publishing programs often involve a bit of compromise: if it's powerful it's usually pricey and a little bit painful to learn. Not Scribus. It's designed to offer all the power of a professional publishing program while remaining easy to use and completely free. That means the odd bit of polish is missing – the interface seems to have been beamed in from about 1993, and you'll notice the odd bit of quality control such as missing images from some templates – but we're more than willing to forgive its flaws given the publishing powers it offers without you spending a bean.

Step-by-step Create a newsletter in minutes



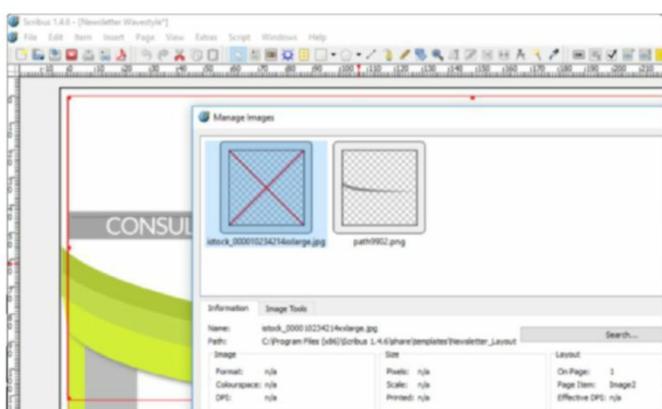
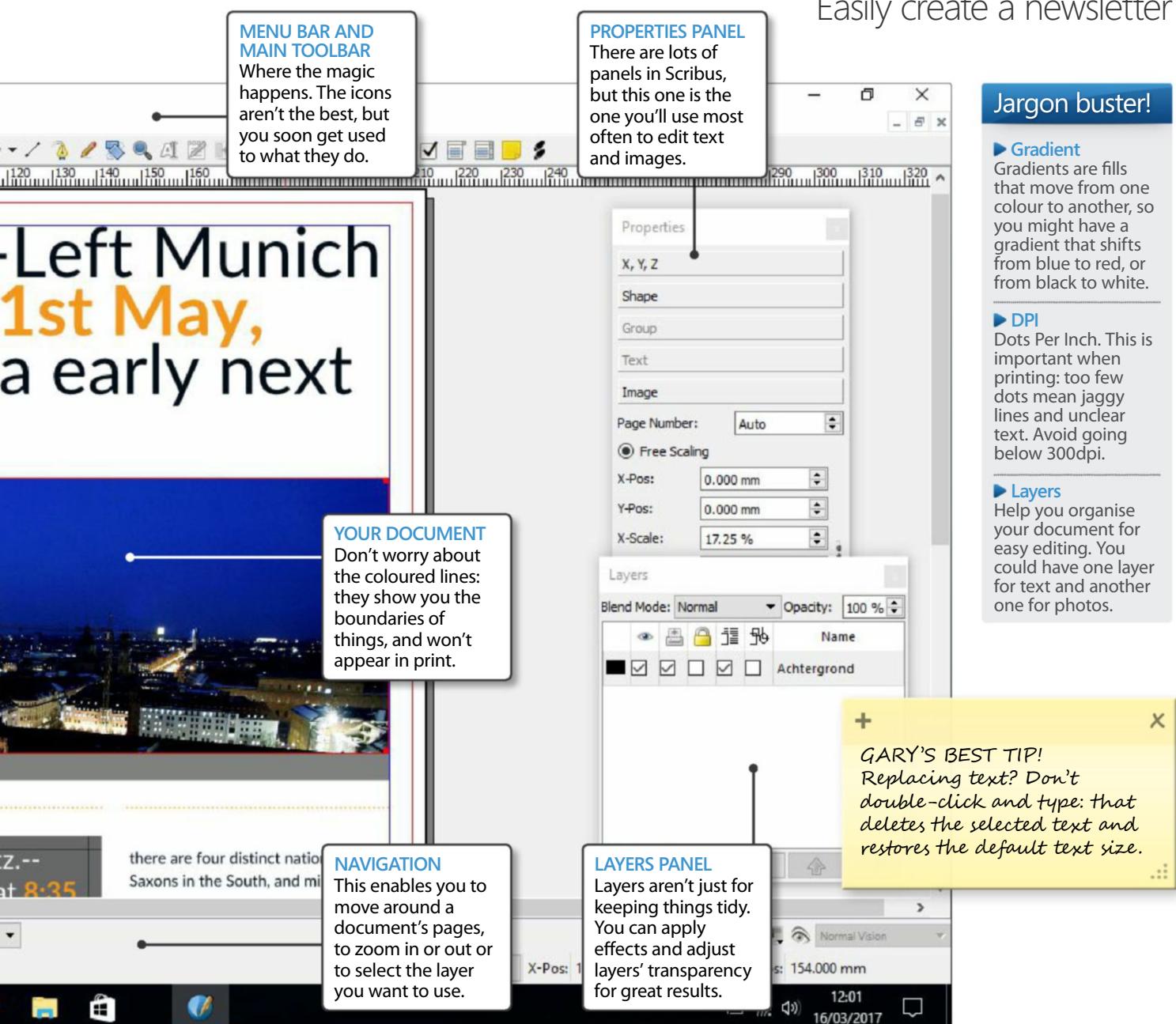
1 Pick a design

When Scribus launches you'll see the New Document window. Click on New From Template and you'll see a range of templates grouped into categories: brochures, newsletters and so on. Click the one you want and then on the Preview button at the right of the window to get a better view. For this tutorial we'll go with Newsletter Wavestyle. Choose a design then click OK.



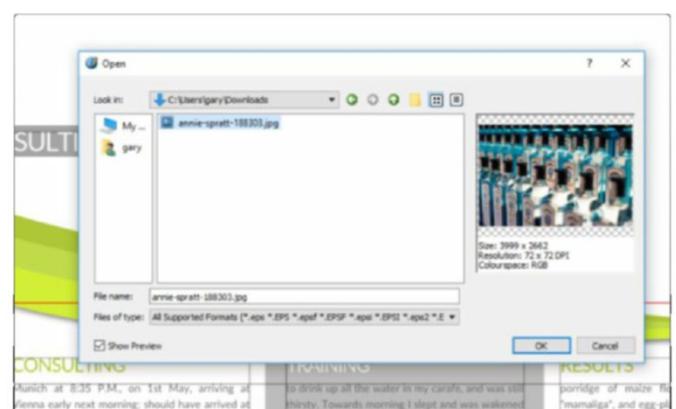
2 See what you've got

Scribus will now open the main editing window with a new document based on the template you chose. We found many of the images used by the templates were missing from our install, but that's okay: we'll be using our own images anyway. Pay attention to the toolbar at the bottom where it says IMAGE AND LOGO – that shows you the selected layer of your publication.



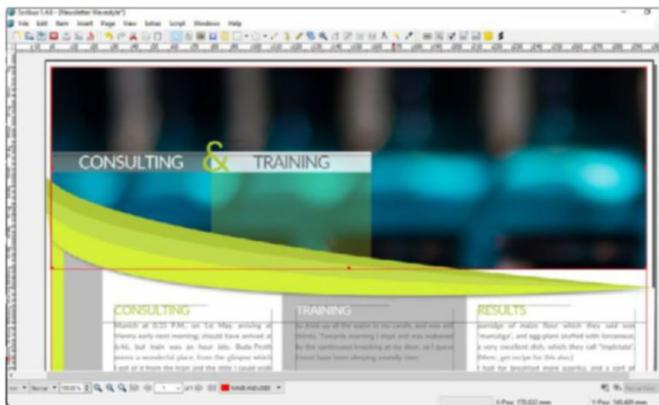
3 Search for what's missing

If you know the image is on your PC, perhaps because you've used it before but moved it since, then Extras > Manage Images from the top toolbar will bring up the Manage Images dialog. If you click on the Search button Scribus will try to find the missing image. This dialog also provides information about the image and the option to render it visible or invisible for speed.



4 Add your own image

To add a new image to your publication, go to Insert > Insert Image Frame, then draw the frame where you want it to appear. Scribus helpfully snaps your frame to line up with other bits of your page. Double-click the frame and navigate to the image you want to use. The Open dialog can take ages to appear, so don't worry if it's slow. Click OK to add your image to the page.



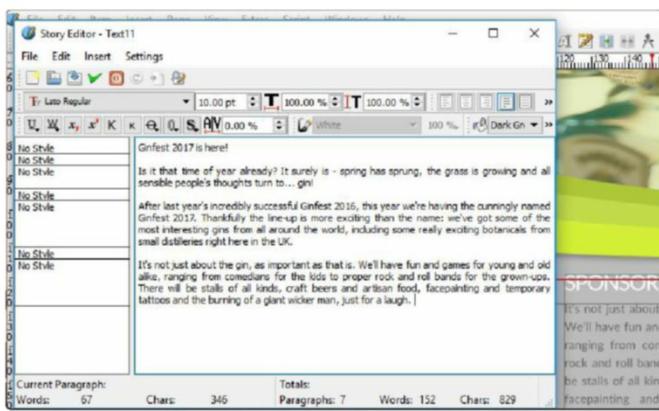
5 Make the picture fit the frame

You'll probably notice something annoying: the image is either too big for the frame, as shown here, or too small. Not to worry: it's easy to adjust the size and shape of an image so that it fits with your design. The trick here is to turn to the Windows option at the top, which lists the various windows, palettes and other goodies you can have open in your publication.



7 Change your headlines

It's time to work on our text. Click the LINEART AND TEXT layer at the bottom toolbar and then double-click on the first headline box. Our flyer here's about a gin festival so we'll replace the big word here with 'gin'. You'll see that the Properties panel enables you to change text size, font and size, and there are advanced formatting options – colour, effects, offsets – here too.



9 Rock your body

Scribus has a built-in text editor for body text, which is much faster and easier than trying to type directly onto the page. Bring it up – Edit > Edit Text – and you'll see it's like a miniature Microsoft Word, enabling you to not just enter text, but add styles and special formatting. There are word, paragraph and character counts too. Click the big green tick when you're finished editing.



6 Adjust the picture properties

The panel we want is the Properties panel, so click on that to make it appear; you can then drag it to wherever suits. Click on its Image button and you'll now see multiple options: X and Y positions for moving it horizontally or vertically, X-Scale and Y-Scale to make the image bigger or smaller, and Scale To Frame Size to stretch the image dimensions to the full frame size.



8 Change the section headers

You can now change the section titles in exactly the same way: the Newsletter Wavestyle template we're using has each header in its own text frame, so you will need to edit them individually. You can change the text colours from the Properties panel by clicking on the Colour & Effects section, which offers not just colours but **gradients** too.



10 Have a sneak peek

You can preview your document at any time by going to View > Preview Mode, but we prefer the bird's eye view of a print preview (File > Print Preview). This enables you to see how your newsletter will look on your own printer. There's a useful greyscale option too: some layouts that look brilliant on a colour screen aren't so great when they're printed out in fifty shades of grey. ■



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Learn how to...

Partition your hard drive



Your guide *Nick Peers* says...

"Protect yourself from data loss by separating your personal files from Windows and your apps"

At a glance

Skill level...

- ▶ Anyone can do it
- ▶ Straightforward
- Tricky in parts

Suitable for...

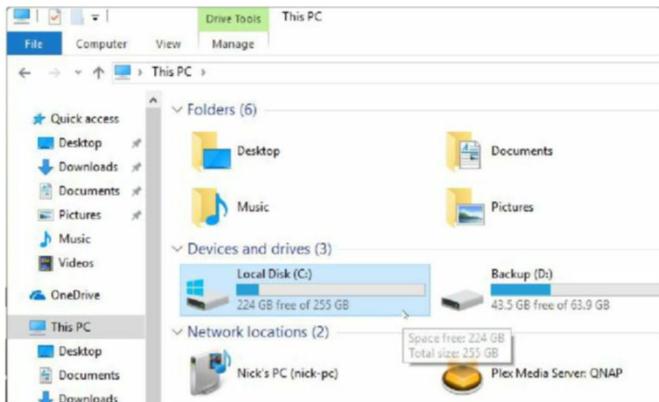
- Windows 10
- Windows 8.1
- Windows 7

Why partition your hard drive? By default, Windows stores itself, your apps, settings and – crucially – all your data on a single drive. If something happens to that drive – your Windows installation corrupts, for example – then everything on it is lost. You can, of course, store your data on a separate drive, but this isn't always practical, which is where partitioning comes in.

Tools such as AOMEI Partition Assistant enable you to split a single hard disk into two or more separate drives, known as partitions. This way you can split off your data from Windows, protecting it should you be forced to reinstall Windows from scratch, so even if your programs are lost, your documents, photos and other files are left untouched.

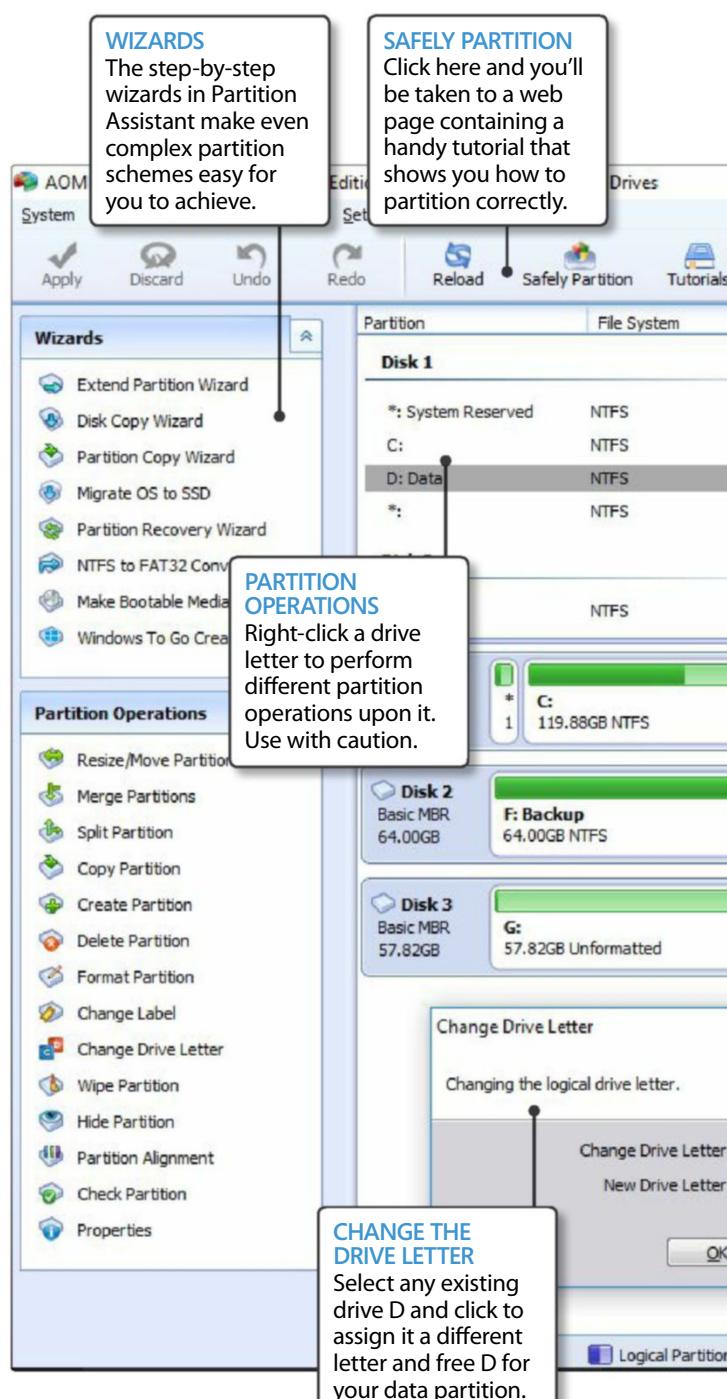
In this tutorial we'll show you how to partition your PC's hard drive, and then to move your precious data to the new partition.

Step-by-step Split your drive into two partitions



1 Check drive space

Open File Explorer and select This PC from the navigation pane. Check the total size of your drive – if splitting it in two, you need to ensure your C drive (system partition) is at least 64GB in size, and possibly 128GB. The rest will be available to your data partition. Check the amount of free space – if it's more than you plan to allocate to your data partition, skip to Step 3.

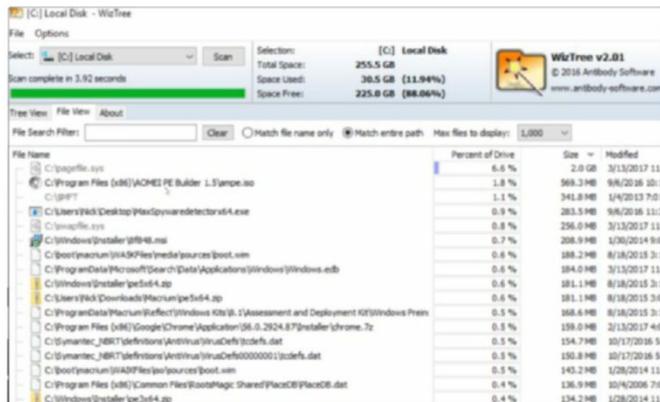


WIZARDS
 The step-by-step wizards in Partition Assistant make even complex partition schemes easy for you to achieve.

SAFELY PARTITION
 Click here and you'll be taken to a web page containing a handy tutorial that shows you how to partition correctly.

PARTITION OPERATIONS
 Right-click a drive letter to perform different partition operations upon it. Use with caution.

CHANGE THE DRIVE LETTER
 Select any existing drive D and click to assign it a different letter and free D for your data partition.



2 Clear space on drive

If necessary, you'll need to temporarily move – not copy – files from your **user folders** (Documents, Downloads and so on) to an external drive to free up space for the partitioning process. Locate larger files and folders using a tool like WizTree (<http://antibody-software.com>), then move any large items to a holding folder on your external drive – you'll copy them back later.

Explore

Partition your hard drive

The screenshot shows the AOMEI Partition Assistant interface. At the top, there are links for Upgrade, Feedback, and Free Backup. Below is a table with columns: Capacity, Used Space, Free Space, Flag, and Status. A callout box labeled 'DRIVE VISUALISATIONS' points to a bar chart representation of the partitions. A context menu is open over a partition labeled 'D: Data 135.59GB NTFS', listing options like Resize Partition, Move Partition, Merge Partitions, Split Partition, Copy Partition, Create Partition (which is highlighted), Delete Partition, Format Partition, Change Label, Wipe Partition, Advanced, and Properties.

DRIVE VISUALISATIONS
Partitions are also displayed as bar charts, helping you visualise where (and what size) they are.

SYSTEM PARTITIONS
You'll see additional hidden partitions, typically two small ones. These are Boot and Recovery – be sure to leave alone.

NICK'S BEST TIP!
If Windows won't load after partitioning, boot from the rescue media and run the Partition Recovery Wizard.

A smaller window shows the Windows Disk Management tool. It lists drives D and E. Drive D is shown as 'None' and has an 'Unallocated' space icon. Buttons for Cancel and Help are visible.

The setup wizard window shows the message: 'Completing the AOMEI Partition Assistant Standard Edition 6.1 Setup Wizard'. It says 'Setup has finished installing AOMEI Partition Assistant Standard Edition 6.1 on your computer. The application may be launched by selecting the installed icons.' There is a 'Finish' button and a checked 'Run this program' checkbox.

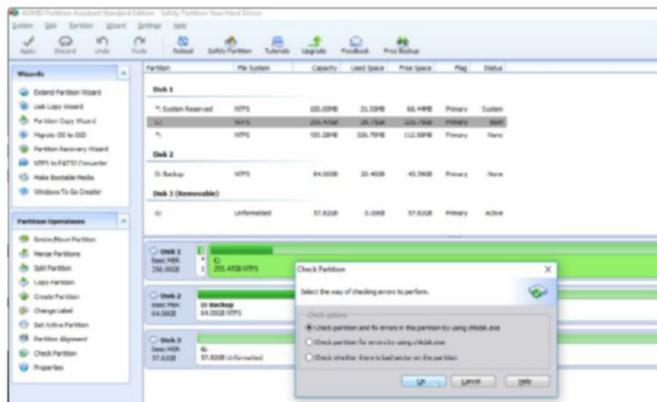
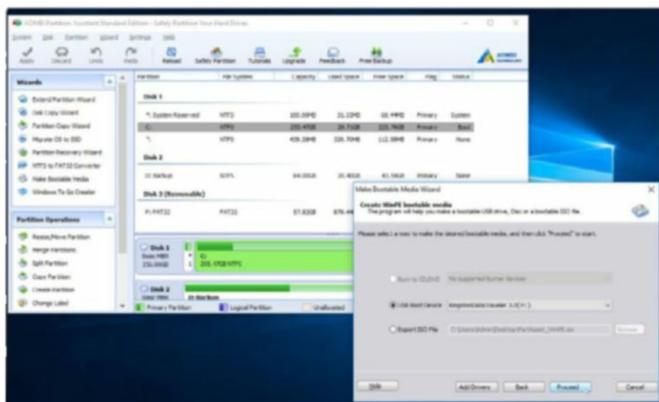
The main AOMEI Partition Assistant window shows disk management features. It includes tabs for Wizards, Tools, and Wizards. Under Wizards, 'Create Bootable Media' is selected. A sub-menu titled 'Select the features you want to install' lists various tools like Deployment Toolkit, Deployment Image Servicing and Management (DISM), and Microsoft Assessment Toolkit. A note at the bottom says 'Estimated disk space required: 3.0 GB Disk space available: 234.9 GB'.

3 Install AOMEI Partition Assistant

Go to www.disk-partition.com and click the green Download Freeware button to download AOMEI Partition Assistant Standard (PAssist_std.exe) to your computer's hard drive. Double-click the installer file and follow the prompts to install it, then leave 'Run this program' ticked and click Finish. Partition Assistant will automatically launch to its main screen.

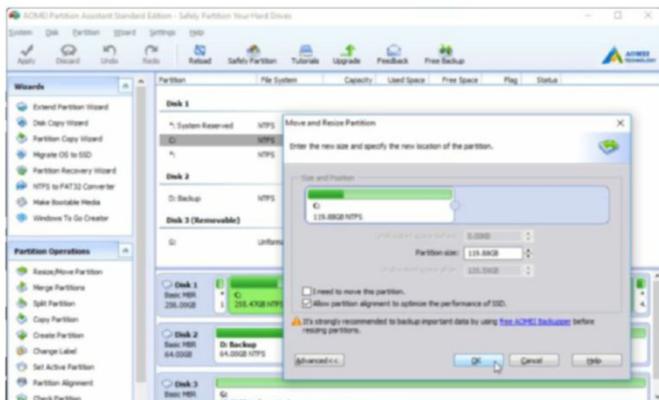
4 Create rescue media

Click 'Make Bootable Media' under Wizards to open a wizard. Click the Download Windows ADK link. A browser window will open pointing to a further link. Ignore the fact it's for Windows 8 (it'll work with Windows 10 too). Click this and click Download to obtain the adksetup.exe tool, then run the wizard. Untick both Toolkit options to reduce the download size to around 3GB.



5 Complete media creation

Wait while the full kit is downloaded – it'll take some time, so while you wait prepare a blank DVD or 4GB USB flash drive to house the rescue media on. Once done, the setup wizard will close and return you to the Make Bootable Media wizard. Click Close, then click Make Bootable Media again. It will now detect the new files and allow you to follow the wizard to create the disc.



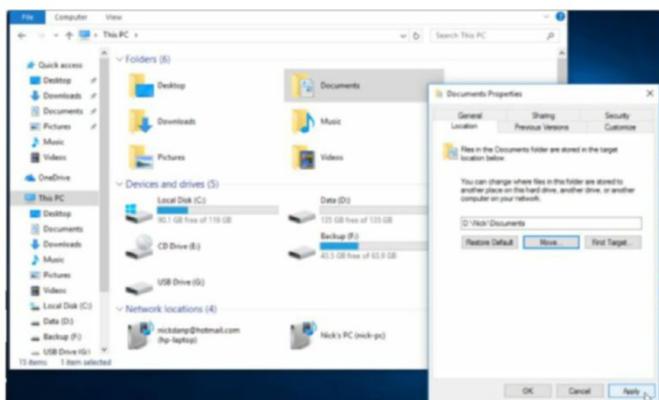
6 Check drive health

You're now ready to partition your drive. Select the main C drive from the list (or click its bar-chart entry at the bottom of the screen) and click Check Partition under Partition Operations to give it a thorough health check. Choose the option to scan and repair, then reboot when prompted. Once the check is complete and Windows reloads, reopen AOMEI Partition Assistant.



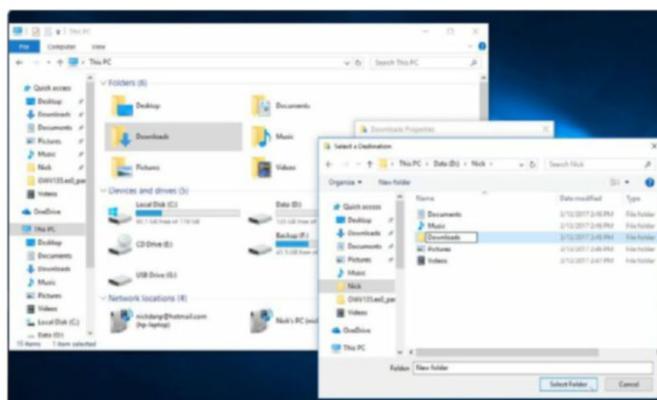
7 Shrink drive C

Select the C drive again, but this time click Resize/Move Partition under Partition Operations. A new window will open – use the slider to shrink the drive by the amount you wish to free up for your data partition. Be sure to leave at least 5GB (preferably more) free space for your system drive. If partitioning an SSD, click Advanced and tick 'Allow partition alignment...' Click OK.



8 Create data partition

Select the unallocated space and click Create Partition. See the annotated screenshot on page 32 if you want to name this partition as drive D. Leave all available space allocated, and the File System set to NTFS. Click Advanced to set a drive label (such as 'Data'), but leave all other settings alone. Click OK followed by Apply. Review the changes being made, then click Proceed.



9 Move user folders

You'll be prompted to reboot – do so and you should find that drive D is now accessible. Create a folder on it named after your username, then open File Explorer to This PC. Right-click one of your user folders, then choose Properties > Location tab. Click 'Move...' to transfer it to an identically named folder inside your username folder on drive D. Repeat for the other folders.

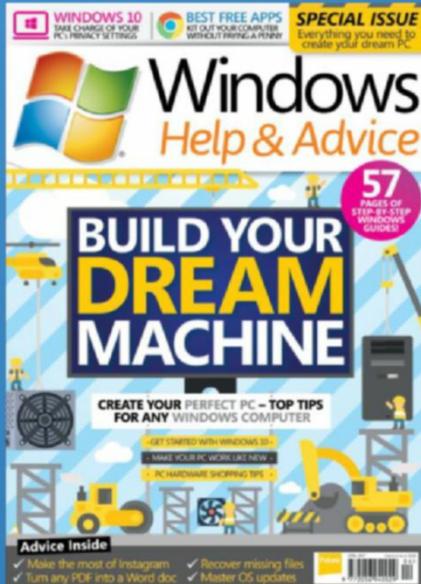
10 Your drive, partitioned

Your data is now separate from Windows – if you ever need to reinstall, it's left untouched on your other partition. Don't forget to move back any data you transferred to your external drive along with other folders you want to move from drive C. Remember to continue backing up data on drive D – it's safe from a Windows crash, but still vulnerable to other forms of data loss. ■

Back issues
Don't miss out!

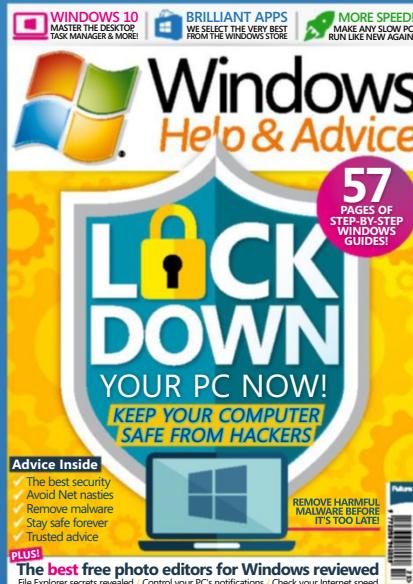
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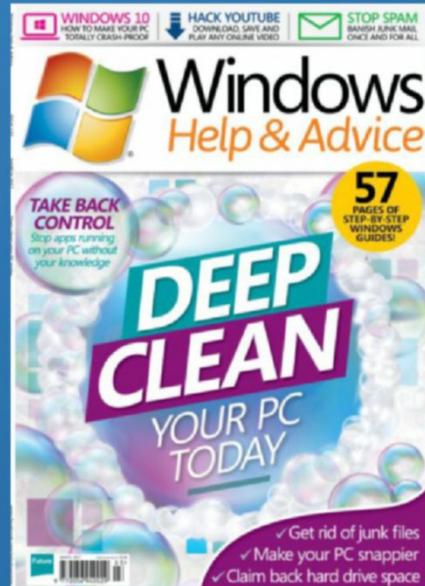
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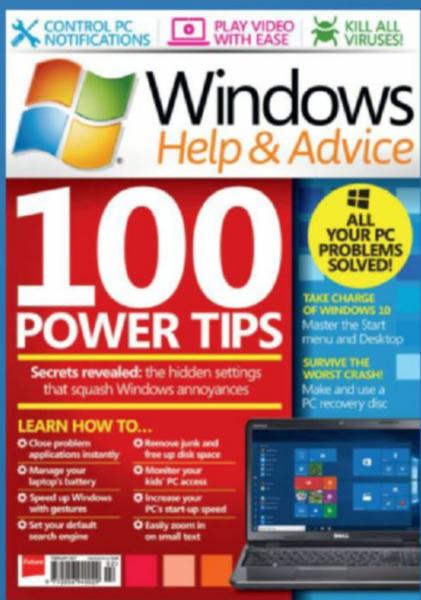
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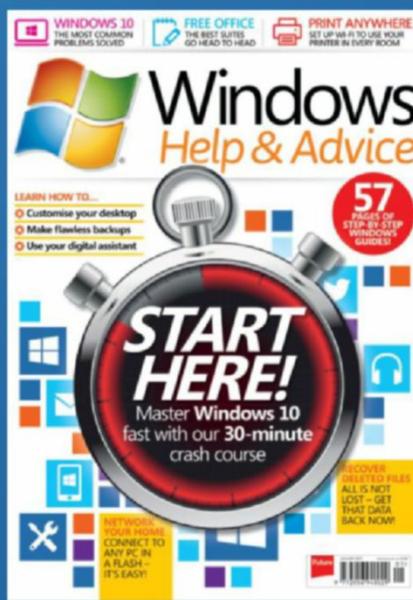
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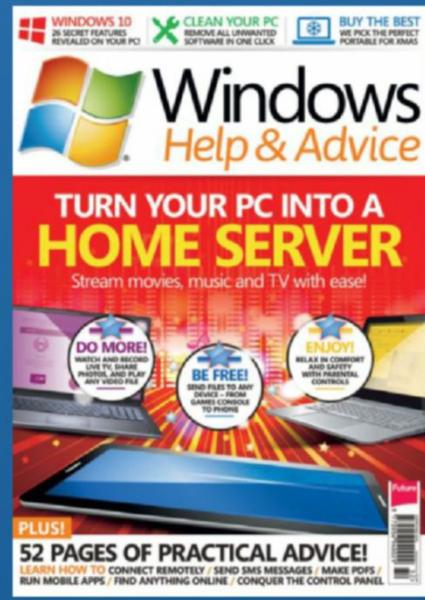
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Learn how to...

Colour-code files and folders in Windows 10



Your guide *Cat Ellis* says...

"Tired of hunting through File Explorer? With some clever colour-coding, you'll be able to find the files and folders you need in seconds"

At a glance

Skill level...

