NEW

The Windows 10 Book

The independent guide to mastering your PC

For PCs, laptops & tablets

Get started with Windows 10 • Security and privacy tips • Browse the web with Edge • 100% unofficial

Welcome to

The Windows 10 Book

Windows remains the most popular operating system around, and Windows 10 is the latest iteration of Microsoft's ubiquitous platform. But while it packs in more features than ever, Windows 10 boasts a sleek look that can look rather alien to those still using Windows 7 or even 8. Fortunately, with the Windows 10 Book, you can explore every aspect of the highly improved operating system, from setting up your PC or tablet for the first time, to getting to know Cortana, your personal digital assistant. Our simple, step-by-step tutorials cover all the essential Windows apps, as well as offering some more advanced tips to help you get the most out of your machine. Read on and discover how to become more productive, enjoy entertainment, organise your photos, keep everything safe and secure, and more.

The Windows 10 Book

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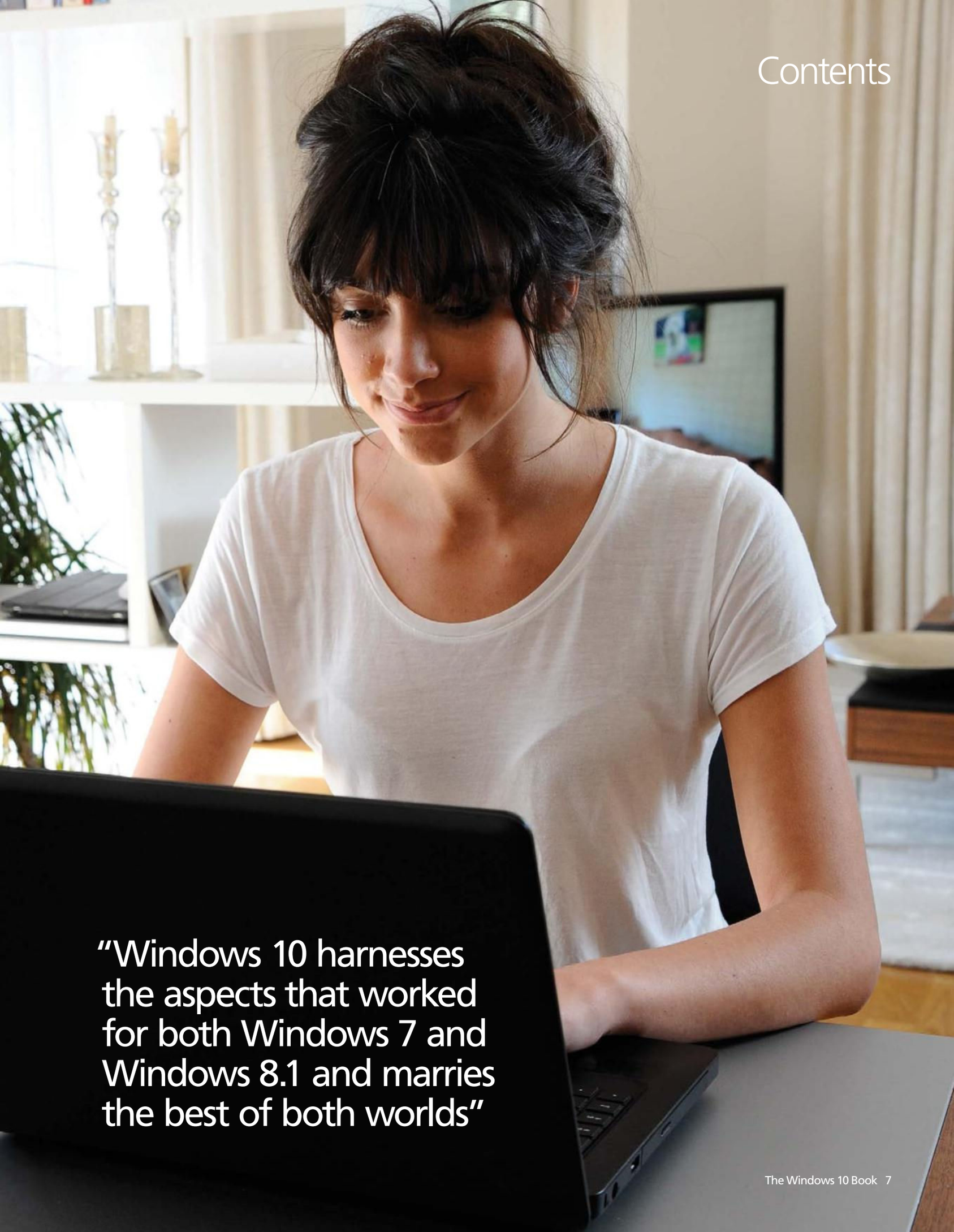

“Windows 10 harnesses the aspects that worked for both Windows 7 and Windows 8.1 and marries the best of both worlds”

Complete guide to Windows 10

Are you getting the most from Windows 10?

Microsoft's latest operating system, the dramatically updated Windows 10, links desktop and mobile computing with a familiar interface

Whereas Windows 7 looked and felt like an evolution from the earlier iterations of the Windows operating system, such as Vista, Windows 8 was an entirely new prospect, delivering an interface more akin to mobile devices. Windows 10 brings the best of both worlds. The Start button – loved by many in Windows 7 – makes a welcome return and by clicking on it you will bring up the Start menu, which is like the Windows 8 Start screen, but compacted into one handy menu that is hidden from view when not in use. The result is that you have an expansive desktop to work from, without the whole thing being populated by app tiles – all of which now reside exclusively in the Start menu.

There are still many ways in which you can tweak and tailor the operating system to meet your needs and requirements. You have complete freedom to arrange the Start menu however you want and there are many ways in which you can keep your favourite apps close at hand. For example, you can pin them to your Start menu, pin them to the taskbar at the bottom of the screen, or create shortcuts to them that can be accessed from your desktop.

Everything can be placed within easy reach so that you don't have to think about finding it. And if you do, then entering keywords into the Search field will provide instant local and web searches to help you find what you want with the minimum of effort.

What makes Windows 10 different?

Microsoft's latest OS includes several significant features

After Window 8's tile-based, in-your-face style, Windows 10 is more of a back to basics approach from Microsoft, to harness the aspects that worked for both Windows 8 and Windows 7 before it, and present them all in an interface that marries the best of both worlds. As such, you now have a familiar desktop feel with a Start menu that encompasses the live tiles and other assorted features. And when you're not using the Start menu it will be tucked away in the corner, leaving you free to carry out your business on an expansive desktop. Should you need to find anything, the 'search' bar next to the Start menu allows you to perform local tasks on your PC and web searches simultaneously – so you will always have all of the info you want.

The Start menu

Starting up a Windows 10-fuelled PC, you cannot help but immediately notice this important new feature. Rather than the standard Start screen of Windows 8, Windows 10 presents to you with a clean desktop, with all of your live tiles and features tucked away in the Start menu, which you can access at any time by clicking on the Windows icon in the lower-left corner of the screen. You can rearrange what is displayed here, turn live tiles on or off and also pin items and services that you use frequently. It's a great way to keep what you want close at hand without intruding on your desk space.

Tiles come in different shapes and sizes, depending on the app and its function. Some feature information on the tile itself

Full-screen apps

When you open an app in Windows 10 you can view it within a desktop window or click the square icon in the top-right corner of the window to make the app full-screen. You can see which apps are open and cycle between them by clicking on the respective app's icon in the taskbar the bottom of the screen. You can also right-click on an icon to close the app. Apps and services that you use regularly can be pinned to the taskbar so that they can be access even swifter than by going through the Start menu.

Apps can multitask and, in addition, can be run side by side, which allows you to do more on a single screen

Windows 10 apps at a glance

Microsoft Edge

The default website browser supplied by Windows 10, Edge is one of the most powerful and capable apps of its type and it replaces Internet Explorer, which has been a Windows stalwart for years.

Mail

The default, fully featured Windows 10 Mail app arrives with a 'power pane' that is situated on the left side of the screen, featuring icons to see your inbox, flagged mail and more.

Store

Click here to open Microsoft's own app store, ready with a host of applications ready to download to your Windows 10 PC. Many of these are freely available or can be purchased for a low price.

Sport

The Sport app provides news updates even when it's not opened, by displaying information on the tile itself. You will see images and text acting as a slideshow on the tile face.

Weather

Another app that displays live information on the tile, the Weather app will ask you about your current location so it can provide exact weather information, no matter where you do your computing.

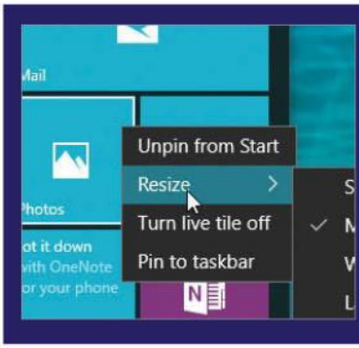
Groove Music

One of several media apps available with Windows 10, Groove will display currently playing music on the tile, grouping your music into a collection, supplying internet radio and streaming commercial tracks.

Why should I update to Windows 10?

Had Windows 8.1 for a while and not sure whether to update? Here's why you should…

"The Windows 8 taskbar returns. And it is just as useful as ever"

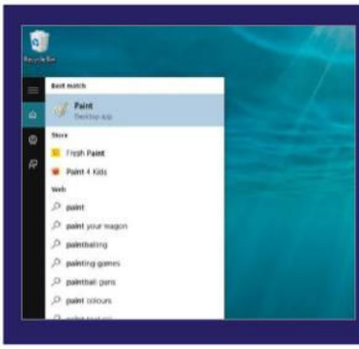


A more accessible interface

The Start menu packs in all of the apps and features, leaving the desktop free and uncluttered to carry out your work. Like in Windows 8.1, you can right-click on the tiles in your Start menu to bring up a contextual menu of options relating to them.

Continuation of the taskbar

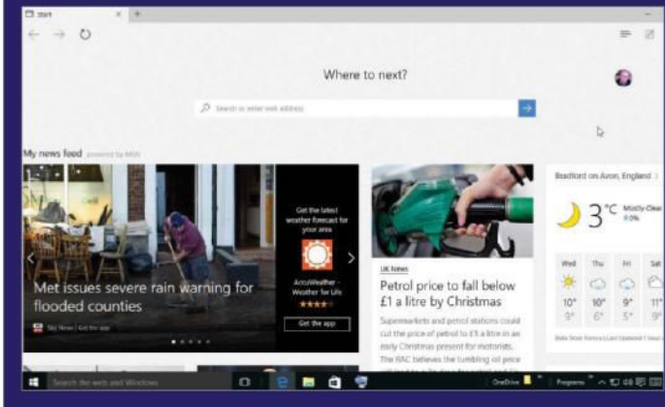
The taskbar that was introduced with Windows 8.1 returns. And it is just as useful as ever in providing easy access to various services and for pinning your favourite apps, folders and documents to. You can also change its position on the screen.



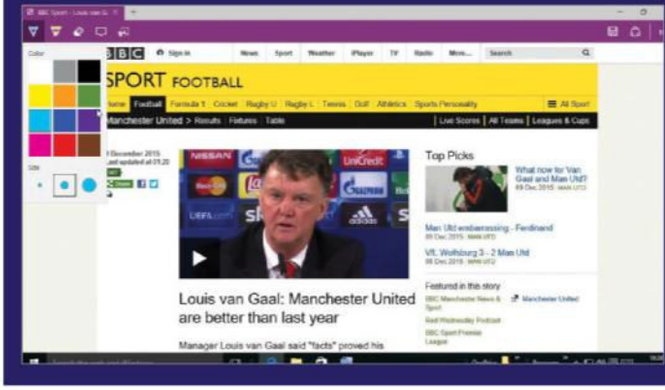
Built-in local and web searches

If you need to find something in a hurry, be it an application or some web research, then you can enter keywords into the Search field and matches will be relayed as you type. The best matches will appear at the top of the list, helping you find items easily.

The power of Edge



Microsoft Edge replaces Internet Explorer as the default web browser of Windows 10, and it is packed full of functions to make your web surfing easier. One of the coolest features is web writing. You can scrawl notes on internet pages and share them as you would conventional notes. You can also remove the clutter from pages to read them easier and search for things quicker.



Get more from the Start menu

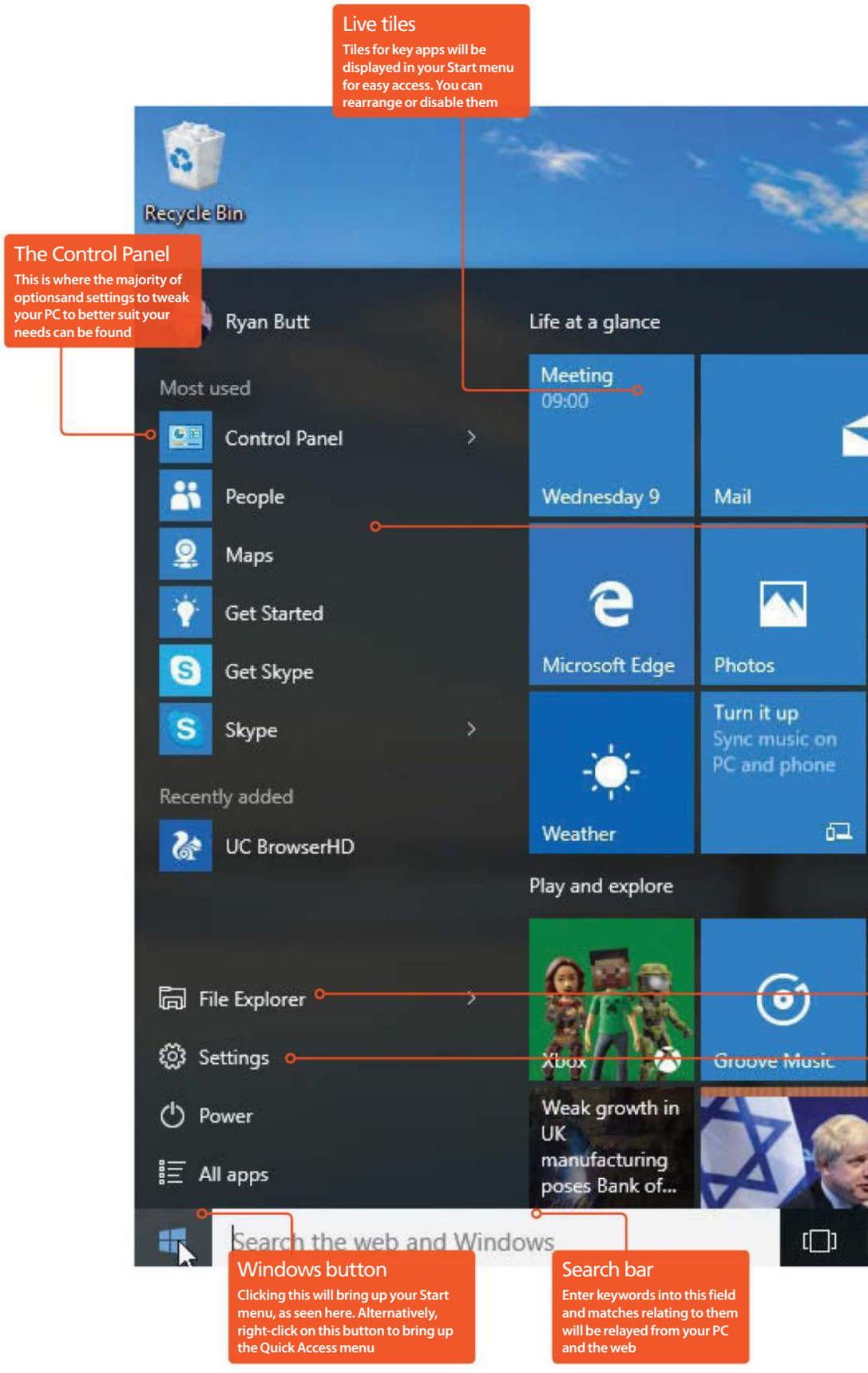
The Start menu is the heart of your Windows 10 PC

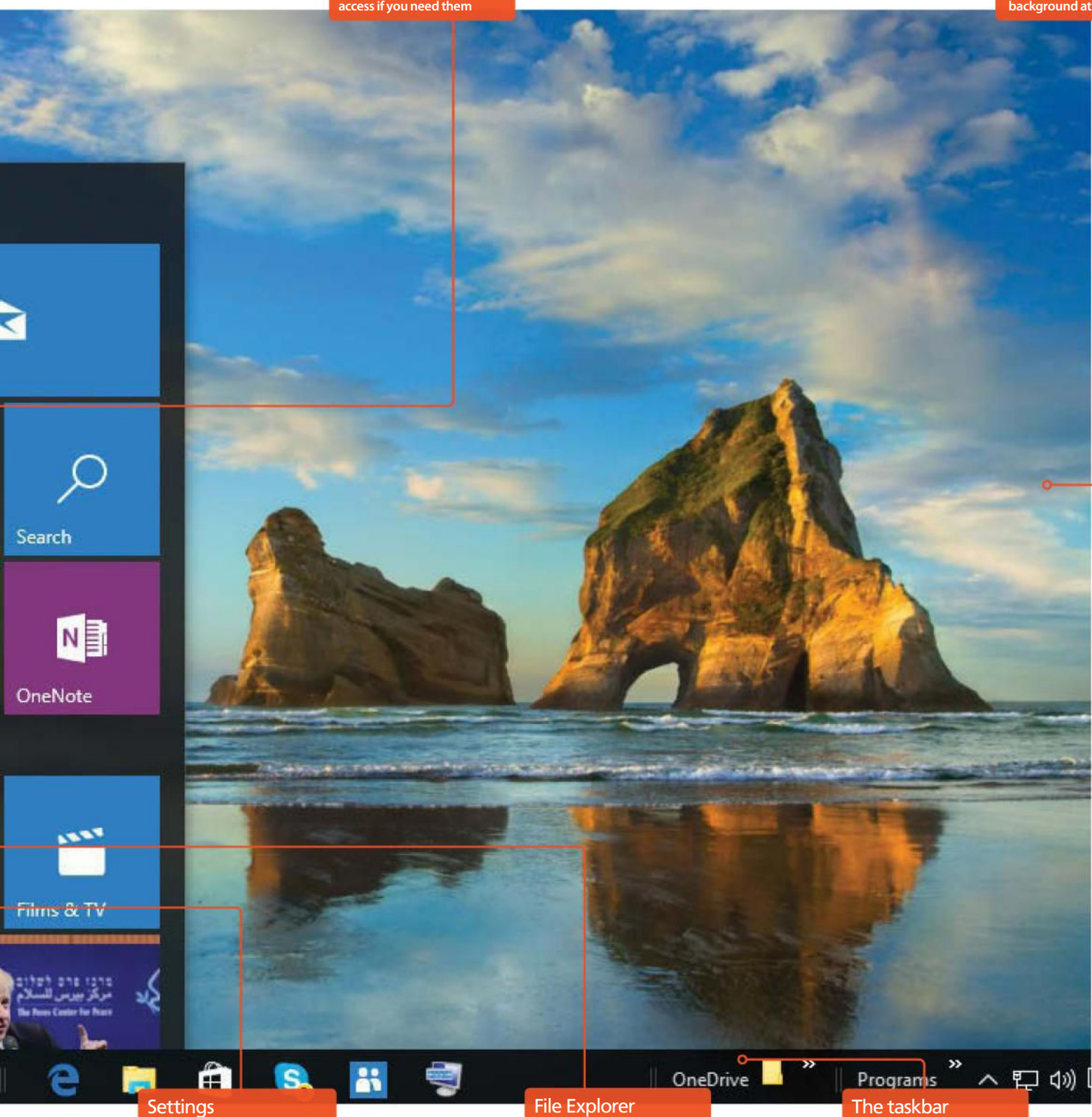
When you use a Windows 10 PC, this is the screen that you will see the most, so it is worth taking some time to get to know what facilities are available within it and what features, connected to the Start menu, you can access. It is at the Start menu that you will be able to contact and interact with the outside world. For example, you will be able to see what emails are ready for you to read, along with other notifications from social media. You can talk to your friends and see what they are doing and utilise this screen as the entry point to the internet via a browser.