- ▶ Anyone can do it
- Straightforward
- Tricky in parts

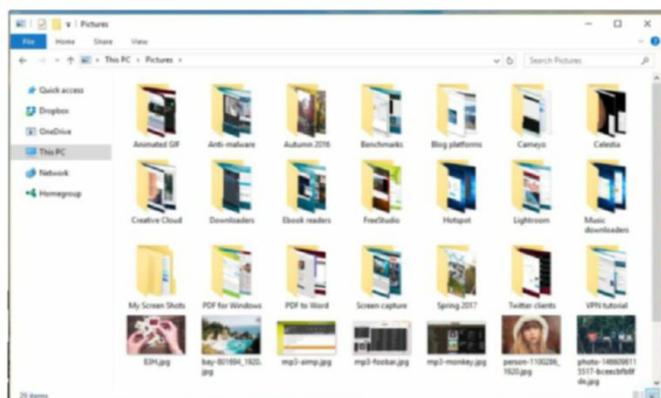
Suitable for...

- Windows 10
- Windows 8.1
- Windows 7

Finding your way around File Explorer can be a tricky business. Folders give you a tiny preview of the files within, but a small sliver of a document is rarely enough to tell you whether you've found the one you need. Keeping your files arranged in a logical system of folders will help, as will using a consistent method for naming them, but you could easily spend hours arranging them and end up with a vast, unwieldy system that takes forever to browse through.

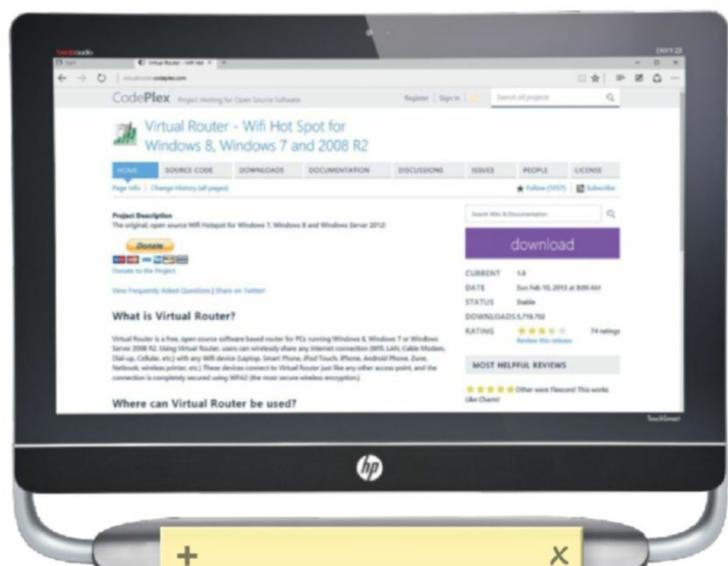
It would be easier if you could label everything with a colour, as you can on a Mac. That's where Folder Marker and FileMarker.NET come in. These free programs let you assign colours to files and folders to categorise them, and add extra symbols to indicate importance or progress. Best of all, you can use them directly through File Explorer's context menu. Here's how to get started...

Step-by-step Get organised with colours and icons



1 Do a little housework

Before you start colour-coding, it's worth taking the time to tidy things up by deleting files you no longer need, including bits left over by software you've uninstalled. Also make sure files are in the right folders (photos in Pictures, songs in Music and text files in Documents, for example). Once done, make a backup of your Documents folder on an external hard drive or use cloud storage.

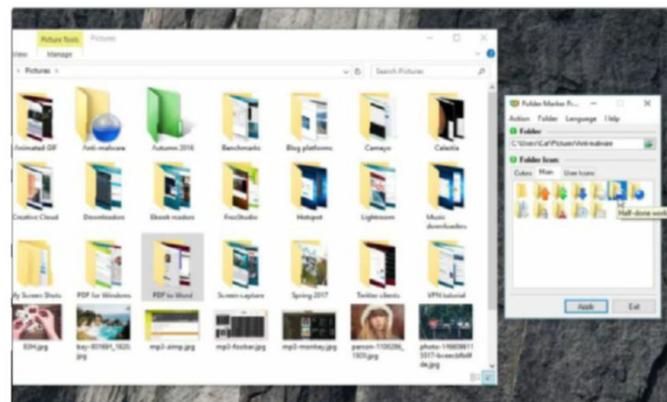
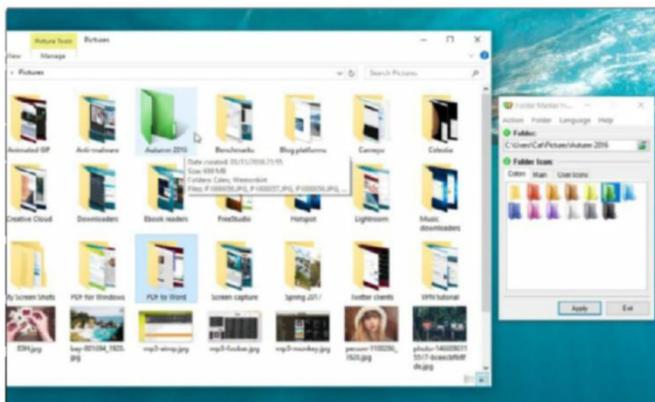


CAT'S BEST TIP
Don't be tempted to use existing Windows icons for your files and folders or others users may get confused!



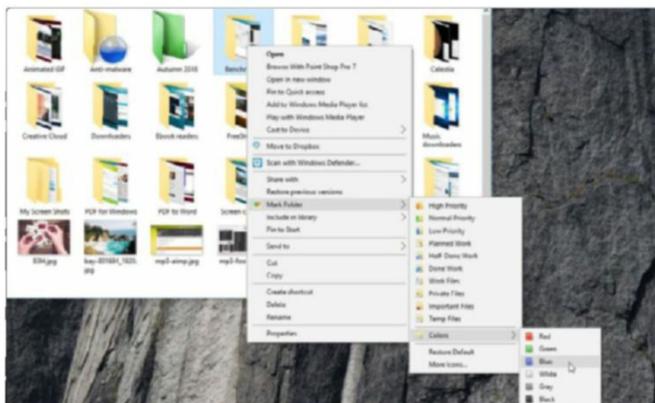
2 Get Folder Marker

Once everything is organised and backed up, download Folder Marker Free from <http://foldermarker.com/en/download> (make sure you select the version on the right) and run the installer. When the program launches for the first time, click the Colors tab to see the different hues available for your folders. There are 13 options in the free version of the software.



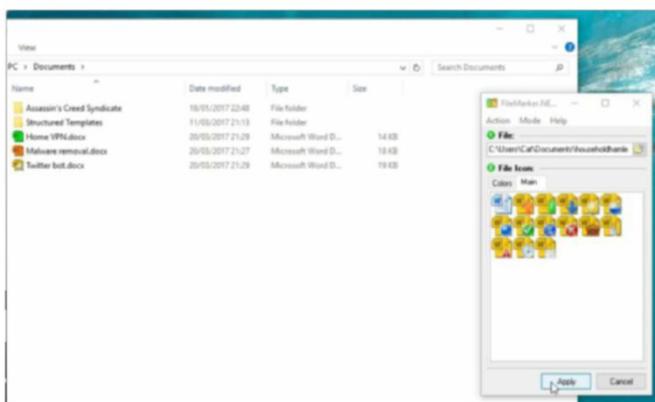
3 Colour your folders

Click the green ellipsis (...) icon and choose a folder to colour, then click OK. Pick a colour and click Apply, then open File Explorer to see the change. Coloured folders don't give you a preview of their contents like standard Windows folders do. That's because they're effectively replacing the dynamic 'live' icons with static images. It's the only drawback of Folder Marker.



5 Use the context menu

Right-click a folder in File Explorer and you'll see a new option in the context menu: Mark Folder. This doesn't give you as many colour and icon options as the main Folder Marker interface, but it's faster, and a convenient way to update status icons when you've finished a piece of work. Selecting 'More icons' reveals the full interface. 'Restore default' undoes any changes.

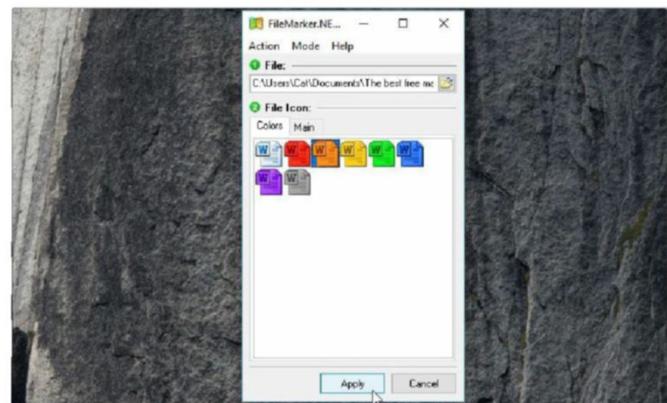


7 Add status icons

FileMarker.NET doesn't work with images (since their icons already show what they are), but it's great for text documents, spreadsheets, databases and presentations, which otherwise look identical. Open File Explorer to see how your re-coloured file looks. You can also apply status symbols to files to indicate progress and priority – even if you've re-coloured the file icon.

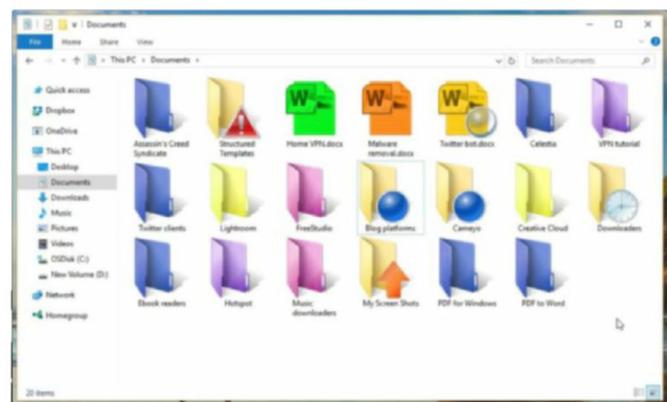
4 Use special icons

Folder Marker also gives you a selection of status icons to use. These include high priority, private, high importance, and half-done work. To use these, select a folder as you did in Step 3, then click the Main tab and choose an icon. Click Apply, then check the results in File Explorer. Click the 'User icons' tab for a huge variety of other icons, but these aren't intended for folders.



6 Mark your files

Once you're happy with your folders, it's time to move onto files. Download FileMarker.NET from <http://filemarker.net/download.php>, again being careful to select the free version on the right side. Run the installer and let the program launch once it's finished. FileMarker.NET is similar to Folder Marker, so click the green ellipsis (...), select a file, choose a colour and click Apply.



8 Make your own system

You now have all the tools you need to get your files and folders organised in a way that suits you. You want your photos from last year? Easy – they're all in purple folders, sorted by location. How about the presentation that's due tomorrow? It's in your red Work folder, marked as Important. Now you'll never be stuck hunting through File Explorer again. ■

Learn how to...

Make the most of LibreOffice



Your guide *Nate Drake* says...

"Create Microsoft-compatible presentations, spreadsheets and documents with this office suite"

At a glance

Skill level...

- Anyone can do it
- Straightforward
- Tricky in parts

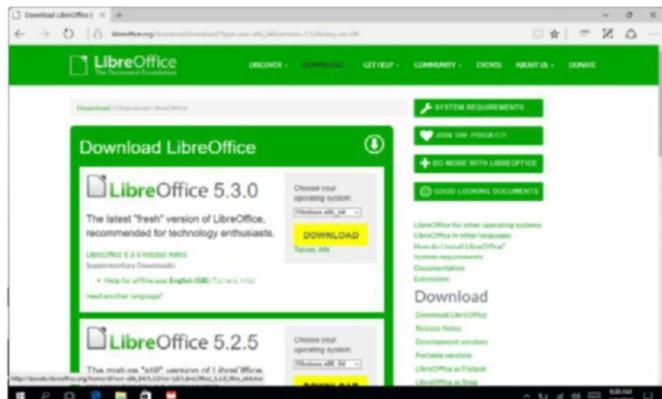
Suitable for...

- Windows 10
- Windows 8.1
- Windows 7

Microsoft Office is a fantastic productivity suite but also takes up a lot of space, resources and you have to pay for it. LibreOffice is the free and lightweight alternative. Most importantly, it's fully compatible with MS Office so you can both open and save in the Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint formats. Use the fantastic word processor, Writer, to create professional-looking documents. You can also create and manage your finances with the spreadsheet software, Calc. The handy program Impress can also be used to create brilliant, animated PowerPoint-style presentations.

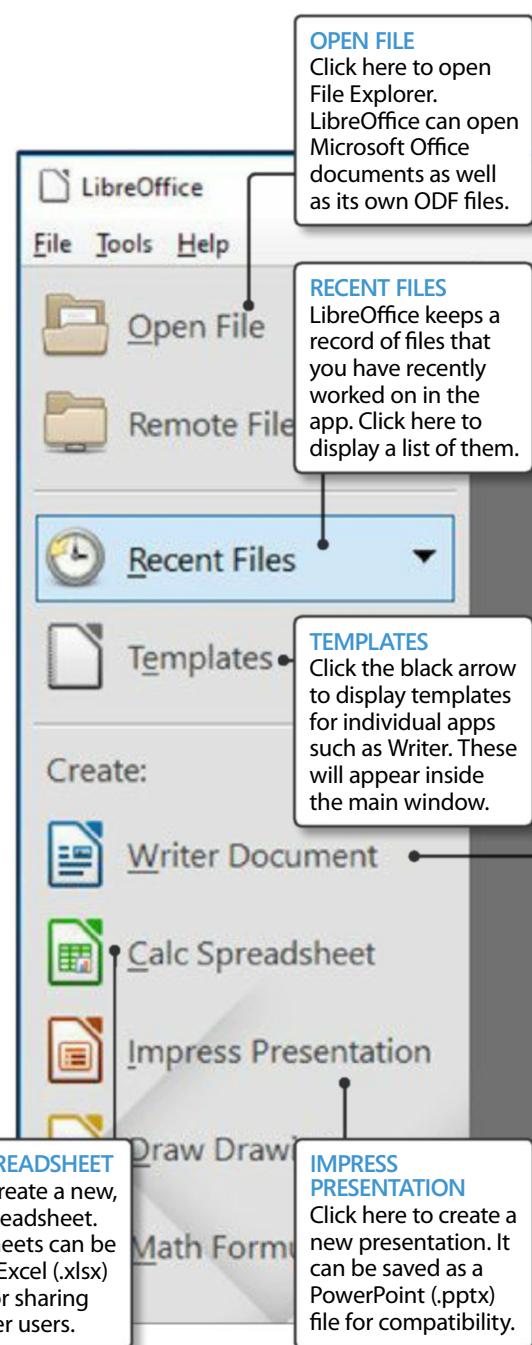
This guide focuses on the basic steps to download and install LibreOffice as well as opening documents. Also feel free to visit <https://www.libreoffice.org/get-help/community-support/>, which features help guides for individual apps and the LibreOffice Wiki.

Step-by-step Take your first steps with LibreOffice



1 Download LibreOffice

Open your browser and go to <https://www.libreoffice.org/download/>. The default download options should be fine, but click on 'Choose your Operating System' if you want to change them. The default language is US English. If you want to change this to British English, for example, click on 'need another language' and select it from the list. Then select Download.



2 Save and launch the installer

Your browser of choice will now ask what to do with the installation file. Click on Save to begin the download. The file is quite small (around 200MB) so this won't take long. If you're using Microsoft Edge, click Run once the download has finished to launch the installer. For other browsers you may need to open the downloads folder and double click the installer from there.

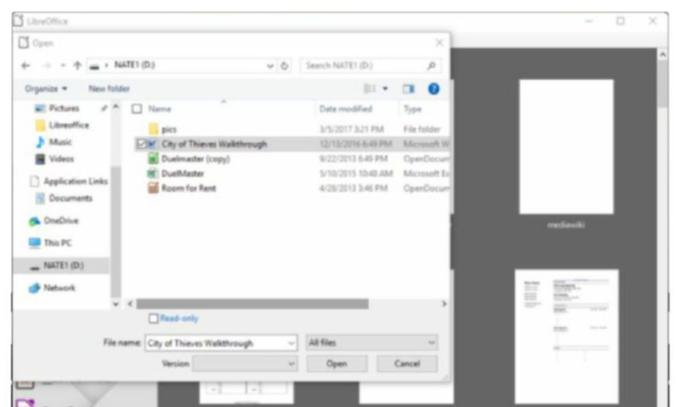
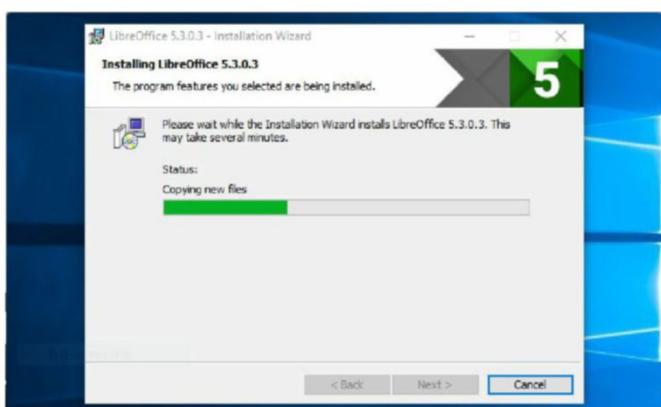
WRITER DOCUMENT
Click to create a new Writer document for word processing.
Files can be saved in Word (.docx) format.

Welcome to LibreOffice.
Drop a document here or pick an app from the left side to create

Jargon buster!

- ODF (Open Document Format)**
A special format used by LibreOffice to save files. You can tell LibreOffice not to use this and save in a Microsoft-compatible format instead.
- Office suite**
A collection of apps designed to increase your productivity. They usually include a word processor, spreadsheet and a presentation app.
- Templates**
Specially-designed reusable documents that come with some office suites. These enable you to easily create professional-looking documents, such as letters, CVs and newsletters.

NATE'S BEST TIP!
You can change the default format for saved files by going to Tools > Options > Load/Save > General.

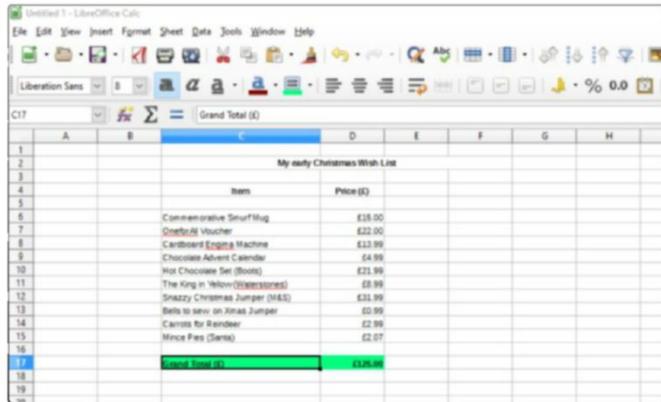


3 Finish the installation

Once the LibreOffice installer launches, click Next to continue. You can now choose the Installation type. Leave 'Typical' checked (you can always change this later) and click Continue. On the next screen, click the checkbox to have LibreOffice launch on startup then click Install. Windows will ask you to confirm that you want to make changes. Click Yes and the install will complete.

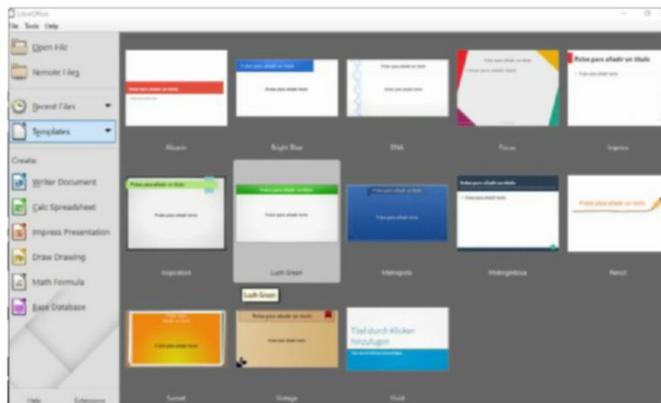
4 Open documents in LibreOffice

You should now see a shortcut for LibreOffice on your desktop. Double click this to open the main window. Open a Microsoft Office document to familiarise yourself with the app. Click on Open File, then navigate to your file of choice. Click Open. The corresponding app for your file will launch automatically. Here, the Microsoft Word Document opens in Writer.



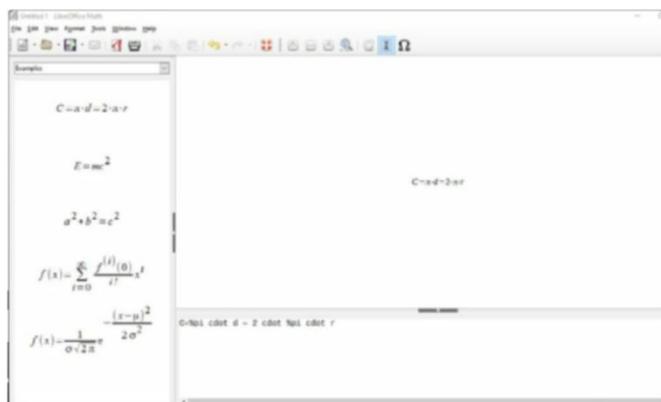
5 Create a new LibreOffice document

Close your document and relaunch LibreOffice from your desktop. Note the document you just opened is now listed under Recent Files. You can double-click to reopen files you're working on at any time. For now, look at the Create section of the main window and click one of the options, such as Calc Spreadsheet, this will create a new, blank document for you to work on.



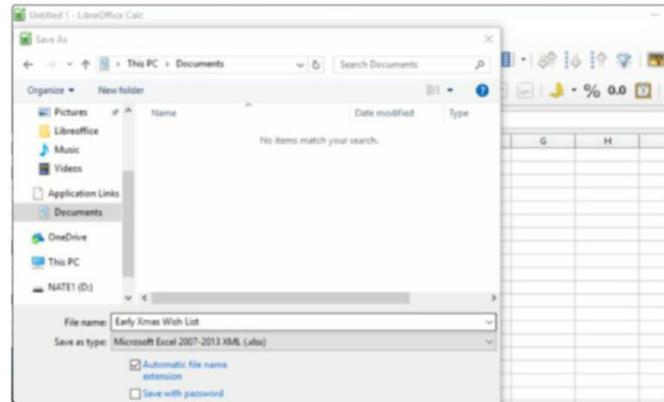
7 Use Templates

Rather than creating a document from scratch, LibreOffice includes templates to get you started. Launch LibreOffice again and click the arrow besides Templates to view categories such as those for presentations. Double-click your chosen template to load a new document based on it. Use Manage Templates to add and remove categories as well as to make your own templates.



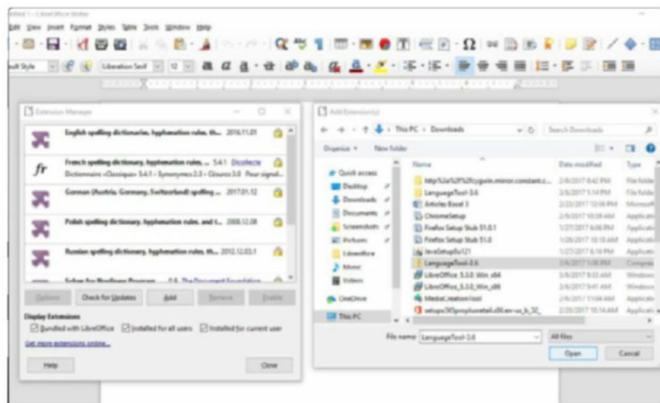
9 Other LibreOffice apps

So far we've focused on word processing, spreadsheets and presentations. LibreOffice has other powerful apps however. Draw enables you to create graphics and diagrams. Math is used to work with formulae. Both of these work as standalone apps or can be launched from inside others. The handy app, Base, allows you to create and edit databases, much as Microsoft Access does.



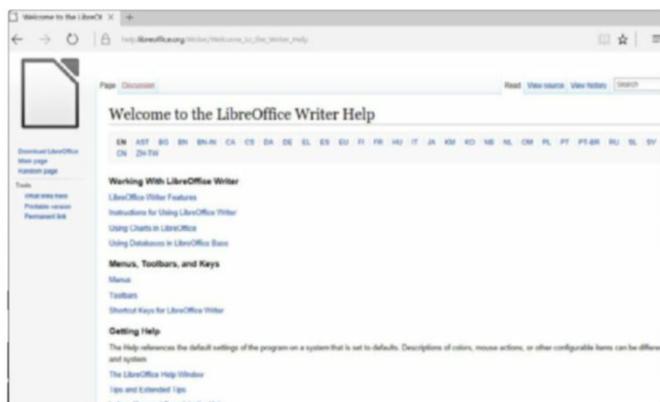
6 Save a document

Once you've changed your document to your satisfaction, it's time to save it. Click the Save icon at the top left or choose File... Save As. Choose a filename. Under 'Save as Type' you'll see LibreOffice wants to use its own .odf format. If you want to share this document with MS Office users, click this menu and choose a Microsoft format such as .xlsx. Click Save to confirm.



8 Add LibreOffice extensions

Open your browser and visit <https://extensions.libreoffice.org> to view all available add-ons. Here, we're installing the Language Tool, which checks your grammar. Click the link to download and save the file. Next, open LibreOffice and go to Tools > Extension Manager. In the new window that appears, click Add, navigate to the new file and click Open to install.



10 How do I...?

This is only a brief introduction to LibreOffice. Visit the Community Support portal (<http://bit.ly/2nMDoXl>) for further help. Or press [F1] at any time when using LibreOffice to be redirected to the relevant help page. One handy tip is to start with the Features section to see if the function you want is supported. It often is, but you access it in a different way than in MS Office. ■

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Learn how to...

Cut down your startup time with Windows 10



Your guide **Matt Hanson** says...

"Make your Windows 10 PC boot up even faster with these effective and easy to follow tips and tricks"

At a glance

Skill level...

- ▶ Anyone can do it
- Straightforward
- Tricky in parts

Suitable for...

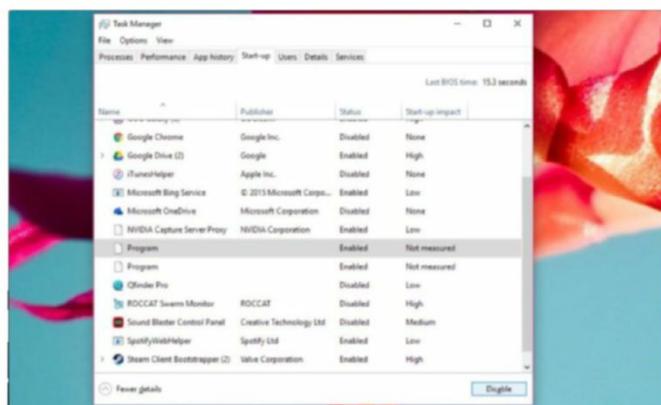
- Windows 10
- Windows 8.1
- Windows 7

Windows 10 is probably the fastest version of Windows ever made, and the days of waiting for minutes on end as pages of DOS text flashed on screen are thankfully long gone. However, even though Windows 10 is very fast to load, there are still a few things you can do to cut the startup time even further. You may also find that after a while of using Windows 10, and installing all manner of apps, programs and games, the time it takes Windows 10 to start up will begin to climb ever higher.

With this guide we'll take you through some tried and tested methods for putting a spring back into Windows 10's step, and make the process of loading up the operating system almost instant. Many of these steps won't just make Windows 10 start up faster – they can also make your entire Windows 10 PC perform faster as a result.

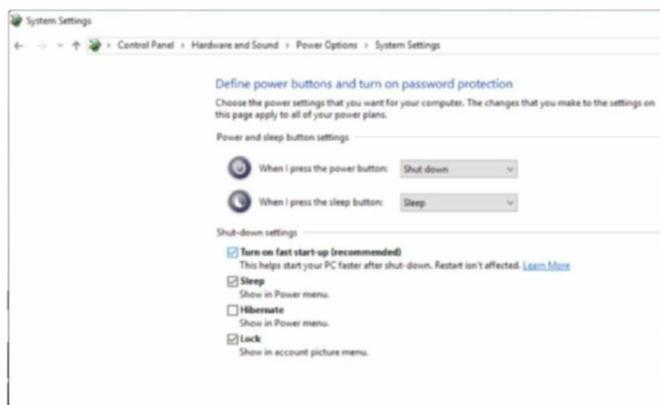


Step-by-step Cut down Windows 10's startup time



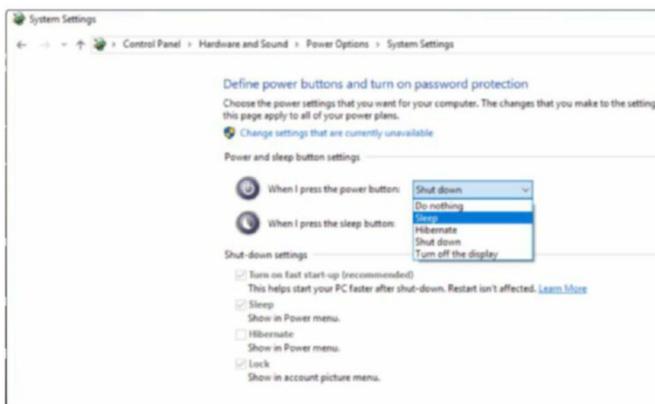
1 Minimise startup apps

The more programs, apps and services Windows 10 loads at startup the slower the launch process will be. To see which ones are slowing you down, select [Ctrl] + [Shift] + [Esc] to open the Task Manager, then click the Start-up tab. You'll see a list potential culprits, along with a column named 'Start-up impact'. Any app you don't regularly use should be disabled.



2 Turn on fast startup

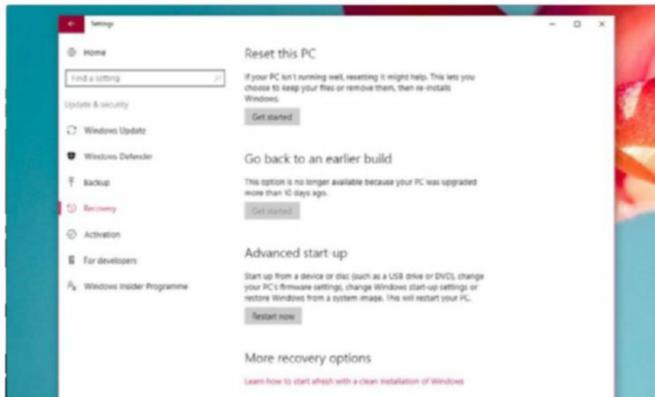
There's an option in Windows 10 called 'fast startup' that can make loading the operating system faster when you press the Power button of your PC. Luckily it's easy to activate – type 'Power options' into the Start Menu, then click 'Choose what the power buttons do' and 'Change settings that are currently unavailable' then make sure 'Turn on fast startup' is enabled.



Uninstall or change a program				
Organise	Uninstall	Publisher	Installed On	Size
	Futuremark	Futuremark Inc.	13/10/2016	4.21 GB
	BitTorrent Inc.	Futuremark	17/12/2016	15.023.20070
	Adobe Systems Incorporated	Adobe Systems Incorporated	24/02/2017	379 MB
	Apple Inc.	Apple Inc.	06/03/2017	160 MB
	Apple Inc.	Apple Inc.	06/03/2017	53.1 MB
	Apple Inc.	Apple Inc.	06/03/2017	41.8 MB
	Apple Inc.	Apple Inc.	11/04/2016	100.3 MB
	Apple Inc.	Apple Inc.	23/03/2016	24.0 MB
	Apple Inc.	Apple Inc.	13/02/2017	50.3 MB
	Apple Inc.	Apple Inc.	13/02/2017	2.0 MB
	Apple Inc.	Apple Inc.	13/02/2017	47.5 MB
	Apple Inc.	Irrational Games	24/09/2016	41.3 MB
	Apple Inc.	Apple Inc.	11/04/2016	403 MB
	Apple Inc.	Broadcom Corporation	24/09/2016	6342.235
	Apple Inc.	Electronic Arts	02/10/2016	347 MB
	Apple Inc.	Electronic Arts	24/09/2016	1.0 MB
	Apple Inc.	Conair Components, Inc.	24/09/2016	88.4 MB
	Apple Inc.	Conair Memory, Inc.	24/09/2016	106 KB
	Apple Inc.	Conair Memory, Inc.	24/09/2016	106 KB
	Apple Inc.	Conair	23/03/2016	45.3 MB
	Apple Inc.	CPUD CPU-Z 1.75	24/03/2016	3.93 MB

3 Don't turn off – sleep!

Another way to make Windows 10 load quickly is to put it to sleep when you've finished using it, rather than shutting it down entirely. To do that, choose Sleep from the power options in the Start menu, or open the Power options window, as in Step 2, and select 'Choose what the power buttons do' to put your PC to sleep when you press the power button.