The great thing about the Start menu, however, is that the default design is not set in stone. Far from it. You have the ability to change and personalise the Start menu to suit your own needs. You will be able to move and rearrange the tiles that are displayed in the Start menu, rename the sections in which they reside, change the size of the tiles to give your most-used ones more prominence and remove the tiles that you don't need.

The Start menu also features other useful sections, such as 'Most used', which lists all of the most frequently used apps, and 'Recently added', which displays the apps that you have recent,y downloaded and installed on your PC. And don't forget that you can also pin items to your taskbar.

"The default design of the new Start menu is not set in stone"





Recent apps
The apps you use most frequently will be listed to the left of the Start menu for easy access if you need them

Your desktop
Windows 10 has much more of a Windows 7 look and feel. You can change your background at any time

Settings
Go here to instantly access some of the more important aspects of your PC, such as security and privacy options

File Explorer
You can access and manage all of the files and documents stored on your computer by using your File Explorer

The taskbar
Key tools and features can be accessed from here. You can also pin your favourite apps to the taskbar

Essential Start menu tips

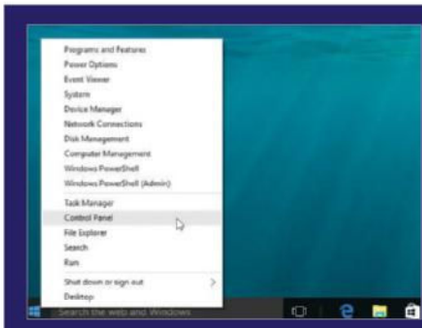
Using Windows 10's Start menu is a straightforward affair, but there are useful tips that will make your computing life even easier

1: Navigate the Start menu

The start menu provides the best of both worlds from Windows 7 and 8 in allowing you to access your important files and settings, while providing shortcut stepping stones to your favourite and most-used apps. Numerous apps will appear by default in your Start menu, grouped together by category such as 'Life at a glance' for all of your news and email apps, and 'Play and explore' for your music and video collections, as well as the Xbox gaming app. Scroll down the menu to see more options and features listed.

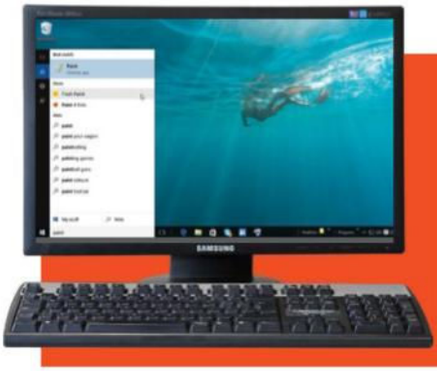
2: Rearranging your items

You have complete freedom to tailor your Start menu to suit your needs. sections can be moved elsewhere by clicking and dragging the partition icons and you can even rename the categories they reside in by clicking on the existing title. If you wish to remove app tiles from your Start menu then right-click on one and then you will be able to turn off the live tile, resize the icon, unpin it completely from your Start menu and pin it to your taskbar for even easier access.



3: Utilise key features via the Quick Access menu

To trigger the Quick Access menu, either right-click your mouse on the bottom-left corner of the screen or hold the Windows (⊞) key on the keyboard and press X. The menu is text-based and allows access to a range of facilities such as the Device Manager, Control Panel, Explorer and much more. It can often be a faster entry point to these areas than the usual routes of access.



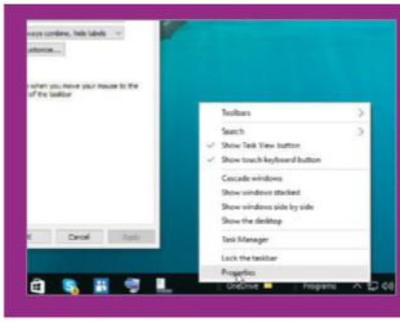
4: Get easier app access

If you use an app frequently but it is not shown on the Start menu and you don't want to constantly use the Search bar to find it, you may want to pin it to the Start menu for quicker access. Initially, search for it via the Search function until you see the app's icon. Then right-click on the icon to open a menu and select the 'Pin to Start' option.

Search for then right-click on the app icon and choose 'Pin to Start' to pin it to the Start menu

5: Shut down your computer

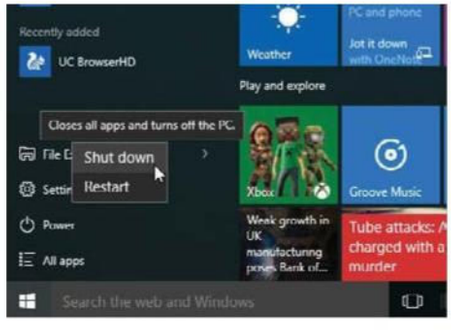
In order to shut down your computer, access your Start menu and then click on the Power button at the bottom of the menu on the left. Options to 'Shut down' or 'Restart' will appear so click on the one that you want. Alternatively, you are still able to use the standard Ctrl+Alt+Del keyboard combination, then click on the Power button and Shut Down from the resulting screen. It's up to you which of the two methods you use.

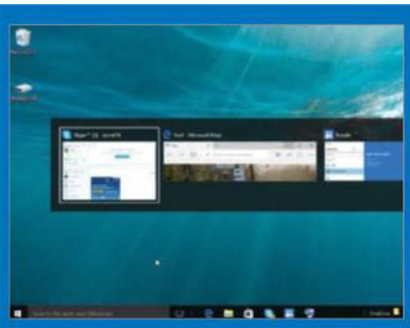


6: Learn what the taskbar can do for you

The taskbar can be accessed by moving the mouse pointer to the base of the screen. Here you will find any frequently used apps that you've pinned to the bar, enabling you to quickly launch them. Right-click on an empty space in the bar and you can access options such as Properties.

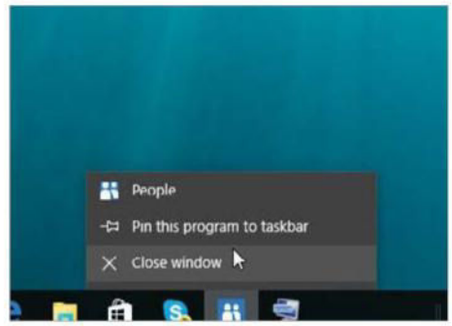
As well as containing pinned apps, the taskbar offers a range of additional features and options





7: Monitor all open apps

You can open an array of apps that will sit within your RAM, waiting to be accessed and used. To remind you what you have open, look to the taskbar at the bottom of the screen to view the icons of the open apps. You can glide your cursor across them to show a miniature image of each open app. Click on a window to use that app. Alternatively, you can press the Alt+Tab key combination, which will bring a ribbon of app windows onto the centre of the screen. Hold Alt and press Tab to select your desired app.



8: Close down apps

Since apps don't have an obvious 'close' button, shutting down an app might seem tricky. Not so. When you start an app and then switch to something else, the app itself is not a major drain on resources, so the requirement for always closing an app is not actually a key one. If, however, you really want to close an app down, then move your cursor down to the taskbar and then right-click on the icon of the app you wish to close. A floating menu of options will appear – choose the 'Close window' option to instantly close the app and all of its associated windows.

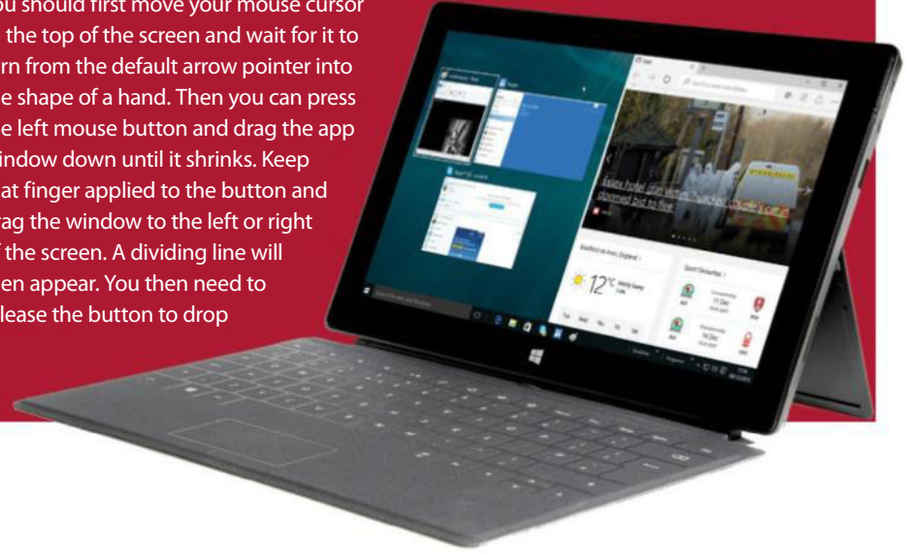
"To see what you have open, look at the taskbar at the bottom of the screen"

10: Run several Windows apps side by side

You are able to view multiple applications at once on your computer screen. With the introduction on Windows 10, that means you can view four apps simultaneously – if you have the necessary screen space on your monitor, of course.

In order to make use of this handy feature, you should first move your mouse cursor to the top of the screen and wait for it to turn from the default arrow pointer into the shape of a hand. Then you can press the left mouse button and drag the app window down until it shrinks. Keep that finger applied to the button and drag the window to the left or right of the screen. A dividing line will then appear. You then need to release the button to drop the app into position. Repeat this process with any other apps and move the dividing bar to resize them until you have loaded your desired number of apps where you want them.

Move the vertically placed dividing bar, seen on the screen, to change each app window's size



9: Changing tile sizes

Alter the shape of your app tiles in the Start menu

The more apps that you download and use on your computer, the more cluttered the Windows 10 Start menu may become. On this basis, it is wise, eventually, to arrange the Start menu into some sort of logical order, perhaps highlighting the apps you use most. One of the important tools that will help in your organisation is being able to change the size of each tile itself. In this way, your Start menu 'jigsaw' can be arranged to take advantage of the interlocking shapes.

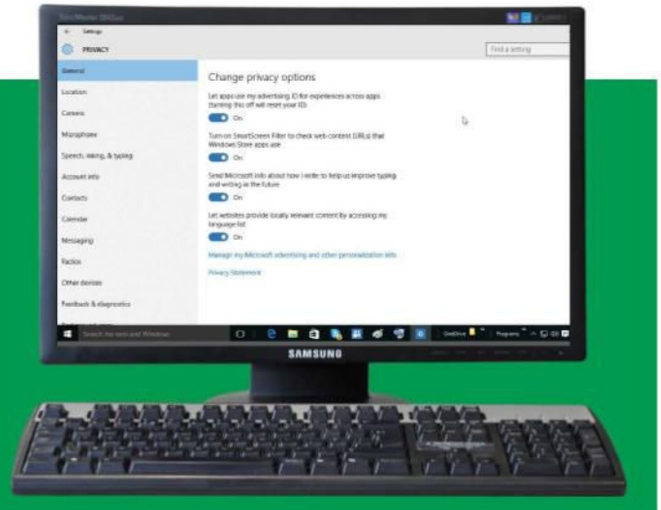
For those apps that are very important, their tiles can be enlarged and, of course, lesser apps can be reduced in size. Size reductions are also useful to create extra room when your screen is cluttered by dozens of apps. To alter a tile's size, right-click on it, then locate and click on the Resize option. A small submenu will appear listing a variety of sizes. Select the required size for your tile and then watch it transform in the Start menu.

"One of the important tools for organising the Start menu is being able to change the shape of tiles"

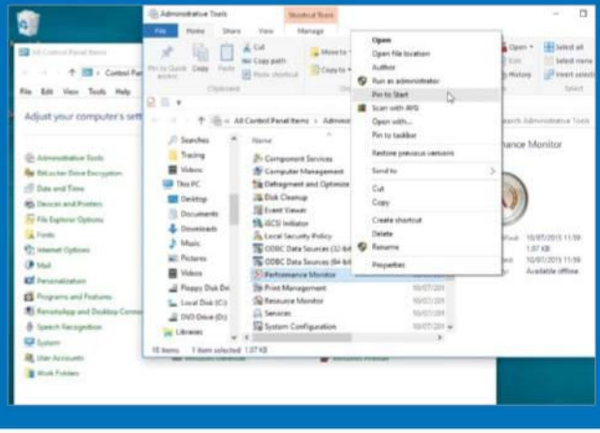
Your key questions answered

Discover solutions to the most frequently asked questions about Windows 10…

Are my details safe?



Windows 10 is able to use your name, location and account picture, sharing this information with its apps. If any of that concerns you, however, then you can change it via the privacy options. First, either hold the Windows (⊞) key and press 'I', or access your Start menu and click on the 'Settings' opoptitoino n at the bottom. Now locate and click on the Privacy section. In the centre of the screen, this will bring up a list of privacy options, each with sliding toggle button that you can use to turn the option on or off. Initially, all of these buttons will be turned on. Modify these buttons to suit your requirements.



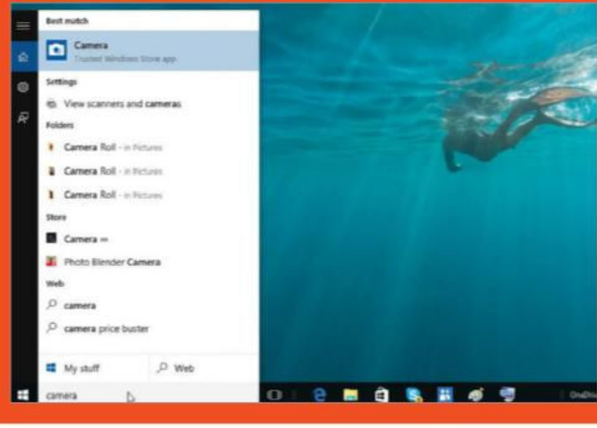
Are there more tools?

If you have previous experience in handling Windows, you might be a little frustrated that more tools are not made immediately available for administration purposes in Windows 10. Such 'applets', as they are often referred to, include Disk Cleanup, Performance Monitor, System Configuration, Print Management, System Information and more. Many of them are genuinely useful. Even beginners would find at least some of these tools handy at times. To reveal the tools, go to your Control Panel and click on Administrative Tools. You can now go through the various tools on offer and if you would like them placed within easy access, right-click and choose 'Pin to Start' or 'Pin to taskbar'.

How can I search?

In Windows 10, the search function is not just about searching for items and files located on your own computer – by default, it's also geared to search online too. So whether you're looking for a particular app or service on your Windows 10 PC or just seeking information about a famous person or event, you simply type keywords into the search field in the taskbar and matches will be instantly relayed to you as you start typing.

The best matches will appear at the top of the list with more general stuff appearing underneath. Click on a match to launch the app or carry out a web search.



Useful keyboard shortcuts

Quick and easy keyboard commands for you to use on the Start menu of Windows 10

A visual, menu-based interface – such as that used by Windows 10 – is a wonderful thing: easy to use and self-explanatory. Sometimes, though, it's not the fastest method of getting a job done. On occasion, issuing the same command from a keyboard is a lot faster. Whatever your views on the matter, it's nice to have an alternative option, so here are a selection of the most useful keyboard shortcuts for you.

+ Begin typing

This key combination quickly accesses Windows' built-in Search function. The text that follows after the Windows key is the subject of the search.

Show all apps

It's possible to have a gamut of apps spread over several Start section screens. This command offers a bird's-eye view of all of your apps.

Charms menu

A 'Charms' menu will appear, running vertically down the right side of the screen and featuring Settings, Devices, Start, Share and Search.

Settings

To access Settings, you don't have to go through the menu system. Use this combination to enter Settings directly.

Escape

Sometimes you just want to get out of a task. In this case, rather than hunting for a menu option, simply hit the Esc key to exit.

Devices

Use this combo to open a Devices window, on the right, that displays options including Play, Print and Project.

Exit to desktop

This key combination not only exits the application that you are currently using, but it also exits to the desktop, removing another step from the process.

App shortcuts

Using this key combination, you can open the shortcut menu for the app that you are working within. Commands shown here include Minimise and Split Left or Right.

Send to bin

This gets rid of an unwanted item when you're in desktop mode, sending it to the Recycle Bin.

Select all

If working in a word processor such as Word, this combo will select all the items present within a document.

Delete item

This option is rather more apocalyptic in manner because it allows you to delete an item of choice without moving it to the Recycle Bin first.

Tab

Just keep pressing this key to cycle through the page options. It can prove very useful.

Customise tiles

Pressing the space bar in the Start screen brings up the Customize menu from the bottom of the display. Here, you can change a tile in a variety of ways.

Guide to the Windows 10 apps

Discover how to get the most from the apps that populate the Windows 10 Start screen

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Get all your contacts and updates in one place

30 **Mail**
Keep in touch with friends, family and colleagues

32 **Calendar**
Organise your daily life with your PC

34 **Maps**
Explore the world and discover new places

36 **Windows Store**
Choose from thousands of apps in the Windows Store and read reviews and ratings

38 **Xbox**
Unlock a host of gaming features

40 **Film & TV**
Browse, stream and download a massive collection of movies and TV shows

42 **Groove Music**
Browse your music library and play tracks and albums with Microsoft's new music app

44 **Camera**
Shoot stills and videos in the Camera app

46 **Photos**
Store and edit your pictures in this intuitive digital gallery

48 **Money**
Brush up on your financial knowledge and track your money

50 **Skype**
Communicate with anyone for free, no matter where in the world they might be

52 **OneDrive**
Explore the vast array of options presented by Windows' cloud computing solution

Guide to the Windows 10 apps

"Just got a PC? We break down what you need to know about Windows apps"

Browse the web with Microsoft Edge

Use the new web browser to access your favourite websites and services

Internet Explorer, the web browser that has been in Windows for the last 20 years has been replaced with a brand new app called Edge that offers exciting new features and a smart new interface. Edge has some fantastic features such as an optional news feed on new tabs that shows the latest stories every time you open the browser and it is a great way to keep up with the events that are happening around the world.

Edge has a Reading View that strips away the clutter that is present on many web pages and this makes it easier to view the content without annoying distractions. It has a Hub which provides access to features like favourites, browsing history and downloads. If you are busy and don't have the time to read a web page, it can be saved for later and read when you are less busy.

The ability to draw on web pages is unusual among web browsers, but Edge has it and it can be useful when researching topics and there is a note button on the Toolbar that provides a collection of simple tools like a pen, a highlighter and a note facility. You can mark up and save pages. Let's take a look at Edge's new features.

The address box

Edge does not have an obvious address box, but if you click here you can type in the URL of a website. Searches can also be performed by clicking and typing here, too

Reading View

This button is enabled whenever Reading View is available and it strips out all the distracting content. It is not available on some pages because it is not appropriate, like **bing.com**

Menu button

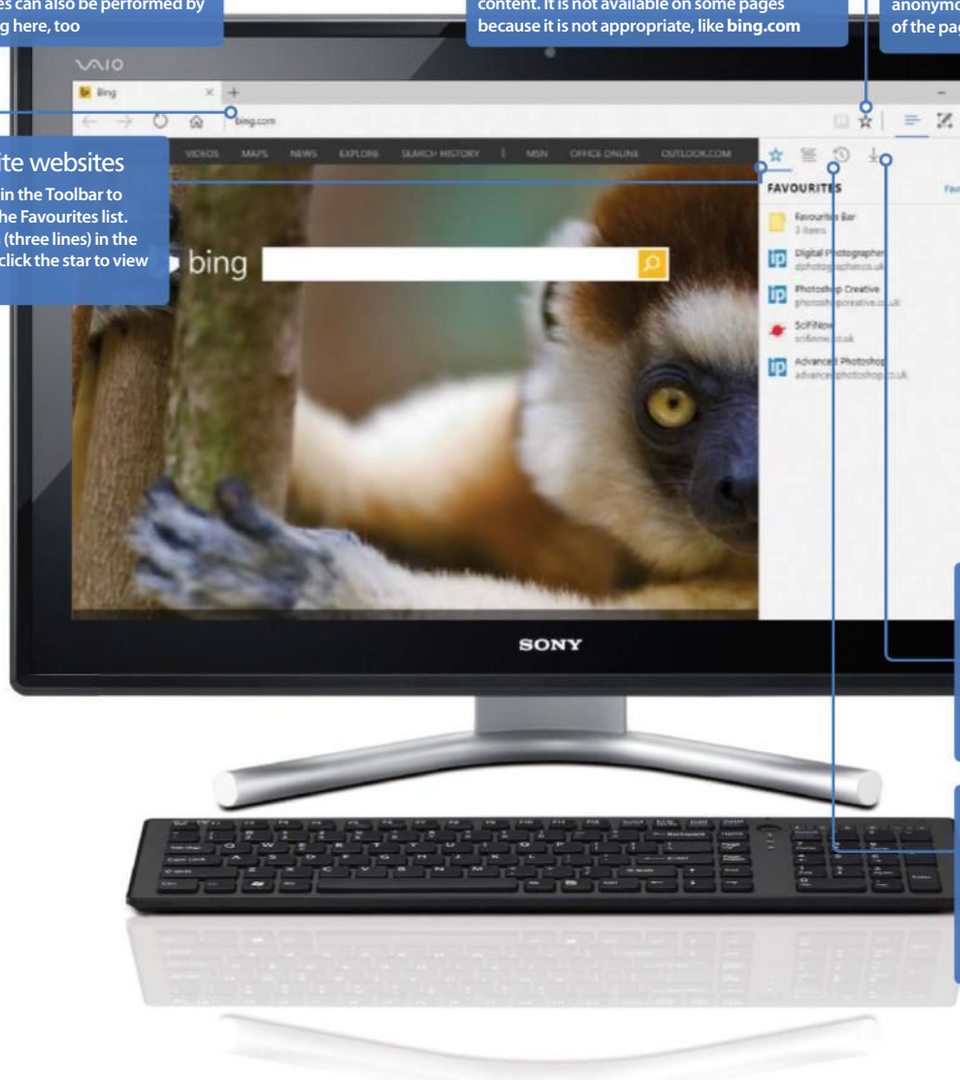
Click the three dots to display a menu. There are options to open an InPrivate window for anonymous web browsing, zoom in and out of the page, print it, and access Edge settings

Your favourite websites

Click the star icon in the Toolbar to add a website to the Favourites list. Click the Hub icon (three lines) in the Toolbar and then click the star to view your favourites

Where's Internet Explorer?

You shouldn't need Internet Explorer, but if you ever come across a website that is not working in Edge, go to the Start menu and click the Internet Explorer tile. This is the same browser that is in Windows 7 and 8, and it is compatible with all websites. It works well enough, but the favourites are not shared with Edge and it has its own. Try to use one browser or the other and not both.



View downloads

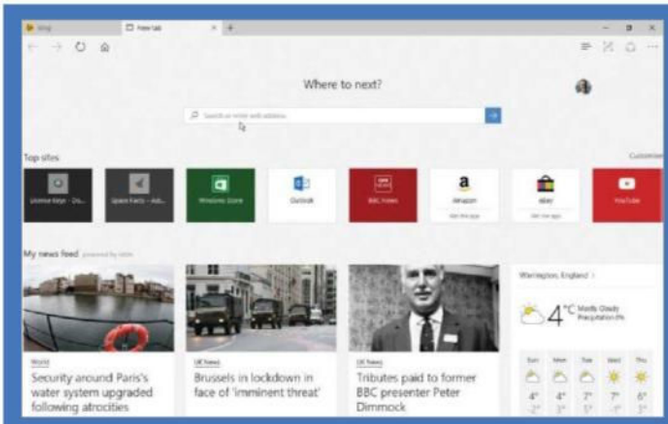
If files are being downloaded from the internet, click this icon to view their progress. It also shows files that have been downloaded in the past and it will open the downloads folder

View your history

Click here to view the websites you visited in the last hour, today, last week and older. It provides a link to clear your browsing history to prevent anyone from seeing it and increases privacy

Explore Edge's best features

Get to know Windows' new browser



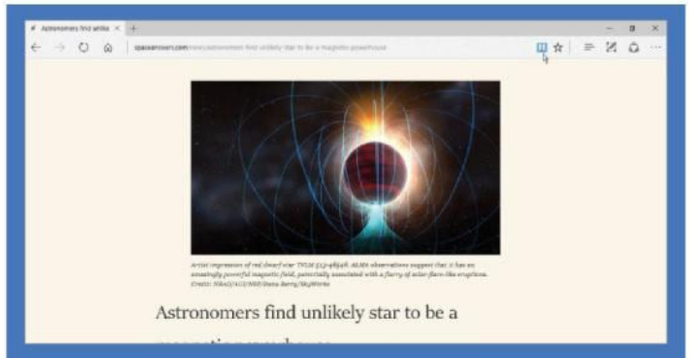
1: Start Edge

Click the Edge icon in the Taskbar or the tile in the Start menu. Edge can show the latest news and weather when it starts and if you do not see them, click Show my news feed at the bottom of the browser window. Click the Customise link on the right to choose which news sources to show and select other startup options. Enter a website URL into the box or a word or phrase to search for.

2: Browse the web

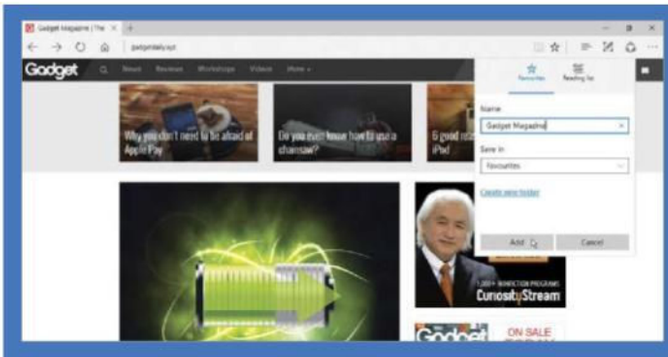
Enter a website address, search term, or click a top site tile to go there. Use the Back and Forward buttons in the top left corner to retrace your steps. Click the Circle button (third icon) to reload the page on sites that change frequently, or to retry a page that is loading slowly. Click the Home button to return to the Start page.

> "Edge has some fantastic features such as an optional news feed on new tabs that shows the latest stories every time you open the browser"



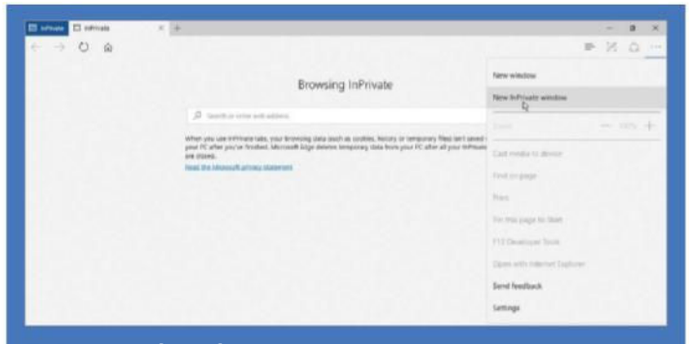
3: Switch to Reading View

Web pages often contain many adverts and other items on the page, which can be a major distraction when trying to read them. Click the Book icon, the first of the icons on the right side of the Toolbar, to switch to reading view. This strips out adverts and other unnecessary items leaving a simple page that is easier to read.



4: Save the page

Click the Star icon in the Toolbar at the top. A panel opens that provides options to save the website or web page to your Favourites or Reading list. Click the button you want, such as Favourites, click in the Name box to edit the name if it is too long, and then click the Add button to save it.



5: Browse in private

Click the three dots in the top right corner of the window to display the menu. It contains useful functions like 'Find on page', which searches a web page for a keyword. Click 'New InPrivate' to create a private browsing window. This enables you to browse anonymously and your previous history is hidden. Your browsing history is erased afterwards.

Use Cortana, your personal digital assistant

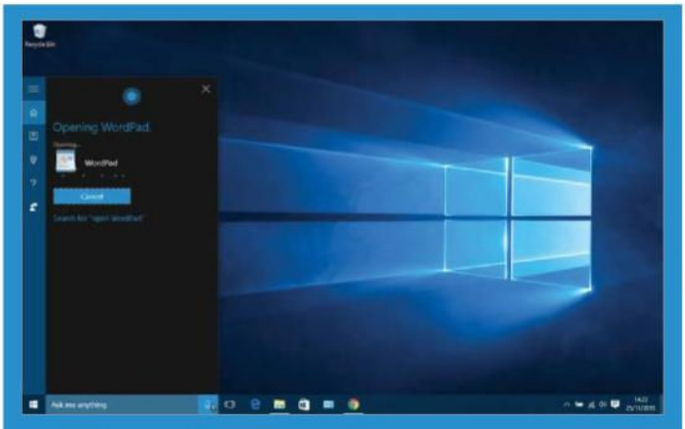
Talk to Cortana, ask questions, perform actions and more – it saves time and effort

Cortana is the artificial intelligence character from the Halo games and was the inspiration for the digital assistant built in to Windows 10, which also features artificial intelligence. Cortana is very smart and can understand what you say. All you have to do is to say what you want. This might be an instruction to open a program, get some information, or perform a search.

Cortana uses speech recognition to understand what you say and it is very accurate. It, or she as the voice is female, nearly always gets it right and this enables Cortana to fetch the information you want or performs the requested action. For example, you do not need to search the Start menu for an application and you can simply tell Cortana to open the one you want to use. It is quicker and easier, especially if there isn't a tile and the program is buried among all the items on the All apps menu. The examples shown here are really just scratching the surface of Cortana's capabilities. It is surprising what information can be found, and there are many actions, such as creating reminders and appointments, taking notes, setting alarms, and even singing and telling jokes.

Learn how to use Cortana

Make life easier with Cortana



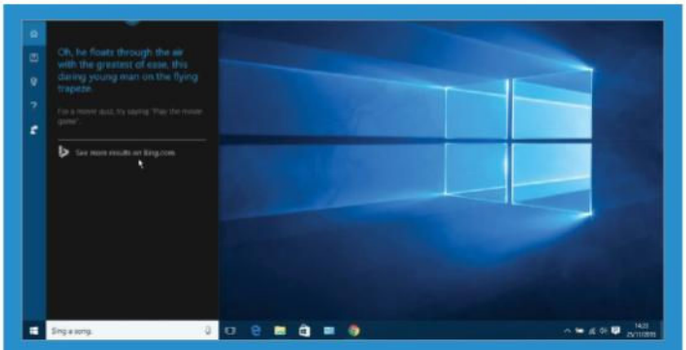
1: Run any program

Cortana is able to run programs that are on the Start menu and this means that you do not have to search for them. WordPad is buried deep in the Start menu and is hard to find, so click Cortana's microphone icon and say "Open WordPad." The Cortana panel closes and the WordPad window opens. It is quick and easy to launch programs this way. Try "Open Settings," and more.

"It is surprising what information can be found, and there are many various actions, such as creating reminders and appointments"

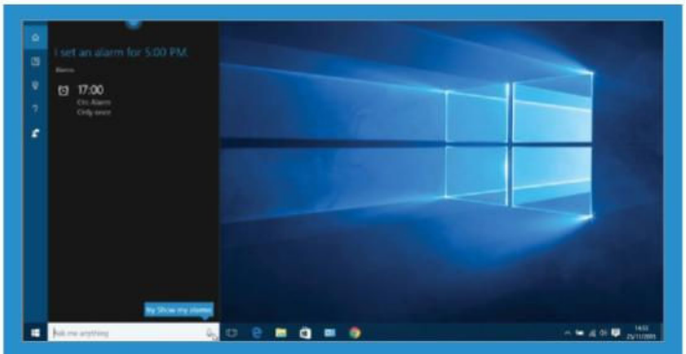
4: Ask for information

Cortana knows a lot of facts, such as the capital cities of countries. Just say "What is the capital of..." and the country. Click the **Bing.com** link or photo if you want more information and Edge opens with search results from Bing. It is a bit hit and miss and sometimes Cortana goes straight to a Bing search for the answer.



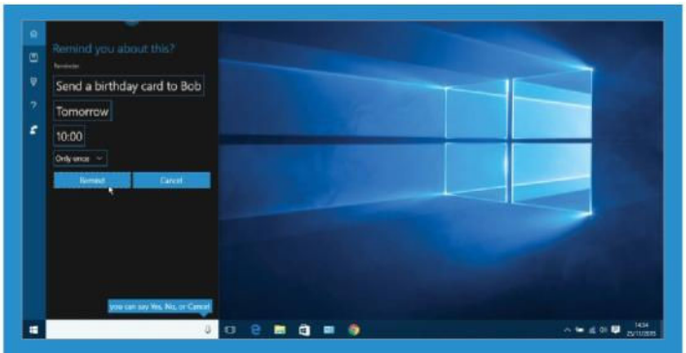
2: Chat to Cortana

Cortana loves a bit of chit chat and playful games. Just talk to her like she was a real person. Say "Sing a song," and Cortana will sing to you and has several songs in her repertoire. Games can be played, too. For example, say "Play the movie game." Cortana provides clues and you have to guess the name of the movie.



3: Set the alarm clock

If you have an appointment, meeting or something else you must not miss, ask Cortana to set an alarm with "Set an alarm for 5pm," or "Set an alarm for 7am tomorrow." You can even say, "Set an alarm for 45 minutes," and Cortana will add 45 minutes to the current time and set the alarm. You'll never miss anything again.



5: Never forget by creating reminders

If you need to do something today, tomorrow, next week and so on, just create a reminder. Say something like "Remind me tomorrow at 10 AM to...", and then the subject of the reminder. If any information is missing, Cortana asks for it. For example, say "Remind me tomorrow," and Cortana asks "what about?"

Keep up to date with News

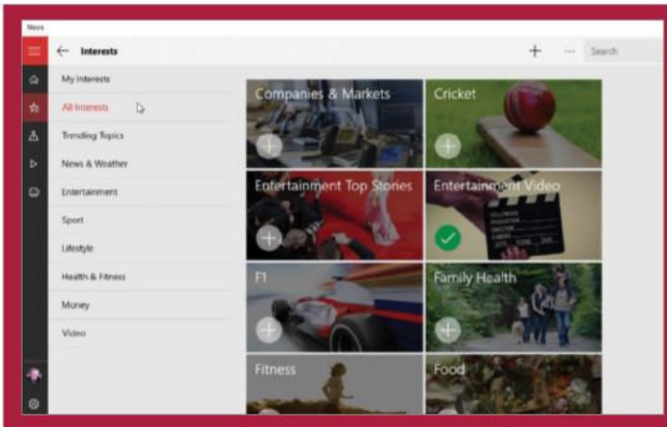
Discover how to personalise your news feed with the Windows 10 News app

The News app enables you stay up to date with the news that matters the most to you, delivered in a personalised experience that covers the topics that you determine from a range of your most trusted news sources. It's all extremely easy to add or remove content in order to suit your interests and rearrange the various sections exactly how you see fit. You can add topics – such as articles about companies, teams or celebrities that you're interested in – and also add stories from the news sources you like the most.

Getting started is easy: just click on the 'Interests' option in the left-hand column and you'll see a column to the left that lets you browse topics by 'All Interests', 'Trending Topics', 'Entertainment' and even more. Clicking on one of these options will bring up a selection related sources, which you can then add to your main feed by clicking on the '+' icon. You can add as many as you want and going to the Home section will present them all in simple, at-a-glance headlines and eye-catching pictures. It's the ideal app for saving you the time it would take to visit each website.

Get the news that matters to you

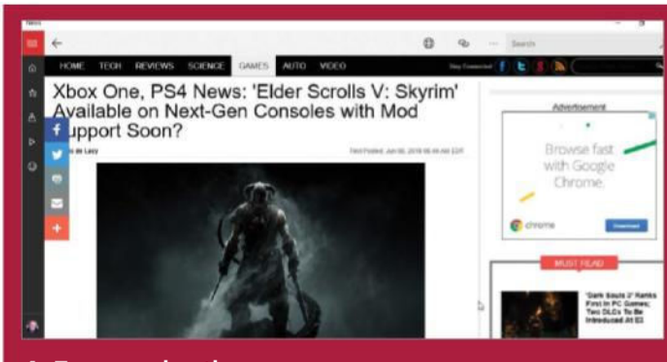
How to get your personalised feed tailored to suit your interests



1: Tracking topics

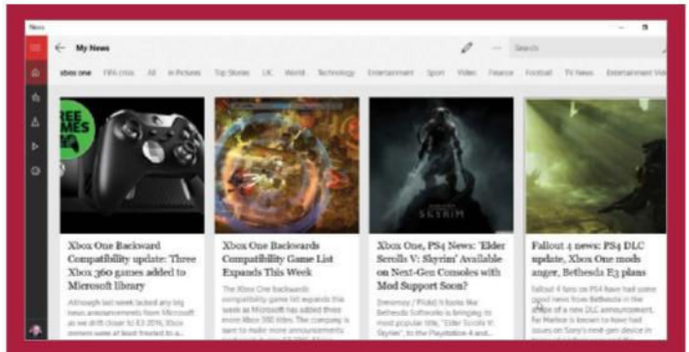
You can customise the News app to include the topics that matter to your. Simply click on the 'Interests' option in the left column and then browse through the various topics, clicking on the '+' icon to add any to your Interests. You will see various categories listed to the left, including Trending Topics, Entertainment and Sport, clicking on one will display the applicable sources.

"It's all very easy to add or remove content to suit your interests and rearrange the sections exactly how you want"



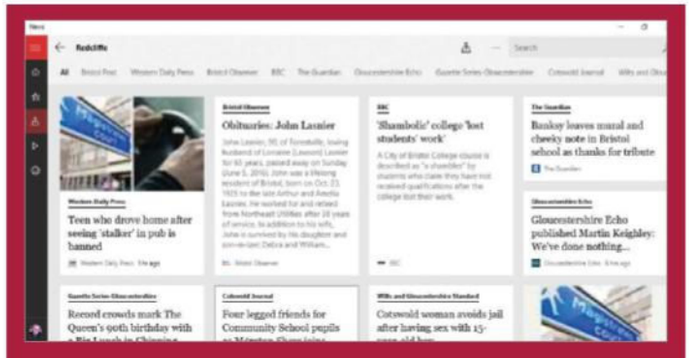
4: Easy navigation

Once you've got your News feed set up as you want it, you can scroll down through the various stories that are sourced for you and then click on one to start reading it. You can use the arrows to swipe through the various pages and the arrow icon in the top-left corner to return to the main feed.



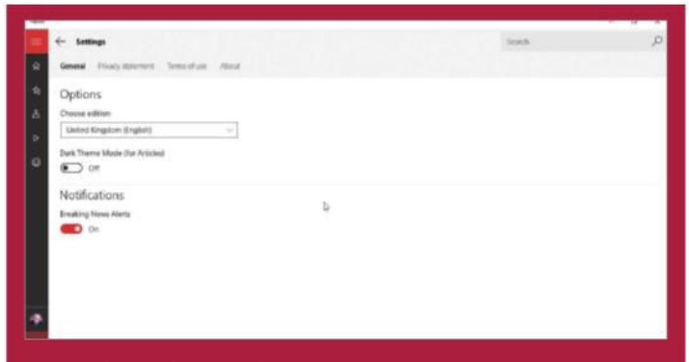
2: Navigating your topics

All of your Interests (see '1') will be displayed at the top of the News app interface while in the Home section. You can click on a topic to see all of the news from your chosen sources that relates to it. This means that you can get news from your chosen sources streamed into a handy digest to save you the hassle of visiting the websites.