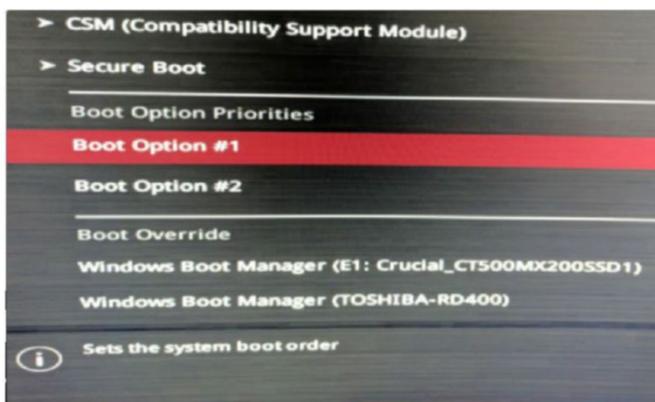
4 Uninstall unused programs

A full hard drive that's brimming programs that are all trying to start up at the same time can cause a PC to boot slower than usual, so go through the installed programs on your PC and uninstall any you no longer use. Type in 'Uninstall' in the Start menu, then select 'Change or remove a program', select the program you want to uninstall and click on Uninstall.



5 Refresh Windows 10

Windows 10 starts up fastest when it's been newly installed. To get that fast startup feeling back, open the Start menu and select Settings > 'Update & security' > Recovery. Under 'reset this PC', click Get Started, then follow the instructions. This will refresh Windows 10, without affecting your personal files. For a more in-depth explanation for how to refresh Windows 10, see page 14.



6 Enable Fast boot

Another way to speed up your PC's startup time is to tinker with your PC's BIOS settings. This tip is for experienced users only as using the wrong setting can cause your PC to stop working! To enter BIOS, restart your PC and repeatedly press [DEL] or [F2] on your keyboard (it varies from PC to PC). Once in, look for a setting for 'Fast boot' and enable it, then restart and see if that helps.



7 Change the boot order

When your PC powers up, it searches any hard drive, disc drive or USB stick to try to find an operating system. It searches all these devices in a particular order – and if that order's wrong it can slow down your PC. Using BIOS again, check to make sure the drive containing your Windows 10 install is at the top of the boot order – that way it won't search on other attached devices first.

8 Buy an SSD

All of the steps we've suggested so far will speed up your PC without you having to buy any new hardware. For an even greater speed increase, though, consider buying a Solid State Drive (SSD) and installing Windows 10 and all your apps and programs on that. SSDs use flash media instead of spinning platters so work much faster and more efficiently – vastly reducing startup times.

Learn how to...

Get started with Photos



Your guide *Ian Evenden* says...

"A great way to organise your photos into albums, and share them with your friends"

At a glance

Skill level...

► Anyone can do it

Straightforward

Tricky in parts

Suitable for...

Windows 10

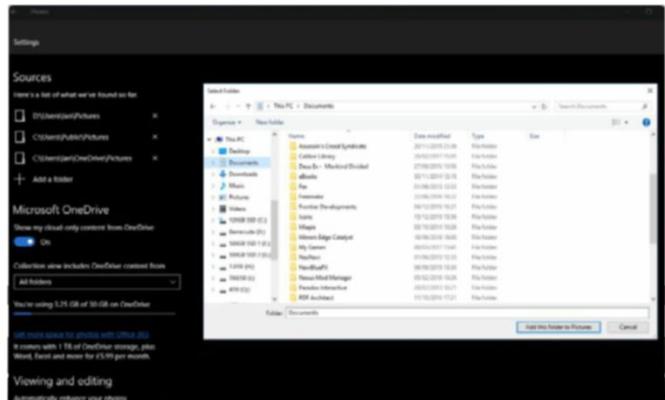
Windows 8.1

Windows 7

OrGANISING a lot of photos can be a time-consuming task, especially if you've just come back from a holiday and want to sort your memories into easily viewed albums. Some might say you need a third-party application – such as Photoshop Elements, with its handy Organiser module – to achieve photographic tidiness, but Windows 10 comes with a built-in Photos app that can achieve organisational nirvana for you.

Once you've learned how to sort, enhance and share your images this way, you'll never go back to just stuffing your files in folders on your PC, or having your Pictures folder overflowing with unsorted images. You'll be able to go straight to the images you want, when you need them. In fact, the only drawback could be that you shoot so many more pictures you need to invest in a new storage drive to hold them all.

Step-by-step See your images in Photos



1 Find your images

Your PC might either be overflowing with image files, or may have just accepted its first **JPGs** from a new camera. Either way, you'll need to tell Photos where to look for pictures. By default, it will look in your Pictures folder, and your **OneDrive** Pictures folder if that's in a different place. If your images are elsewhere, go to Settings and add the folder to Photos' list.

ALBUMS

Click here for albums you've created. If you've yet to make any, you'll be shown albums of images, sorted by date.

FOLDERS

If you know the image you want is in a specific folder, click here to display all folders you've told Photos to look in.

Collection Albums Folders

December 2016

COLLECTION

Displays all the images, sorted by date, that Photos can find, depending on the folders you set in Preferences.



YOUR PHOTOS

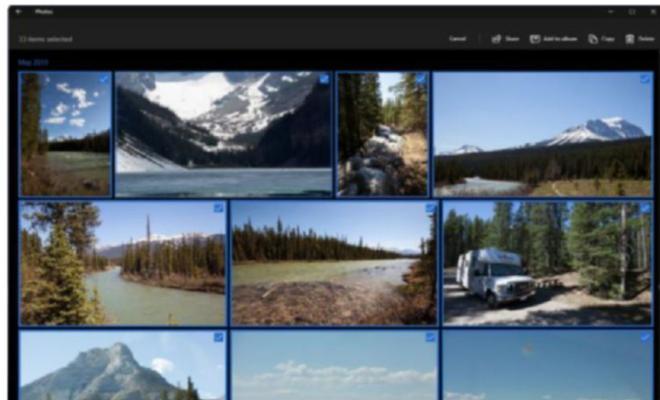
All your pictures are displayed here. The way they will be presented depends upon which viewing mode you select.



YOUR PHOTOS

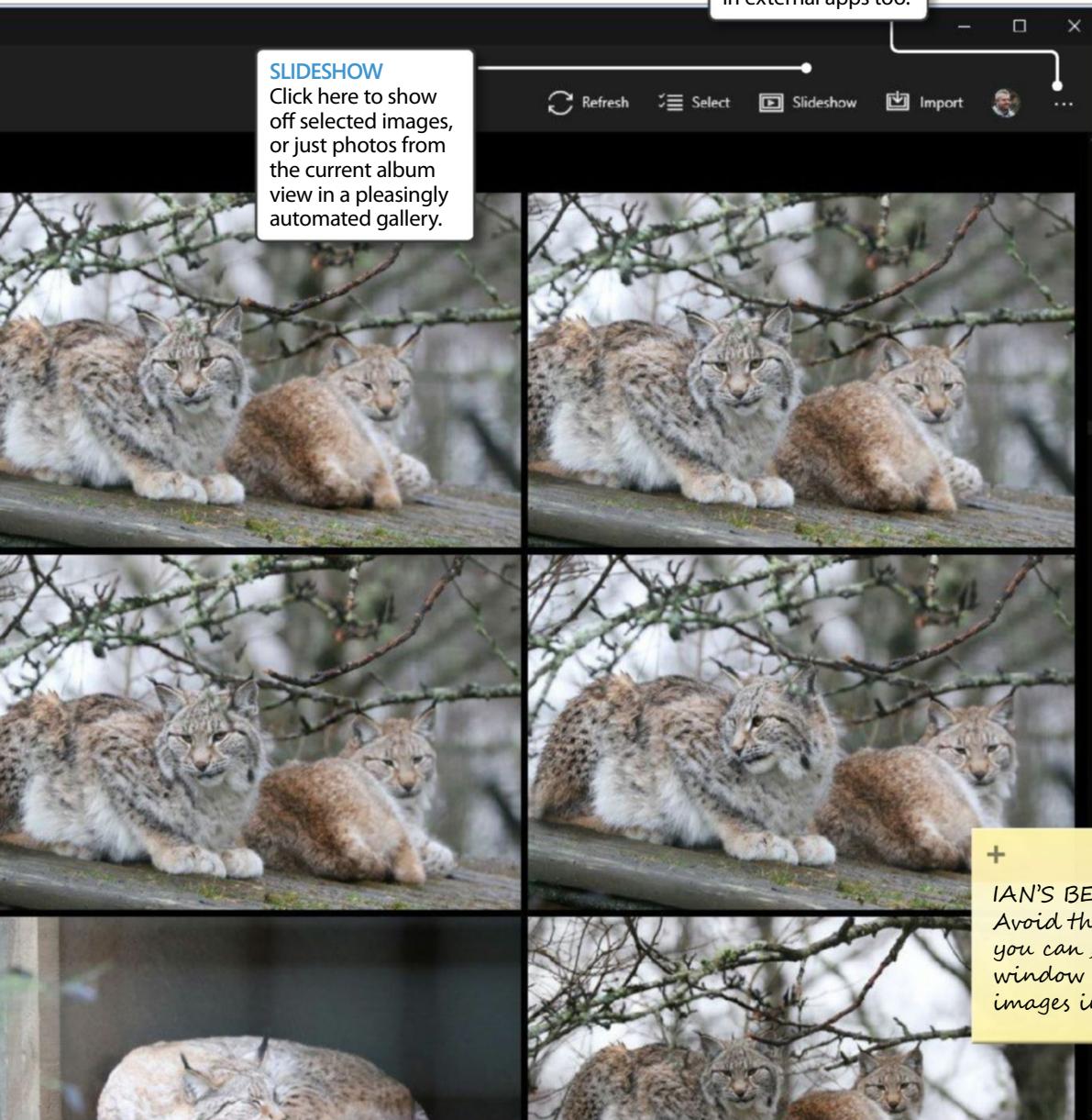
All your pictures are displayed here. The way they will be presented depends upon which viewing mode you select.





2 Get yourself organised

Once Photos has found your images, it will display them in its main window, sorted by date. For most things, this will be enough, but if you want to sort all your photos from a holiday in one place, you need to make an album. Click in the top-right corner of the images you want to add to select them. You can add whole days by clicking the 'Select all...' link at the top left.

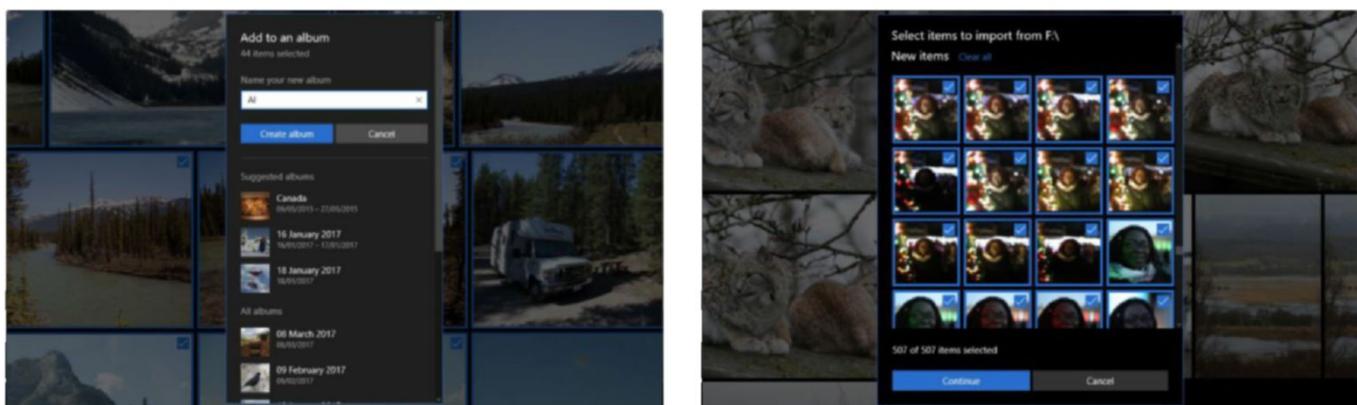


Jargon buster!

JPEG
Joint Photographic Experts Group. By far the most common image file format in existence. Your camera almost certainly shoots these files.

Vignette
Darkened corners of an image caused by the camera lens or with software. Used to draw more attention to the centre of an image.

OneDrive
Microsoft's cloud storage system, deeply embedded in Windows 10. Photos uses it to gather your images together from across your Windows devices.

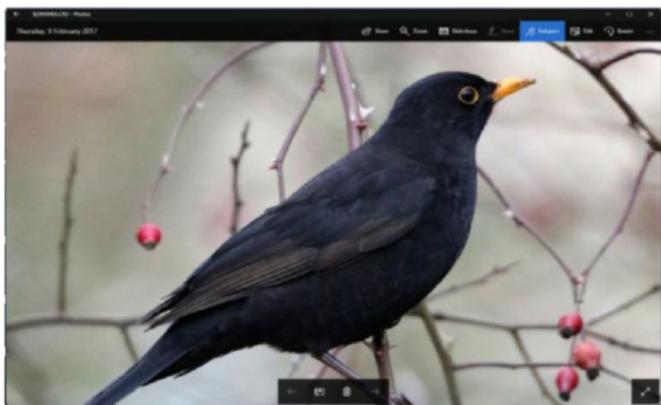


3 Create an album

Once you've chosen your images, click 'Add to Album'. You can either add them to an existing album, or create a new one. If you choose the latter, you'll be prompted to give your new album a name, and it will appear in the Albums view as a new entry. Albums are sorted by date, so depending on when your photos were taken your new album may not appear at the top.

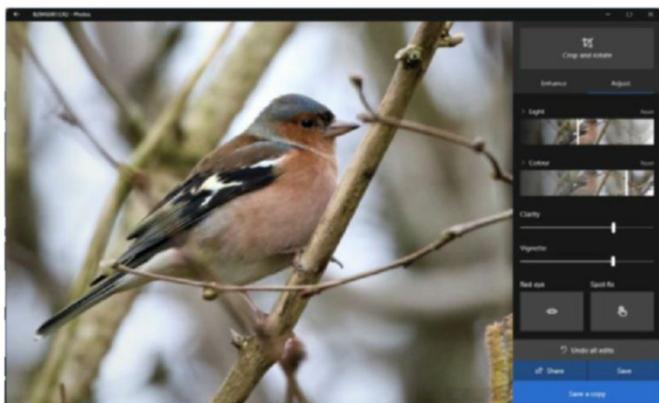
4 Import photos

You can add images to Photos from a memory card or any external drive. Make sure the card or drive is plugged into your PC, then, in Collection view, choose Import button from the top right of the Photos interface. You'll be asked to choose your card, and the images you want to import. Click Import. Images will be copied to the Pictures folder by default, but you can change this.



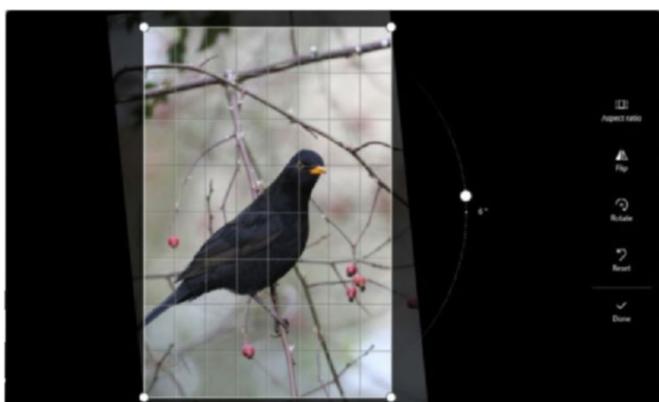
5 Enhance your images

The simplest of Photos' editing tools, Enhance gives any selected image a one-shot makeover without any input from you. As such, it's very much an imprecise instrument, but for a quick tweak of the contrast and colours in an image, it's a speedy tool for the job. It generally ups the contrast of the image, while improving the saturation of colours, but does little else.



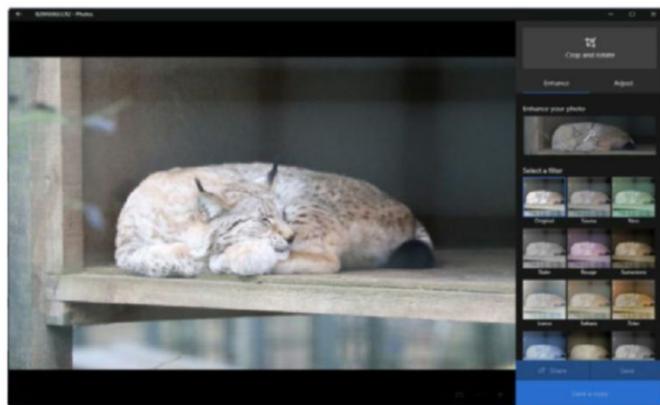
7 Make image adjustments

Adjust's tools enable you to change the contrast and colour of an image to your exact specifications, while using the Clarity slider to adjust its perceived sharpness. It can't do anything about something that's out of focus, but can give an image extra punch. You can undo your edits at any time. Be sure to save or make a copy of your finished image to make any changes permanent.



9 Crop and rotate

You can also change the look of your images using Edit > Crop and Rotate. Cropping involves removing the outer portions of an image to concentrate on the centre, while Rotate straightens up an image. Photos takes this further by adding options to flip your image over, and to change the aspect ratio of your crop. You can undo at any time, or click the tick icon to save your changes.



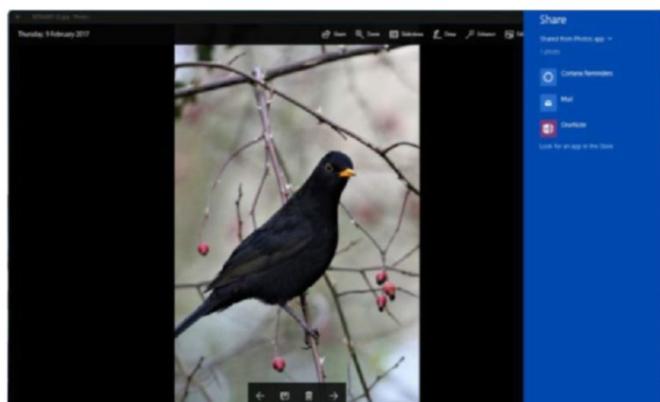
6 Edit your images

For more control over your images, use the Edit option, which takes you to a new interface with new tools. Your selected image will be enlarged in the centre, and you can zoom further into it using the mouse wheel. On the right are your editing tools, split into Enhance and Adjust. Enhance has a 'magic wand' that does the same as in Step 5, along with some coloured filters.



8 Spot removal

Adjust mode has two more brushes, Red Eye and Spot Fix. You can only use them as one-click tools, there isn't any way to change their effect or the area they cover. Red Eye removes red eyes from photos caused by a camera flash – just click on the eyes with the brush. Spot Fix can remove dust from a digitised print, skin blemishes or anything else you can fit under its blue circle.



10 Share some photos

File sharing is built-in to Photos. With a photo selected, you can click the Share button at the top of the interface. A blue bar will sweep in from the right, listing the sharing options you have set up on your PC. This enables you to share either the image you have selected or a screenshot of your Photos app. You can also send images to Mail or Microsoft services such as OneNote. ■

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Learn how to...

Save photos to OneDrive



Your guide *Nick Odantzis* says...

"Your photos are precious. Store them safely in the cloud and access them wherever you are"

At a glance

Skill level...

► Anyone can do it

Straightforward

Tricky in parts

Suitable for...

Windows 10

Windows 8.1

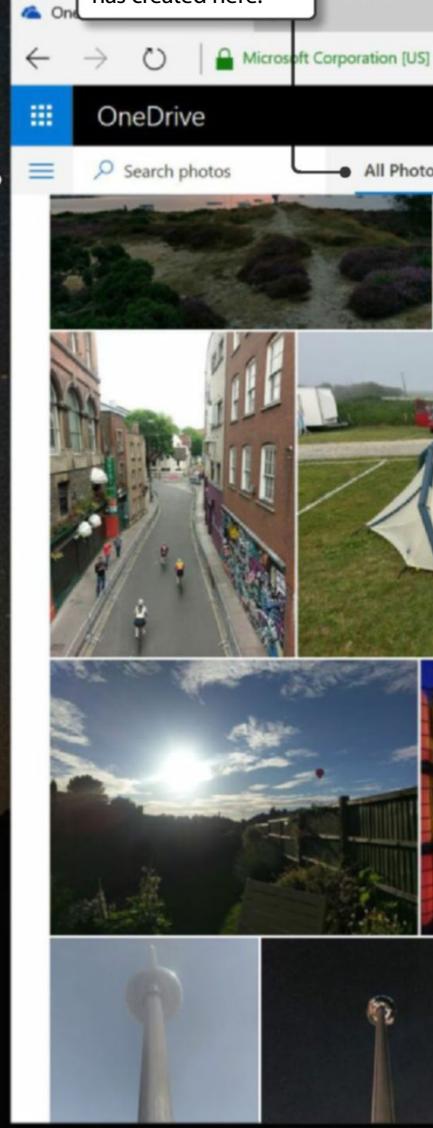
Windows 7

When you want to keep your digital photos somewhere safe, where do you put them? On a memory card? On a hard drive? Maybe you do both. But, no matter how many backups you make, your precious photo collection is at risk of being lost forever if you rely on hardware to store them. What's the alternative, you say?

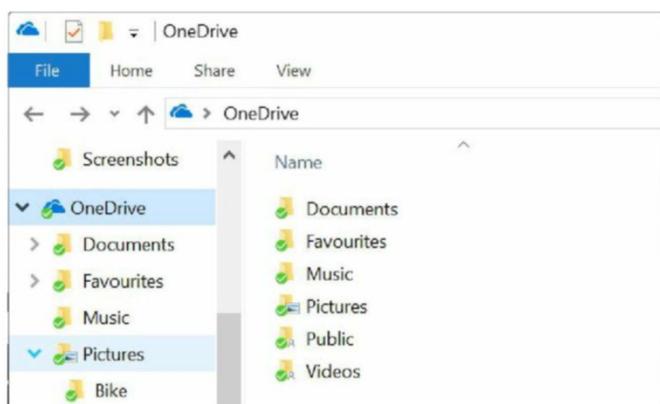
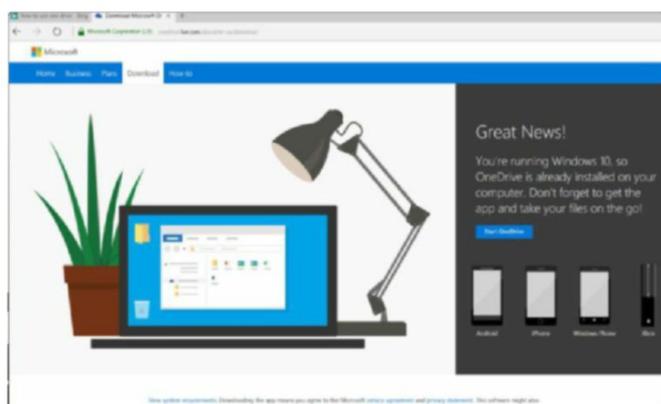
It's an easy one actually, and it's called OneDrive: an online storage facility created by Microsoft. Think of OneDrive as a big hard drive in the sky, because that's kind of what it is. Once you've uploaded your photos to OneDrive, they will always be there, no matter what happens. It's dead easy to use, with lots more benefits – such as being able to search for your favourite images. OneDrive is built in to Windows 10, so here's how to use it to store your photos online and never worry about losing those photographic memories again.

SEARCH

If you need to find a photo, or group of photos, that have been tagged type in here and hit [Enter] to locate it.



Step-by-step Use OneDrive to manage your photo collection



1 Get OneDrive

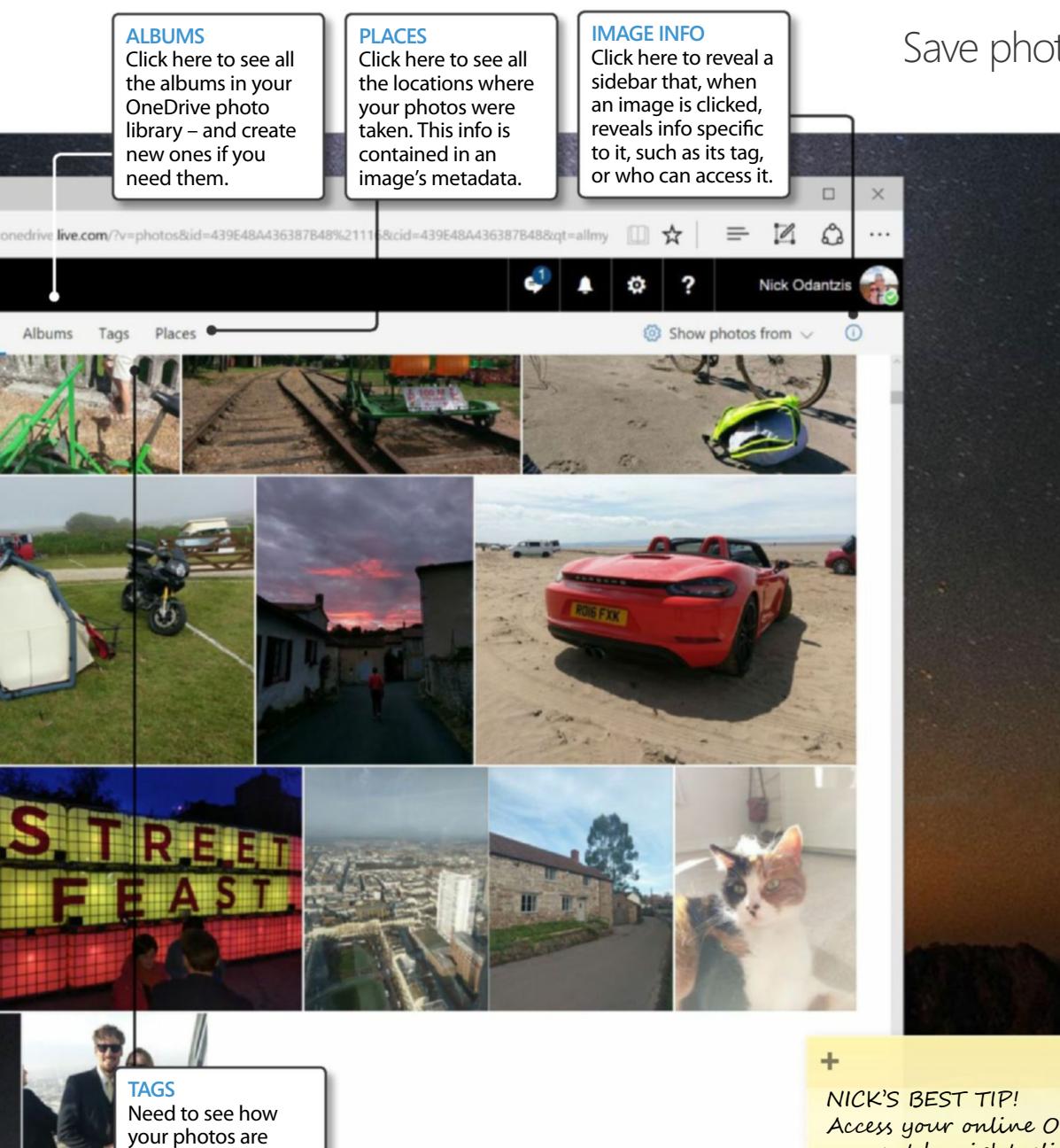
When you save photos to your PC, you'll normally just head straight to My Computer > Pictures to save them. Not any more. In Windows 10 you can move or copy them to the Pictures folder on OneDrive, which stores your files online and **offline**. If you're running Windows Vista, 7 or 8, you'll need to download the OneDrive app at onedrive.live.com/about/en-us/download.

2 Browse to the OneDrive app

Now you're running OneDrive, you'll need to find it. Click the folder icon in the **Taskbar** to open File Explorer, then in the left menu pane, click on OneDrive to reveal the files and folders contained within; by default this should be limited to Documents, Favourites, Music, Pictures, Public and Videos. Alternatively, you can browse using the drop-down arrows in the left menu pane.

Explore

Save photos to OneDrive



Jargon buster!

► Tag

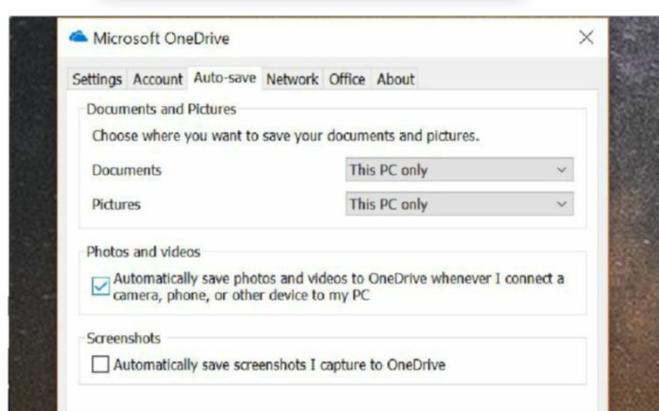
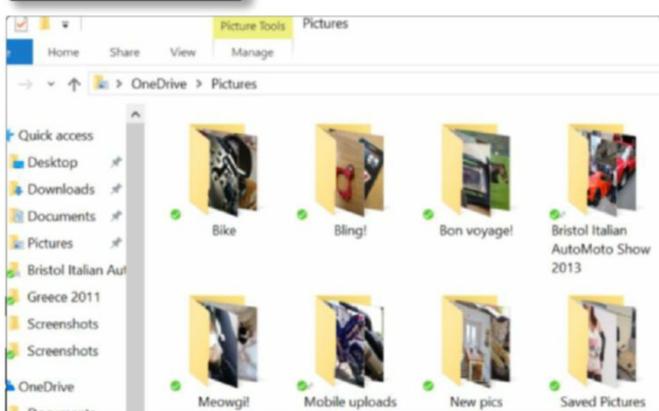
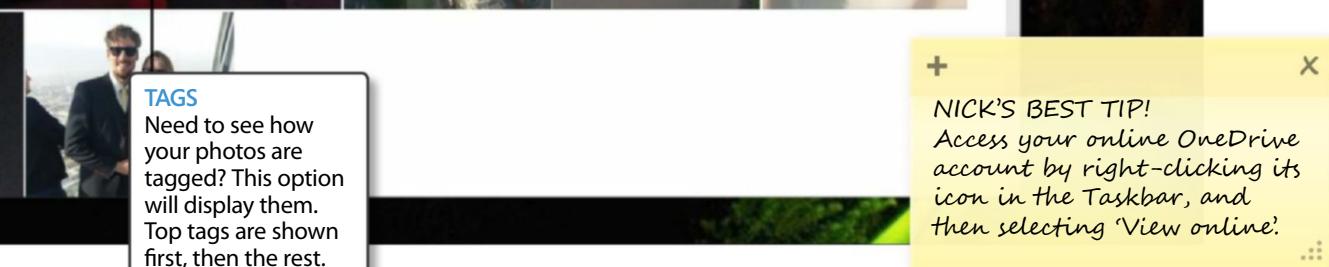
A tag is a keyword attached to a file – in this case an image – which is used to help you quickly find relevant items when searching for them on your PC.

► Taskbar

The bar at the bottom of the Windows desktop which contains the Start menu, launch icons and more.

► Offline

Any time that you're not connected to the internet, so you only have access to local files stored on your hard drive.

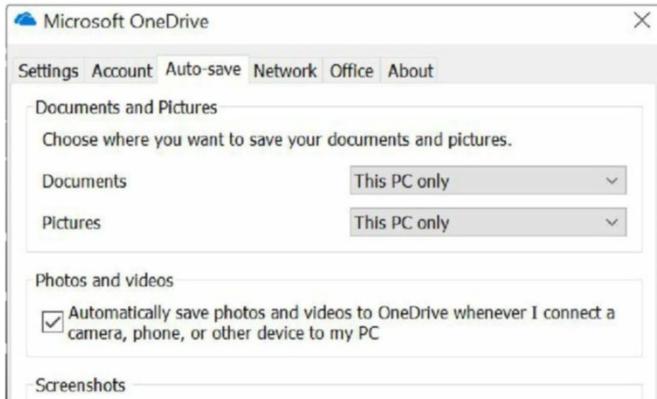


3 Add photos to OneDrive

Drag photos (or folders of photos) to OneDrive > Pictures and they'll automatically be uploaded to OneDrive online. You'll still be able to access your files locally on your PC's storage drive, but a copy will also be saved to the cloud. When OneDrive is uploading files, you'll see their progress within the Pictures folder – files that have a green tick on them have synced successfully.

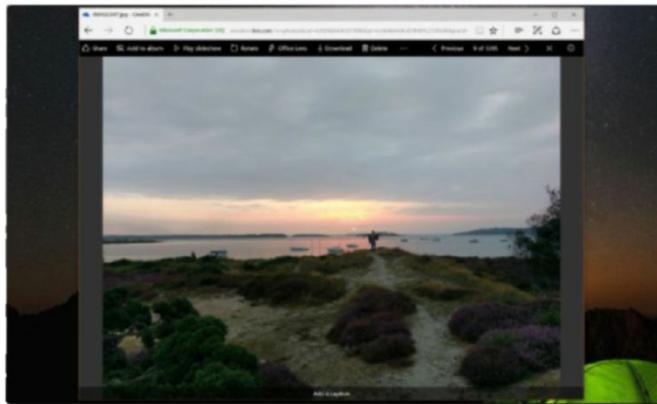
4 Auto upload camera photos

If you download photos from a camera or phone and save them to your PC, you can configure OneDrive to automatically upload these photos to the Pictures folder on OneDrive online. To do so, right-click the OneDrive icon on the Taskbar, click Settings and next to where it says 'Automatically save photos and videos to OneDrive whenever I connect a camera...' check the tick box.



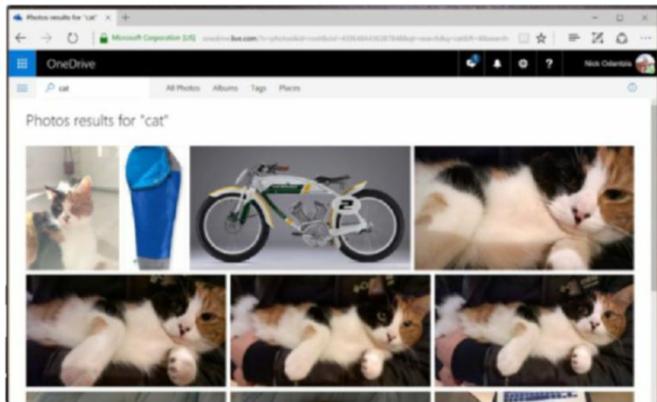
5 Auto upload screenshots

If you take lots of screenshots on your PC, they normally get sent straight to My Computer > Pictures > Screenshots, but if you want to automatically save them all to OneDrive online, go to the Settings options once again – as you did in Step 4 – but this time tick the check box next to where it says ‘Automatically save screenshots I capture to OneDrive’.



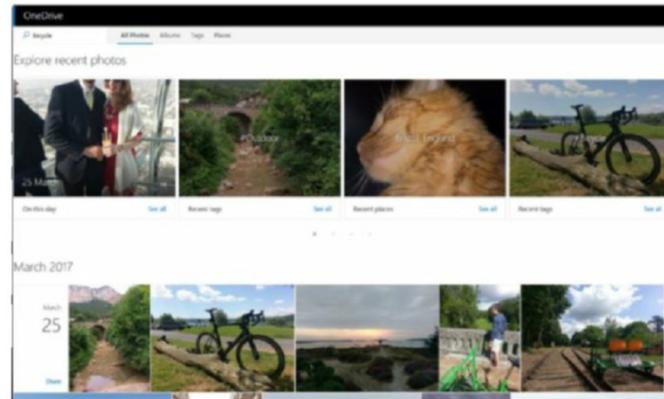
7 Browse your photos

At the top of your photo library, you’ll be able to see all the recent photos that have been added to OneDrive, categorised by those added on the current day, plus any recent places and **tags** that OneDrive has identified when they were uploaded. The rest of your photos are displayed in chronological order below. To get a closer look at a photo, just click on it to open it.



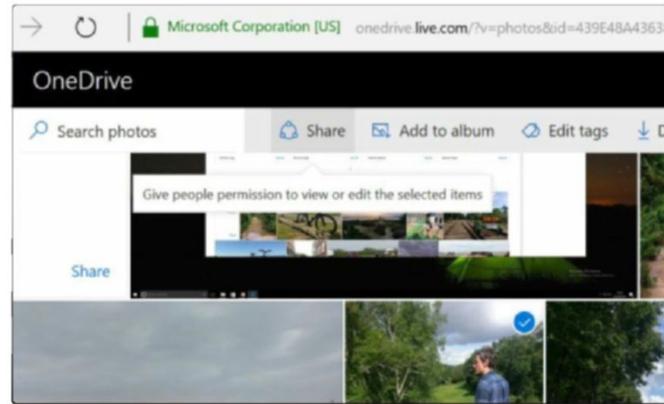
9 Find photos you like

Whenever you add a photo, OneDrive automatically scans it and adds a tag, based on what it thinks it contains. For instance, if you want to find pictures of cats, simply type ‘cat’ into the search box at the top of the OneDrive. You can also add your own tags to specific photos. Highlight them, as in Step 8, select Edit tags and you can either choose a pre-existing tag, or type in your own.



6 View your photos online

OneDrive gives you 5GB of free storage, which should be enough for your photo collection (you can buy more if you need it). To access that space, type ‘onedrive.live.com’ into your browser, hit [Enter] and sign in using your Microsoft account. Once you’ve signed in, click on the Photos heading on the left. You’ll now see the photos stored in the OneDrive > Pictures folder on your PC.



8 Do more with photos

Hover your mouse over an image and click the circle in the top right corner to select it. This reveals image-specific settings at the top of the browser window. Choose the appropriate option to share some photos or add them to a photo album. If you want to make changes to multiple images, just select them and any single changes will be made to all of them.



10 Your photos are safe!

By using OneDrive to store your photos you’ll never lose your favourite moments. And no matter where you are you can always access them, whether it’s on a laptop or on your mobile. You can even download a OneDrive app for your specific device, so that when you take photos on it they’ll automatically be uploaded to OneDrive – no need to connect it to your PC first. ■

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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

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- ▶ Anyone can do it
Straightforward
Tricky in parts

Suitable for...

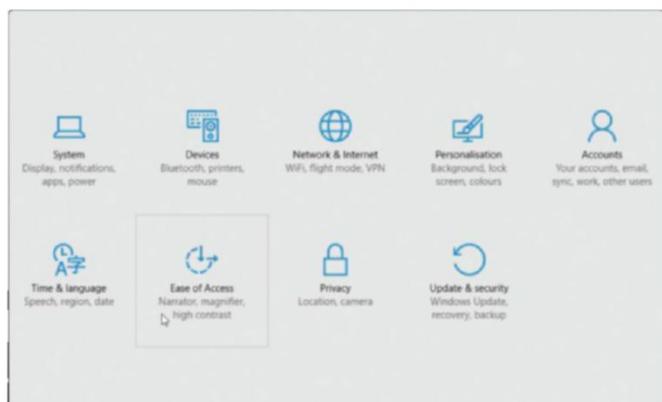
- Windows 10
- Windows 8.1
- Windows 7

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.

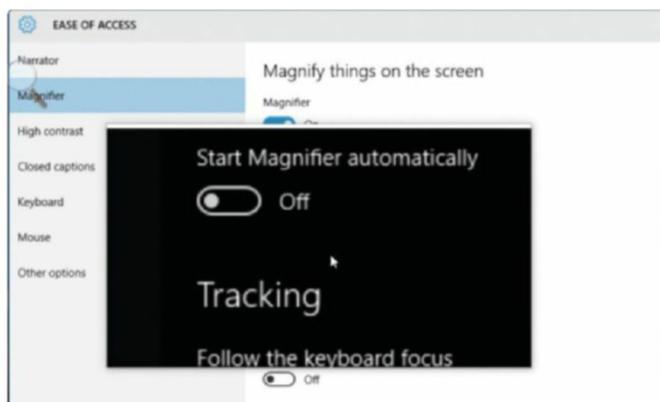


Step-by-step Make Windows work for you



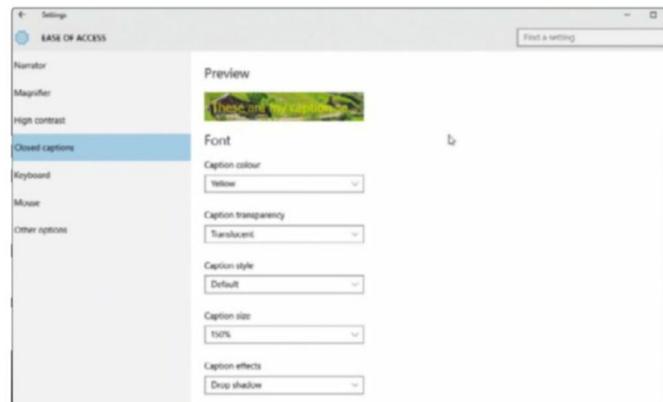
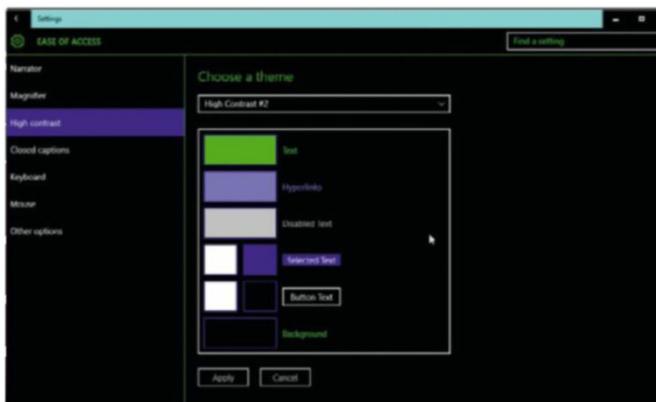
1 Read it aloud

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.



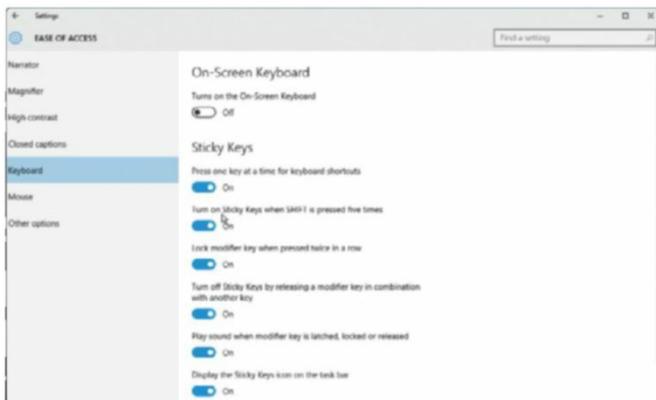
2 Get closer

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.



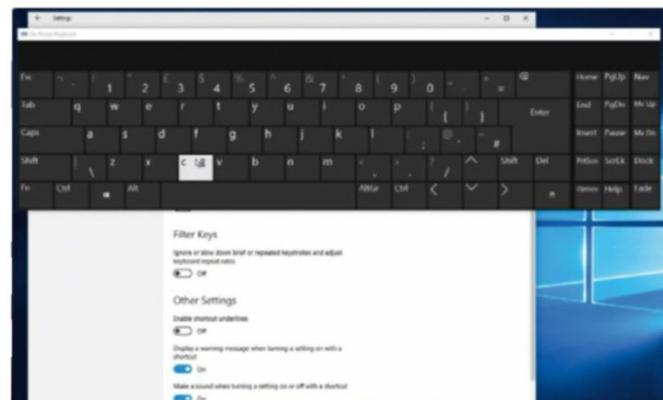
3 Bright and bold

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.



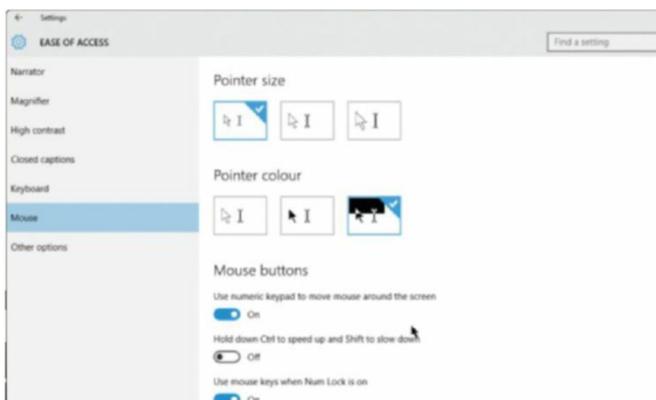
4 Clearer captions

Closed captions are displayed in many video programs for viewers who have limited hearing. Windows 10's Films and TV app supports closed captions (CC); 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.



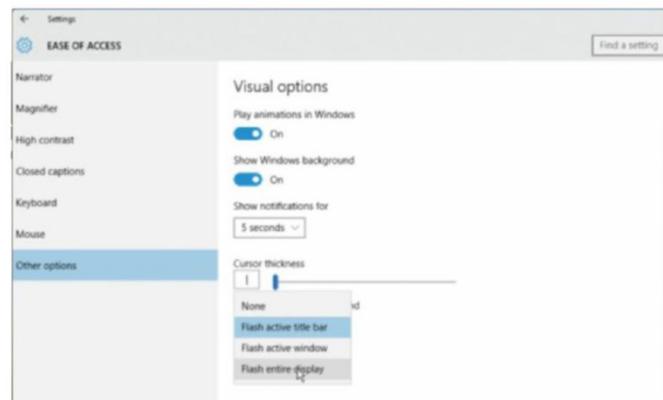
5 Shorter shortcuts

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 anti-virus 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... Streamline Windows 10



Your guide [Alex Cox](#) says...

"With just a little effort, you can make Windows 10 slicker, faster and easier to use"

At a glance

Skill level...

Anyone can do it

► Straightforward

Tricky in parts

Suitable for...

Windows 10

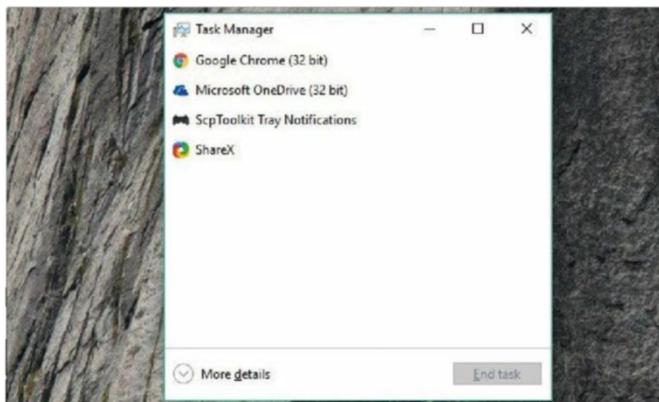
Windows 8.1

Windows 7

Not all computers fare particularly well in their transition to Windows 10. The promised quick, clean environment and super-fast boot time might not have materialised. Or there might be as much clutter as there was before, if not more. And for the majority who have had a pleasant Windows 10 experience, you could make it even better still.

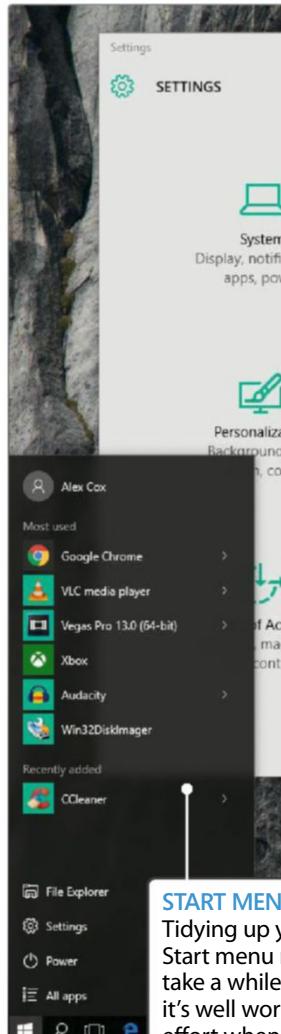
Here we'll speed up your system and clean it up at the same time. We'll disable some of Windows 10's less-essential features, clear away unwanted clutter, and make sure you're only running the programs you need at startup. You should end up with a faster boot time and a much more elegant experience. And since most of the things we're going to do are non-destructive, you'll be able to switch back the changes at any time if you miss certain features.

Step-by-step Clean your Windows 10 system



1 Start attack

If you've upgraded to Windows 10 or picked up a new PC with it pre-installed, it's likely a number of existing programs will run at startup. Each one of these takes time to load, contributing to that laboured power on sequence. Hit [Ctrl] + [Shift] + [Esc] to open Task Manager, click the arrow to see more information, then click the Startup tab to see the offenders.



SETTINGS
Many of Windows 10's newer, more vocal features can be disabled by digging through the Settings application.

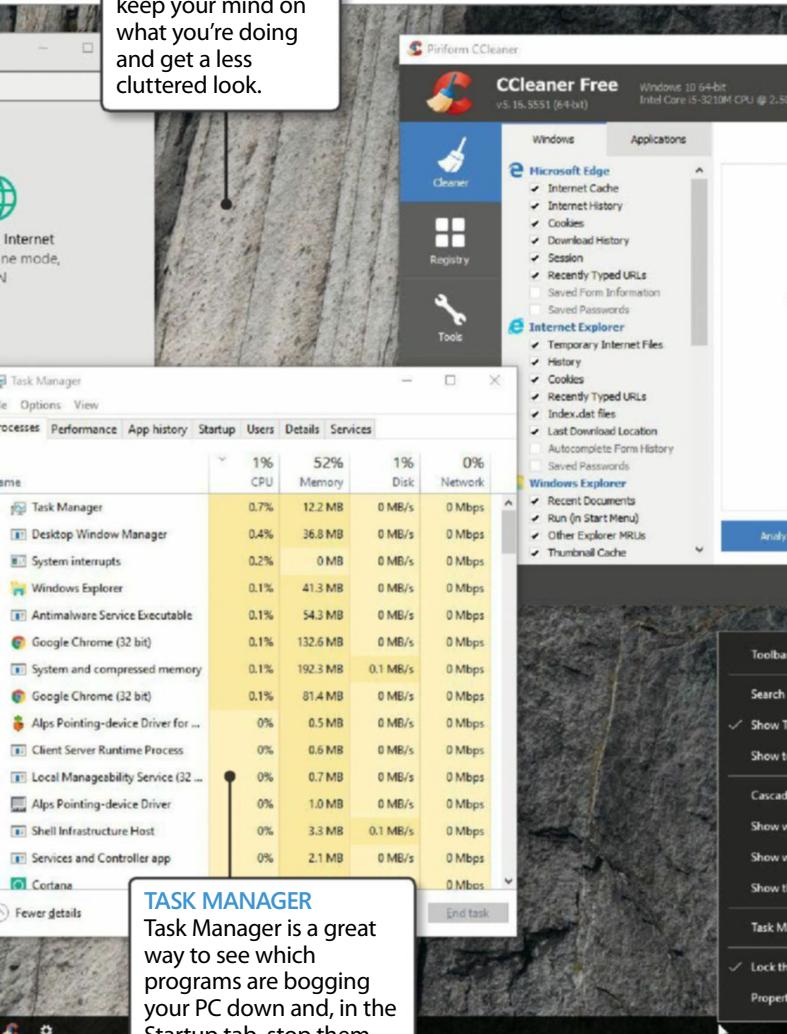
START MENU
Tidying up your Start menu might take a while, but it's well worth the effort when it looks this neat.

2 Choose your victims

You'll see a list of programs, the majority of which you've probably never used. So, with the exception of your anti-virus software, you're safe to disable as many as you like. Reboot your machine, and you should notice the difference. If you disable something then find you need it, head back to Task Manager to switch it back on again. See page 42 for more Startup speed tips.

NO ICONS

Hiding your desktop icons means you can keep your mind on what you're doing and get a less cluttered look.



TASK MANAGER

Task Manager is a great way to see which programs are bogging your PC down and, in the Startup tab, stop them running automatically.



ALEX'S BEST TIP!

What's slowing down your PC? Check Task Manager, and sort by the CPU or Memory columns to find out.

Jargon buster!

► Uninstall

Removing software completely from your computer. This usually deletes all of its files, including those stored away from the program's main folder, and cleans references to the software from your PC.

► Live Tiles

Windows 10's big, bright icons. These sometimes display up-to-date information, and usually lead to built-in programs.

► Third-party

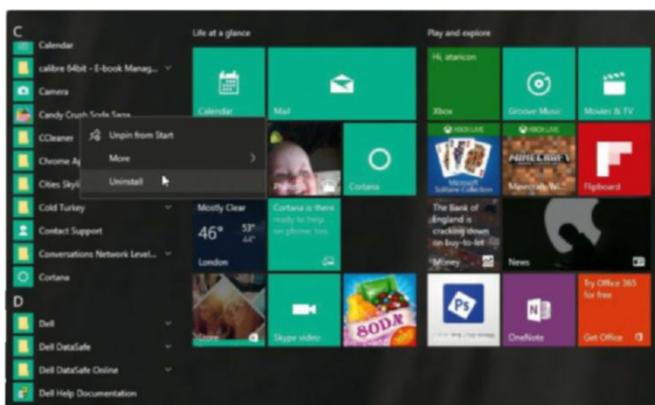
Applications made by a company other than Microsoft.

CCLEANER

Sometimes special measures are required. CCleaner can do away with certain things that Windows would rather have you keep.

TASKBAR SETTINGS

Gain extra screen space with a smaller taskbar and do away with that ugly search box using its right-click menu.

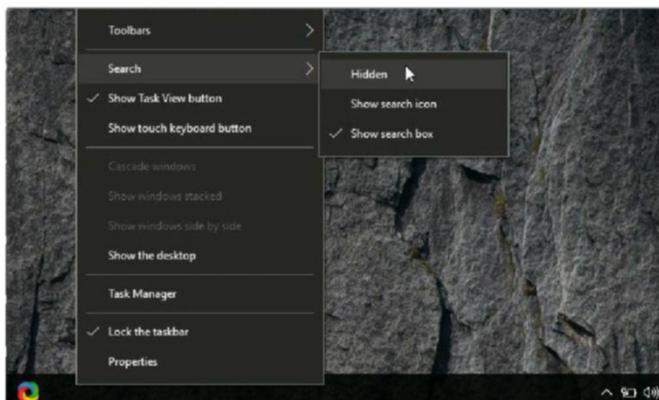


3 Quick uninstallation

While we're dealing with software, let's clean away some unloved applications. Windows 10 makes this easier than ever. Any application you've installed can be removed by finding it in the Start Menu's All Apps list, right clicking, then clicking **Uninstall**. Sadly, this won't work for Microsoft's pre-installed applications, however infrequently you might use them.

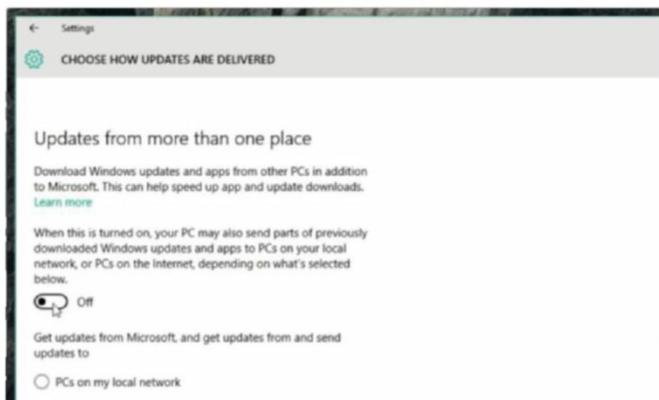
4 Menu massacre

Let's look at the Start Menu more closely, as it's ripe for a little streamlining. The **Live Tiles** on the right side won't all be to your taste, and in fact you can get rid of them altogether, although it'll take a little time. Right-click each one, and select 'Unpin from Start' until they're all gone. This will reduce your Start Menu to a single column.



5 Search silence

The gigantic search box at the bottom left of the screen isn't to everyone's taste, but it's easy to switch off. Right click an empty area of the Taskbar, select Search, then 'hidden' to do away with it. You can also select the Properties menu and use it to switch on small Taskbar icons for a sleeker look that saves screen space and shrinks the search box down to a single small icon.



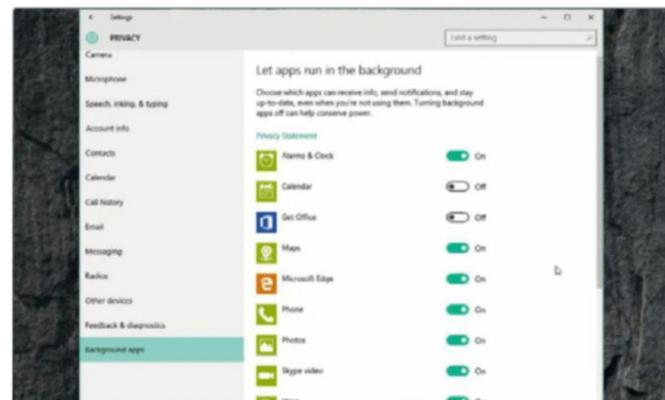
7 Bandwidth practice

Head back to the Settings screen and go to 'Update & security'. From the Windows Update tab click 'Advanced options' then 'Choose how updates are delivered'. Here you'll find a toggle switch for Microsoft's new peer-to-peer update sharing service, which uses your internet connection to send updates to other Windows 10 users. Switch it off for a little more internet speed.



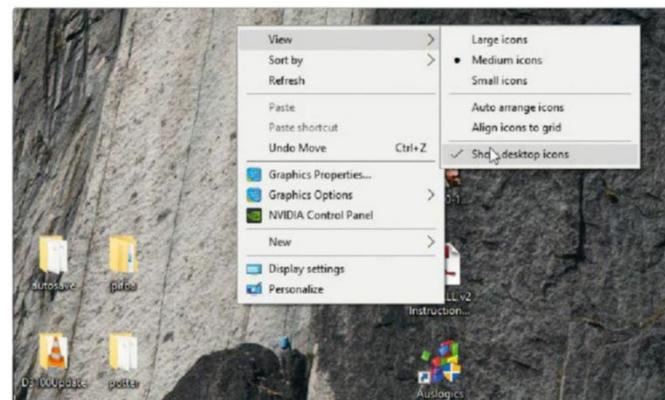
9 Enter the cleaner

Our final bit of house-cleaning involves an old favourite third-party program, CCleaner Free, which you can download from www.piriform.com/ccleaner. Not only is it great at scouring away the unwanted stuff lurking beneath Windows 10, you can also use it to do away with those useless apps that Microsoft insists must remain installed.



6 Background bother

Now let's search for a little more performance. While earlier we switched off auto-running [third-party](#) apps, Microsoft also automatically runs some of its own apps in the background. Click the Start, Settings, Privacy or Background apps to see the list, and use the toggle switches to disable them. This has the benefit of reducing a few of Windows 10's more pestering pop-ups.



8 Hiding icons

If you're like us, you have a messy desktop cluttered with files and icons. There's no need to delete them all – you can clean up that desktop to just your wallpaper in a couple of clicks. Right-click an area of empty space, go to the View menu and deselect 'Show Desktop icons'. When you need to see your stuff again, view it through File Explorer, or reverse the process.



10 A full clean

In CCleaner's tools tab, seek out the built-in Windows 10 apps you wish to remove, click them, then click Uninstall. Be careful, as you can remove semi-essential tools like the Windows Store and it's very difficult to replace them later on. Finish off by running CCleaner's Cleaner function (select it in the left menu) to wipe away just about everything we haven't already covered. ■

THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO BUILDING YOUR OWN PC

The No.1 guide to building & overclocking

180
PACKED PAGES

THE ULTIMATE **PC Building** HANDBOOK

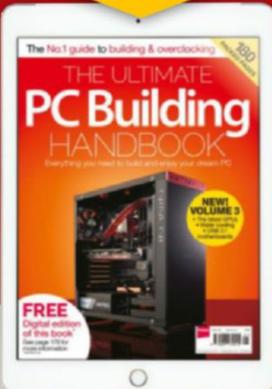
Everything you need to build and enjoy your dream PC



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GET ORGANISED WITH YOUR PC

Take back control of your chaotic life with our pick of the best free tools and services

M

odern life is fast, isn't it? It can be almost impossible to keep up with the torrent of information placed before us, demands made of us and the content we consume. How on earth can anyone

possibly stay on top of it all?

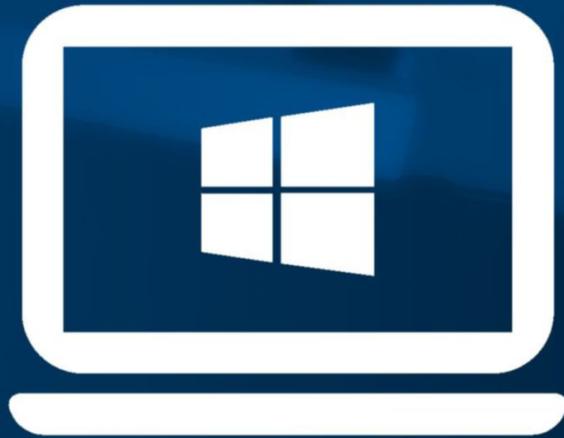
Ironically, much of this deluge originates from our tech – computers, mobiles, smart TVs and so on. It's only fair, therefore, that we task those devices with helping us to better manage our lives. And the good news is that your Windows PC can play a central role.

In this feature, we'll round up some of the best tools and services out there for organising the various aspects of your life, whether you're at home, in the workplace or out and about. We'll cover broad bases with tools for taking and

organising notes, managing projects and even acting as your personal assistant (Hello, Cortana). We'll also look at managing your email by archiving old messages to another destination so they're safe, and not cluttering up your main inbox.

If you're the kind of person who struggles with money, we'll also reveal a free tool for better managing your finances. We'll also help you stay on top of your media files, from taming bloated photo folders to fixing incorrectly tagged music as well as providing you with a powerful, user-friendly way to manage and consume your media.

Throw in a handy password-management system and a convenient tool for cataloguing just about any kind of personal collection – from books to Blu-rays – and you've just taken your first steps to putting your life back in order. Enough chit-chat, it's time to take back control...





SPEAK TO CORTANA

If you're happy to surrender some of your privacy, then handing over your disorganised life to Windows could be the best thing you ever do. And the way to do that is by tapping into Cortana, Windows 10's virtual personal assistant. Invoke her via the Search box on the Windows Taskbar and you'll find she's capable of doing a lot more than helping you find programs, system settings, files and more.

To find out what Cortana is capable of, select the Search box and then click the Notebook icon on the left. Work through the various sections to offer as much (or as little) information about yourself as you want, and configure what you'd like Cortana to help you with. One of Cortana's best uses is as a reminders tool – just type something like 'Remind me to get milk tomorrow after work' and you'll be able to create a reminder, complete with timely prompts to ensure you don't let it slip. You can also get answers to pertinent questions for things like organising your travel plans, and you can use your PC's microphone to dictate an email before fetching the latest sports results.

All of this is helpful, but it's not much use if it's locked to your main PC. Fear not, install the Cortana app for your iPhone, iPad or Android device, and it'll sync with your PC, enabling you to take her out on the road with you.

"To find out what Cortana is capable of, select the Search box and then click the Notebook icon on the left"



A Cockney in the Outback
Monday, September 3, 2012 3:45 PM

Tags: #family history #Howell #pink

Notes about Annette Pink's memoir of the five years she and husband Percy spent in the Australian outback in the 1920s.

driving a six horse team. When Perce received my cable, Mr. Wilkins offered him land, seed, and use of machinery, if we would stay with him and settle at ... However, Perce wanted to live in the warm temperate south-west near Busselton.