3: Get local news

The 'Local' option, which can be accessed via the colum on the left, provides an influx of sources and news applicable to your location. The sources will be listed across the top of the screen, while the main screen is dedicated to a roundup of local headlines. You can search for other locations and get the news applicable to them too.



5: Explore the settings

By clicking on the cog icon at the bottom of the left column, you will access the News Settings screen. Options here are actually quite sparse, but there are useful nonetheless. Use the drop-down menu to change the country (and thus make the news more centric to that particular country), and turn on breaking news notifications.

Stay in the loop with Sport

Get up to date with the latest sports news and follow your team's fortunes

If you're looking for a way to keep on top of your favourite sport or team, then the Bing Sport app is for you. It provides a gateway to up-to-the-minute news, scores, results, tables and more, across all your favourite sports, teams and – if you follow US sport – even individual players.

The app draws on nearly 100 major web sources to populate its content, from BBC and Sky Sports to the sport sections of your favourite newspapers, which means it's both comprehensive and on the pulse. Most popular sports are covered, from tennis and golf to rugby and Formula 1. Football fans will be particularly pleased to see a wide range of European leagues are catered for, including all British leagues, so whether you support Manchester United or Mansfield Town, the Sport app has something for you.

It's incredibly easy to browse from the off, but read on to find out how you can tailor Sport to your personal tastes, adding your favourite teams and sports so that you can focus on the news and updates that really matter while keeping disliked teams and sports that you don't care for at arm's length.

Today

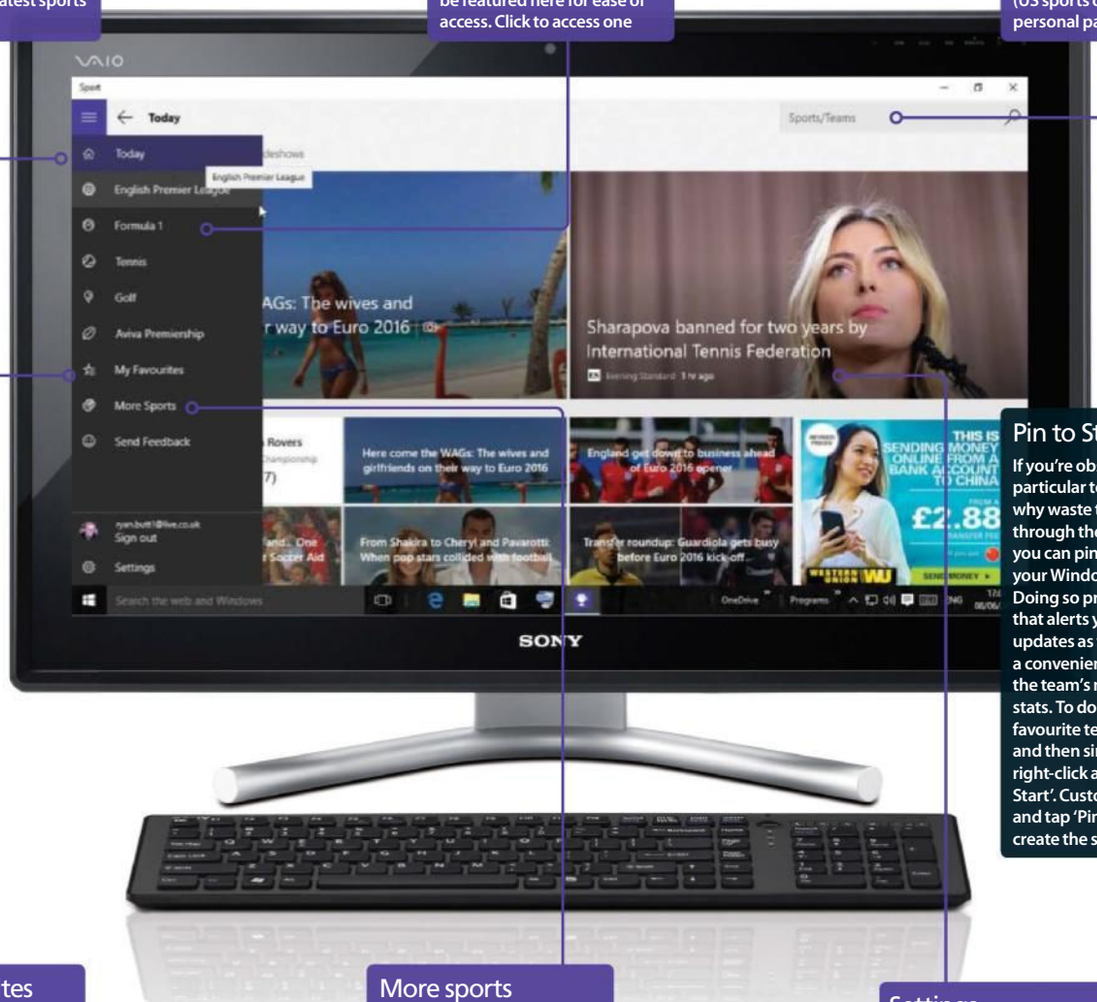
Think of this as the Sports app homepage, the place to go for all of the very latest sports news headlines

Sports you follow

The sports that you have expressed interest in will be featured here for ease of access. Click to access one

Search

Quickly search for a favourite team (worldwide) or player (US sports only) to visit their personal page



Pin to Start screen

If you're obsessed with a particular team or individual, why waste time wading through the Sport app when you can pin them directly to your Windows Start screen? Doing so provides a live tile that alerts you to the latest updates as well as providing a convenient shortcut to the team's news, results and stats. To do this, locate your favourite team (see opposite) and then simply swipe up or right-click and choose 'Pin to Start'. Customise the tile name and tap 'Pin to Start' again to create the shortcut.

Your favourites

Your favoured sports and teams will be accessible via this option. You can also expand your interests here

More sports

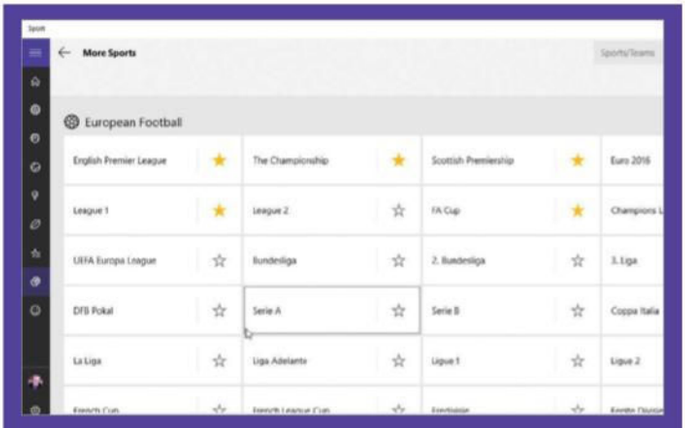
You can mine down through the categories, leagues and cup competitions here to determine what you see

Settings

By accessing the Settings you can choose which country's sports edition you read

Personalise the Sport app

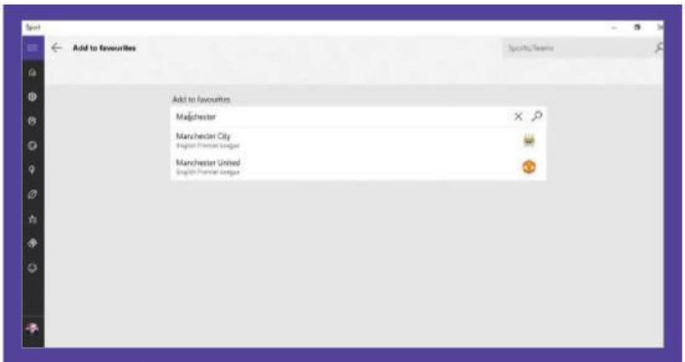
Put your team front and centre



1: Pick your sport

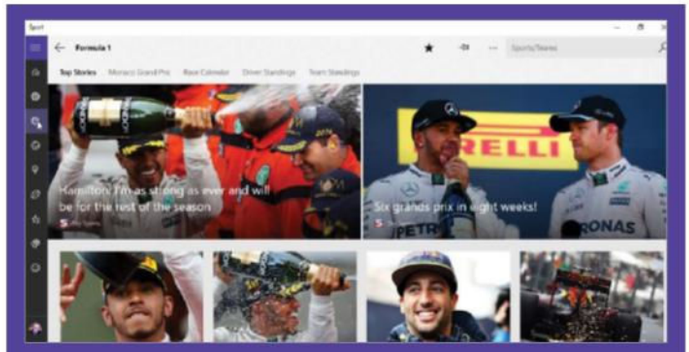
By default, Sport selects a number of popular sports and leagues it thinks you'll be interested in, including top-flight football and rugby as well as tennis and cricket. To customise this list to your personal tastes, either select the 'My Favourites' option from the left-hand column and then click on the '+' pane, or click on the 'More Sports' option and 'star' the sports that you wish to add.

"Click a team to visit its page – you'll find the latest news stories, recent results, tables, upcoming fixtures and context-sensitive stats"



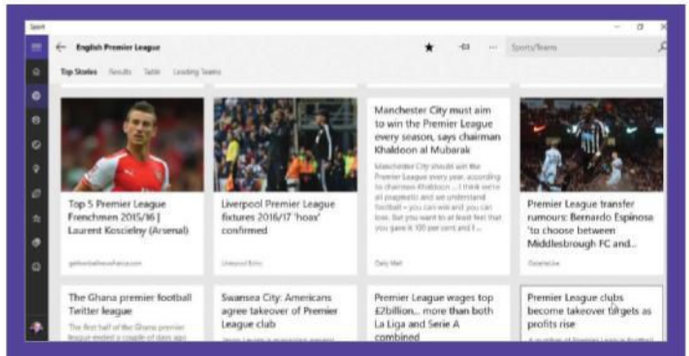
4: Favourite teams

If your favourite team's league is covered by Sport – most football leagues are, as is rugby, but not county cricket, for example – then click on the 'My Favourites' option and then, under the 'My Teams' section, click or tap '+' to enter a team's name. If it appears in the drop-down menu, click to select it. Repeat for other teams.



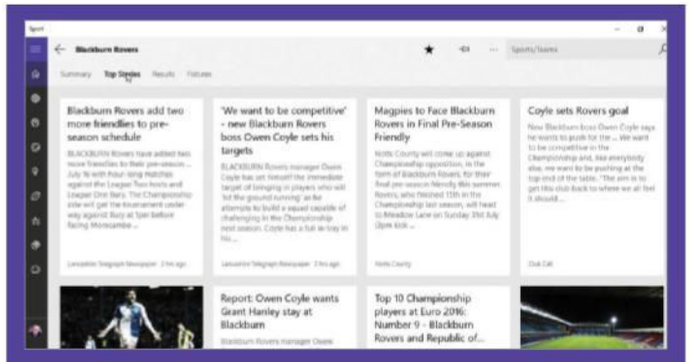
2: Get news updates

Click on the 'Home' option in the left-hand column and then use the 'News' tab to get all of the headlines relating to your chosen sports. Some stories will be reformatted to fit into the Sports app layout – use the < and > buttons to navigate between pages and stories. Right-click or swipe down to make the text smaller or larger.



3: Non-featured stories

When browsing by category, you'll find most news stories simply appear as they do on the web, with no special formatting applied. You can't move between stories directly in this way – click the back button to choose another – but you can browse the website as if you were viewing it in Internet Explorer or another web browser.



5: Browse team

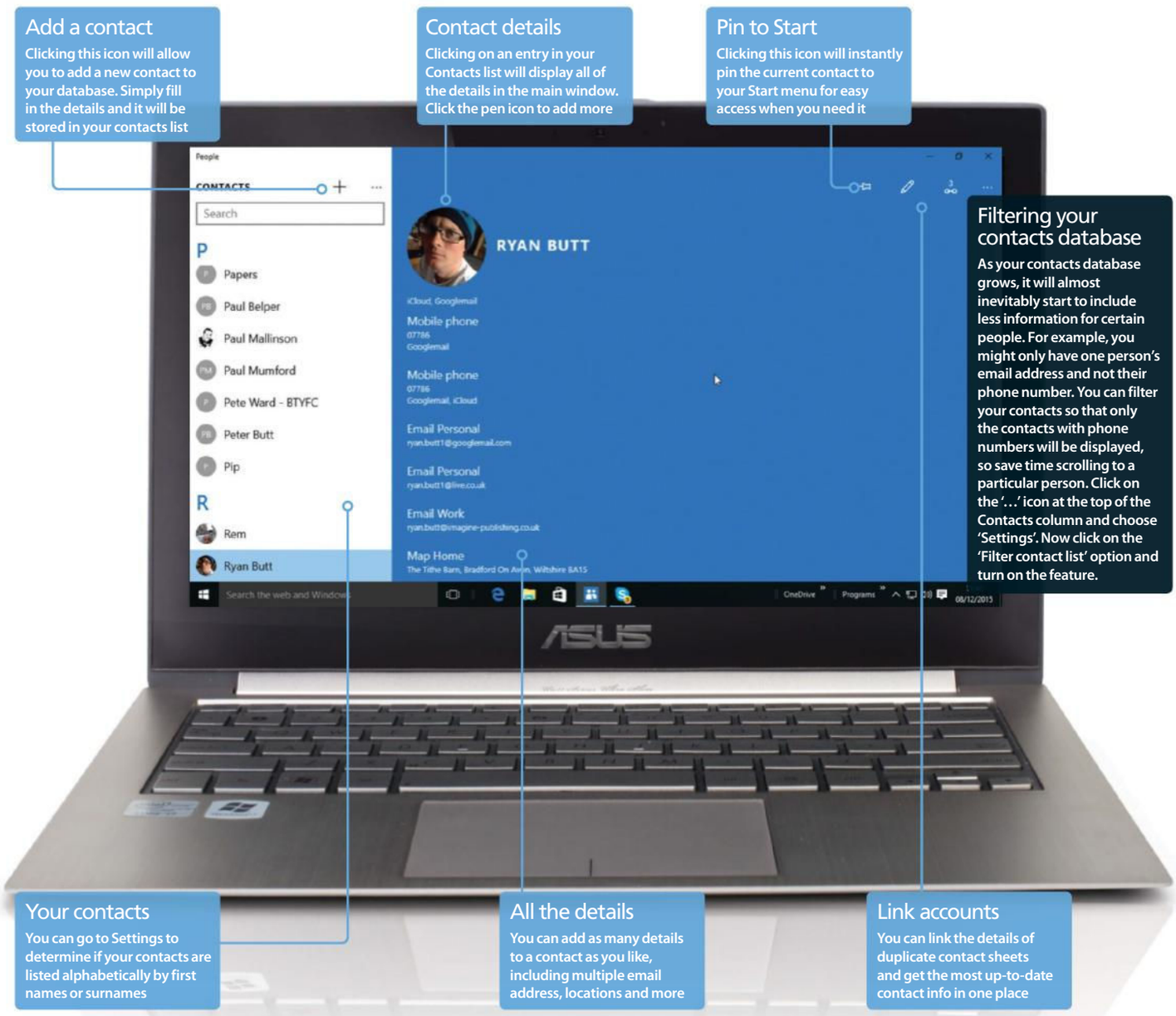
Once set up, click a team to visit its own dedicated page – you'll find the latest news stories, recent results, tables, upcoming fixtures and a number of context-sensitive stats, such as leading scorers, squad details and – in the case of US sport teams – links to individual player bio and stats pages too.

Keep in touch with People

Get all your contacts and updates in one place

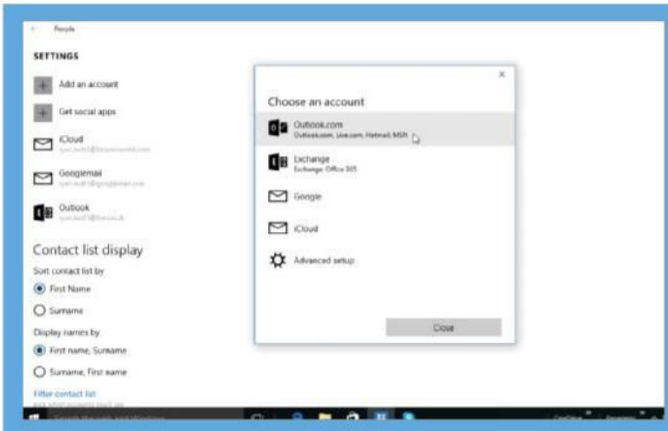
When you have a lot of different accounts, keeping track of your contacts – and their updates, notifications and tweets – can eat up a lot of time. With the People app, all this activity is brought under one roof , making it easier to see at a glance. Getting it all up and running, though, is where you need to put the effort in, as the more services are connected to People, the more useful it becomes. Start by clicking on the '…' icon at the top of the Contacts column and go to Settings to bring up a list of services currently connected and synced. Click on 'Add an account' or 'Get social apps' links to show others that can be added. Enter your account details and then updates from that service will appear in People and the contacts from it will be added to those in People. You can filter out contacts from any particular service.

People shows your contacts on the left side and their details will be displayed in the main window on the right. Your favourite people can be pinned to your Start menu for easy access and new contacts can be added simply by clicking on the '+' icon in the Contacts column. The app has certainly been simplified to make it even easier to use.



Stay up to date with People

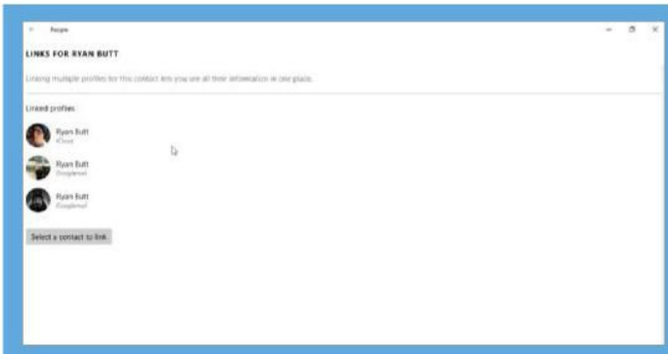
Add, edit and organise your contacts



1: Connect with new accounts

Click on the '…' icon at the top of the Contacts column, then go to Settings and click on 'Add an account'. Select the account type to add. Here we are adding an **Outlook.com** account to access our contacts from Microsoft Outlook. Once completed, the contacts from that service are added automatically to your existing list of contacts. Setting up is a quick and easy process.

"Favourite people can be pinned to Start for easy access and new contacts can be added simply by clicking on the '+' icon in Contacts"

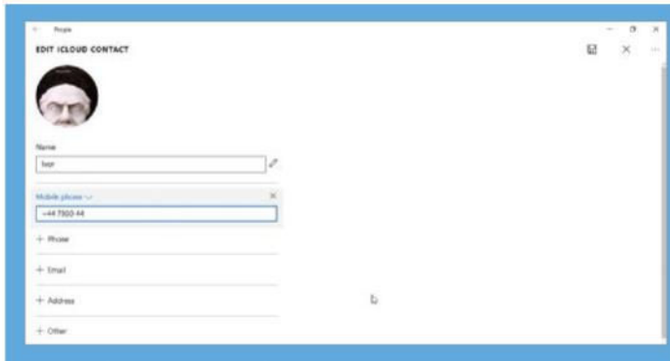


4: Link and share contacts

You can link contacts together by clicking on the link icon at the top of the contact info page. Linking profiles lets you see all of their information in one place, so if you have multiple details for the same person, link them. You can share contact details by clicking the '…' icon, choosing 'Share' and then picking a sharing service.