We were married in Perth, then joined other settlers going to Karridale. We were given ten sheets of corrugated iron to build a humpy, and a stove for cooking. The men worked together to build a temporary shelter

Bring all your notes, thoughts and jottings into one place with OneNote.

TAKE AND ORGANISE NOTES

When it comes to recording your thoughts, a note-taking tool is a must. If all you require is a simple text-based notes tool that syncs across all major platforms, then check out Simplenote (<https://simplenote.com/>), but if you want a more powerful note-taking app

then Microsoft's free OneNote tool (www.onenote.com) is a must.

OneNote allows you to capture just about anything: type text, embed images and grab snippets of web pages via its web-clipping tool. You can mix and match elements, create tables, charts and more – each one is a 'container' that can be dragged and dropped around the page, enabling you to control the layout of your notes.

If you have access to a touchscreen on your phone or tablet, you can even scribble notes with your finger or a stylus too. OneNote works across Windows, Mac, iOS, and Android, and can sync in with Office 365 too (although it's not mandatory).

Notes are stored in notebooks, which are split into tabbed sections.

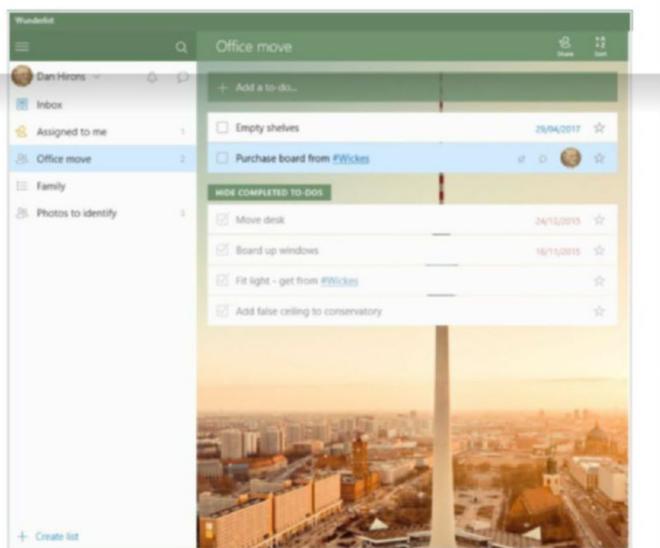
PLAN TASKS

whip into shape, then Wunderlist (www.wunderlist.com) is a better choice. It's task-oriented, making it easy to plan anything from your next grocery shop to a full-blown project containing multiple tasks.

Wunderlist works around the concept of to-do lists, with each task given its own checkbox to indicate

the task into multiple steps (or subtasks) and adding more descriptive text and photos.

Wunderlist can ping you with deadlines and reminders, and supports collaborative working for sharing a project between friends or colleagues. The app works on desktop, mobile and through the web, so you have access to your to-do list from anywhere.



Office move

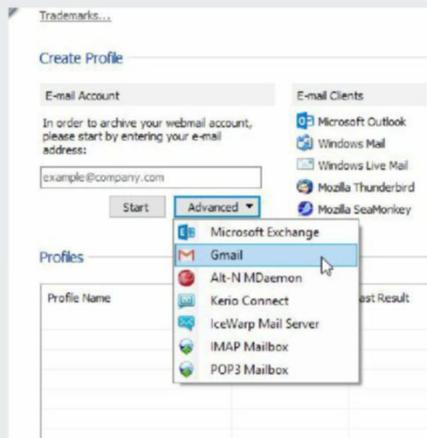
- + Add a to-do...
- Empty shelves 29/04/2017
- Purchase board from Wickes

HIDE COMPLETED TO-DOS

- Move desk 24/02/2015
- Board up windows 18/01/2015
- Fit light - get from Wickes
- Add false ceiling to conservatory

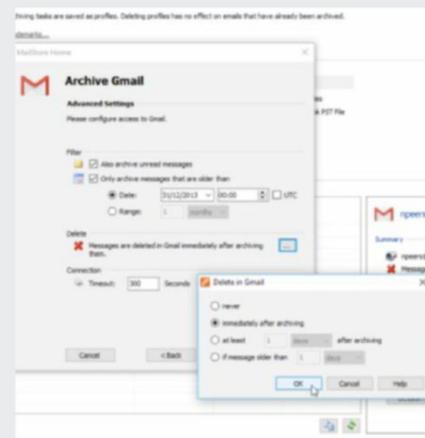
+ Create list

ARCHIVE OLD EMAIL



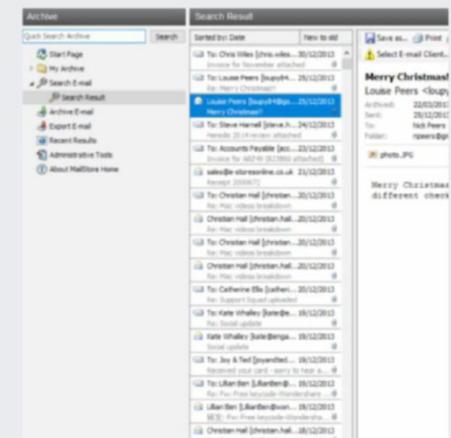
1 Select mailbox

We recommend installing MailStore Home as a portable application, so you can house it on your backup drive. Once done, launch the application. Click the Archive E-mail button to create your first profile. Select your mail client, browse for a file containing your messages or click Advanced under the webmail address to choose an online provider.



2 Set archive options

Once you've connected your account, client or mailbox, click Next to access the Advanced Settings screen. Here you can choose specific folders, plus filter the archiving by date or range (the latter option allows you to add mail to the archive after a certain time has passed). Some mailboxes allow you to delete archived mail from the original inbox too.



3 Retrieve mail

Once done, click Run and wait for the mail to be retrieved, archived and – if applicable – deleted. From now on you can browse your archived mail via My Archive, or use Search Email to track down specific messages. Messages can be read, and attachments saved, directly from MailStore, or visit Export Email to set up a profile for sending archived mail back to.

Each section can contain a list of pages (and subpages), giving you granular control over how your notes are organised. You can share individual pages, sections and entire notebooks too, making Microsoft's OneNote a truly collaborative tool.

CLEAR OUT YOUR INBOX

These days, we're all bombarded with emails, whether they're personal, professional, promotional or pure spam in nature. Most email clients offer tools for manually sorting mail through the creation of rules while dealing with obvious spam, but you can still find yourself overwhelmed after a time.

MailStore Home (from www.mailstore.com) enables you to archive mail into a single central repository, helping you free space on your mail server while taking the load off your email program (or webmail client).

Once archived, you can use MailStore to search for specific messages and even restore or export messages back to your email client should they be needed. Streamline your email folders today with the 3-step guide above...

MANAGE YOUR MONEY

One of the hardest things to stay on top of is your spending. Learn to

"LastPass' vault can be used to store secure notes, including profiles"

carefully track every incoming and outgoing transaction, and you'll start saving money simply by not spending what you don't have (or think you have). Quicken may be long forgotten, but its natural successor continues to thrive, and is completely free to boot.

HomeBank (<http://homebank.free.fr>) is a free personal accounting software program that enables you to manage multiple accounts from savings (assets) and current accounts to credit cards and loans (liabilities). You record each transaction – including transferring money between accounts – and group them into categories. It also enables you to set up recurring transactions for direct debits, standing orders and other regular payments to save time.

As you build a picture of your finances, use HomeBank's Reports menu to see where your money is going and identify areas where you can tighten your finances further. Try it and you'll have no excuse when it comes to finding ways to save.

SORT AND SAFEGUARD YOUR SENSITIVE INFO

We won't lecture you (again) on the importance of using strong passwords and keeping your sensitive data away from prying eyes. Password managers, such as LastPass (www.lastpass.com), can help since they offer a quick and convenient way to generate strong, unique passwords for your accounts, then lock them away in an encrypted vault protected by a single master password – the only one you need to remember going forward. LastPass' vault can also be used to store secure notes, including profiles for quickly filling out forms.

LastPass isn't immune to attack from third parties, but it moves quickly to fix reported vulnerabilities. Make sure you enable two-factor authentication (Account Settings > Multifactor Options) to provide an extra layer of security, which blocks anyone who manages to guess or hack your password from accessing your data.

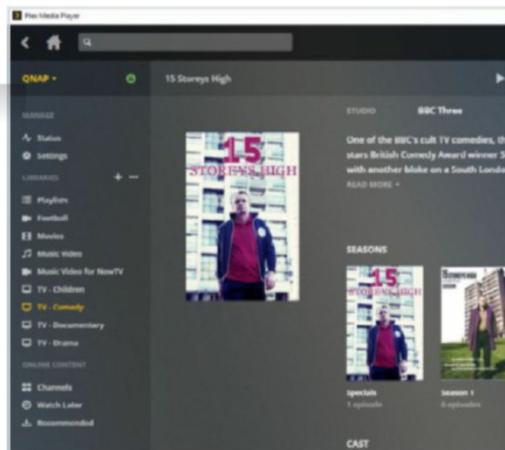
KEEP MEDIA ORGANISED

You have digital movies, music and photos you wish to share and access from anywhere in the home (or even further afield). How do you do it? By installing Plex Media Server (<https://plex.tv>) on your main computer (or a compatible network drive).

Just make sure you organise your media into the correct folder structure, and if you name it up correctly (see our guide at www.techradar.com/1155622) Plex will download artwork and extra information about your media, such as artist, movie synopsis or actors to help you navigate your media collection.

[Plex will download artwork and extra information about your media, such as artist, movie synopsis or actors to help you navigate your media collection.](http://www.techradar.com/1155622)

Once set up, simply install Plex Media Player on your computers, or download the Plex app for your mobile or smart TV, and you'll have on-demand access from anywhere that you choose.



STAY AHEAD AT SCHOOL

If you're a student – young, old or anywhere in-between – then you need My Study Life (www.mystudylife.com). Forget paper-based timetables and written homework diaries, My Study Life is a completely free service that offers scheduling, timetabling, tasks and reminders with multi-platform support, enabling you to sync and access your information wherever you happen to be – it'll even work offline for those times when you're stuck in a mobile network dead spot.

Once you've signed up, whizz through the wizard where you set your school's start date and the average length of each class. Then it's on to defining your academic year (so My

Study Life knows it shouldn't buzz you about classes outside of term time) and putting your timetable in place. My Study Life supports three types of timetable: fixed schedule, plus day and week rotations. Separate timetables for classes and exams are provided, and once your timetables are in place you can then add task-based assignments for individual subjects as well as set up revision tasks for upcoming exams.

Large assignments can be broken down into manageable chunks, enabling you to mark them off in stages. All tasks are accompanied by deadlines and reminders, ensuring you've no excuse for forgetting to hand in a piece of homework. The main screen then provides a handy

dashboard alerting you to all your upcoming classes, assignments, exams and more. You'll never have to decode a colour-coded chart again...

TAKE CHARGE OF YOUR PHOTO COLLECTION

How many hundreds – thousands even – of photos do you have cluttering up your PC's storage drive? Have they all been ported across from a camera, phone or tablet, confusingly named and scattered all over the place? If so, then you need a tool like Phototheca, which you can install through the Microsoft Store.

The free version supports up to 5,000 photos – simply select the folder containing all your photos and wait for them to be imported. By default, photos are organised into events based on folder (you can then merge events or change how events are determined using date ranges), but you can also browse them by date or via a timeline.

Phototheca will automatically detect duplicates, enabling you to quickly remove them to free up space. You can also merge events, organise photos into albums (see the step-by-step guide opposite) and change photo captions from their filename to something more descriptive.

Once organised, you can share your photos easily with others via Twitter, Google, email and other supported platforms. Upgrade for \$19.95 to remove the 5,000-photo limit.

GET YOUR PERSONAL COLLECTIONS ORGANISED

Do you have an impressive library of books? Constantly mislaying CDs because people keep 'borrowing' them? Want to catalogue your Blu-ray collection? Data Crow is a brilliant free cataloguing tool that has many time-saving features – select your

Start saving money using a money management tool such as HomeBank.



template (books, CDs, DVDs and so on) and you can speed up the cataloguing process by searching various online databases (such as Amazon), then downloading key information and even artwork with just a few clicks.

You will need to install Java from java.com if you haven't already. After installation, you can lock down security by typing 'java' into the Search box and choosing 'Configure Java'. Switch to the Security tab and untick 'Enable Java content in the browser' before setting security to 'Very High' and clicking OK.



Catalogue your precious collections with the help of Data Crow.

"Search for an album title, select the right one and match up your tracks"

Once done, download and install Data Crow from www.datacrow.net – launch the program and create a new catalogue. If your chosen type isn't covered, you can select the generic Container, then customise it to suit whatever it is you plan to catalogue.

Dig out your copy of issue 128 for a full step-by-step guide to using Data Crow.

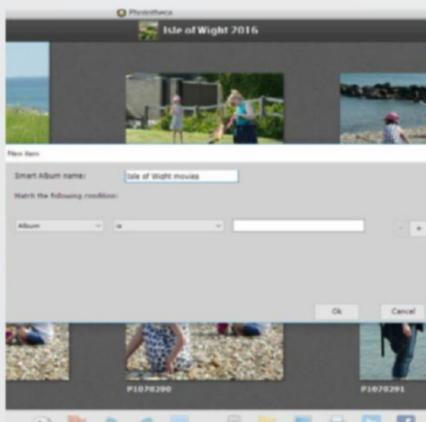
TAG MUSIC FILES

When you rip a CD, Windows Media Player attempts to tag each music track with the correct information, including track artist, song title and even artwork. But it's not always 100 per cent accurate, and what any about music videos you might also possess?

MP3Tag (www.mp3tag.de/en/) enables you to add, edit and remove tags from supported music and video formats, and links in with a number of online databases – including Amazon, Discogs and freedb – to speed up the process of tagging albums. Search for an album title, select the right one and match up your tracks.

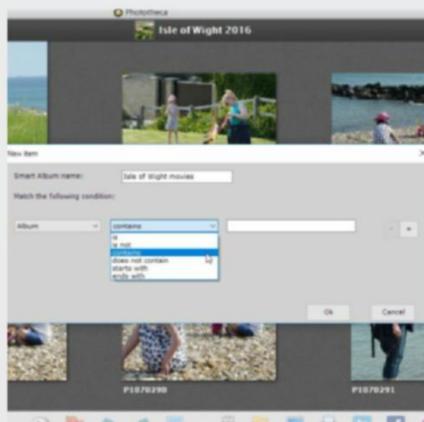
Once complete, you can even rename files using the artist and track names (or any naming convention that you choose) via the Convert menu. If your music library is full of 'unknown track' listings, then MP3Tag will help fix the problem for you. ■

CREATE A SMART PHOTO ALBUM



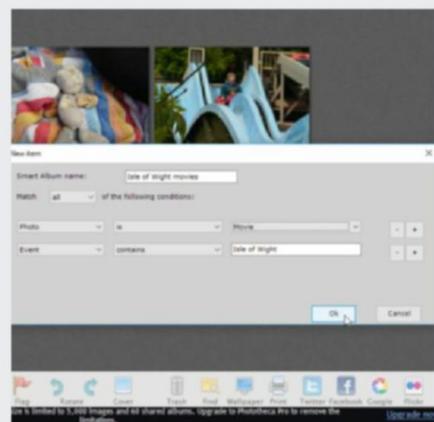
1 Name new album

Phototheque's Smart Albums automatically update whenever images are added to your library that match their criteria. Start by selecting File > New Smart Album. Give your album a suitable name, then choose what's selected by setting up one or more rules – each made up of three elements – that determine what content is included within it.



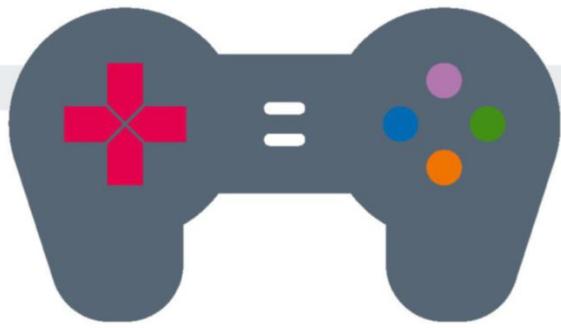
2 Anatomy of a rule

First, click the Album drop-down menu to choose what type of content is selected for the rule, such as text, filename, event or keyword. The second element determines whether your content matches (is), doesn't match (is not), contains, doesn't contain, starts or ends with the third element. Options vary based on your chosen content type.



3 Finish, test, update

The final element requires you to enter specific words or choose available options from the list (such as if a photo is flagged, a duplicate or a movie). Once done, click '+' to add further rules or OK to view the results. Right-click the album name in the left-hand navigation pane and choose Edit Smart Album to make further refinements.



GAMES FOR 2017

Keeping the PC ahead of the pack

Now is a great time to be a PC gamer. The console battles for audience, along with utter saturation of the phone games market, mean that publishing on PC is the safest, easiest bet developers can make.

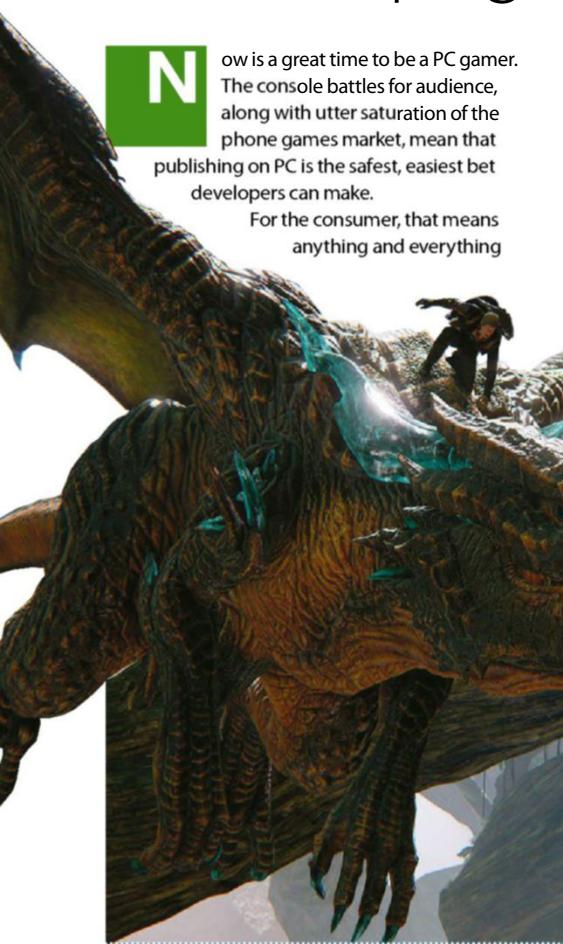
For the consumer, that means anything and everything

you want to play is on PC – except if some lunatic at a console company has dropped a million or two on buying a temporary exclusive. Indeed, the number of games released on Steam every year has grown so much that it always exceeds the total number of games from previous years.

We've drawn up a list of the games we think are going to be the

best over the coming year. We've judged them on innovation and implementation, rather than on how convincing their bullshots are, or how shiny the protagonist's hair looks. If we've missed your favorite, well, that's life.

Of course, there's a whole load of games we did want to include but didn't have enough space or enthusiasm for – but they still deserve a mention. They are: *Red Dead Redemption 2*, *Tekken 7*, *World's Adrift*, *Vampyr*, *Bloodstained*, *Quake Champions*, *Kingdom Come: Deliverance*, *Lego City Undercover*, *Nidhogg 2*, *Mu Cartographer*, *Battle Chef*, *Spellforce 3*, *Sea of Thieves*, *The Church in the Darkness*, *Thimbleweed Park*, *Full Throttle Remastered*, and *Xenonauts 2*.

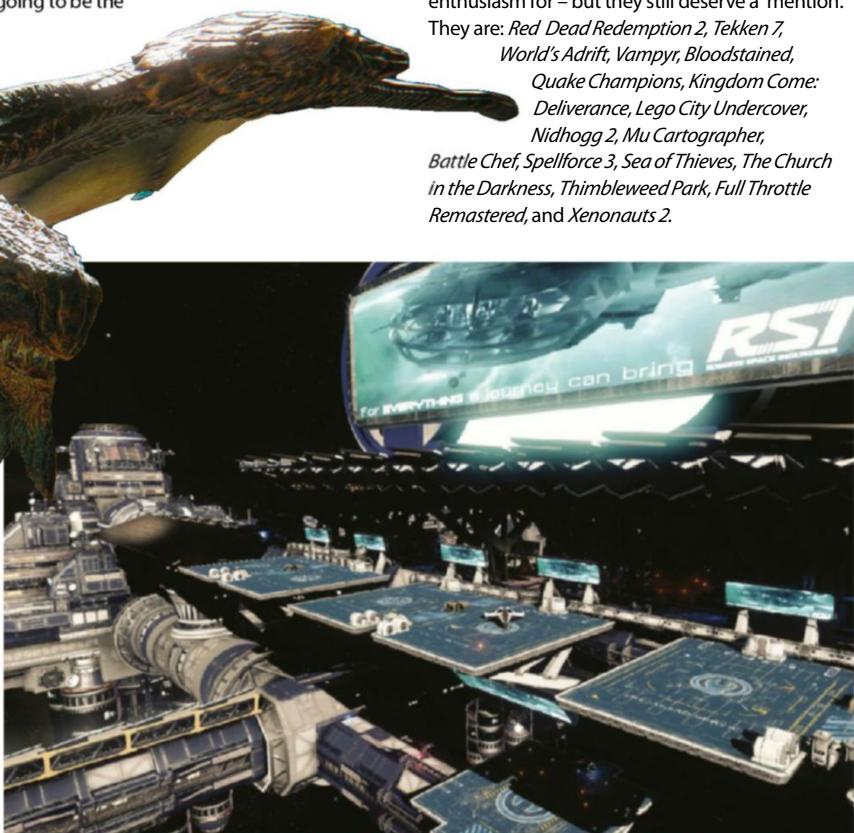


Scalebound Release date: 2017

An action role-playing game (RPG) in which you have a giant noble dragon as a sidekick, which you can order about or take direct control of. Using your dragon, you explore the strange world of Draconis, and defeat the enemies that threaten it and Earth. Combat is combo-driven, and the game can be played through in co-op – with the added bonus that each player gets to have their own dragon.

» **Publisher:** Microsoft

» **Developer:** Platinum



Star Citizen Release date: TBC

Star Citizen is Chris "Wing Commander" Roberts' return to video games. It's actually two games in one: a single-player/co-op FPS campaign packed with Hollywood stars such as Gary Oldman, Gillian Anderson, and Mark Hamill, and a massively multiplayer FPS/combat/trading/exploration game in a huge persistent universe. It's built on the CryEngine, so it's as pretty as sin, and supports all the VR headsets. It's also ridiculously ambitious.

» **Publisher & Developer:** Roberts Space Industries (RSI)



Pyre Release date: 2017

Supergiant made its name with the stunning isometric action games *Bastion* and *Transistor*. *Pyre* returns to a fantasy world with a 1980s cartoon style. You play The Reader, leading a trio of exiles across a purgatorial land. Its unique selling point is that it includes text adventure elements, while its combat system is like three-person fantasy basketball.

» **Publisher & Developer:** Supergiant



Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon Wildlands Release date: Out now

Tom Clancy may have passed away, but his dystopian militarism continues. Ubisoft has said that *Ghost Recon Wildlands* is one of the biggest open-world games it has ever created, including mountains, forest, deserts, and salt flats, scattered across Bolivia.

» **Publisher:** Ubisoft » **Developer:** Ubisoft Paris



For Honor

Release date: Out now

A medieval combat/beat-'em-up historical mash-up. Players take control of a Viking, Samurai, or Knight in multiplayer battles, often alongside weaker non-player characters (NPCs). There are three single-player or co-op campaigns, too. Combat is the game's most ambitious aspect: Players must match the direction of each other's attacks to defend or parry.

» **Publisher:** Ubisoft
» **Developer:** Ubisoft Montreal



Tacoma Release date: Early 2017

Fullbright's *Gone Home* was acclaimed for its depiction of a mysteriously abandoned suburban American home. Its next game steps a million miles from the parochial, taking its first-person abandoned mystery into space. Reminiscent of *Solaris* and *Everybody's Gone To The Rapture*, you explore the augmented reality traces of a space station's staff on their last day.

» **Publisher & Developer:** Fullbright



Halo Wars 2

Release date: Out now

This is an old-fashioned real-time strategy (RTS) game, in the style of *Starcraft II*, where you control two factions. It features a large array of FPS-inspired multiplayer modes, ranging from co-op skirmish modes, to deathmatch, Capture-And-Hold, and an innovative deck-building mode called Blitz.

» **Publisher:** Microsoft
» **Developer:** Creative Assembly



Shenmue 3

Release date: December 2017

In 1999, *Shenmue* was the most expensive video game ever, estimated to have cost Sega over \$47 million. This time, it has raised \$6.6 million from crowdfunding. *Shenmue III* is an open-world action adventure, where you battle beat-'em-up enemies and quick time events.

» **Publisher:** Ys Net
» **Developer:** Nielo/Ys Net

Yooka-Laylee

Release date: Out now

Among Nintendo fans of a certain vintage, the platform games created by UK developers Rare, including *Banjo Kazooie*, are thought about with fond nostalgia. *Yooka-Laylee* is the spiritual sequel to those games, created by former Rare employees. You take control of the chameleon Yooka and the bat Laylee, as they explore worlds contained in magical books, collecting Pagies, in an attempt to prevent a corporate overlord from destroying all the books.

» **Publisher:** Team 17

» **Developer:** Playtonic



Call of Cthulhu

Release date: 2017

H.P. Lovecraft's *Cthulhu* mythos has spawned many imitators, but surprisingly few games. This release is based on the 1981 tabletop role-playing game (RPG). Like the books, the game is an investigation that quickly turns into horror, where players must strive to penetrate the secrets of a cult that's taken over a small fishing town.

» **Publisher:** Focus Home Interactive

» **Developer:** Cyanide



Prey

Release date: May 5, 2017

Prey already looks like this year's best blockbuster, a spiritual sequel to *System Shock*. It's a first-person RPG set in an alternate timeline, where the US fully funded the 1960s space program, before Earth was attacked by aliens. Cut to 2032, and Morgan Yu finds himself inside a space station, using every weapon and resource he can to survive against bizarre aliens.

» **Publisher:** Bethesda

» **Developer:** Arkana



Resident Evil 7

Release date: Out now

Capcom has started again with *Resident Evil 7: Biohazard*, shifting to first-person horror, reminiscent of the classic *Condemned*. Set in rural America four years after the last game, you control Ethan Winters, a man searching for his missing wife. Soon enough, he encounters mutant creatures he has to put down with shotguns, flamethrowers, chainsaws, and the like.

» **Publisher & Developer:** Capcom



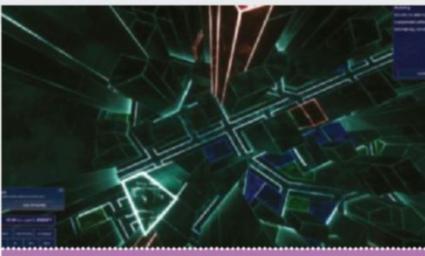
Absolver

Release date: 2017

Created by a bunch of ex-Ubisoft Paris developers, *Absolver* is a highly technical martial arts RPG with an impressionistic art style. You play a Prospect, a member of the Absolvers, a elite group of combatants who must bring stability to their world. You'll learn attacks, feints, and parries, which you can build into combos. These switch between stances, so combat is fluid and quickly fatal. You can fight with or alongside other human players – or spar with them to learn new moves.

» **Publisher:** Devolver

» **Developer:** Sloclap



Frozen Synapse 2

Release date: 2017

Frozen Synapse was a great example of the turn-based combat mechanics of games such as *XCOM* and *Laser Squad*, albeit with a twist. *Frozen Synapse 2* is where developer Mode 7 gets to show off its own ideas, taking place in a giant procedurally-generated cyberpunk city.

» **Publisher & Developer:** Mode 7



Crackdown 3

Release date: 2017

PC gamers didn't get to try the previous *Crackdowns*, but the first was one of the best Xbox 360 exclusives. Up to 99 players take control of a superpowered cop, with total impunity to take down gangs that have taken over his city. With an impressive arsenal, the power of cloud computing is being used to make the entire city destructible.

» **Publisher:** Microsoft » **Developer:** Reagent Games



Divinity: Original Sin 2

Release date: 2017

Divinity: Original Sin was a huge open-world game, with innovative character classes, magical systems, and combat. This sequel has been in early access since Autumn 2016, and expands on the original in every way. You can play almost any race, talk to anyone, go anywhere, interact with anything, kill any non-player character (NPC), destroy any object... Its story follows a wielder of forbidden magic, battling a divine order, seeking to establish a new god. The game has rave reviews on Steam. Definitely worth a look.

» **Publisher & Developer:** Larian Studios



Conan Exiles

Release date: 2017

Funcom made the original *Age of Conan*; now it's returning to the barbarian's world with *Conan Exiles*, a survival game, which works in both single- and multiplayer. As an exile, you plunder ancient ruins and shelter from sandstorms. Survive, and you can build your clan's legacy.

» **Publisher & Developer:** Funcom



Torment: Tides of Numenera

Release date: Out now

It might not be a straight sequel to 1999's *Planescape: Torment*, but as a spiritual sequel with much of the old team involved, this is definitely exciting. It's a party-based role-playing game (RPG), where the focus is on choice, interaction, and story – not necessarily combat. You play the Last Castoff, the erstwhile host body of a godlike human, now abandoned and forever changed by the experience, who must find his immortal predecessor.

» **Publisher:** Techland » **Developer:** inXile Entertainment

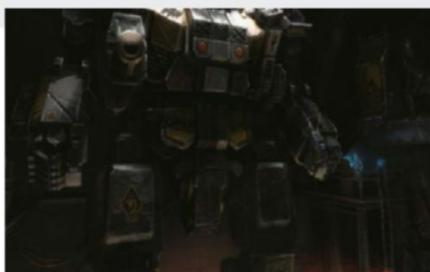


Dawn of War III

Release date: Out now

Games Workshop's video game adaptations seem everywhere now, but the *Dawn of War* RTS series is the longest-running. *Dawn of War III* promises to bring the series up to date, with even bigger battles, featuring some returning friends.

» **Publisher:** Sega » **Developer:** Relic



BattleTech

Release date: 2017

Good news for old-school tabletop gamers: *BattleTech/Mechwarrior* is back. The player takes control of a squad of Battlemechs, choosing their loadout, and taking them to turn-based war in the service of one of the world's noble houses.

» **Publisher & Developer:** Harebrained Schemes



The Signal from TOLVA

Release date: 2017

You control a surveyor robot on a planet dotted with the titanic remains of fallen civilisations. The focus on controlling, fighting, and killing other robots is a step away from the disempowerment of Big Robot's *Sir, You Are Being Hunted*.

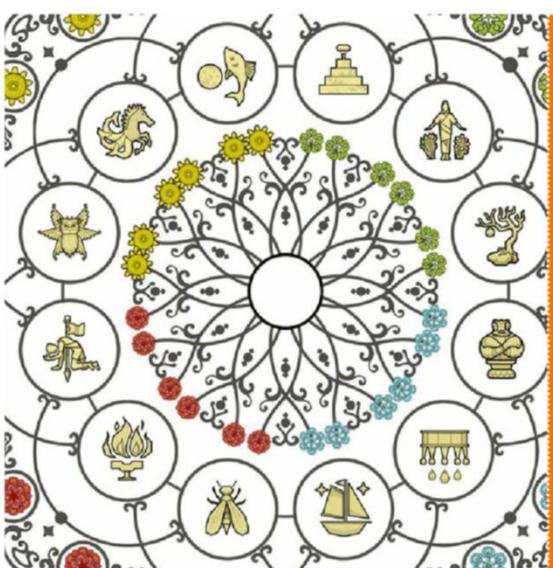
» **Publisher & Developer:** Big Robot

Agents of Mayhem

Release date: 2017

Volition was well respected before its *Saints Row* series copied *GTA* and (whisper it) improved on it. Now it's establishing a new series, albeit still in the *Saints Row* universe. You take the part of three heroes, fighting the criminal masterminds of LEGION, in Seoul, an open world full of missions, doomsday devices, and underground lairs. You can swap between agents easily in the field, and customize them to create a hero dream team.

» **Publisher:** Deep Silver
» **Developer:** Volition



Gorogoa

Release date: Spring 2017

There are plenty of strange indie titles due in 2017, but *Gorogoa* has been on our watchlists for years. Players are presented with four images in a grid, and must combine and explore each image to discover their connection and continue exploring. Intriguingly, there's no help available, the game is drawn in an unusual *fin de siècle* style, and it's completely wordless.

» **Publisher:** Annapurna Interactive
» **Developer:** Jason Roberts



Tokyo 42

Release date: Early 2017

Tokyo 42 is a beautiful combat puzzle game, inspired by *Syndicate* and *GTA*. You take the part of an assassin, and must mingle stealth, bullet physics, acrobatic jumping, and cover in simulated crowds, as you close in on your target. Single-player has you following a wannabe assassin getting embroiled with sinister forces, while multiplayer mixes stealth and lethality for a perfect lunchbreak game.

» **Publisher:** Mode 7 » **Developer:** SMAC

South Park: The Fractured But Whole

Release date: 2017

Ubisoft's previous *South Park* game was a perfect translation of *South Park* to a... turn-based RPG? This time, Stan, Kyle, Kenny and Cartman are imitating superheroes in their make-believe, and you, as the New Kid, have to intervene in the brewing civil war between the heroes, and defeat the dark power behind it. Oh, and your superpower is farts.

» **Publisher:** Ubisoft
» **Developer:** Ubisoft San Fran



Mass Effect: Andromeda

Release date: Out now

Mass Effect 3 controversially ended Bioware's *Mass Effect* series, halting the story of Commander Shepard and his battle against the Reapers. Now, the story continues in a new galaxy, 600 years later, where humanity is seeking to find new homes. You play Pathfinder Ryder, exploring this open-world galaxy in your starship, or on the surface of planets in your buggy, or on foot with a team. You can fight, reason with, and romance many of the characters you meet.

» **Publisher:** EA » **Developer:** Bioware



Hand of Fate 2

Release date: Early 2017

The original *Hand of Fate* game was like something from a fairy tale. You sat facing a mysterious, masked stranger known as The Dealer. He dealt you cards, then lay out more, like a tarot, taunting you as they landed. Every card you turned over was another event, a quick action adventure battle or a text adventure. Win and you could play more games; lose and... *Hand of Fate 2* promises more of the same, adding companions, new challenges, and new opponents. And much higher stakes than just your life...

» **Publisher & Developer:** Defiant Development



Mount & Blade II: Bannerlord

Release date: TBC

Mount & Blade: Warband quietly established itself as an indie behemoth. A bodge-together bunch of systems, it enabled you to take part in realistically bloody battles. Its sequel, *Bannerlord*, promises much more polish. It expands the charmingly rudimentary fighting system of the first game, and its world. New to the game are siege warfare, diplomacy, and a working economy, adding to its hugely complex world.

» **Publisher & Developer:** TaleWorlds Entertainment

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)

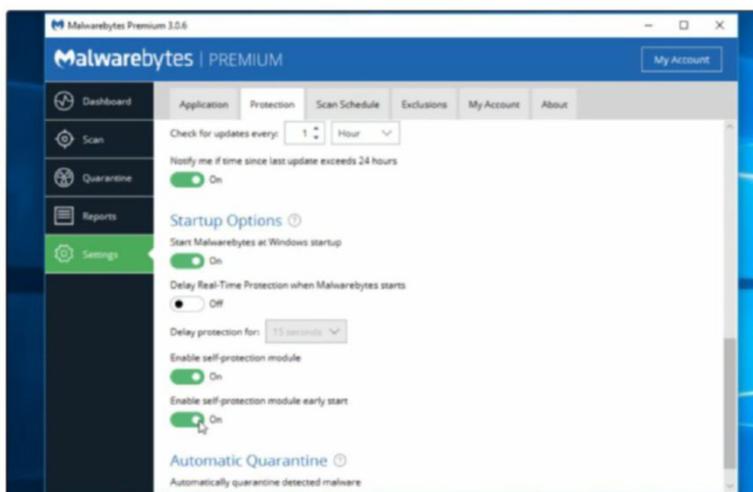
Security MALWAREBYTES REAL-TIME PROTECTION

Q I'm running Malwarebytes Anti-Malware Premium and I've started getting messages telling me that the real-time protection is switched off. If I try to switch it back on again, it doesn't seem to work – it appears to be linked to the web protection

module. Can you assist?
Albert Lechaude

Nick P's solution
Malwarebytes' web protection layer helps block websites marked as malicious from a range of programs, including Skype as well as your web browser. Version 3.0.6 was supposed to fix a range of

real-time protection issues, but this problem persists for many. First, open Malwarebytes and go to Settings > Protection. Now scroll down to the Startup Options section and flick the switch marked 'Enable self-protection module early start' to On. Reboot your PC and see if the problem now fixes itself. You may still get a warning about the web protection module being switched off from time to time, but clicking the button to resolve it should now work.



REAL-TIME GLITCH
Enable 'early start'
to resolve web
protection issues.

Windows EXPLORER CRASHES WHEN I RIGHT-CLICK

Q I have two laptops – one of which is new – and both are running Windows 10. Both have the same problem: when I right-click an item in File Explorer, Windows will momentarily freeze and then File Explorer crashes and restarts. It's not consistent – it occurs around 50 per cent of the time, and it doesn't happen when right-clicking within an application. Any ideas?
Peter Hoarea



The screenshot shows the CCleaner Free interface. On the left, there's a sidebar with icons for Cleaner, Registry, Tools, and Options. The main area has a title bar "CCleaner Free v5.28.6005 (64-bit)" and "Windows 10 Pro 64-bit Intel Core i5-4440 CPU @ 3.10GHz, 16.0GB RAM, Intel HD Graphics 4600". Below this is a section titled "These programs are set to run when your computer starts" with tabs for "Windows" and "Scheduled Tasks". A table lists various startup items with columns for Enabled, Key, Program, and Publisher. Several entries are highlighted in blue, including "ID 1265f0" through "ID 1265f7".

Alex's solution

This is usually linked to a third-party program adding an option to the context menu that appears when you right-click a file, folder or drive. We told Peter to use CCleaner (www.piriform.com) to view what items were currently present in the context menu by heading to Tools > Startup > Context Menu.

Here you'll see a list of entries linked to directories (folders), drives and files – and one or more of these will be causing the crash. Start by selecting them all, then click Disable (some entries may be blocked, ignore these). You should find the right-click menu works correctly, enabling you to start re-enabling items until you encounter the crash.

Peter used this technique to trace the problem to the entries related to Dropbox – as he didn't need the extra features, simply leaving these disabled fixed his problem.

Backup

DRIVE-IMAGING QUERIES

Q I have a couple of questions regarding Macrium Reflect Free. First, as I type I notice it's started making a backup. Is there any harm in using my PC while it does this? And second, how often do I need to create a new rescue

disc using the program? For example, should I update it each time Macrium updates itself?

William Maestre



Rob's solution

While it's okay to use your PC during the backup process, we'd suggest sticking to lighter tasks: browsing the web, checking email or writing a letter, for example. Avoid making major changes like installing updates or new software,

STAY SAFE
Flick the automatic proxy setting to off.

The screenshot shows the Windows Settings interface under "Network & Internet". The left pane lists "Home", "Status", "Ethernet", "Dial-up", "VPN", "Data usage", and "Proxy". The "Proxy" section is expanded, showing "Automatic proxy setup" and "Manual proxy setup". Under "Automatic proxy setup", there's a note about using a proxy server for Ethernet or WiFi connections. Under "Manual proxy setup", there's a note about using a proxy server for Ethernet or WiFi connections. Both sections have "Save" buttons at the bottom.

Quickfire questions

My Linx 1010 tablet won't switch on at all. Any ideas?
Ben Perkins

It may be in a 'panic' state. Press and hold the tablet's power button for at least 30 seconds until you see the red light come on. That should resolve things.

I'm looking for a lightweight alternative to both Groove Music Player and Windows Media Player. Any pointers?
Charlie Stewart

If MusicBee (issue 132) doesn't float your boat, then try Winyl (<http://vinylsoft.com/>), which is geared towards low-end laptops and uses very few system resources.

STOP CRASHES

Use CCleaner to disable items if right-clicking crashes Explorer.

Jargon buster!

► Master Password

A single password used to unlock an encrypted data vault containing more passwords and other sensitive data.

► VPN

Stands for Virtual Private Network, and provides an encrypted internet connection, even on insecure networks such as public Wi-Fi hotspots.

Quickfire questions

Would you recommend the Reimage tool/service?
Harriet Ford

We've heard good and bad things about this online repair tool – it's expensive and the technical support may not be all that helpful. Check out page 68 of issue 131 (February 2017) for our alternative, and free, guide to building your own emergency recovery toolkit.

Malwarebytes won't let me download Lazesoft Recovery Suite. Do you have any suggestions?
Joel Vignere

By the time we contacted Joel, Malwarebytes was no longer blocking the download – if there's a program website you trust that's being blocked, go to the Settings > Exclusions tab and click Add Exclusion to exclude the website.

I'm trying to apply a VPN connection through Microsoft Edge, but can't find any reference. Can you help?
St John Davis

Opera is the only web browser to offer a built-in VPN. Use a service such as CyberGhost VPN (www.cyberghostvpn.com) to encrypt your network connection. Once connected, all apps – including Edge – will connect through the VPN to ensure you're fully protected.

or partitioning a hard drive, until the backup has completed.

As for the rescue media, you don't need to update it regularly – it works independently of Windows, so shouldn't be affected by operating system updates, minor or major. That said, keep an eye out when updating Macrium – occasionally the release notes will reveal bug fixes and new features specific to the rescue media that make updating it worthwhile.

Internet IS THIS SETTING DANGEROUS?

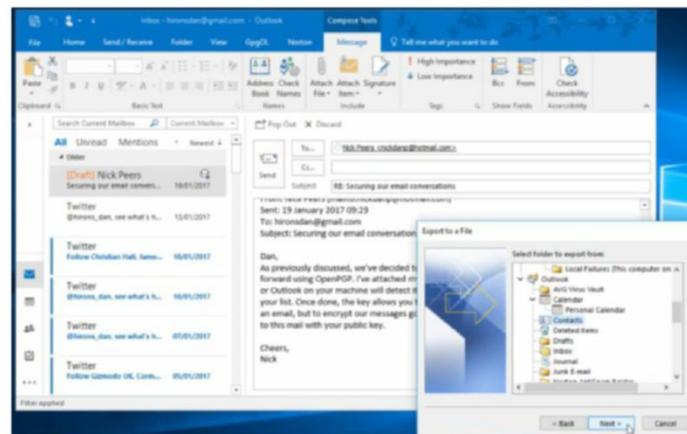
Q I've read that WPAD is enabled by default in Windows 10, and that it's dangerous. What is it, and are the warnings correct?
Hunter Travis



Nick O's solution

WPAD stands for Web Proxy Auto-Discovery, and is a setting related to the configuration of a proxy server. Proxy servers are typically used by organisations – such as companies and schools – to configure a connection to their network, which means for most people it's not required. However, past versions of Windows 10 enabled the setting by default, which provides a possible security loophole were you to connect to a public Wi-Fi hotspot that was configured for malicious intent.

To cut a long story short, if your PC is only ever connected to a single network at home, the setting isn't dangerous. However, if you're using a laptop or tablet and often connect through public Wi-Fi networks, such as at a café or airport, it's best to disable the setting. To do this, go to Start > Settings > Network & Internet > Proxy and flick the 'Automatically



CONTACTS TIP
Back up your Outlook contacts separately from your PST file.

detect settings' switch to Off. You'll now be able to surf safely.

Security LASTPASS RESET

Q I have got my knickers in a twist and I can't remember what password I originally used when setting up LastPass. I want to start by clearing out the old password and starting all over again, but I keep going around and around in circles. Is there a set procedure I should follow?
Bryan Little



Cat's solution

If you're trying to recover your master password, then your options are sadly limited since LastPass has no record of it stored for obvious security reasons. If you've previously managed to log on successfully with your master password, then open the browser you logged on through, go to <https://lastpass.com/recover.php> and follow the prompts. If successful, you'll activate a locally generated one-time password that will enable you to generate a new master password, or – if you've updated the master password

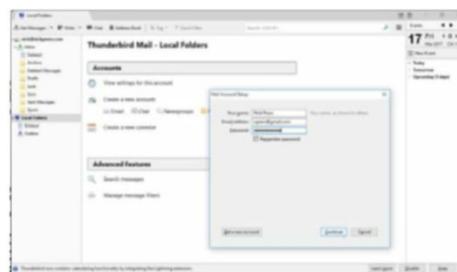
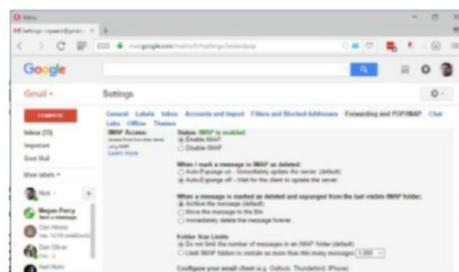
TRANSFER YOUR OLD EMAILS TO THE CLOUD

Q How can I easily transfer emails from my old Internet provider to Gmail?
Bernadette Wallis



Rob's solution

You could simply forward them on to your Gmail address, but the following technique is quicker, and should work with other cloud providers such as Hotmail too. We've used Thunderbird here (www.getthunderbird.com), but you should be able to adapt it to your own particular email client.



1 Enable IMAP access

Log into your Gmail account at <https://mail.google.com> using your web browser. Click Settings and select the 'Forwarding and POP/IMAP' tab. Scroll down, select Enable IMAP and then click Save Changes to access Gmail through your email client.

2 Connect Gmail to client

Open your email client and add Gmail as an additional account – in Thunderbird, select Local Folders and click Email under 'Create a new account'. Skip the new address prompt, type your Gmail address and password and click Continue.



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 at:
Support Squad,
Windows Help & Advice magazine,
Future Publishing Ltd,
Quay House,
The Ambury,
Bath BA1 1UA

within the last 90 days – revert back to the previous one.

If this fails, then you'll have to reset your account – this will free up your email address for use with LastPass, but all your existing saved data will be lost. Go to https://lastpass.com/delete_account.php?np=1 if you're happy to go down this route, as Bryan was.

Email RECOVER LOST OUTLOOK CONTACTS

Q I recently reinstalled Windows, which included the backing up of my Outlook.pst file (and a full drive image). This went well, except I couldn't reactivate Office 365. A Microsoft Chat person took control of my PC and eventually fixed the problem, but having done a further backup of the Outlook.pst file as part of the process, I now find my contacts are missing. Can you help track them down?

Ian McAndrew



Nick P's solution

It sounds like the technician imported the file into Outlook, which can lead to data, such as contacts, being lost. Ian had previously had the foresight to copy his contacts to his wife's laptop, so we were able to retrieve them by exporting them in CSV format from her copy of Outlook via File > Open & Export > Import/Export > 'Export to a file' > Comma Separated Values. He then selected Contacts as the folder before saving the file. This was duly transferred across, and Ian was able to import it via the same process (choosing 'Import from another program or file' at the appropriate point in the process). Head to www.msoutlook.info/question/826 using your web browser for more help and advice on restoring

contacts from a PST file after importing it into Outlook.

Hardware

WHY AM I GETTING PICTURES, NOT SOUND?

Q Recently I connected my laptop to the television via HDMI to watch something on the big screen, but can only get pictures – not sound. Everything was fine up until this point – I'm running Windows 10 on a HP laptop and have verified that the HDMI cable is working correctly.

Andrea Christou

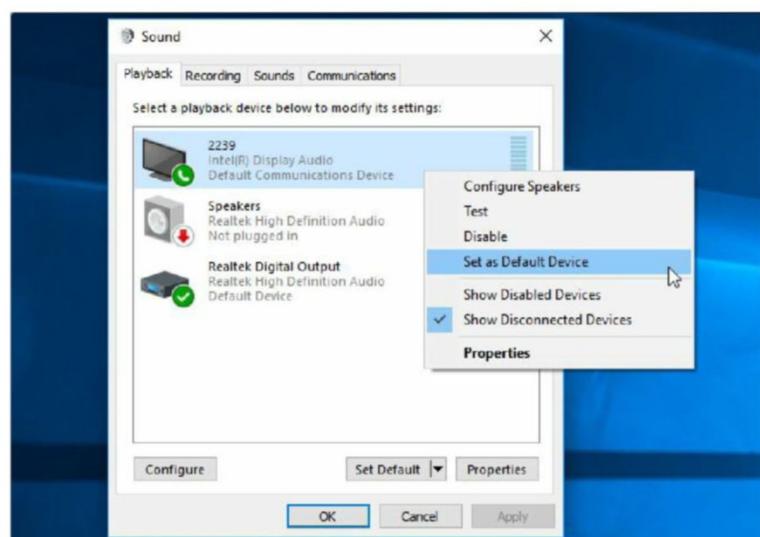


Rob's solution

These days, both laptop and desktop PCs offer multiple sound outputs, and if you have the wrong one

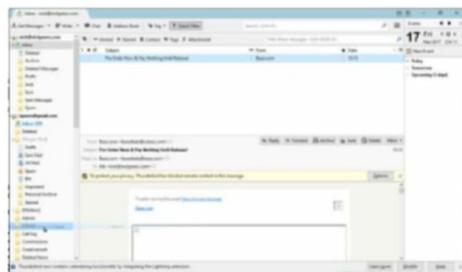
selected as the default it means you can appear to lose all sound. To solve this problem, start by clicking the '^' button in the Taskbar Notification area. Look for a white volume icon, right-click it and then choose Playback devices. One will clearly be marked as the default – our guess is that it's not the correct one, so right-click each device in turn and choose Test. When you hear sound again, select the device in question and then click the Set Default button to make it the default from now on.

Going forward, when you connect your HDMI cable between your laptop and your TV again, you may need to return here and switch the sound output to the HDMI port temporarily to hear sounds coming through your television.



RESTORE SOUND
Switch playback device to get your sound back.

"It sounds like the technician imported the file into Outlook, which can lead to data, such as contacts, being lost"



Jargon buster!

► Web proxy

A server (either a computer or an application) that fields requests and manages the connection between clients (your PC) and other servers, such as a network shared folder or the internet.

► CSV

Stands for Comma Separated Values, and is a text file format for storing records (on separate lines) containing multiple items of data (separated by commas).

3 Finish configuration

Leave IMAP selected, then click Done. You'll need to sign in to Google and authorise the connection to complete the process. Thunderbird will now begin to download all your mail (including any folders) – you don't have to wait for it to finish.

4 Transfer messages

Now you can now simply transfer your messages by dragging them from your old account email into the desired folder on Gmail (you could set up a dedicated folder for this purpose). They should automatically sync online when you're next connected.

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Welcome to... Windows 10

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

Welcome



Just starting your Windows journey? Confused by the changes Microsoft has made to the

Creators Update? Maybe you just want to learn something new about Windows 10. Well, this is the section for you!

There's not enough space to tell you absolutely everything you need to know here, but *Windows Help & Advice* always has your back. In this month's Basics section, we'll show you how to: master the desktop and make it work for you; customise the Start menu and quickly access favourite items using tiles; and how to get the best from Windows 10's virtual personal assistant, Cortana.

Matt Hanson

Associate Editor

www.facebook.com/windowsmag

Featuring...

76 How to master the Windows 10 desktop

78 Change the way the Start menu works

80 Discover the ways Cortana can help you

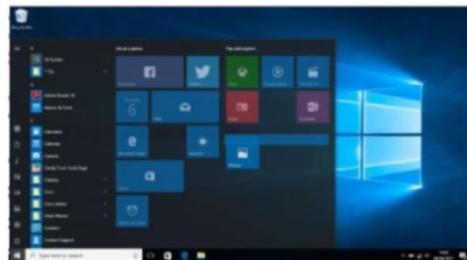


Windows 10 tip of the month

Customise tiles in the Start menu

Move and resize Start menu tiles

The Start menu is better than ever in Windows 10 – and in our tutorial on page 78, you'll discover how you can customise it so it works for you. Here, though, we're going to show you a simple tip to move and resize any tiles you already have in place – so they reflect the way you want to work on your PC and make the things you need to access most often more prominent, so they're always easy to find...



MOVE A TILE This is easy. Simply click and drag the tile you want to move using your mouse to its new location.



RESIZE A TILE Right-click a tile to bring up its menu and select Resize. Now choose the tile size that you want.

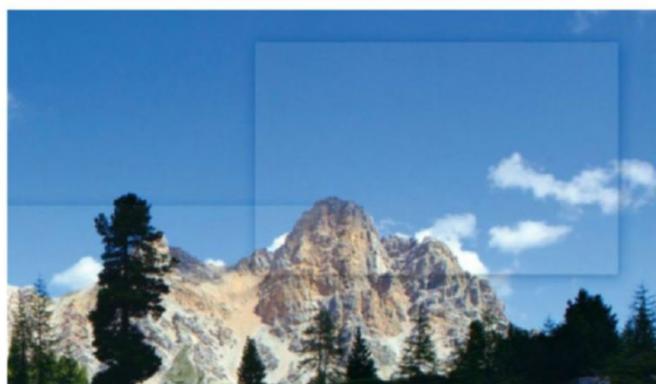
Master the desktop

You'll spend a lot of time there, so here are some great ways to make it work for you...

When not actually using applications, the Windows desktop is where you'll spend much of your time, moving files about, hunting for that obscure application you installed six months ago and suddenly need, or lining up your windows so that they fill the space perfectly (a time-wasting

pastime that's all but dead now thanks to window snapping).

In Windows 10, the desktop and the taskbar get a few new tricks that make working with files and folders even easier, and the new search bar means pulling up an application you don't use often is a breeze. Follow these tips to a happy start...



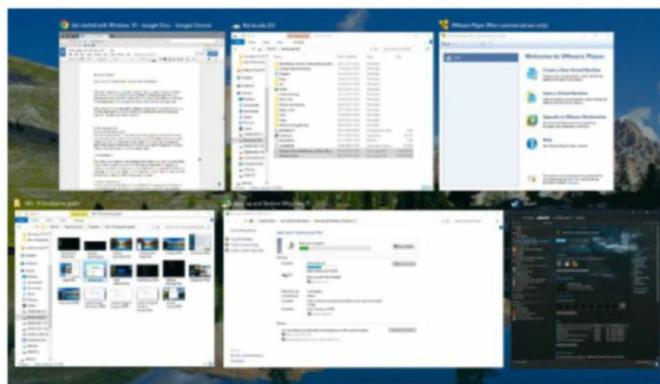
1 Show desktop/peek

The Show Desktop button isn't marked, and some people don't even know it exists. Press this anonymous section at the extreme right of the taskbar, and all your open windows will minimise. Hover the mouse pointer over it, and you'll get a preview 'peek' at the desktop that reverts when you move your mouse pointer away. It's very useful when you've got a chaotic number of windows open on your desktop.

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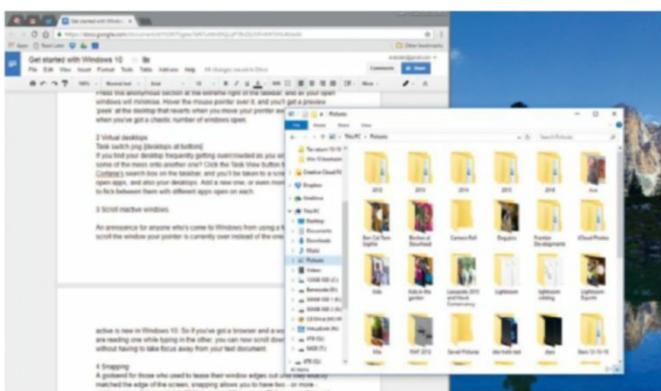
2 Virtual desktops

Task switch png [desktops at bottom] If you find your desktop frequently getting overcrowded as you work, why not offload some of the mess onto another one? Click the Task View button to the right of Cortana's search box on the taskbar, and you'll be taken to a screen that shows your open apps, and also your desktops. Add a new one, or even more, and you'll be able to flick between them with different apps open on each. It's a great way to stay organised on your PC.



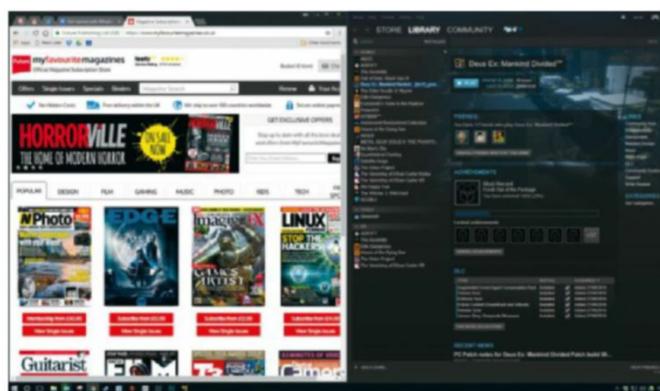
2 Virtual desktops

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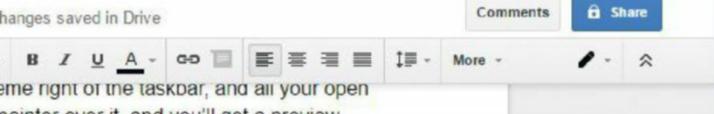
3 Scroll inactive windows

An annoyance for anyone who's come to Windows from using the Mac, the ability to scroll the window your pointer is currently over – instead of the one that's currently active – is new in Windows 10. So, if you have a browser and a word processor open, and are reading one while typing in the other, you can now scroll down in the browser without having to take your focus away from your text document.



4 Window snapping

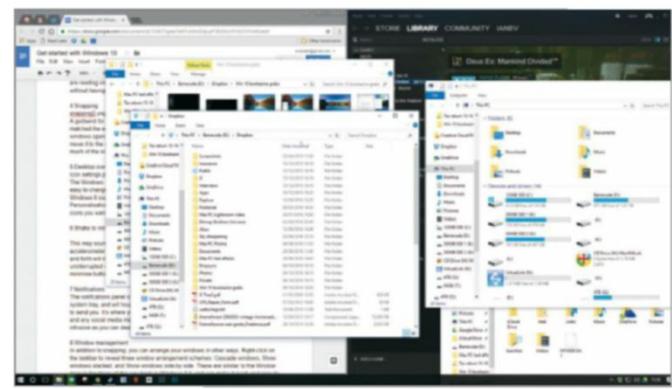
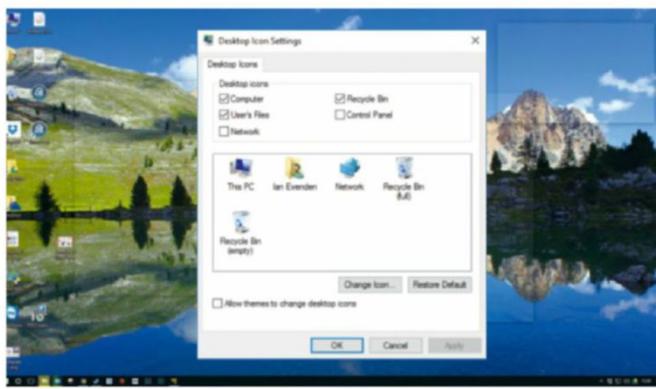
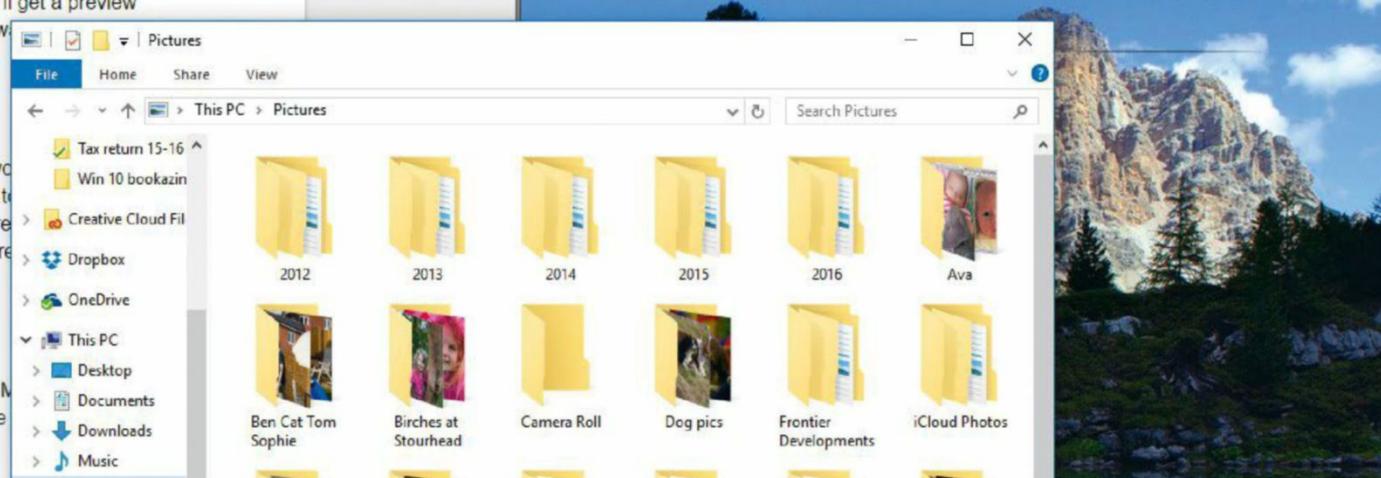
A real godsend for those who used to tease their window edges out until they exactly matched the edge of the screen, snapping in Windows 10 enables you to have two or more windows open that completely fill their areas of the screen. Pick up a window and move it to the extreme left or right edge of the desktop to try it (you'll see it 'snap' to the new half screen format). You can adjust how much of the screen they take up too.



the right of the taskbar, and all your open pointer over it, and you'll get a preview. You move your pointer away windows open.

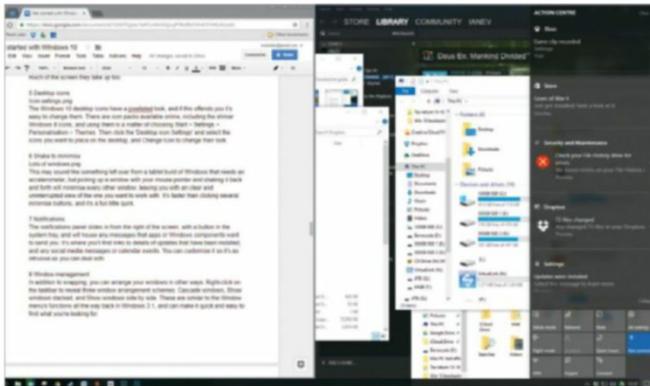
overcrowded as you work the Task View button to you'll be taken to a screen a new one, or even more open on each.

Windows from using a mouse instead of the one



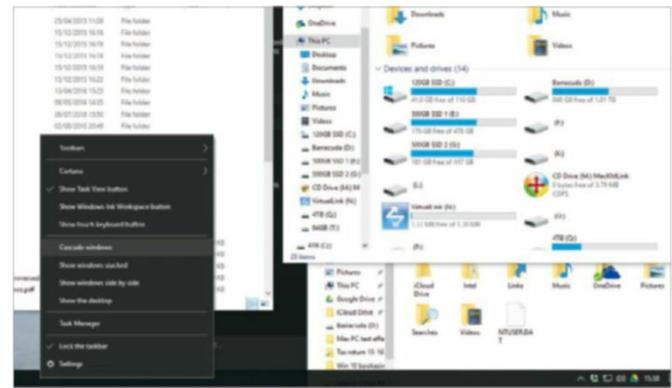
5 Desktop icons

The Windows 10 desktop icons have a pixelated look, and if this offends you it's easy to change them. Luckily, there are icon packs available online – including the shinier Windows 8 icons. Download the icon pack you want to use, then go to Start > Settings > Personalisation > Themes. Click the 'Desktop icon Settings' and select the icons you want to place on the desktop, then use the Change Icon option to change their look.



6 Shake to minimise

This may sound like something left over from a tablet build of Windows that needs a built-in accelerometer, but picking up a window with your mouse pointer and shaking it back and forth will minimise every other window, leaving you with a clear and uninterrupted view of the one you want to work with. It's much faster than clicking several minimise buttons, and it's a fun little quirk that's a good one to remember.