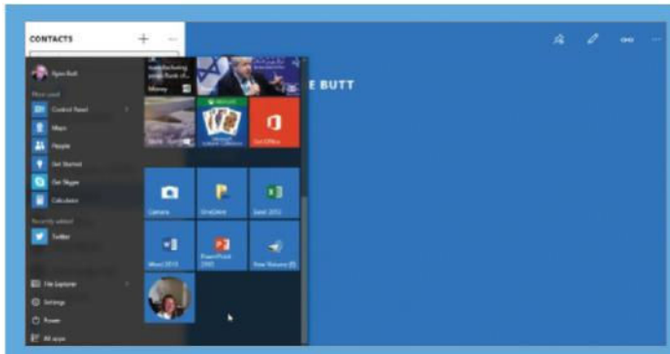
2: Sorting out contacts

Click on the '…' icon in the Contacts column and then click on Settings. The contacts are sorted alphabetically by first name by default, but this can be changed to by surname here. Also, to filter out contact names from a particular service, click on 'Filter contact list' and untick the box next to the service name.



3: Find out more about someone

When in the contacts area, click on someone to see their details – these depend on what info they made available within the service that the contact was imported from. You can edit contact details manually by clicking on the pen icon at the top of the contact info page and then amending the details.



5: Pin contacts to your Start menu

If you have a favourite contact then you can pin them to your Start menu for quick and easy access. To do this, simply click on the pin icon at the top of the contact detail page and the current contact will be immediately pinned. You can also right-click on a contact listed in the Contacts column and pick the option from the menu.

Send messages in Mail

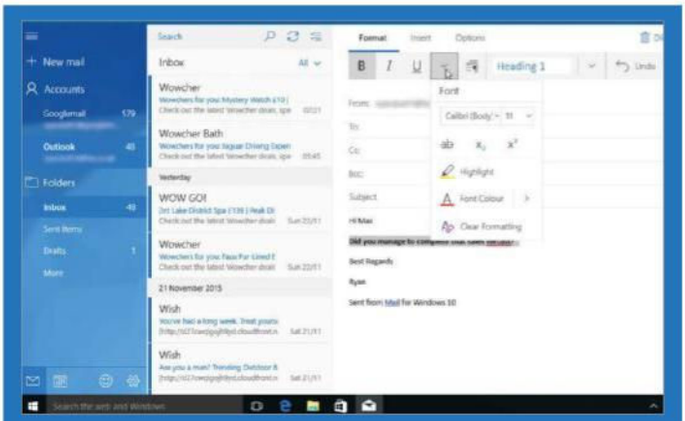
Mail is a great email app for work or social purposes

The Windows 10 Mail app is able to handle all your email messaging needs and it has lots of useful features to make things as easy as possible. If you haven't already added an email account to it, you'll be prompted to add one the first time you use it. It can handle more than one and they are set up by clicking on 'Accounts' in the left column and then choosing the 'Add account' option. It works best with **Outlook.com** (Hotmail or Live) accounts, but you can add Google, Yahoo! and other email accounts, too.

In Settings>Options you can choose whether to group emails by conversation; this means that when you send an email, receive a reply, reply to that and so on, they all appear together. Use the on/off switch to set it to the view you prefer. There are other useful features in Settings too, such as Personalisation, which allows you to tailor the look of your Mail app interface to your liking, and Reading, which lets you determine what happens to the emails in your inbox once you have read them. The whole app has been simplified and is now much more easy and intuitive to use.

Create and manage email messages

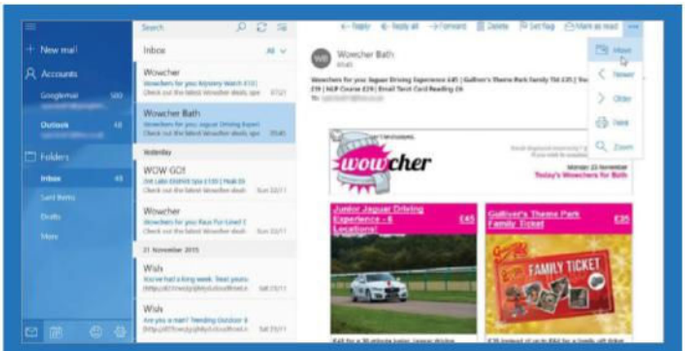
A tour of Mail's main features



1: Mail formatting features

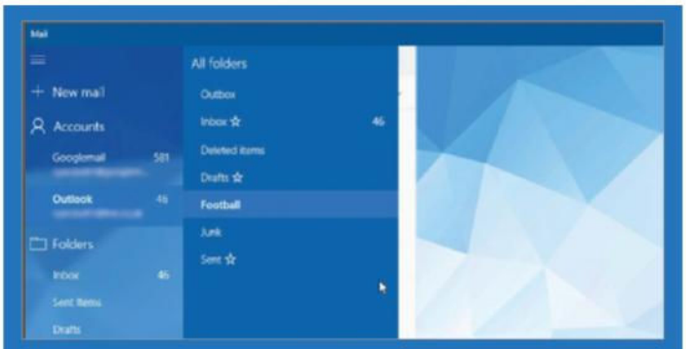
Click the '+' button to create an email and then click on the 'Options' tab at the top to set the priority. High-priority emails are flagged in the recipient's inbox. Type a message and afterwards, select some text and click on the 'Format' tab to make the formatting bar appear. You can select fonts, sizes, bold, italic, smiley faces (emoji) and more.

"Mail gives you the freedom to customise the interface in a variety of different colours and backgrounds to suit various tastes"



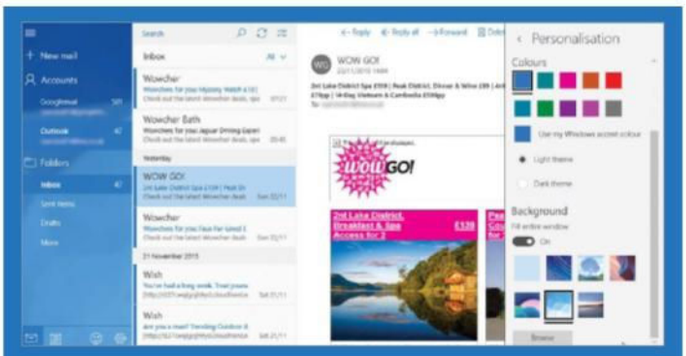
4: Apply actions to emails

Select an email in the inbox and a toolbar appears at the top of the screen that contains all the actions you need, such as Reply, Forward, Set Flag and more. You can also tap on the '…' icon to the right for more options, such as Move and Print. If you right-click on an email then you can get easy access to some of these options.



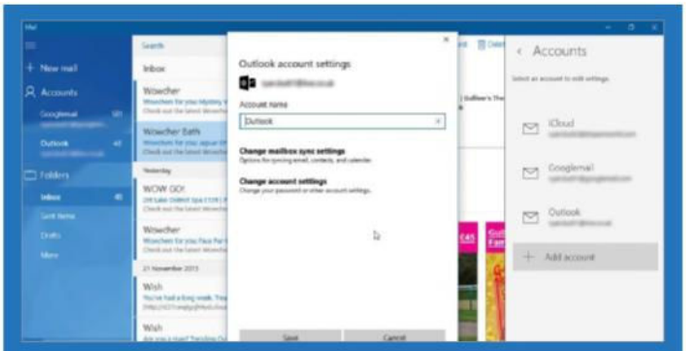
2: Create new folders

If you want to create new folders in which to file your emails in the Mail app then it is a slightly long-winded process. You will need to open up your Microsoft Edge web browser and go to **outlook.com**. Once there, click on the 'New Folder' option at the bottom of your folders list and name it. This folder will then be available in Mail.



3: Personalise your inbox

The Mail app gives you the freedom to customise the interface in a variety of different colours and backgrounds. To start exploring what you can do, click on the Settings icon and then choose the 'Personalisation' option from the menu. Here you can change the colour scheme, set a background and alter the theme.



5: Change your account name

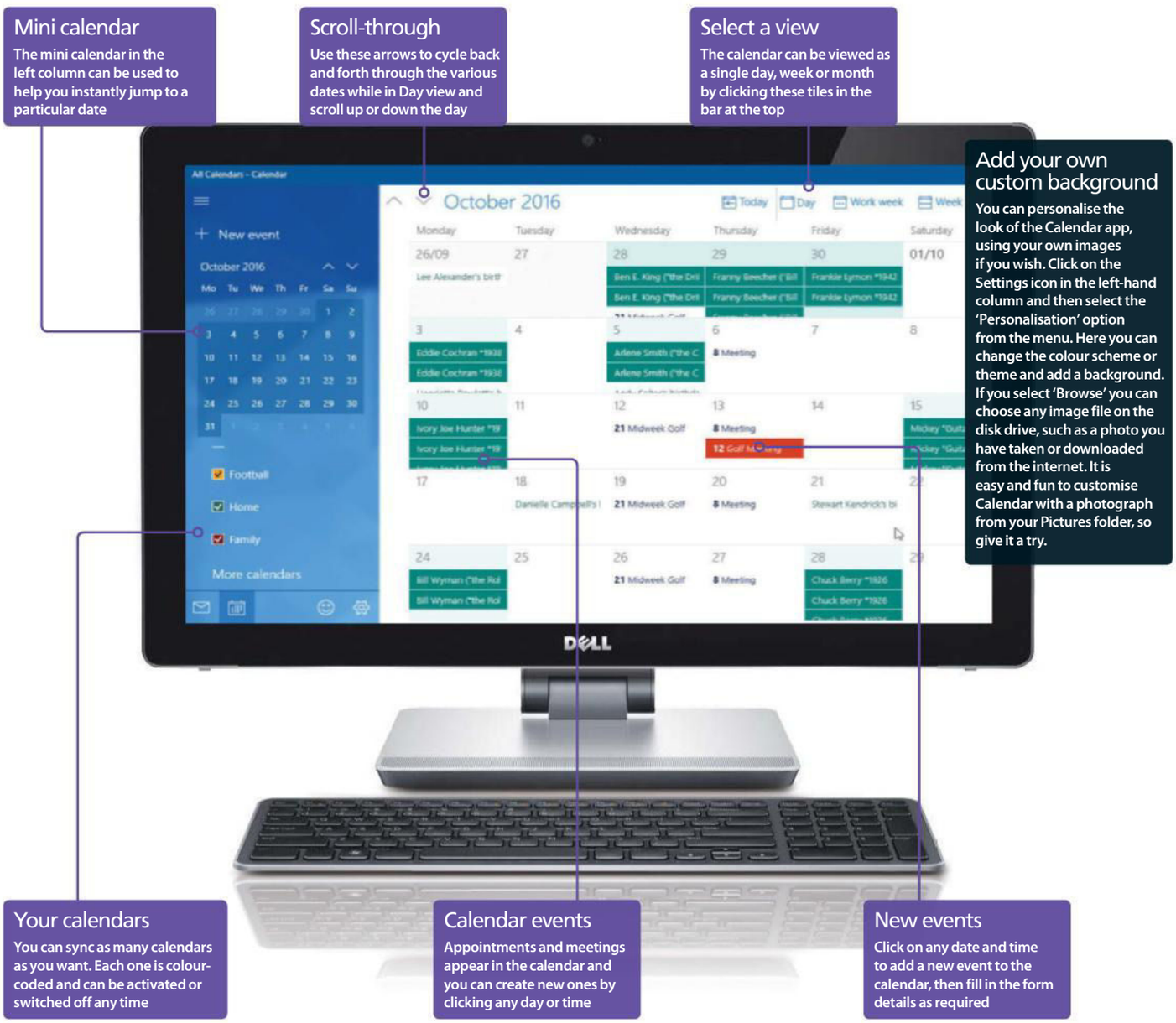
Any accounts that you add to the Mail app can be easily renamed through the Settings. Either right-click on an account name and choose 'Settings' or click on the Settings icon at the bottom of the screen and choose 'Accounts' before clicking on an account. Here you can change the name, adjust the sync settings and more.

Plan ahead with Calendar

Store appointments, meetings, holidays, birthdays and more

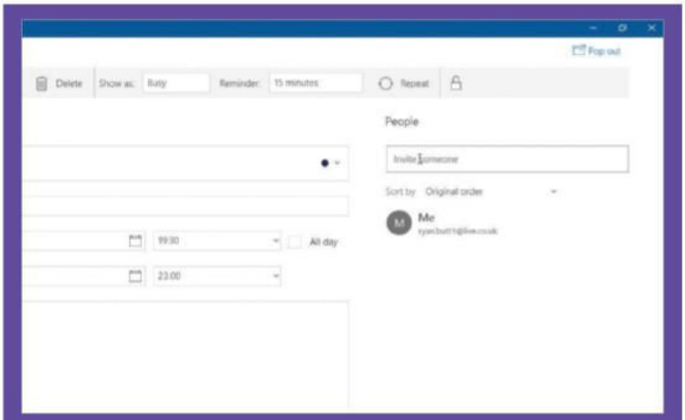
Keeping track of all the things we need to do – such as projects for work, birthday and anniversary presents to buy, meetings and appointments – is difficult without some sort of aid. You could use a traditional diary, but the Windows 10 Calendar app is better and it enables you to store every event that is important to you, as well as reminding you when they are about to occur, giving you plenty of warning so that you can make all the necessary preparations for them. You will never miss another meeting, birthday or other event.

Calendar can be used to manage your time and it shows when you are busy and free. You can't accidentally schedule two events at the same time, with the exception of all-day ones. You could add a week's holiday to it and have a birthday on one of those days, for instance. Calendar provides several different views, such as day, week and month, but there is also a list view that shows upcoming events in order. Calendar works with other people's calendars in Windows, on **outlook.com** and Google, so you can invite people, they can respond, and you can see who's attending an event.



Add calendar events and appointments

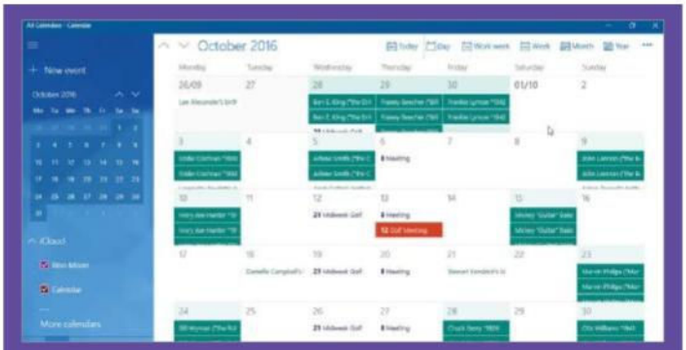
Set durations, invitations, reminders



1: Invite people to events

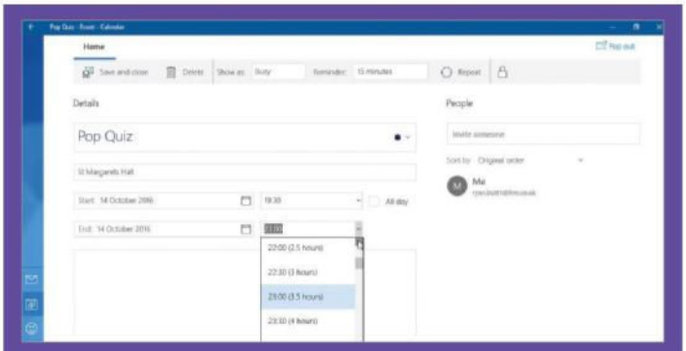
You can invite people to events and see their responses, to know who can make it and who can't. Create a new event and, on the event details screen, click on the 'Invite someone' field and start typing to see a list of matching contacts, then select one to invite. Add more people if necessary. An invitation is emailed and if you return and click Show Responses, you can see who has accepted.

"Calendar can be used to manage your time and shows when you're busy. You can't accidentally schedule two events at the same time"



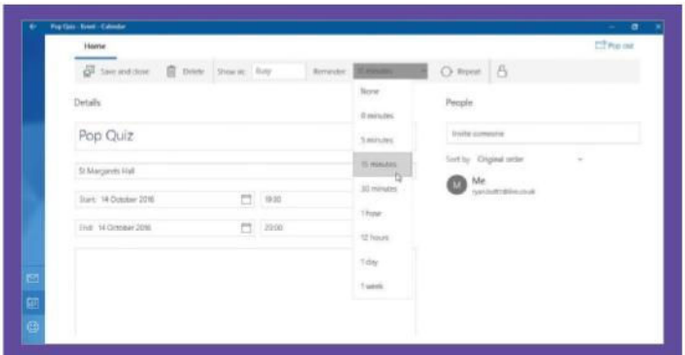
2: Browse the calendar views

Whether you choose the day, week or month view, to move to the next period swipe left or right if you have a touch screen, or click the arrow buttons at the top of the screen. Use the links in the top-right corner to switch views or click on a calendar date on the calendar in the left-hand column to instantly jump to that date.



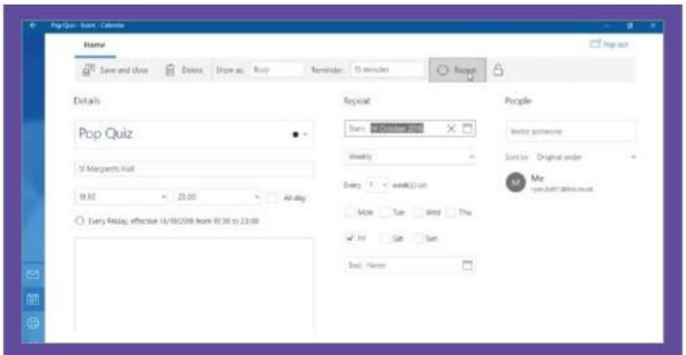
3: Set the duration of the event

There are two types of event: it can be all-day or between specific times. On the event details screen, select the duration of your event using the 'Start' and 'End' fields. If you click on the 'All day' box, the start and end times are disabled because they do not apply. This time period will then be marked in the main calendar.



4: Never miss your appointments

You don't want to forget appointments in the calendar, so add a reminder to alert you to upcoming events before they happen. When creating an event, you will see the 'Reminder' field on the toolbar at the top of the screen – click on the arrow and set the preferred time of your notification.



5: Create repeating events

Some events repeat at regular intervals – common examples are birthdays and anniversaries, which occur once a year. You may also have weekly or monthly meetings at work. You just need to set these up once and they repeat automatically. When you create an event, simply click on the 'Repeat' option in the toolbar.

Explore the world with Maps

Discover places, get directions and travel information

Whether you are taking a business trip, going on holiday or just want to explore, Maps is up to the task. Much more than a mere map, it has access to a huge amount of information. For example, you can enter a town, city or address into the search box and Maps goes straight there and shows the area. Businesses and places of interest on the map can be clicked to show information like the address and phone number, and there are buttons to get directions and even place phone calls to them through the Skype app.

Use the search facility and you will find that the left-hand panel that opens has options to get driving, public transport and walking directions from one place to another. You can see whether there are traffic jams that might slow you down and other road hazards. It can list a wide range of local businesses, places to eat or visit and so on; it even shows ratings from people that indicate how good these are. The more you explore Maps, the more you will find and there are great 3D bird's-eye views of cities and places of interest. You also can pin your favourite locations and return later.

Search Maps

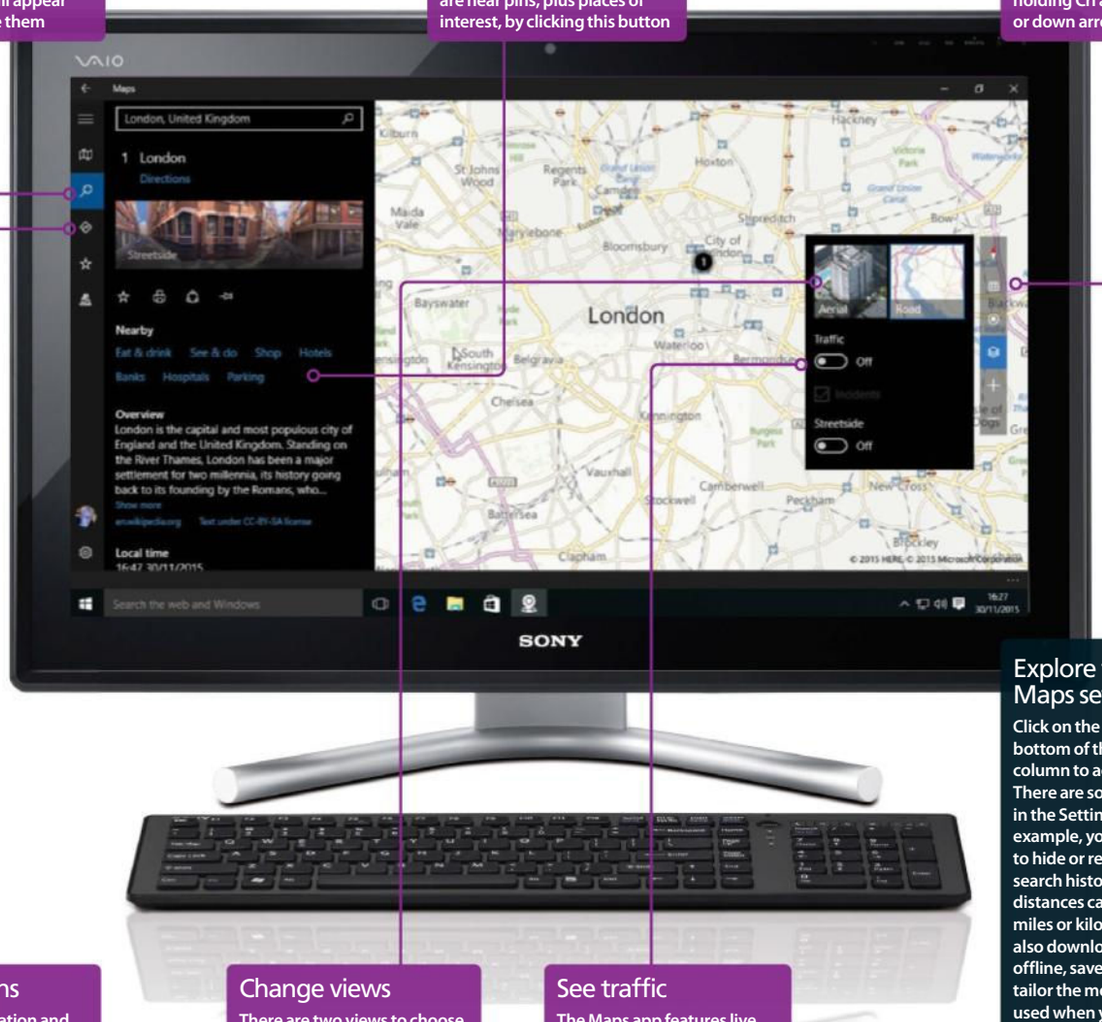
Click here and enter place names to locate them on the map. Locations will appear below as you type them

What's nearby?

You can discover which businesses and attractions are near pins, plus places of interest, by clicking this button

Tilt map

You can change the perspective of your map by holding Crl and either the up or down arrow keys



Explore the Maps settings

Click on the cog icon at the bottom of the left-hand column to access the Settings. There are some useful items in the Settings section. For example, you can choose to hide or remember your search history in the app and distances can be shown in miles or kilometres. You can also download maps to use offline, save a location and tailor the mode of transport used when you ask for directions. Use the Settings screen to tailor the app to meet your needs.

Get directions

Search for any location and then get directions to and from it with ease by clicking on this icon

Change views

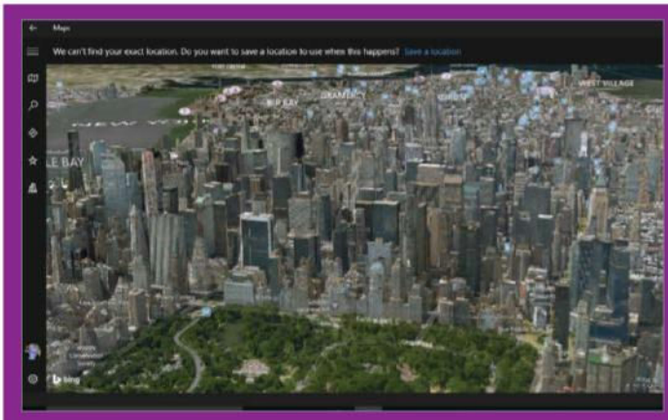
There are two views to choose from – the traditional 'Road' view and 'Aerial', which provides a lot more detail

See traffic

The Maps app features live traffic information, which you can toggle on here, to help you plan the quickest route

Use the Maps app to plan your trips

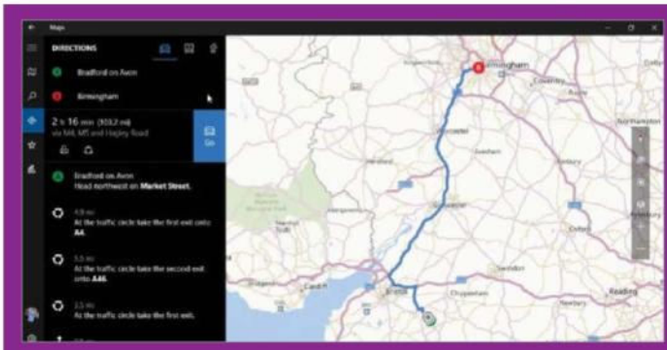
Use different views, explore local info



1: See fantastic 3D views

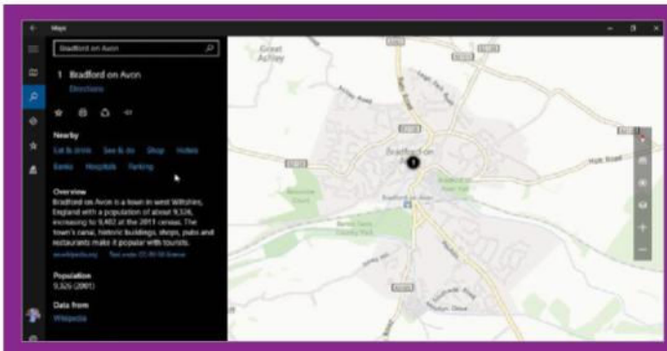
The Maps app is able to show amazing 3D views and is a great way to explore the world from the comfort of your home or office. Click on the '3D Cities' option in the column to the left and all of the locations that support this mode will be listed. Simply click on one to then go and explore it in full 3D. You can press Crl + up arrow or Crl + down arrow to tilt the map.

"The more you explore Maps, the more you will find and there are great 3D bird's-eye views of cities and places of interest"



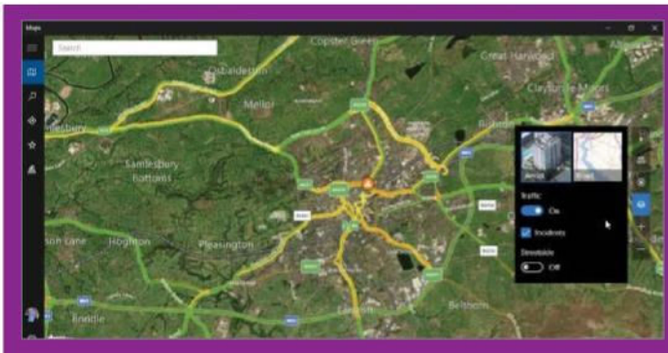
2: Don't get lost, get directions

One of the most useful Maps features is directions for driving, public transport and walking. Type a place or address into the search box to open a panel on the right and click Directions at the top to enable you to use your current location as the starting point or enter another one. Click the car, bus or person to get directions.



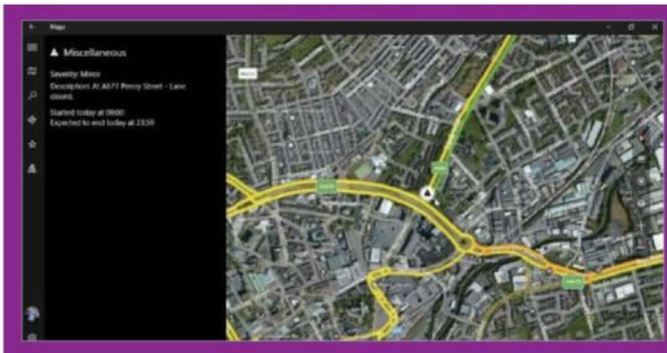
3: Get useful local information

Maps knows about local businesses, attractions, hotels, shops, and places of interest. Start by entering a town, city, or address into the search box, then click the magnifying glass icon to the left. Choose from Eat & Drink, See & Do, Shop, Hotels and more. Numbers appear on the map and the left panel then shows descriptions.



4: Show satellite views

The Maps app has several different views and the two main ones are the traditional 'road' illustration and the satellite 'Aerial' view. To switch between then, click on the 'Choose map view' icon in the floating menu. It can be used it to see what places look like from the air.



5: View live traffic information

Before setting off on a journey by car, you should open Maps and check what the traffic situation is like. It shows roads with heavy traffic in red, light traffic in yellow and no traffic in green. Avoid red roads! Click on the 'Choose map view' icon in the floating menu to enable this view. Click hazard symbols to view problems.

Explore the Windows Store

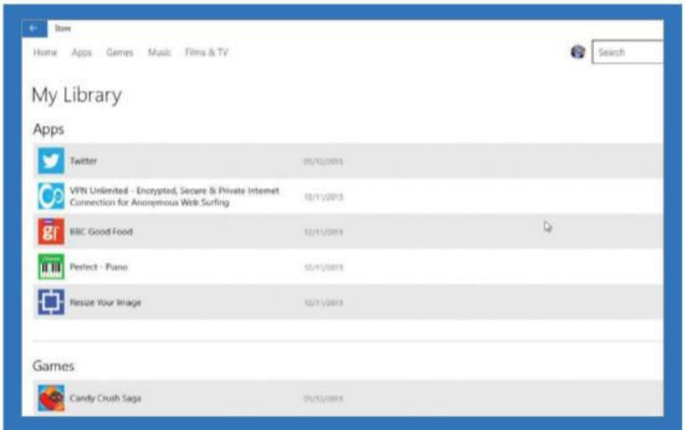
Choose from thousands of apps in the Windows Store

Windows 8 introduced a new type of software – apps – that borrowed ideas from tablets and phones. This has grown with Windows 10. Microsoft bundles a few Start screen apps, but there are thousands more available in the Windows Store, including some fantastic ones. Start the Store app and you can browse charts that show the most popular apps and see what other people think about them in their reviews. The ratings and reviews are a great guide when selecting apps and a thousand or more five-star ratings usually means an app is well worth installing.

Apps in the store can be viewed in several different ways, such as by category. You just select the category you are interested in and it shows the highest rated, the top free and paid apps and so on. If you are new to Windows, bundles of apps called 'collections' are a brilliant way to add lots of top-quality apps. Just one click installs the best apps in a category and in minutes you have a dozen or more apps on your favourite topic, ready to use. Some apps have to be purchased, but there are many excellent free ones, too, and all it takes is a few minutes browsing the store to find them.

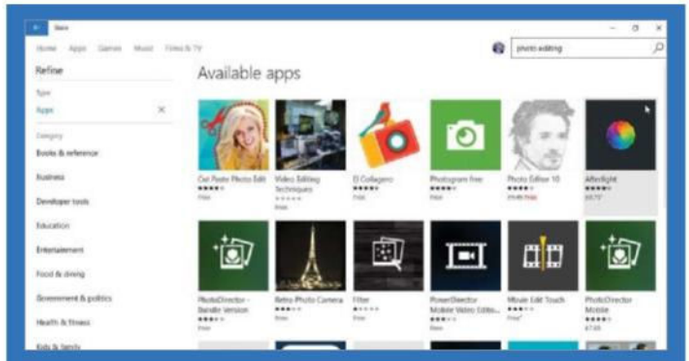
Browse and search the Windows Store

Discover top apps for your PC



1: Install any missing apps

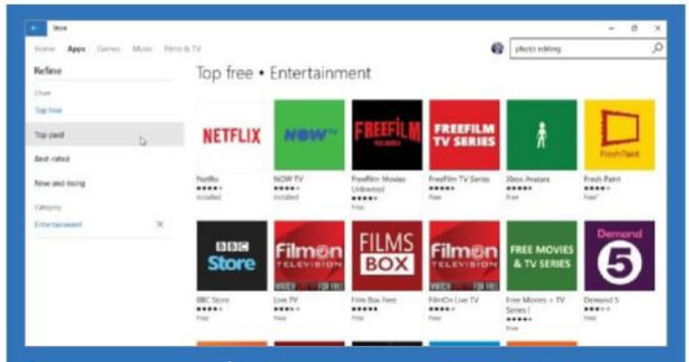
If you use multiple PCs, there may be apps on one that aren't on others, or you may have installed apps and then removed them but want to put them back. The store remembers your purchases and free downloads so you can reinstall them. Click on your account icon followed by 'My Library' and then click on the download arrow that is present next to any apps not installed on your current PC.



2: Search for apps in the store

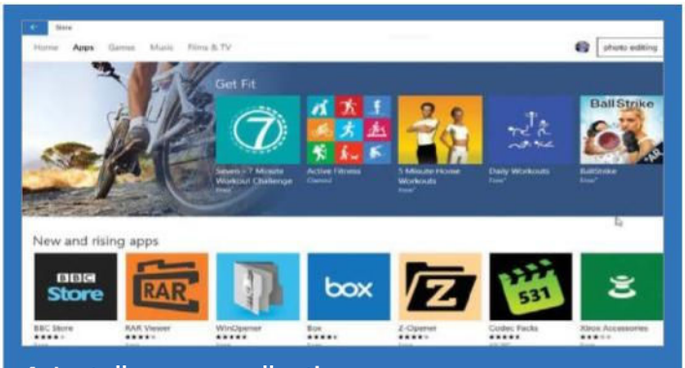
The search box in the top-right corner is a useful facility for finding apps if you know what you are looking for. Enter a word or phrase, such as 'photo editing' and you'll see lots of apps. The search results can be sorted by relevance, newest, highest rating, lowest price and so on. The results can be limited to just free apps, too.

> "The ratings and reviews are a great guide when selecting apps. Thousands of five star ratings mean an app is well worth installing"



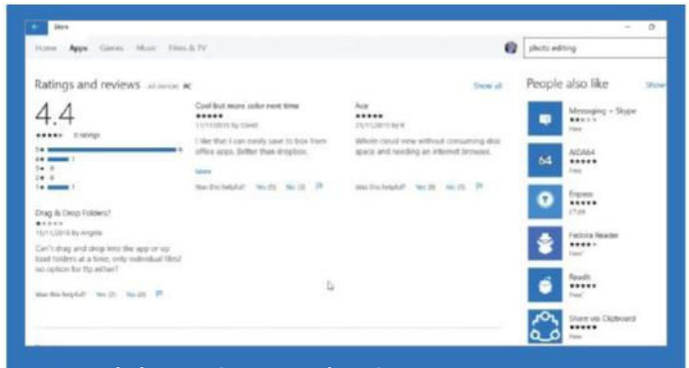
3: Browse apps by category

If you don't have a specific app in mind and just want to browse to see what is on offer, go to the Home section and click on the 'App top charts & categories' link. After selecting a category, the contents are organised into the top paid, the top free, best rated, new and rising and so on. Click 'See all' to view them.



4: Install an app collection

If you go to the Apps section and scroll down then you will come across collections of apps that have been picked for you or relate to a particular theme, such as fitness. You can then click on a category to see the apps grouped together within and then install them on your PC quickly and easily.



5: Read the reviews and ratings

If you aren't sure whether to install an app, it is useful to see what others think. After clicking an app, scroll down and click 'Show all' next to ratings and reviews. You can see the total number of ratings, how many people gave it five stars, read the comments and so on. Use the filters to the left to choose the reviews to show.

Unlock the mysteries of the Xbox app on Windows 10

The Xbox app provides a host of features for gamers and we showcase what's on offer

The Xbox app is designed to work as a front end to Microsoft's Xbox Live gaming network, which is now fully integrated within the core operating system. There is no denying that the app will be more of a benefit to those who own an Xbox console, specifically an Xbox One. This is because you can use the app to stream content from the latter to your Windows 10 PC; including games or entertainment apps. Likewise if you have an Xbox One Digital TV tuner you can even stream the TV programs from your console to the Xbox app as well. Fear not, if you don't have the latter console there are still some useful features for PC gamers, such as the ability to take screenshots or capture gameplay footage of your favourite moments (recorded to your hard drive) from the games you play. Additionally using the app you can tap into the integrated store to purchase games for both the Xbox One and Windows 10 platforms. Finally, the App is great for managing your online gamer profile (an Avatar that represents you in the virtual space) a friends list and finally for keeping track of your gaming achievements. All of the above will become clearer as you go through our guide below.

Gamer profile

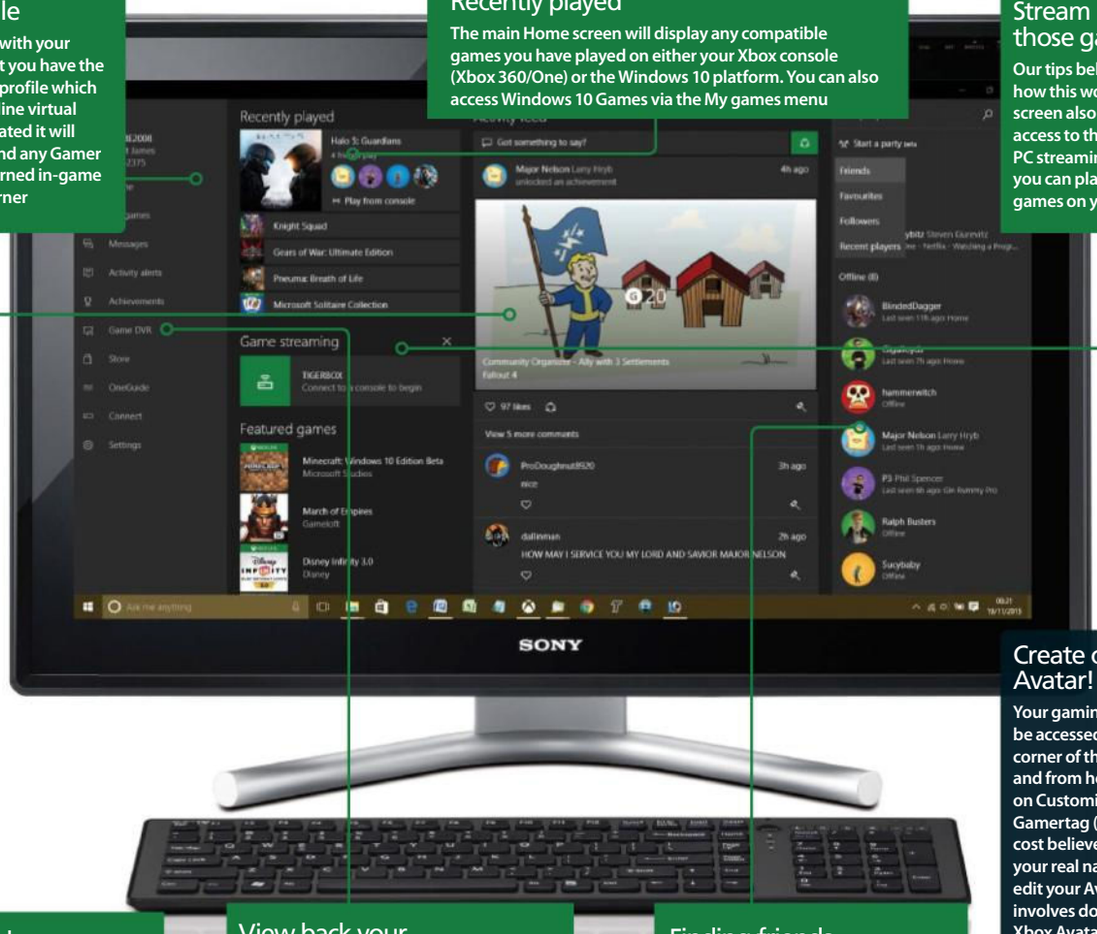
When you sign in with your Microsoft Account you have the ability to create a profile which becomes your online virtual identity. Once created it will display your pic and any Gamer score you have earned in-game via the top left corner

Recently played

The main Home screen will display any compatible games you have played on either your Xbox console (Xbox 360/One) or the Windows 10 platform. You can also access Windows 10 Games via the My games menu

Stream those games

Our tips below will showcase how this works, but the Home screen also provides quick access to the Xbox One to PC streaming service! Thus you can play your Xbox One games on your PC



Keep in touch

With the Xbox app you can keep track of the friends or people/games that you follow via the Activity feed. This will usually display any achievements earned or any comments made by people from the gaming community

View back your gaming moments!