7 Notifications

The notifications panel – or Action Center – slides in from the right of the screen, with a button in the system tray, and will house any messages that apps or Windows components want to send you. It's where you'll find links to details of Windows updates that have been installed on your machine, and any social media messages or upcoming calendar events. You can customise it so it's as intrusive as you can deal with.

8 Window management

In addition to window snapping, you can arrange your windows in some other ways too. Right-click on the taskbar to reveal three window arrangement schemes: 'Cascade windows'; 'Show windows stacked'; and 'Show windows side by side'. These are similar to the Window menu's functions that have been available all the way back to Windows 3.1, and can make it quick and easy to find what you're looking for.

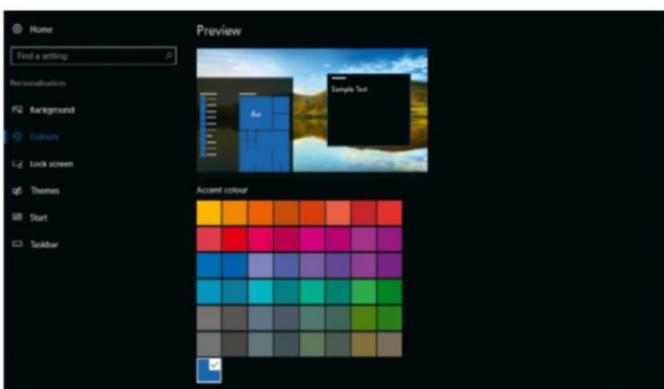
Customise the Start menu

The Start menu in Windows 10 is more powerful than ever – here are some easy tips to make it work for you

The Start menu's return was big news when Windows 10 launched, and it has evolved as the operating system has been updated. It's become a fast, and efficient way to access apps and settings – Windows 8's full-screen monstrosity is now a distant memory, thankfully!

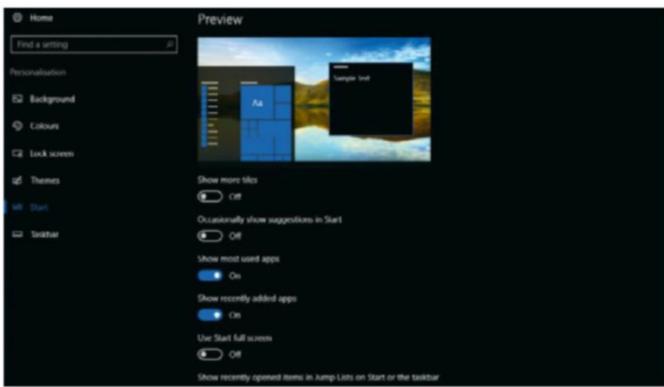
However, if you don't like how the Start menu looks when you first pop it up on your fresh

install of Windows 10, it doesn't have to stay that way. It's fully customisable in ways that were never possible on earlier versions of the operating system, and can be made to work in just about any way you want, standing out from its background for ease of reading, or automatically blending in with the colour scheme of whatever theme you have currently set on your desktop.



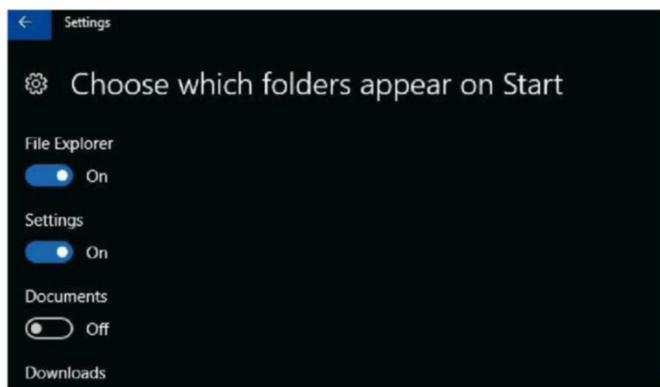
1 Colour

Your Start menu's background can be any colour you like – all you have to do is untick a box. Open up Settings, then Personalisation and finally Colours. Untick the 'Automatically pick an accent colour from my background' option and you'll be able to pick a colour from the palette. So your Start menu can be a contrasting red or yellow rather than a dull blue or grey. Play around to find a combination that works for you.



2 Size

To make space for all the customising you can do to the Start menu, you can easily resize it to your liking. Just move your mouse pointer to the top-border or right-border of the Start Menu, the pointer will change into arrows, and you'll be able to increase or decrease height and width, dragging it out to completely fill the screen if you want to. This is particularly useful if you have a PC filled with programs that you access regularly.

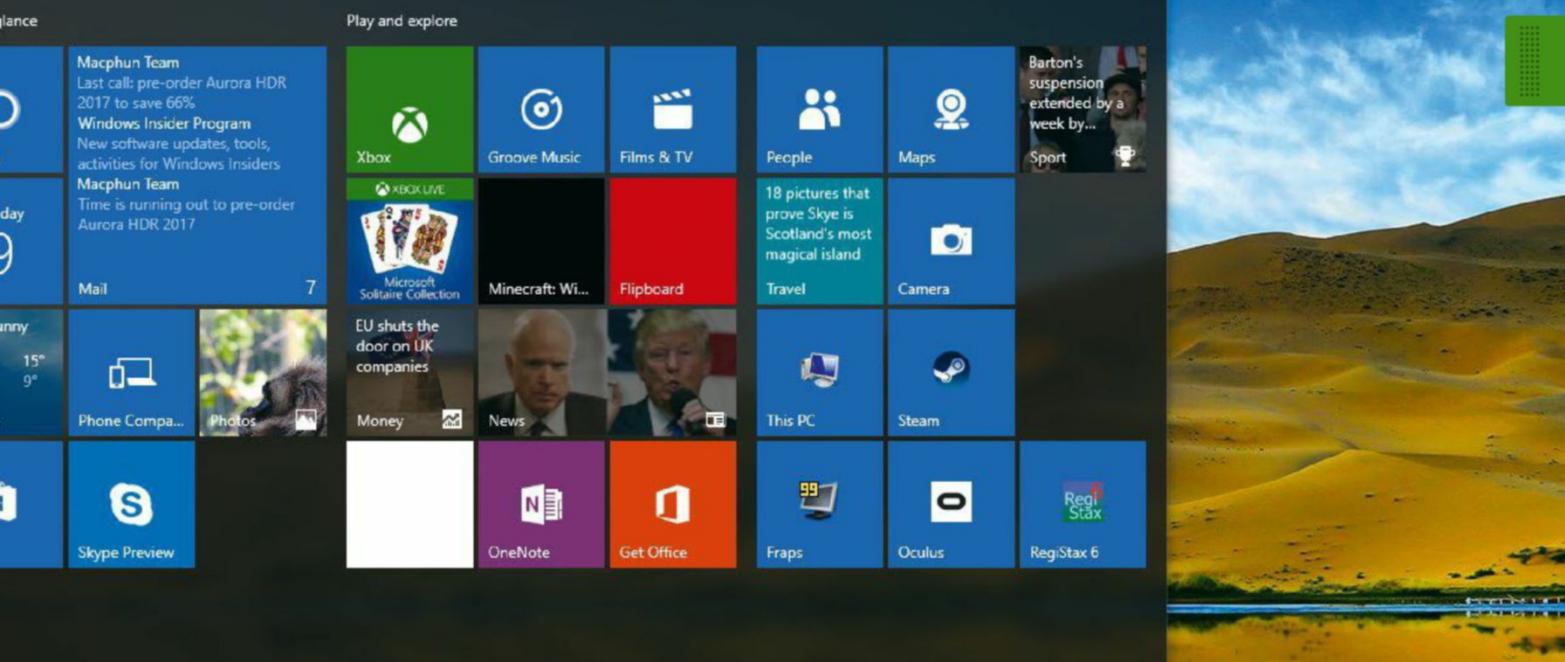


3 Folders and tiles

Your Start menu is made up of lists and tiles, and some of these can be shortcuts to folders such as Documents. Settings > Personalisation > Start enables you to tinker with this, so if you never shoot videos you can stop the empty Videos folder from taking up space on the menu. You can turn the links to the Settings window, and the one that opens an empty File Explorer window, on and off too.

4 Hide program lists

By default, the Start menu will show you lists of both your most used programs and the most recently opened ones. This can end up repeating itself, so if you want to get rid of one or the other of the lists, or both, open up Settings > Personalisation > Start, from where you'll be able to toggle the lists on or off. You can also prevent apps from appearing on the lists so you only get a view of the things you really need from day to day.



5 Use it to search with

Hitting the [Win] key on your keyboard to pop up the Start menu's Search box is one of the fastest ways to look for anything in Windows 10. Just type a few characters and you will get suggestions for applications and documents stored on your computer that match your initial query. You can also use the arrow keys on your keyboard to navigate the Start menu, if you'd rather not use the mouse.



6 Live tiles

Live tiles are tiles that are constantly updated with data, usually gleaned over the internet to make them up-to-date. There's one for the Mail app that shows your most recent messages, one for the Weather app that uses your PC's location to tell you what's going on outside the window, and so on. If you find them distracting, you can turn them off by right-clicking them and choosing the appropriate option.



7 Pin tiles and shortcuts

If there's something you need to be able to find quickly, but which gets lost in the lists of the Start menu, you can pin and reposition it so it's always prominently placed. To do that right-click an item and choose 'Pin to Start'. It will now appear in tiles. Now click and drag the tile to where you want to move it to. To resize the tile, right-click, choose Resize then the tile size you want. You can pin shortcuts to the Taskbar for easy access too.

8 Bring back the Start screen!

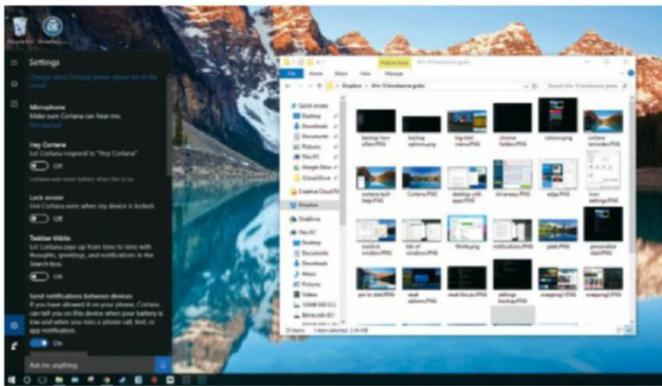
It may have been almost universally mocked and reviled in Windows 8, but the fullscreen Start menu is still there in Windows 10, ready to block out all your work at a single press of the Windows key! But, if you liked it, go to Settings > Personalisation > Start and tick the box marked 'Use full-screen Start when in the desktop'. Note that wording: it now won't actually cover up your apps like it did in Windows 8.

Get to know Cortana

Meet the digital assistant that's here to help you – she can even recognise the sound of your voice

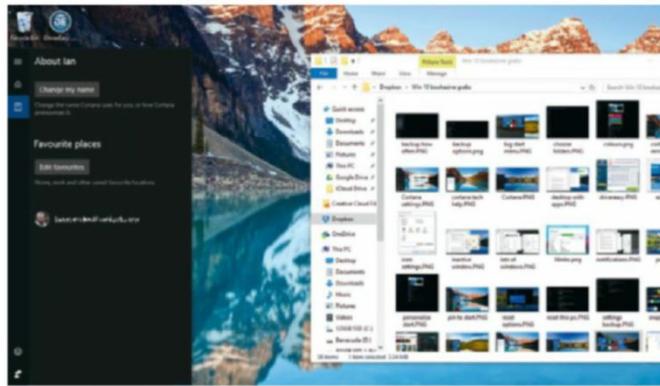
Microsoft's virtual personal assistant takes its name from a character in the Halo series of videogames. That incarnation of Cortana – an AI who is outwardly female (having been created from the brain patterns of a female scientist) and never seems to have been provided with quite enough clothes – can hack alien computer encryption and fly captured spaceships.

The Windows 10 version is perhaps a little less powerful, but comes in useful all the same. She can search using natural language terms, and by using voice activation just like Siri does on your iPhone. And if the idea of voice controlling your PC alarms you, or perhaps your computer isn't equipped with a mic, then you can still interact with Cortana through the keyboard, typing your queries for Cortana to answer.



1 Set up

Depending on how your PC has been configured, you may need to switch Cortana on in order to work with her. The first time you try to search your PC, she'll ask if you want to use her. Say no, and the search box remains functional, but without the extra features that Cortana brings. You'll need to be connected to the internet to use Cortana of course, because that's how results are queried and returned to you, just like Apple's Siri.



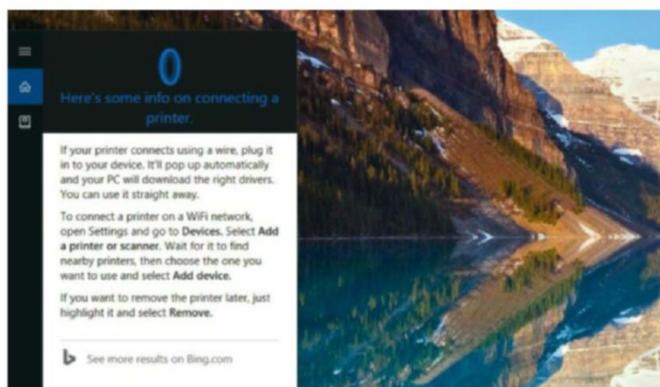
2 Personalise Cortana

To make Cortana as useful as possible she needs to address you personally. Tell Cortana your name and where you live and she can adapt herself to you. If you've opted for her to speak results back to you, she'll call you by name and allow you to correct her pronunciation if she gets it wrong. Tell her your interests, and appropriate news snippets will appear when you open Cortana's panel. You can do all this from the settings.



3 Narrow down your search

To stop Cortana searching things she doesn't need to, and speed up the return of those internet results, you can tell her exactly what you're looking for, which is great when it comes to finding apps and files in particular. So if it's definitely an app you need, rather than a picture or video, start your search query with 'app:'. If it's a setting, type 'setting:'. For a document... you get the idea. You can force a web search with 'web:' too.



4 Use Cortana for tech support

If there's something you want to know how to do in Windows 10, a publication like this one can help of course. If you need to know really quickly, try asking Cortana instead. Type your query in, and it will appear in the list of results under 'Can I help?'. Clicking this gets you the Microsoft help files, and in the case of many common tasks a walkthrough will show you how it's done. Don't forget the tips on these pages though!

Settings

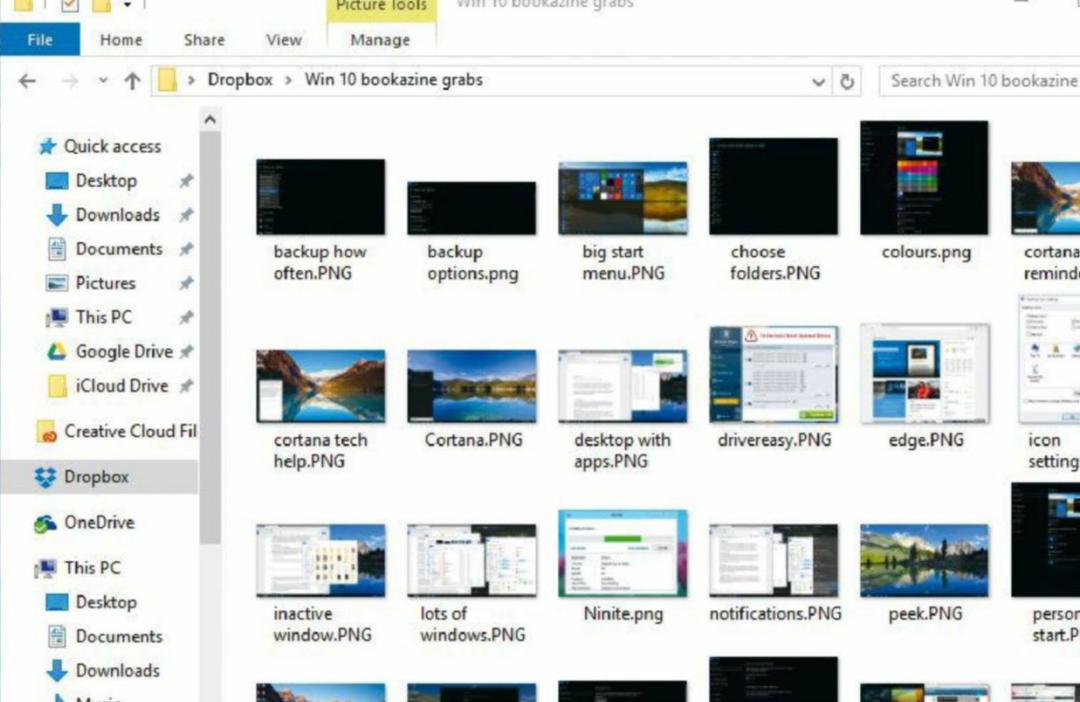
Change what Cortana knows about the cloud

Microphone
Make sure Cortana can hear me.
[Get started](#)

Hey Cortana
Let Cortana respond to "Hey Cortana".
 Off
Cortana uses more battery when this is turned on.

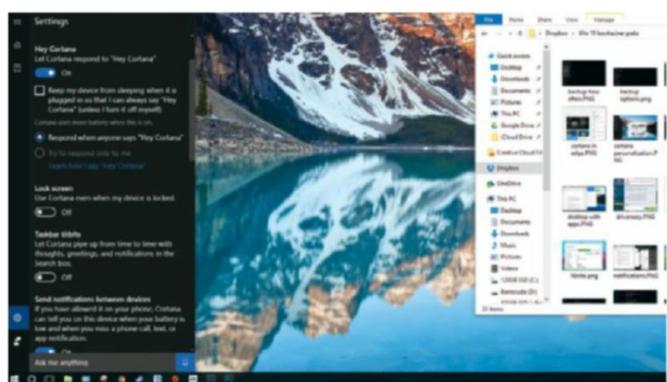
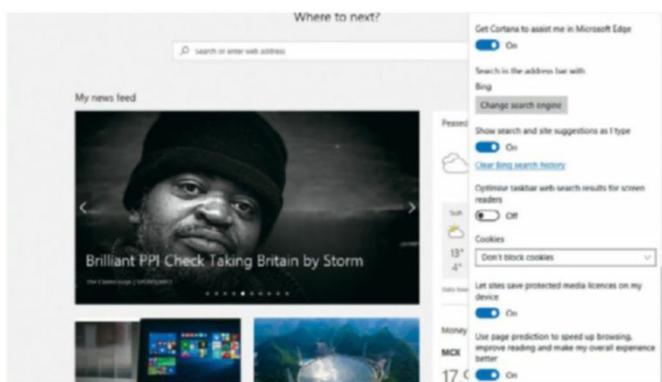
Lock screen
Use Cortana even when my device is locked.
 Off

Taskbar titbits
Let Cortana pipe up from time to time with thoughts, greetings, and notifications in the Search box.



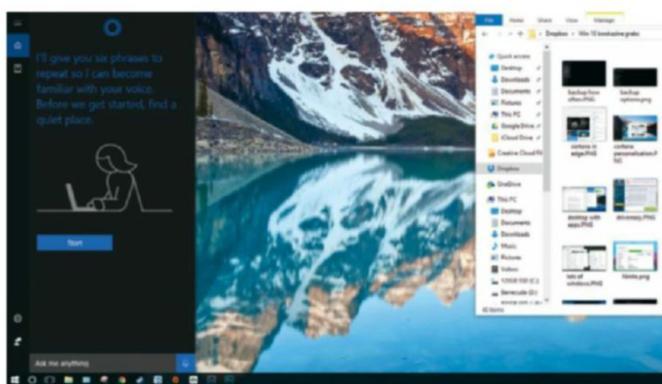
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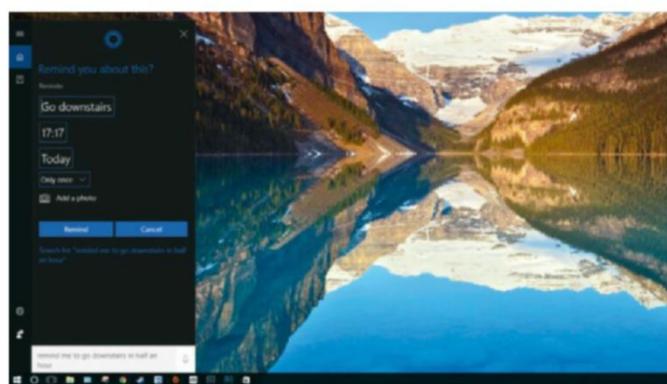
5 Use Cortana in Edge

Cortana can also help you as you browse the internet. To enable it in Microsoft Edge, go to Settings > Advanced Settings > View Advanced Settings and under 'Privacy and Services' enable 'Have Cortana Assist Me in Microsoft Edge'. Now, as you explore the web, you'll get helpful additions such as song lyrics if you're listening to music, or links to apps if the site you're using has one.



6 Use voice commands

Click the microphone icon next to the search box, and you can speak your questions and instructions to Cortana. You must have 'Search online' enabled in Cortana settings to use voice search, otherwise the mic icon disappears. If you select the option, she will respond to a cheery 'Hey Cortana' – but this will increase battery usage on portable devices, so is only worth turning on if you're sure you'll use it.



7 Train Cortana to only reply to you

It's hilarious to shout 'Xbox off!' at someone else's Xbox with Kinect voice control switched on, shutting the box down in the middle of what its poor user was doing, so train Cortana to respond only to your voice by selecting the 'Learn my voice' option in Settings and speak the test phrases. You'll find that Cortana keeps learning anyway, so over time the more you use Cortana the better she will be at just about any task!

8 Use natural language to search

If you want to set yourself a reminder, you don't need to find a calendar app and input what you want to do, and when, just type or speak it into Cortana as you would when talking to someone. Saying 'Remind me to take a screen break in an hour' or 'Remind me to buy flowers on the way home', for example, will trigger a notification at the appropriate time. Now there's no excuse to forget that meeting or important date again!

Get the UK's best-selling Linux magazine

The image shows the front cover of the May 2017 issue of Linux Format magazine. At the top, it says "FREE DVD!" with a CD icon, "UBUNTU STUDIO 16", and "LINUX FORMAT". Below that, a yellow bar says "Get into Linux today!". The main headline is "Pi ZERO W REVEALED" in large red and black letters. Underneath, it says "» Bluetooth » Wireless » Just £10" and "Build better devices with the all-new Pi and your essential maker guide". A photograph of a Raspberry Pi Zero W board is prominently displayed. To the left, there's a smaller image of the magazine's DVD cover, which features the Ubuntu Studio 16 logo and a green chameleon. A circular badge on the right says "OUT NOW!".

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Upgrade

► NEW HARDWARE ► ESSENTIAL ACCESSORIES ► LATEST GADGETS

Welcome

Whether you're into works of literature or the latest bestsellers, reading is one of the great pleasures of life. Thanks to ebooks you can now have an entire library at your disposal and you don't need dedicated e-reader hardware either. In this issue we're going to look how you can enjoy your favourite books on your PC for free using the four best ebook apps for Windows. We also take a look at Dell's XPS 27 all-in-one desktop PC; enjoy the super-sounds of the Denon Heos 5 HS2 and get our game on with Lenovo's Y27g gaming monitor.

Nick Odantzis Deputy Editor
windowsmagazine@futurenet.com

This issue's highlights



84 Dell XPS 27 All-In-One PC

Meet the incredible desktop that's been purpose built for your entertainment...



86 Denon Heos 5 HS2

Enjoy great sounds all around your home with this easy-to-use multi-room speaker



88 Lenovo Y27g monitor

Does this beautifully engineered display deliver where it counts? Our verdict...



95 Free ebook readers on test

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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



Dell XPS 27 AIO

£1,699 | \$1,349 www.dell.com

This entertainment-savvy All-in-One PC is a little pricey

Things can change a lot in four years. That how long it's been since we reviewed the Dell XPS One 27 Touch, an All-in-One PC that sported Blu-Ray drive options and relied on integrated graphics.

Since 2012, the standard has shifted for desktop PCs. With the advent of Microsoft's Surface Studio, manufacturers are now expected to think outside the box and come up with forward-thinking AIOs engineered for versatility, while catering to designers and gamers – the 2017 Dell XPS 27, with its 27-inch Ultra HD display, 6th generation Intel Core i7 processor and discrete AMD Radeon GPU is certainly up for the challenge, especially when you factor in its six front-facing speakers and subtle, albeit weighty, design.

Pricing

There's no getting around the £1,699 (\$1,349) price range that the Dell XPS 27 inhabits. Even with

standard specs it's more lavish than a baseline 24-inch iMac, which starts at £1,049 (\$1,099). Note, that's without the touchscreen and articulating hinges. Even so, the Dell XPS 27 is more of a 5K iMac rival – it's certainly more enticing.

Although the version we were sent is valued at £2,599 (\$2,799), it has a lot more on offer than Apple's top-end £2,249 (\$2,299) 5K iMac. For that sum, the Dell XPS 27 is graced with an Intel Core i7 processor and an SSD. It also gives you 8GB more RAM and a graphics card with double the VRAM.

However the Dell simply seems overpriced when compared to the HP Envy AIO 27, which is similarly speced, but only costs £1,999 (\$1,899). For almost a grand less, you're getting an almost equivalent configuration with a touchscreen, an Intel Core i7 processor, 4GB of Nvidia VRAM, 16GB of DDR4 RAM and a 2TB hard drive combined with 256GB of PCIe SSD storage.

Though the quality of the Dell's speakers, mouse and keyboard all put the HP Envy AIO 27 to shame, the price difference between the two is monumental.

Design

There's no denying that the Dell XPS 27 is a looker. Although there is no backlighting on the back of the PC, the minimalism is honestly for the best. It exhibits the subtlety and sophistication that the company is known for and a quality we've admired in other Dell PCs.

Turn around to the front, however, and you'll notice a full soundbar firing directly at you. Among these are two tweeters devised with high notes and vocals in mind, four full-range drivers for punchy midrange sounds and two passive radiators for the bass.

When Dell says its speakers are immersive, the company means it, as the XPS 27's sound system is a clear draw for audiophiles in the



market for an All-in-One. The sound is as loud as it is vibrant. Even with the system volume tuned down to about 10%, you can hear it from across the room or even outside it.

Despite the components stuffed into the Dell XPS 27's gut, it still manages a relatively slim bezel, complemented by a 4K display. As long as you have the touchscreen equipped, there's an articulating stand that enables you to lay it flat. You can get up close and personal with the XPS 27 without any loss in quality when viewing the screen.

"The Dell XPS 27 AIO ships with a wireless mouse and keyboard, which are surprisingly impressive"

Given there's no stylus included with the Dell XPS 27, a touchscreen seems unnecessary except for use as a giant tablet. At least you have the option to avoid its inclusion altogether and still retain the Intel Core i7-6700 processor.

The Dell XPS 27 AIO ships with a wireless mouse and keyboard, which are surprisingly impressive. The mouse is sleek and lightweight, yet avoids feeling cheap; while the keyboard goes all out with a number pad, dedicated media control buttons and a virtually silent membrane interface that feels natural to the touch.

The only downside is the use of AAA batteries rather than a native rechargeable solution. Though they're bound to last you longer

than something you'd plug into the wall, the need for household alkaline batteries seems a bit antiquated in 2017.

Connectivity

The Dell XPS 27 is well equipped with ports as well. On the right side of the display, you'll find a USB 3.0 port with PowerShare just above the power button while, on the left, you'll be grateful to discover an SD card slot and an audio socket in place for your convenience. It was smart of Dell to install ports on the

side as well as the back, that is until you find out why it was necessary.

The ports on the rear are located within a small cubbyhole and comprise four more USB 3.0 ports, two Thunderbolt 3 USB Type-C ports, a DisplayPort and an HDMI output. Unfortunately, they're largely inaccessible being caught between the chassis and one of the hinges on the adjustable stand. We'd have also like to see an HDMI input in the spirit of the HP Envy AIO 27, which itself can be used as a monitor for other devices.

Performance

Because it wrestles with the idea of discrete graphics, featuring an AMD Radeon R9 M470X, the Dell XPS 27 performed well in our graphics-

KEY FEATURES

Dell XPS 27 AIO

CPU: 3.4GHz Intel Core i7-6700 processor (quad-core, 8MB cache, up to 4.0GHz)

Graphics: AMD Radeon R9 M470X (4GB GDDR5 VRAM)

RAM: 16GB DDR4 (2133MHz)

Display: 27-inch, UHD (3840 x 2160)

Storage: 512GB PCIe SSD

Connectivity: 802.11ac Wi-Fi; Bluetooth 4.0; 5x USB 3.0 ports; 2x Thunderbolt 3; 1x DisplayPort; 1x HDMI out; 1x SD card slot

Dimensions: 434x625x80.3mm

based benchmarks. That said, the XPS 27 is no gaming PC. Even so, it'll be able to handle most of the games you want to play at medium to high settings. This is a machine that's geared towards more general forms of entertainment as well as creatively-driven assignments.

Compared to the HP Envy AIO 27, the XPS scored better in every test, earning 780 points in Cinebench, compared to the HP Envy's 662.

For those stuck between these two rivals, the Dell XPS 27 is the faster machine, even if that speed does come with a towering price tag. Just another factor to keep in mind as you determine just how much a little extra performance boost is worth financially.

Summary

From its gaudy (though desirable) sextet of speakers to its glossy and gargantuan 4K display, the Dell XPS 27 is an entertainment PC to be gawked at. It's no gaming machine, nor is it meant to be, but it throws a convincing pitch as a productivity machine as well.

While it's held back by a price that's unjustifiable when compared to its closest rival, the Dell XPS 27 almost makes up for that with a comfier mouse and keyboard, better performance and a sleeker design than the HP Envy AIO 27.

The lack of a pressure-sensitive stylus means it isn't as great for designers as Microsoft's nearly-as-expensive Surface Studio; then again, maybe it doesn't need to be. All-in-all, the Dell XPS 27 will give you a sound AIO experience. ■

The XPS 27's design, gorgeous screen and sound quality make for a dreamy entertainment PC.

 Windows Help & Advice
Verdict





Denon Heos 5 HS2

£349 | \$399 <http://denon.co.uk>

High-res audio and Bluetooth meet multi-room

When Heos by Denon arrived in 2014, the world of wireless multi-room audio finally had a convincing alternative to market leader Sonos. For here was a product that was just as easy to set up as its better-known rival, and offered comparable product choice and performance.

Choosing between the two brands' products was as much a decision based on aesthetics and brand loyalty, as anything else. But Denon clearly wasn't content to be a me-too multi-room brand. It's second generation Heos line, dubbed HS2, expands compatibility beyond active speakers and improves sonic performance.

The £349 (\$399) Heos 5 HS2 featured here is the everyday workhorse of the range. It sits above the compact Heos 1 and desktop Heos 3, but under the Heos 7, which is a bigger, beefier proposition. It works with other Heos-compatible components,

including the Heos HomeCinema soundbar and select Denon AV receivers, most notably the 9-channel AVR-X4300H and the 11-channel AVR-X6300H.

Measuring just 294x166x209mm, the Heos 5 HS2 has a form factor that's easy to accommodate, with a suffix that denotes compatibility with en vogue High Res Audio files, something Sonos doesn't offer.

Build quality and setup

The Heos 5 HS2 is relatively compact, but comes across as a well-balanced mid-ranger. The triangular design may prove a little divisive, but we rather liked it. Curiously it comes with a carry handle on the rear, but it isn't battery powered. At 3kg Heos 5 HS2 is also reassuringly weighty, and undeniably well built.

Connectivity comprises a USB port, 3.5mm audio socket and Ethernet. The only on-body controls are volume and mute.

In terms of placement, the Heos 5's natural habitat is shelving, tables, office nooks and kitchen surfaces – everyday locales that might equally suit a vase of Petunias. You do need to accommodate an external power brick though, not typically a consideration with floral displays.

System setup and control is via the Heos app, available for iOS and Android. The process of getting multi-room components online can sometimes be frustrating – we're looking at you, Yamaha MusicCast – but Heos by Denon seems reasonably obliging.