With the Xbox app you can take screenshots and record gameplay footage for your favourite games. This can then be reviewed via the app's Game DVR menu. The latter even offers basic video editing

Finding friends

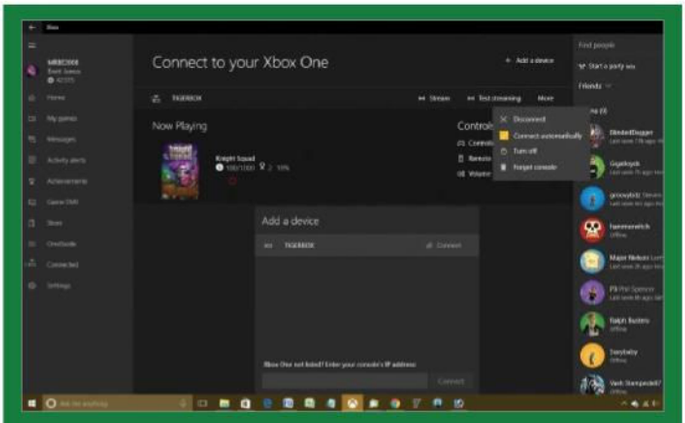
To the far right is where it will display any friends you have and you can click on their icon to view specific profile info. Friends can also be gleamed from a 'Recent players' list or by utilising the 'Find people' Option

Create or Edit your Avatar!

Your gaming profile can be accessed via the top left corner of the Home screen and from here you can click on Customise to alter your Gamertag (though this can cost believe it or not!), share your real name or even create/edit your Avatar. The latter involves downloading the Xbox Avatars program from the Windows Store. However once downloaded you can use the built-in editor to quickly create a virtual representation of yourself that others will see in their Xbox app or their Xbox Console.

Enhance your gaming experience

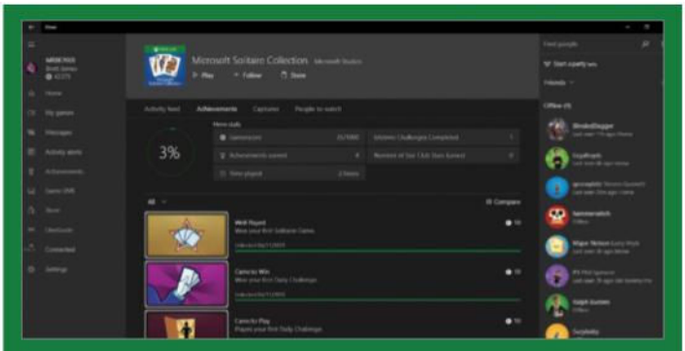
Get more from the Xbox app with these handy tips



1: Stream games from Xbox One

Both your Xbox One and Windows 10 PC/Tablet need to be on the same network to begin with i.e. wirelessly or wired into your router (the box from your ISP in other words). You will also need to plug in the Xbox One controller to your PC/Tablet via a USB lead. Once this is done you can then head to the Xbox app and select the Connect Menu. This will automatically detect your console so you can add and play games via the Stream option.

"Take screenshots or capture gameplay footage of your favourite moments from the games you play!"



4: Keep track of achievements

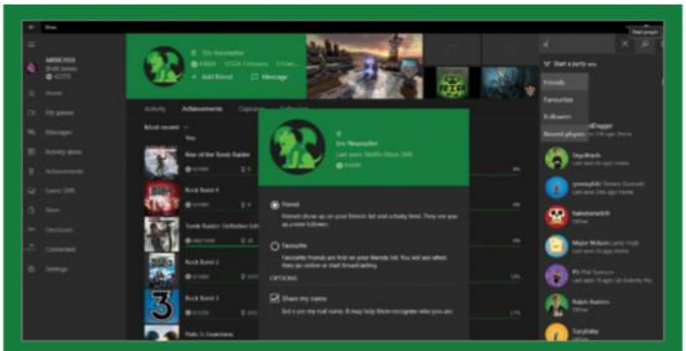
Xbox One and specific Windows 10 games from the Store will provide achievements for completing in-game objectives. After earning an achievement you can then head to the Achievements menu to view it or discover how to earn more. You can compare achievements with your friends via the Activity feed.

2: Adjust the stream quality

This tip carries over from the Stream option, but basically when you are playing games if you hover your mouse in the top right corner you can adjust the stream quality to improve performance; low is useful for slower networks. When back in the Xbox app you can even tap the More option to do things like turn off the console.

3: Capture gameplay

Head first to the left menu's Settings option and then choose Game DVR. From here you can toggle 'Record game clips' to On or adjust the background game recording quality. Once you launch a game – something like Solitaire – you can press Win+G to bring up a 'Game bar'. Now you can take screenshots or record gameplay footage.



5: Adding Friends and Followers

Via the Home screen you can click on the Friends drop-down box to view 'Recent players' or utilise the 'Find people' box-out to search for people. Once you find a friend and they are added, they will then become someone you follow. Thus find out what games they play and even invite them to chat via the 'Start a party beta'.

Use Films and TV for media playing in Windows 10

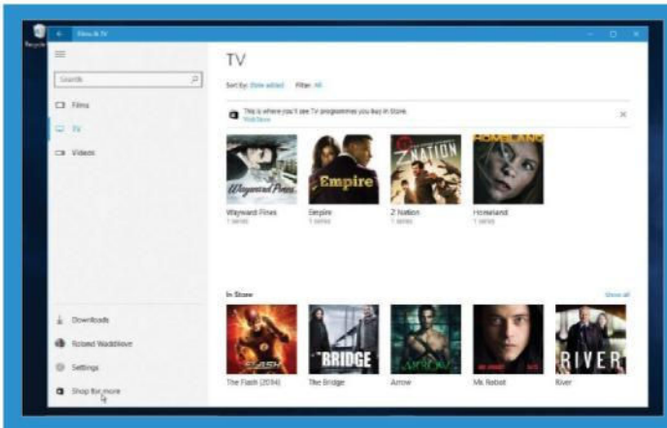
Stream and download TV shows and movies, and watch them in Windows

VHS is a distant memory and DVD is all but dead. The future of television and movies is digital and you can stream the latest TV shows and films over the internet using the Films & TV app in Windows 10. There is no waiting with streaming content and it starts straight away, but you can also download and save programmes and movies for viewing offline too. The Films & TV app makes use of the Windows Store app and the store is where you browse all the latest exciting movies, television programmes and series. You can then purchase your favourites and you can catch up with TV and movies you missed or watch the best ones again. Some of the items in the store can be purchased and some can be rented. It is up to you and if you want the option to watch something several times then it is best to purchase it. There is a small amount of free content in the store and these are mostly trailers, making-of, interviews and behind the scenes items.

Films and TV is not just for content purchased in the store and if you have transferred videos from a digital camera or mobile phone to the computer, you can browse them and watch them from within the app.

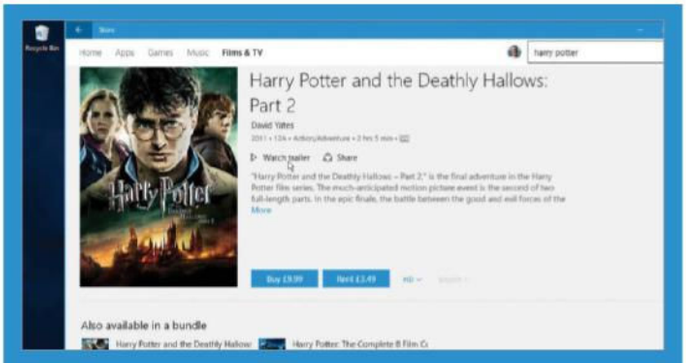
Watch movies and TV shows

Browse and buy content for Films & TV



1: Open Films & TV

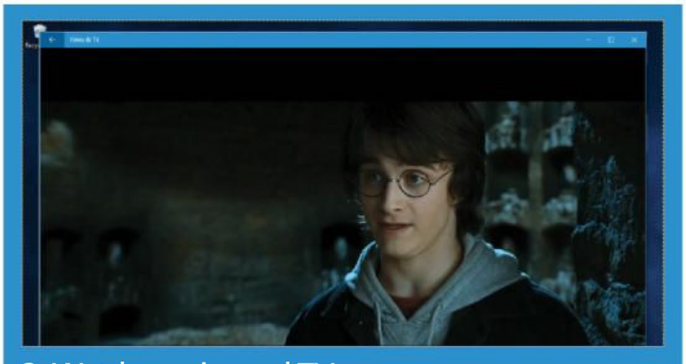
Go to the Start menu and click the tile for Films & TV to open the app. Select a category on the left, such as Films or TV to see what you own. In the lower part of the window are some suggested items from the Windows Store. Click one of these to view it, click Show all to see all highlighted items, or click Shop for more to open the Windows Store app for even more content.



2: Browse the store

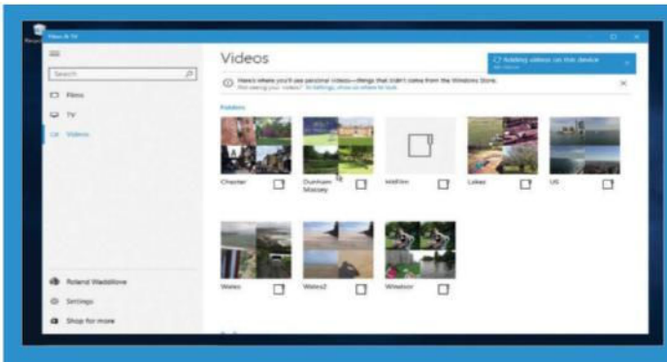
Your second task is to find movies and TV shows to watch. There are hundreds in the Films & TV section and clicking a movie opens a screen like this. Click the Watch trailer link under the title because it is free to view. There are buttons to buy or rent, and just to the right is HD. Click it for standard resolution or high definition.

> "The future of television and movies is digital and you can stream the latest TV shows and films over the internet using Films & TV"



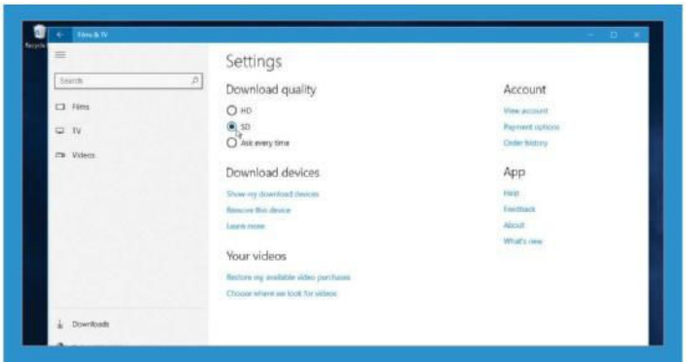
3: Watch movies and TV

Click an item in your Films & TV library and then click the Play button. The movie or TV programme begins playing and if you want it to fill the screen, click the double-headed arrow. The second icon in the Toolbar changes the aspect ratio – movies can be wide with black bars top and bottom or they can fill the screen.



4: View your videos

Select the Videos category on the left and thumbnail images of your own digital camera or mobile phone videos are displayed in Films & TV. Click a folder to open it and click a video thumbnail to start it playing. Use the player controls to pause, fill the screen or show it in a window, and so on.



5: Explore the settings

Select Settings and there are useful options and links. Select the download quality you prefer, or choose 'Ask every time'. Under Account are options to view your account, view and change the methods you use to pay for items in the Windows Store, and to view your order history. You need to set up payment options too.

Play your music with Groove

Browse your music library and play tracks and albums with Microsoft's music app

Groove is the new music app from Microsoft, and it is available on Windows 10 and mobile phones. Whether you are sitting at your home computer or out and about travelling, you can listen to your favourite music. There are two ways to use Groove: there is a streaming service that provides access to millions of tracks and thousands of albums for a monthly fee, and there is the option of playing your own music.

Music can be purchased and downloaded to the computer or it can be transferred from CDs and stored on the disk drive. Groove can then be used as your music player. It scans the disk drive for music and adds all the tracks and albums it finds to your music library. You can browse the music by songs, albums or artists, and play tracks or albums. Music can be added to playlists and several can be created for different occasions or moods, from party music to chilling out.

It is useful to store your music in the Music folder of OneDrive because it means that it can be accessed and played on any computer, mobile phone and tablet, even when you are out with a laptop or just your mobile phone.

Track indicator

The left side of this bar shows the current play position in minutes and seconds. Drag the circle to skip forward or back. The right side of the bar shows the track length

Pin to Start

Albums and artists can be pinned to the Start menu as tiles. Create a group of tiles on Start for your favourites, then it takes just one click to open them in Groove

Select the view

This screen shows the artist view, and there are options to show all of their songs in a long list or to show their albums. In album view the covers are displayed as thumbnail images

Music file types

Digital music can be stored in different types of file formats, such as MP3, WAV, M4A, and more. Groove cannot play every type of music file, but it does support the most common ones. MP3 is a popular choice of file format, and music can be purchased from Amazon and other stores. There are also utilities that can read music CDs that you own and save them to the PC's disk in MP3 and other formats, too.

Add to playlist

There is a plus button on the track currently selected and also another one next to the album cover. Click them to add the track or a whole album of tracks to a playlist

Play controls

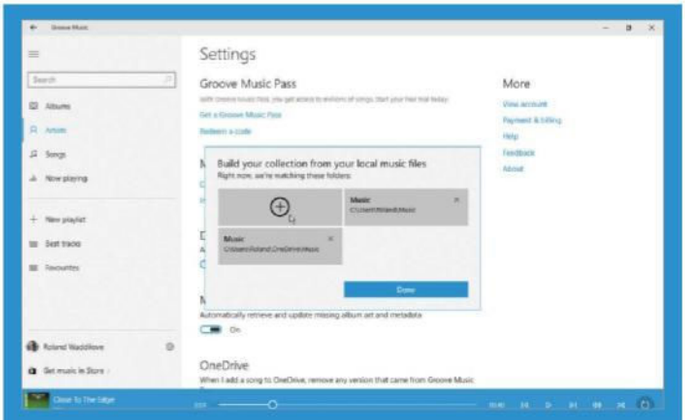
This button switches between play and pause, depending on whether the music is playing. The left and right buttons either side go to the previous or next tracks in the list

Shuffle or Repeat

These two icons are Shuffle and Repeat. Click the arrow next to the album cover in order to play all tracks. Click Shuffle to play them in random order and Repeat to replay them continuously

Listen to music on your PC

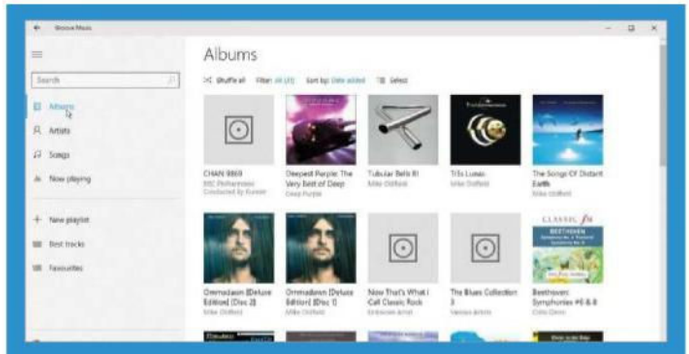
Add your music, sit back and listen



1: Add music folders

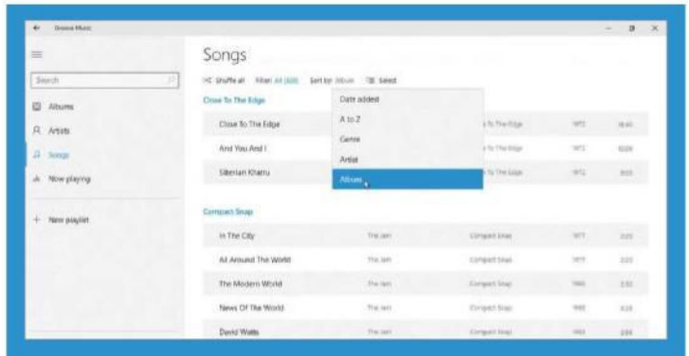
Groove needs to know where you keep the music on the PC's disk drive. Click the gear icon in the bottom-left corner then, in the Settings, click 'Choose where we look for music'. The music folder in your account folder is the obvious place to store music, but it can also be stored in OneDrive's Music folder. Use the plus button to add them and click Done. The tracks and albums are then added.

"Music can be purchased and downloaded to the computer or it can be transferred from CDs and then stored on the disk drive"



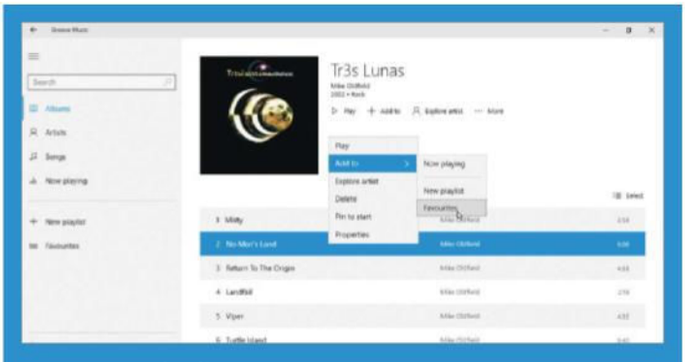
2: View your albums

Select Albums in the left panel and if music tracks are organised into folders on the disk drive, Groove displays them as albums. It even goes on the internet and downloads album artwork for many popular artists. Give it a few minutes after adding your music to get the artwork though. Click an album to open and play it.



3: Browse the songs

Select Songs on the left and every track in your music library is presented in one long list. Click the link next to 'Sort by' and choose to list them by date added, alphabetically, according to genre, or grouped by artist or album. The Filter link provides additional ways to display your music, and there's a 'Shuffle all' option too.



4: Create playlists

No matter which view you are in, tracks or albums can be added to playlists. Select Albums, then click on one to open it. Right click a track in the list, and on the 'Add to' menu you'll see 'New playlist'. Create a new one, then build it up by adding more tracks to it using the menu.

5: See what's playing

Click 'Now playing' on the left and a list of all the tracks you have played is shown. The currently playing track is highlighted and the top part of the Groove window shows the album artwork. Tracks and albums can be right clicked and added to the Now playing list. It does tend to grow long though.

Take photos with the Camera

Broadcast live video and shoot snaps in the Camera app

If you're interested in shooting video blogs, chatting with friends over Skype, or simply taking a hands-free shot of yourself, then the Camera app provides all of these options and more. With its straightforward and easy-to-use interface, you can chat, shoot and snap with the Camera app as soon as you connect a camera to your device. Photos and video can be sent to various sharing apps or opened up to examine and edit in other apps and software. The Camera app is built to be compatible with cameras that provide a streaming function, so not all cameras (such as DSLRs) will be compatible when connected. Of course, if you have a camera built into your computer then you'll have no trouble getting it connected up straight away. When connecting a new camera, you may be prompted to install some new drivers to be able to make the camera function in Windows 10. When using your camera in other Windows apps, you can open the Start menu and select the Settings icon to open the app's settings. From here you'll be able to alter the camera settings how you like for that particular app, adjusting the quality of the video and images.