First link the speaker to your smartphone by the supplied 3.5mm cable. Then update the Heos with your network password. Disconnect and the speaker should be networked. All Heos speakers are dual-band Wi-Fi compatible. There's no mesh infrastructure.

Streaming is straightforward. Whether you have music on your



KEY FEATURES

Denon Heos 5 HS2

Drive units: 2x tweeters, 2x woofers
High Resolution Audio Support: Yes
Connectivity: 802.11a/b/g/n/ac Wi-Fi; Bluetooth; 1x USB; 1x 3.5mm analogue audio input; 1x Ethernet port; NAS and DLNA support
Supported audio formats: WMA; AAC; MP3; WAV; ALAC; FLAC; DSD
Dimensions: 209x294x166mm
Weight: 3.2kg

plus DSD 2.8Mhz and 5.6Mhz. With these 24-bit sources, the system finds extra nuance and snap. Although, the real win here is the ability to have a High Res Audio music library accessible on both audiophile and multi-room systems, giving any serious music fan the best of both worlds.

The addition of Bluetooth to the Heos spec is obviously welcome. It certainly improves the convenience of the speaker. However, there's no higher-quality aptX support, which is disappointing. We quizzed Denon about this and they confided that it was simply a limitation of the chipset that it has chosen for the HS2 range.

Overall, the Heos 5 is a solid standalone active speaker, and stands as a tempting gateway into the Heos ecosystem. It's a tad quirky, but works well with most musical genres.

Summary

With its new HS2 line, Denon has taken the performance high ground when it comes to wireless multi-room audio systems.

The Heos 5 may not quite have the chops to really take sonic advantage of higher-fi files, but there's volume and musicality, which serves most tracks well – although if you consider Bach more classic than Blue Oyster Cult, it's probably going to struggle to completely satisfy.

Build quality and functionality can be considered excellent. Overall the Heos 5 HS2 by Denon is well worth auditioning. ■

Solid streaming and High-Res Audio make the Heos 5 HS2 a must-have multi-room speaker.

 Windows Help & Advice
Verdict



smartphone, networked on a DLNA NAS or in an iTunes library, the app will discover it all. That USB input also enables you to play content locally from a thumbdrive.

App services include Tidal, Soundcloud, Napster, Deezer and TuneIn Radio (dependant on region). You can also use Spotify via Spotify Connect.

When it comes to functionality, you can play multiple sources in multiple rooms simultaneously – Spotify to your office, MP3s from a NAS to the living room, and local

this compact table-topper has admirable grunt.

It may not drop as low as the more expensive Heos 7, but it still knows how to party. *Double Barrel* from the *Celebration: 25 years of Trojan* album, has the volume and extension to warrant honorary sound system status, while club classic *How Do You Do*, by Cascada, thumps like a Jägerbomb hangover.

Need a little more metal to your music? The little Heos 5 has a good stab at *Can I Play With Madness* from the *Iron Maiden: Flight 666*

"As a second generation Heos model, this Heos 5 has more processing power than its predecessor"

radio to the garage. The choice is dictated simply by how many Heos speakers you have and how great your Wi-Fi range is.

Performance

The Heos 5 HS2 proves an entertaining listen. It's a two-way speaker design, with dual tweeters and woofers, powered by four Class D amp modules. There's a passive radiator for pronounced bass.

While it makes a valiant attempt at sounding stereophonic, the end result can be a bit funnelled. You can pair it with a second Heos 5 to create genuine stereo, but the cost will most likely be prohibitive.

Perhaps unhelpfully, Denon doesn't publish technical specifications, but we can confirm

soundtrack album, although the guitar work ends up sounding a bit stodgy, like it's mired in a mosh pit.

As a second gen Heos model, this Heos 5 has more processing power under the hood than its predecessor, which doubtless helps with Hi-Res Audio playback.

Synchronicity between Heos units is excellent. We paired the Heos 5 in our living room with a Heos 1 in the kitchen and music flowed seamlessly between them. There's no timing echo. Different zones play out without any discernible delay.

File support is class-leading. In addition to MP3, AAC, ALAC and 16-bit FLAC, the speaker will also play uncompressed WAV, ALAC, AIFF and FLAC up to 24-bit 192kHz



Lenovo Y27g

£599 | \$599 www.lenovo.com

Great design that isn't matched by image quality

The curved, 27-inch Lenovo Y27g is a high-end entry into the world of gaming monitors. The Y27 series makes good on gamer's desires with a 144Hz refresh rate, frame rate smoothing technology and a big, angular design that cuts sharp lines. If you really want to go wild, Lenovo even offers a version with Razer's Chroma lighting tech.

Pricing

The Lenovo Y27 series is available with either NVIDIA G-Sync or AMD FreeSync anti screen-tearing technology and lots of inputs. It's a worthy gaming monitor, but technical shortcomings keep it from reaching its full potential.

If you opt for AMD graphics, the FreeSync-equipped Y27f will set you back £349 (\$399). The NVIDIA G-Sync enabled Y27g, reviewed here, carries an MSRP of £599 (\$599), and the Chroma-enabled Y27g RE comes in at £649 (\$649).

Other than the anti screen-tearing tech and 144Hz refresh rate, the rest of the Y27g's specs aren't nearly as exciting. It's rated for a 3,000:1 contrast ratio, response rate of 4ms, and max resolution is a standard 1920x1080 for Full HD gaming. For the money, those specs should be better. At the very least, a 1440p option would help justify the price.

Design

The Y27g follows the same design cues as the rest of Lenovo's gaming line, such as the IdeaCentre Y900 desktop computer. Sharp angles with deep red highlights are the name of the design game here. The boomerang-shaped base shoots outward, keeping the monitor stable and allowing it to swivel.

Hash marks etched along the circumference of the stand, as well as the tilting hinge, give it the look of a precision instrument. Turning the Y27g is practically effortless and

it just as easy to adjust the height, as well. The monitor can move up and down with a feather touch, and once in place, it stays in place.

The monitor's tilt adjustment isn't so straightforward, requiring a firm grip on the base. It's not a difficult adjustment to make, but the Y27g feels like it might tip over when tilting it back.

Fortunately, the mechanical pieces involved in the swivel, height, and tilt adjustments operate smoothly and easily, while maintaining a reassuring heft. All the adjustments are generous, too. Swivel goes 30 degrees in either direction, while you can tilt the monitor from -5 degrees to 30 degrees. Height adjustment offers around 10cm to stretch.

Features

There aren't any speakers in the Y27g, which is a weird omission for a monitor of this calibre and price point. Even though most monitor



KEY FEATURES

Lenovo Y27g Curved Gaming Monitor

Display Type: Full HD widescreen WLED backlit TFT LCD
Maximum Resolution: 1920x1080
Refresh rate: 144Hz
Aspect Ratio: 16:9
Viewing angle: 178-degrees
Contrast Ratio: 3000:1
Connectivity: 1x HDMI port; 1x DisplayPort; 4x USB ports; 1x 3.5mm headphone socket
Dimensions: 625x563.3x242mm

Racing preset turns overdrive to its highest setting, and that's where the monitor runs into big problems.

There are three overdrive options in the menu: Off, Normal, and Extreme. Both Normal and Extreme introduce unacceptable levels of ghosting. Playing *Dirt Rally*, the fans on the sides of the road smeared the screen with a glowing ghost.

Everything else looked doubled, like watching a 3D movie without 3D glasses. It wasn't just a fast game like *Dirt Rally*, either. Walking around in *Hitman* brought out the same awful ghosting. The best option when playing anything is to turn the overdrive off completely.

G-Sync and 144Hz makes for some really smooth gaming. It's easy to overlook the shortcomings of a monitor when games flow like waves on the sea. Getting the monitor adjusted in the on-screen display is cumbersome and prone to mistake, and the overdrive option should never be turned on for any reason.

Summary

The Lenovo Y27g succeeds in its industrial design, with smooth, easy adjustments to height, tilt, and swivel, USB ports, and a smart headset hanger built into the screen. Where it falters is with its lack of high resolution options, cumbersome menu design, and low contrast and response times.

It's truly heartbreaking to see a gaming monitor do so well in some areas yet fail to excite in others. As a result, the Lenovo Y27g turns out to be disappointingly average. ■

The Y27g is an attractive monitor, but cumbersome menus and ghosting cloud its vision.


Windows
Help & Advice
Verdict



speakers sound like glorified iPhone speakers, it's good to at least have the option to use them if you wish.

Lenovo almost makes up for the lack of built-in speakers with a pair of USB ports and a 3.5mm headset socket on the left side. Further sweetening the deal is a fold-out hanger for storing your headset. When not in use, this folds up and disappears from view. It's a neat touch. And since one of the side USB ports is always-on, this is the perfect place to hang a wireless headset and charge it in one place.

"It's easy to overlook the shortcomings of a monitor when games flow like waves on the sea"

There are two more USB ports on the back of the Y27g, grouped alongside the HDMI, DisplayPort, and power ports. The USB ports on the back aren't easy to get to, even with the monitor turned completely to its side. All the ports face down, rather than out, which saves on room, but given that the Y27g is such a beast of a monitor anyway, it's more annoying than it is space-saving.

The Lenovo Y27g is supplied with almost everything you need to get the monitor connected and up and running, including DisplayPort, USB and power cables. Plus, Lenovo's Artery software. Artery enables you make adjustments to the monitor without needing to navigate Window's Display and Appearance

options. Settings such as refresh rate and resolution can also be changed quickly and painlessly with the Artery software.

Usability

Not so painless are the on screen menus. The buttons are front-facing, and labelled, which is helpful, but the menu structure is labyrinthine in nature. We found ourselves accidentally pressing the wrong buttons and undoing display changes, or entering the wrong sub-menus, or going back

when we meant to go forward. Shortcuts assigned to the buttons, such as accessing the Y27g's gaming presets with one button should be helpful.

Unfortunately, trying to use any of these presets drops you back into Lenovo's messy menu system. Instead of accessing the sub-menu, the button would work better if it cycled through the presets.

Not that the presets are great. The Y27g's Gaming modes make pre-programmed adjustments to colour, overdrive, brightness and contrast. However, we found the best picture came from turning the presets off. The FPS1 preset, for example, makes everything too blue; while the FPS2 preset makes everything too red. Worse, the



Withings Steel HR

£169.95 | \$179.95 <http://withings.com>

Discover the hybrid watch with heart

Plenty of people now want to wear a fitness tracker to keep an eye on their steps and exercise regime, but not everyone wants an eye-catching, plastic gadget on their wrists – and that's where Withings' Steel HR comes in. It's a hybrid device that combines fitness tracking with classic watch looks – making it both useful and stylish at the same time. The question is: does the Steel HR do enough on its own to justify its hybrid smartwatch status, or do you need to combine it with a traditional tracker as well?

Design and features

The Steel HR is certainly the most watch-like fitness tracker we've ever seen and is slimmer than rivals from big name watch brands. We used the 40mm version, but you can also get a 36mm model if you have slimmer wrists. For us, though, this is the perfect size. It's slightly thicker than other Withings devices,

which was presumably necessary to put a heart rate tracker inside the thing, but it's still not much thicker than your average watch. Its slim size and smaller design also make it more comfortable to wear than rival smartwatches.

The Steel HR's strap choices are durable and comfortable too – the black silicon one on the watch we tested didn't cause skin irritation (unlike some) and is easy to enough to clean if you get sweaty during a workout. Silicon straps are also available in white, yellow, blue and red for £25 (\$30) each; or you can plump for a premium leather strap in black or brown for £70 (\$80).

On the right side of the watch display you'll find the only button. Although it looks like the crown on a traditional watch it doesn't spin like the one on the Apple Watch does. Instead, you simply press it to cycle through each of the Steel HR's menus to see your stats. Press it once and the small display at the

top of the watch face will light up to show you the time, with each press after that showing your heart rate, steps, distance, alarms and battery life, in that order. This can get irritating when you just want to see how much battery life remains and you have to press the button six times, but at least it doesn't take long to cycle through the options.

Above the six o'clock position on the watch face you'll see another dial with what looks like a second hand. This is actually a percentage calculator, with the hand gradually shifting position as the number of steps you take increases, giving you a quick visual guide to how much exercise you've done, with your daily targets set separately using the Withings smartphone app.

Despite the presence of both a digital display and a percentage monitor, it's easy to tell the time on the Steel HR, thanks to its large main dial and the clear and easy to see hour and minute hands.



KEY FEATURES

Withings Steel HR

Supplier <http://withings.com>

Case Stainless steel with mineral glass

Display Analogue dial showing hours and minutes; Subdial displaying progress towards your activity goal; OLED screen showing additional information

Sensors Day and night motion sensor; MEMS 3-axis accelerometer; low power

Connectivity Bluetooth Low Energy

Battery Up to 25 days in normal use

Water resistance Up to 50 metres

example, it will appear here so you can see your activity at a glance.

Under heart rate, your stats are taken every half an hour by default, so the Withings app gives you a useful graph to see where your beats were highest and whether there's any particular part of the day that's been particularly intense.

To pair the Steel HR with your phone you'll either need an iPhone running iOS 8 or higher; or an Android phone running Android 6 or 7. BlackBerry and Windows Phone devices are not supported.

Battery life

With only a small digital display and watch hands to power, the Steel HR boasts impressively long battery life for a smartwatch. During our week long test we saw the battery life drop from 75% to 50%, easily putting it ahead of Withings' claim of 25 days of battery life between recharges. The Steel HR is also easy to charge, thanks to a charging pad that you plug in when needed.

Summary

The Withings Steel HR is a device for those who want to track their fitness while wearing something that looks like a more traditional watch. It may not have all the bells and whistles that many trackers have, but if you appreciate long battery life and only need to track things like running, walking and swimming then the Steel HR is ideal. Its stylish design also means you'll be more likely to wear it more often – making it easier to stay on top of your fitness goals. ■

The Steel HR cleverly combines basic fitness tracking with traditional watch cues. It's a hit.


Windows Help & Advice Verdict



Performance

Since the Withings Steel HR is a hybrid device, it's obvious that some compromises have been made along the way. While it can do basic fitness and exercise tracking, it's not as fully featured as dedicated tracking devices – it can track your steps during a muscle building workout, for example, but nothing else. If you go for a walk or a run, though, it's more useful, as it will automatically begin tracking your steps. We found the step tracking to be accurate with the Steel HR giving us similar results to what we've seen on other devices.

The big highlight of the Steel HR is the heart rate tracker on its back.

"Since the Withings Steel HR is a hybrid device, it's obvious that some compromises have been made"

This sits against your wrist and will supply you with your heart rate averages, with measurements taken every half an hour. It also continuously monitors your heart rate when you're working out to identify how well you're doing – with all the information it collects available in the smartphone app.

If you find your pulse is racing particularly quickly, you can also press the button on the side of the watch twice to see your current heart rate. We used this tech alongside other trackers and had very similar results, but you should never take this information as 100% accurate. For the average run or long walk, this quality of heart rate tracking is good to have, but if you're looking to workout a lot or

train professionally you may want a dedicated heart rate tracker.

The Steel HR does have a couple of other aces up its sleeve, though. Firstly you can take it for a dip in the pool and automatically have it track your swim, with the number of lengths you've done tagged within the app. And, secondly, it can also track your sleep.

The Steel HR's battery life is sufficiently long enough for you to be able to wear it to bed every evening, enabling it to monitor how well you've slept by keeping track of your heart rate, as well as how much you've moved around in your sleep. True, the Steel HR is not the most comfortable device to

wear at night, but it does seem to track sleeps accurately.

App and compatibility

The free Withings app is one of the most useful on the market. It isn't designed for anyone who wants lots of fitness features, but it shows your steps, sleep and heart rate details in a beautiful interface that's easy to navigate around.

Each time you open the app, you'll be greeted with a Timeline that kicks off with the steps you've taken, how close you are to your goal for the day. The app also displays your key stats from the last few days on different cards, with a press on each one taking you to further details. If you've been on a long and strenuous walk, for

4K ACTION CAMS

Make every day an adventure with our pick of the best 4K action cameras – the ultimate gadget for thrill-seekers



1 Garmin Virb Ultra 30

£389.99, garmin.com

Capture every moment with Garmin's lightweight (87.9g) 4K shooter, instantly snapping a 12MP still or filming (up to 4K/30fps) with one-touch controls. The 1.75-inch touchscreen makes light work of playback in and out of the waterproof (to 40m) housing and, thanks to three-axis stabilisation, footage remains steady no matter how gnarly the terrain. There's a high-sensitivity mic to capture whoops of adrenaline-fuelled joy/panic, plus GPS and other sensors to log data, which you can overlay onto your edits.



2 Drift Ghost 4K

£299.99, driftinnovation.com

Drift's first 4K action cam is a motorcyclist's dream. A flat profile, rotating lens and multiple mounts add up to versatile positioning. The camera is solid and well-sealed from the elements, too. While the Ghost's top flight 4K/30fps is impressive, we shot the smoothest footage at 1080p with the addition of electronic video stabilisation. Dual mics work in harmony to eliminate wind noise, and dashcam-style loop recording is handy if you're covering a lot of road miles. The small screen is fine for basic settings, but you'll need the Drift Life app for playback.



3 Olfi One.Five

£149.99, olfi.co.uk

Despite the low price, the lightweight One.Five is more than capable of capturing your high-octane hijinks. The max 4K/24fps setting isn't much cop if you're doing anything too energetic. However, drop the resolution, up the frame rate and – combined with gyro-stabilisation and motion detection tech – the camera hits its stride. Low-light performance is impressive, 16MP stills are a nice touch and, while not premium, the audio is passable. There's no touchscreen here, but the LCD screen is ample for live view, playback and navigating the simple menu system.



When you love living life on the edge, it's likely that you'll want to capture every adrenaline-fuelled moment, if only for bragging rights. But you're not going to strap your

smartphone to your mountain bike, are you? Of course not! So what you need is a camera that can handle all the filth, fury and frontflips you can throw at it. The six 4K Ultra HD action cams we've selected here are bursting

with tech, ranging from GPS tracking and voice recognition to digital image stabilisation and apps for playback, editing, sharing and live streaming of your exploits. The question is, are you ready for all that action?



4 Olympus Tough TG-Tracker

£279.99, olympus.co.uk

Olympus' 4K cam is one tough cookie. Waterproof to 30m, crushproof to 100kg and frostbite-free down to -10 degrees (C), it's the perfect companion for mountain climbing, snowboarding, scuba diving or anything else on the extreme spectrum. A built-in 60-lumen light is ideal for caves and other dark spaces, too. The ultra-wide 204-degree lens doesn't miss a trick, and 5-axis image stabilisation puts paid to jittery footage. Five sensors log important data such as location and altitude, so you can relive every detail of your adventures.



5 GoPro Hero 5 Black

£399.99, gopro.com

There's a reason GoPro dominates the action sports world. The case-less Hero 5 is waterproof to ten metres and features a vivid, two-inch touchscreen. Voice controlled instant recording is also ideal when the camera's strapped to a helmet or you're up a mountain with frozen fingers. But what about the footage? The 4K/30fps top resolution is crystal clear with excellent colour reproduction, but 2.7K/60fps is the sweet spot for us. Distortion-free video stabilisation and auto low-light assistance justify the cash. Rich stereo audio is the icing on the cake.



6 Ezviz S5

£199.99, ezvizlife.com

At £200 less than GoPro's latest, the stylish Ezviz S5 represents mind-blowing value. For starters, the supplied housing is waterproof to an Abyss-worthy 40 metres, menu navigation is a doddle, and the LCD touchscreen works a treat. While 4K/15fps is nothing to write home about, the built-in gyro sensor and distortion-correction tech help produce fantastic footage at lower resolutions – which is where the Ezviz S5 shines. Audio is superb in all but the noisiest, windiest environments. The camera is a little slow to react to light changes, but overall this action cam is difficult to fault for the money.

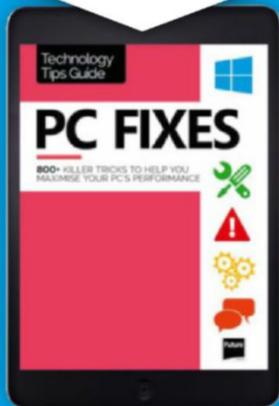


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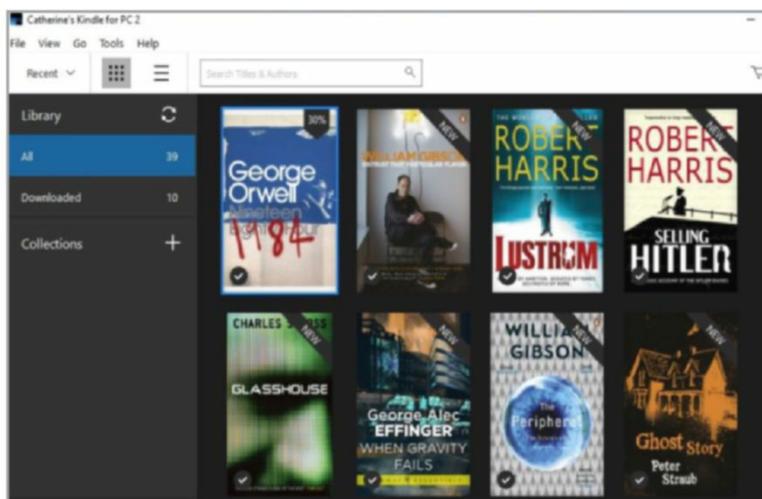
1 Kindle for PC

www.amazon.com/kindle-dbs/fd/kcp

Amazon's official Kindle for PC eBook reader is smart and stylish – and although it tempts you with reading suggestions from the company's Kindle store, the sales pitch isn't too in-your-face.

There's no setup necessary if you already have an Amazon

account. Just log in with your usual username and password and your virtual shelves will be populated automatically (although you'll have to click a book's cover to download it, so bear this in mind if you're planning some offline reading). Your notes and



bookmarks are synced across all your devices automatically (handy if you use multiple devices), as are flashcards – an extremely useful addition for students using digital textbooks for revision.

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RATING



Whether you use Amazon or not, Kindle for PC is the best free reader for your ebooks.

2 Freda

www.turnipsoft.co.uk

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RATING



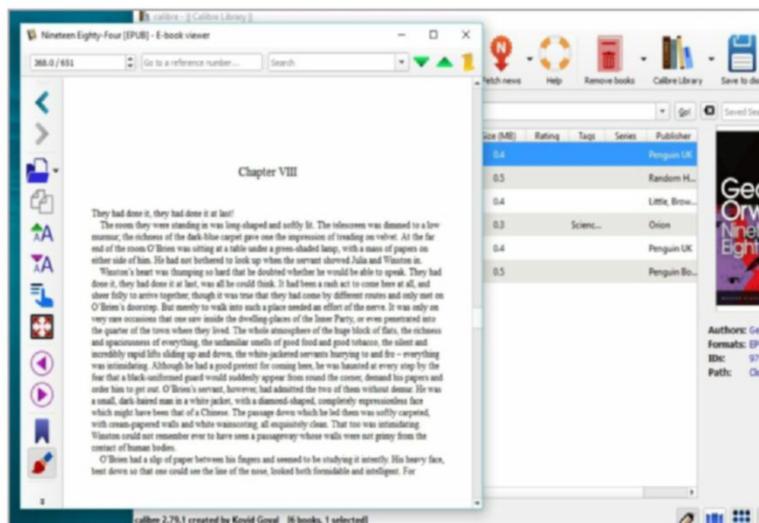
3 Calibre

<http://calibre-ebook.com>

Calibre is an open source ebook reader and manager that's lightweight and lightning-fast. Unlike many free ebook readers, Calibre supports Amazon's AWZ format (though it won't open DRM-protected files) as well as all

the other popular ebook file types, and if any metadata is missing (such as genre or cover art), you can add it yourself using the bookshelf's options menu.

One of Calibre's best features is Reference Mode, which displays



Calibre is a free, open source ebook reader that's ideal for students.

the current chapter and paragraph number in the top left – ideal if you need to cite references in an essay. We also like Flow Mode, where text is shown as a continuous scrolling stream without page breaks; not as pleasant as simulated page-turning for recreational reading, but a handy time-saver to avoid flicking backwards and forwards through a textbook.

Calibre is also available as a portable app, enabling you to take both it and your entire library of books with you on a USB – handy for a spot of lunchtime reading using your PC at work.

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4 Sumatra PDF

<http://sumatrapdfreader.org>

Despite its name, Sumatra PDF is a great little ebook reader, capable of displaying books in EPUB and MOBI format, as well as comic books in CBZ and CBR.

Like some versions of Calibre, Sumatra PDF is a portable app, so you can save it to a USB stick or cloud storage service and use it

on any PC. You can save your ebooks in the same place too, eliminating the need to sync your library before you head out.

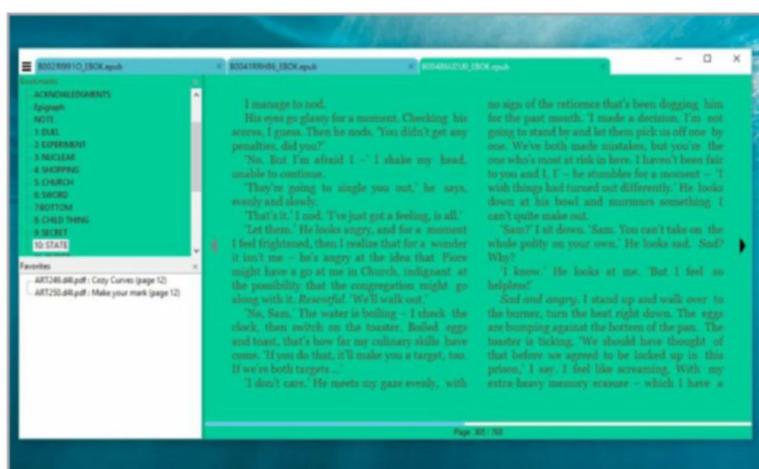
Sumatra PDF makes it easy to adjust basic settings like font size, but its advanced options can only be edited by opening a text file and typing in new values. If you

want to change the page colour, for example, you'll need to find the hex code for your preferred shade and enter it on the appropriate line. It's not difficult to do, but we'd still prefer a graphical interface to be able to do this.

Another shortcoming of Sumatra PDF is that there is no way to add notes or highlights. However, the convenience of carrying your ebook library and reader anywhere might outweigh those drawbacks for you. The portable version of Calibre, of course, offers similar flexibility, has more features and is easier to customise to boot.

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Sumatra is a quirky little PDF, ebook and comic reader for anyone who uses multiple PCs.

Windows Help & Advice is an internationally licensed title and is exported to another 22 countries.

Future Plc, Quay House, The Ambury Bath BA1 1UA
Tel: 01225 442244 Fax: 01225 732275
Email: windowsmagazine@futurenet.com
Web: www.facebook.com/windowsmag

EDITORIAL

Editor-in-chief Graham Barlow
Editor Rob Mead-Green
Deputy editor Nick Odantzis

ART/PRODUCTION

Art editor Jamie Schildhauer

CONTRIBUTORS

Editorial Chris Barnes, Gabe Carey, Alex Cox, Alan Dexter, Nate Drake, Cat Ellis, Dan Grilloopoulos, Ian Evenden, Matt Hanson, Seth G. Macy, Gary Marshall, Steve May, James Peckham, Nick Peers
Photography Future Photo Studio, Thinkstock.com

ADVERTISING

Commercial sales director Clare Dove (clare.dove@futurenet.com)

Senior advertising manager Lara Jaggon

Advertising manager Michael Pyatt

Director of Agency Sales Matt Downs

Ad Director – Technology John Burke

Head of Strategic Partnerships Clare Jonik

MARKETING

Marketing manager Kristianne Stanton

PRODUCTION & DISTRIBUTION

Production controller Nola Cokely

Production manager UK & US Mark Constance

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CIRCULATION

Newstrade Channel Manager Andy Williams

SUBSCRIPTIONS

UK reader order line & enquiries 0844 848 2852

Overseas reader order line & enquiries +44 (0)1604 251045

Online enquiries www.myfavouritemagazines.co.uk

Email windowsmag@myfavouritemagazines.co.uk

LICENSING

Senior Licensing & Syndication Manager Matt Ellis

matt.ellis@futurenet.com

+44 (0)1225 442244

MANAGEMENT

Editorial Director Paul Newman

Art and Design Director Ross Andrews



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Chief executive Zillah Byng-Thorne
Non-executive chairman Peter Allen
Chief financial officer Penny Ladkin-Brand
Managing director, Magazines Aaron Asadi
Tel +44 (0)1225 442 244 (Bath)

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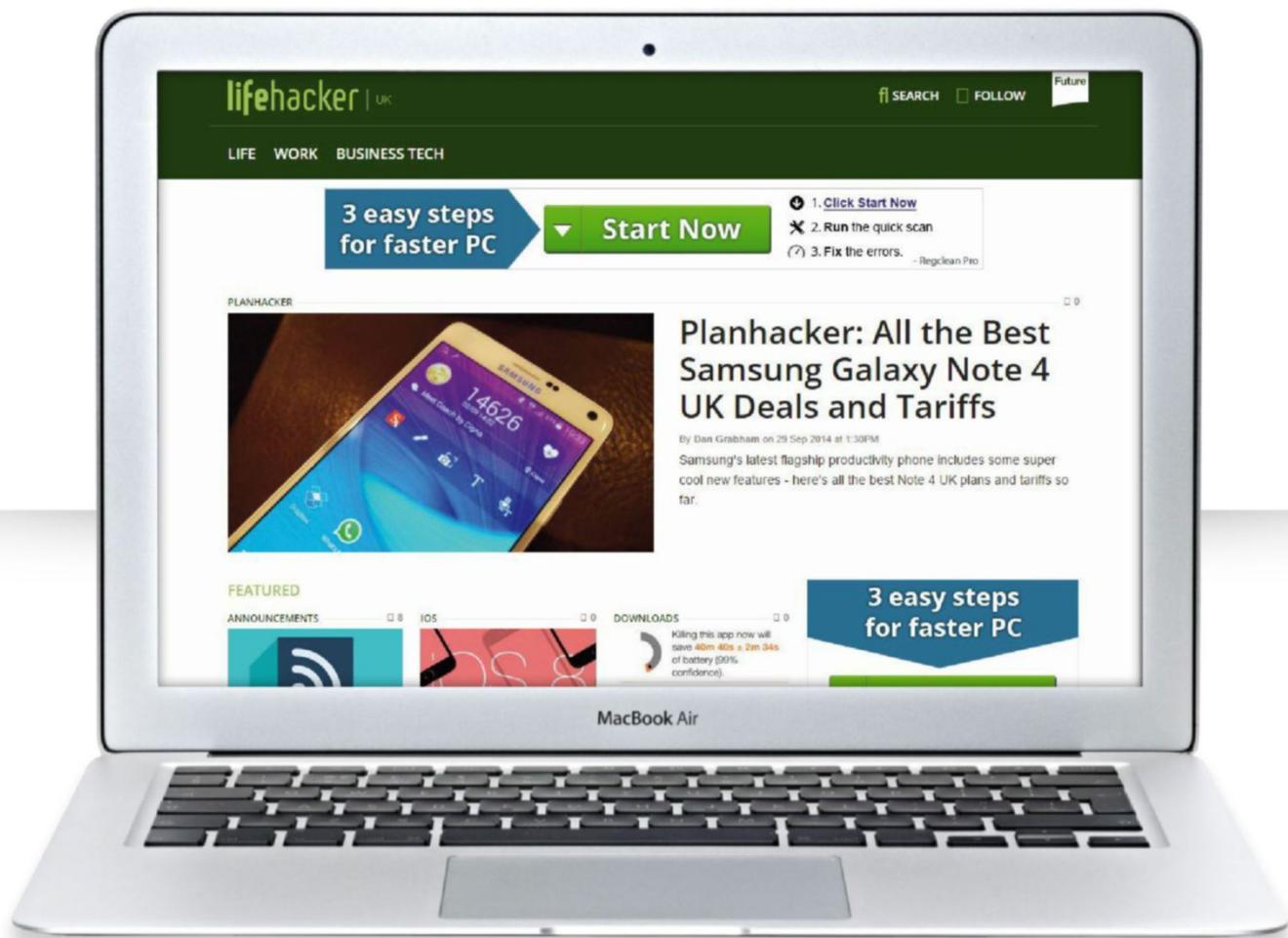


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