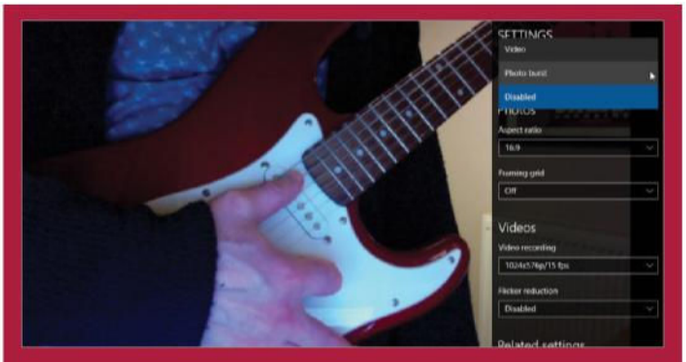
Windows 10's easy camera access

Connect a camera in moments

1: Record video and take photos

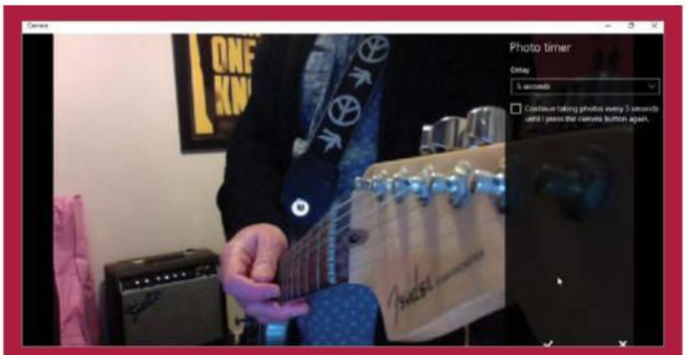
The Camera app can record HD video from your internal or external webcam or camera. All you have to do is run the app and hit the video camera icon. While recording video, a counter will appear to show you the duration of your recording. As soon as you finish recording you can view your clip in the app's camera roll window. This also applies to taking photos in the app using the camera icon.

"With its simple and easy-to-use interface, you can chat, shoot and snap with the Camera app as soon as you connect a camera"



4: Explore the Settings

Click on the '…' icon and choose the Settings option. Here you will be able to tweak various aspects of the Camera app, such as the aspect ratio for photos and the frames-per-second for video. You can also set the framing grid and various other apects, so take time out to explore the settings and see how they can help you.

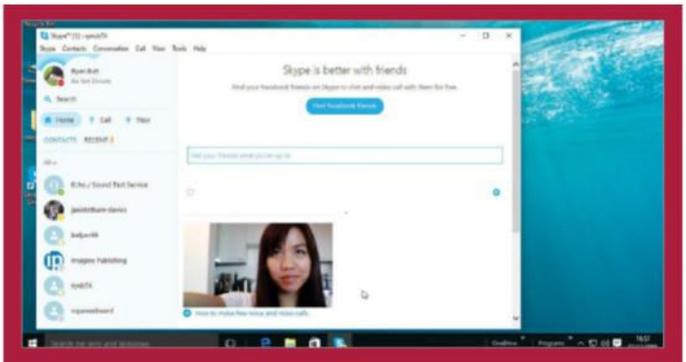


2: Timer tools

The Camera app comes with an important tool for capturing timed images. The timer option allows you to set up a delay of two, five or ten seconds. Perfect for setting up your shot. Click on the '…' icon in the top-right corner to access this feature and then use the drop-down menu to select the desired interval for the timer.

3: The camera roll window

Whenever you take a picture with the Camera app it will be saved to your collection. Click on the thumbnail of your last taken image in the top-left corner and you will be taken to your Photos app whereby you can review the images you have taken and, if need be, edit them to make them look even better.



5: Camera-compatible apps

Once you have a compatible streaming camera connected to your PC, it will be detectable in any app that supports camera functions and tools. When opening such an app, like Skype, the app will ask permission to use the connected camera. Select Allow and it will automatically connect with the app, making the camera available.

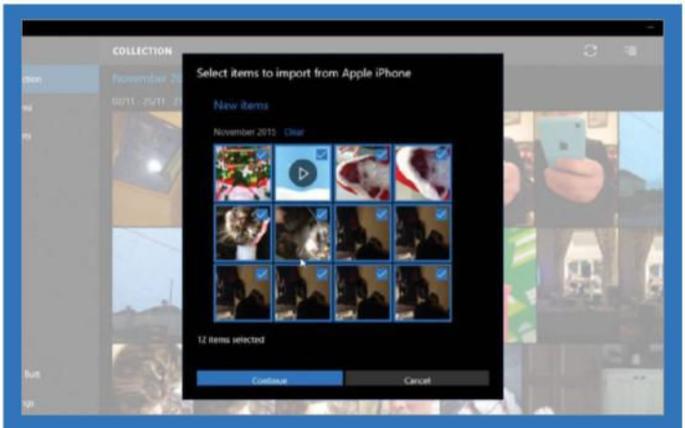
Store and edit snaps in Photos

View your images in an intuitive digital gallery

The Windows 10 Photos app provides you with an automated tool for viewing your images. If you've got a large collection of photographs already stored on your computer, the app will automatically connect with and display them, allowing you to view and browse through them at will using a digital gallery interface. The Photos app is all about removing the frustration of navigating through hundreds of images via folders. In the Photos app you'll be able to move and delete images or folders. You can also use the app to crop, resize and edit your photos. The edit tool provides you with a series of quick image-altering effects that can be used to enhance images. You can then save a copy of your edited image or replace the original one. The Photos app is also connected to your OneDrive account, so you can access all of your cloud-stored images to view them or download them to your PC. Much like apps or webpages, photos can be placed as a tile in your Start menu, or set up as your lock screen. The Photos app provides you with all of the sharing, printing, editing and managing tools you need for your Windows 10 image collection. Start exploring your collection in style!

All your images in one tidy gallery

Upload device photos automatically



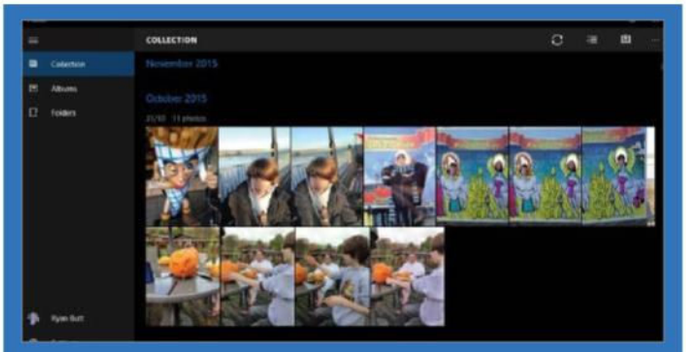
1: Import photos from devices

When you connect a camera, smartphone or any kind of storage device that contains images to your Windows 10 PC, you'll be asked what you want to do with the device's stored images. Clicking on this prompt and selecting 'Import photos and videos' will begin a scan which will then present you with the device's images. You can then select the images you want to import into the Photos app.

"You'll be able to move and delete images or folders. You can also use the Photos app to crop, resize and edit your photographs"

4: Share your photos

The Photos app is perfect for quickly finding an image and sharing it with other people. Simply find a photo in your collection and then right-click on it. This will bring up a floating menu of options, including Share, Copy and Delete. Choose the 'Share' option and then select a means of sharing from the right-hand column.

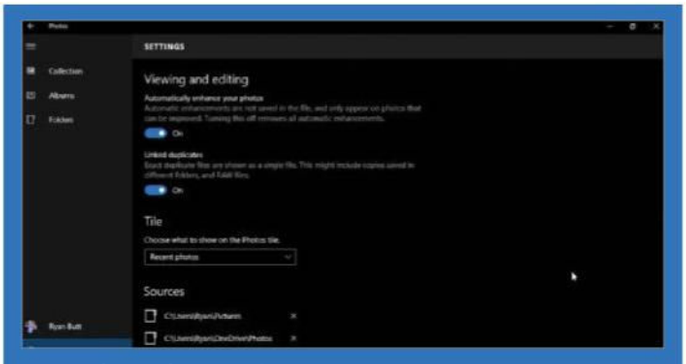


2: Automated gallery setup

Organise and view all of your computer-stored photos in one app. The Photos app in Windows 10 will automatically locate any image folders on your computer and place them in the app's Collection view. Albums in the Photos app are created to mimic your photos folder structure. You can click on an album to view the images.

3: Edit your photos

You can edit and enhance images with the Photos app. Add filter effects, vignettes and correct the colour balance, brightness and contrast of photographs. The app comes with a series of tools to enhance your images, from beginner effects like adjusting brightness right up to advanced tools such as selective focus.



5: Explore the Settings

If you click on the Settings option in the left column then you will be able to tweak certain aspects of the Photos app. For example, you can turn on the option to automatically enhance your photos, choose the sources from which the displayed photos are extracted from and display photos stored on your OneDrive.

Monitor markets with Money

Check share prices, calculate loans and view currency exchange rates

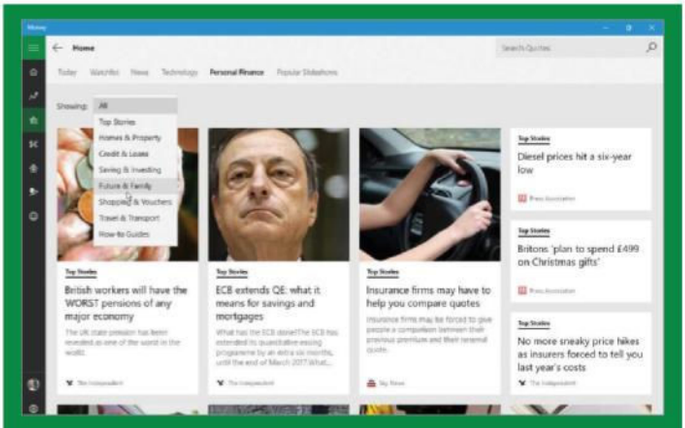
Money is one of the best financial news and tools apps on Windows 10. It is brilliantly designed, and has a great range of features and a simple and clean design that is easy to use, yet it's packed with useful information. The home screen, for example, shows the latest news stories in the financial world, the state of the stock market and whether it is up or down, currency exchange rates, commodities and more.

Delve into the app and go beyond the home screen overview, and there is a lot of detailed information. You can explore different market sectors, such as saving and investing, travel and transport, and so on. View the latest share prices and see which stocks are up or down, those that are being traded the most, and monitor your favourite companies.

There are a couple of useful tools, one being the currency exchange-rate calculator. This is perfect for anyone who travels abroad, as you can see how much your pound, dollar or euro is worth in another currency. Historical exchange prices are charted too. The other, a loan calculator, is perfect for working out how much loans and mortgages will cost you. It's one of the best of Microsoft's Windows 10 apps.

View financial news and use calculators

Explore the Money app's features and tools



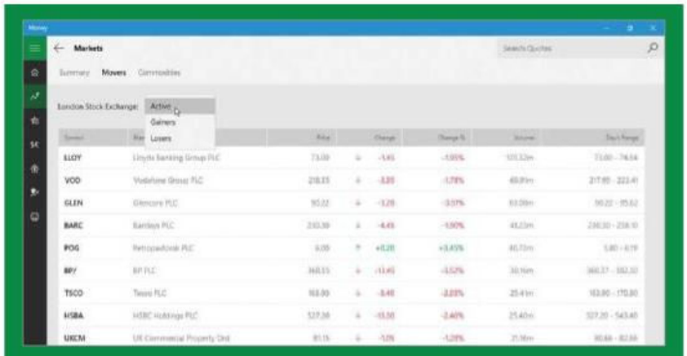
1: View personal finance stories

Across the top is a menu that provides access to the news sections in Money, but there is more. Select Personal Finance and click the Showing menu. Select the type of news stories you want to see, like Homes & Property, Credit & Loans, Future & Family, and so on. The top news stories related to the selected topic are displayed. Click one to read it and then click the back button to return to this page.

"Money is one of the best financial news and tools apps on Windows 10. It is brilliantly designed and has a great range of features"

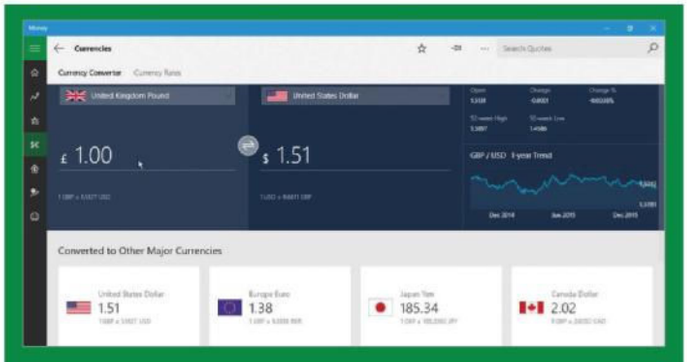
4: Calculate loans

Select the Mortgage Calculator to access the loan calculator, used for working out anything from small loans or mortgages for homes. Enter the loan amount, any charges and fees, the interest rate and number of years it runs for. Click Calculate for results. Click the Chart or Schedule buttons for two views.



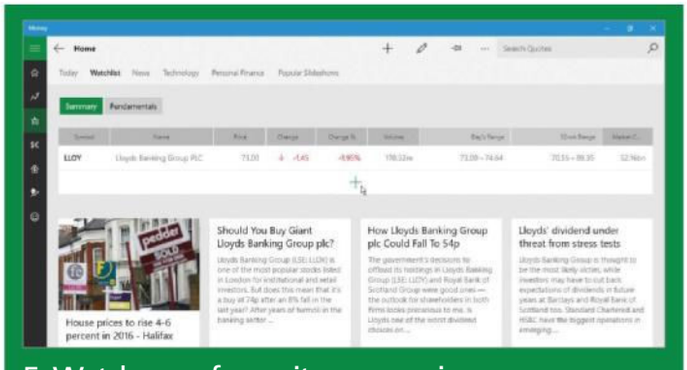
2: View share prices

Click the Markets icon on the left, and companies on the London Stock Exchange are displayed. There are hundreds, so the app lets you narrow the focus and display three groups. Click the menu button. Select the most actively traded shares, biggest gainers or biggest losers for an overview of what is happening in the markets.



3: View money exchange rates

Select Currencies. There are two views: Currency Converter and Currency Rates. Select two currencies in the large tiles at the top. Enter an amount to see the equivalent in the other currency. On the right is a chart showing the changing exchange rate over time. Below are popular currencies.



5: Watch your favourite companies

If you have shares in a company or plan to buy them, add the company to the watchlist. Select it at the top, and click the plus button to add a new item. Enter the company name into the search box and select the share price to watch. News stories relating to the watched companies are shown.

Make the most of Skype in Windows 10

Communicate with anyone for free, no matter where in the world they are

It may feel like a very strange notion to make and receive phone calls from your computer, but the fact is that it will make all of the sense in the world once you realise what Skype can do and how easy it is to use.

It will use your internet connection to make and receive audio and video calls and the quality of these calls will in theory be better than you get from a normal telephone line. The video call facility is particularly useful when speaking to relatives abroad and can make all of the difference when trying to keep in contact with loved ones who live some distance away or even in another country. We will highlight the most useful features that Skype offers and also show you how to change some of the most often used settings, but we can assure you that once you start using it, there is little here that is difficult to use or understand.

If you can use the basic features of a computer, you will be able to use Skype and benefit from its ability to save you money, keep in touch with those you love and help you make new friends. There are many good reasons why Skype is used and loved by millions of people all around the world.

Your current status

You can change your status at any time and also add emojis so that people who may want to make contact will know if it is worth calling you. It is simple to set up

Video quality

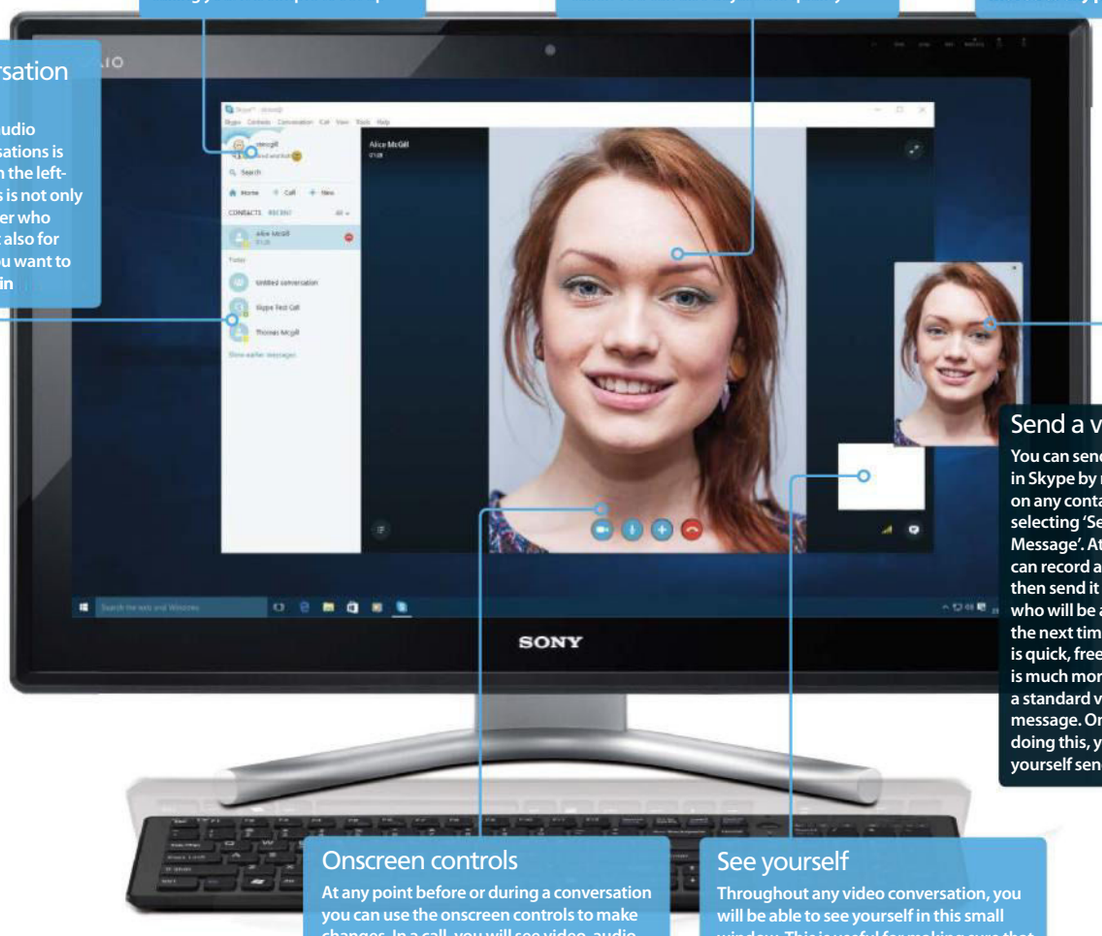
The quality of a video conversation will be affected by the speed of your internet connection, the quality of your webcam and the general lighting situation for each caller. You can also adjust the quality

Call and work

If you need to do something else on your computer while talking, you can make a small pop-up window appear that can be **moved to any part of the screen**

Your conversation history

A history of your audio and video conversations is always available in the left-hand column. This is not only useful to remember who your spoke to, but also for quick dialling if you want to **call a contact again**



Send a video

You can send a video message in Skype by right-clicking on any contact and then selecting 'Send Video Message'. At this point you can record a quick video and then send it to the contact who will be able to view it the next time they log in. It is quick, free and easy, and is much more personal than a standard voicemail or text message. Once you start doing this, you may find yourself sending them often.

Onscreen controls

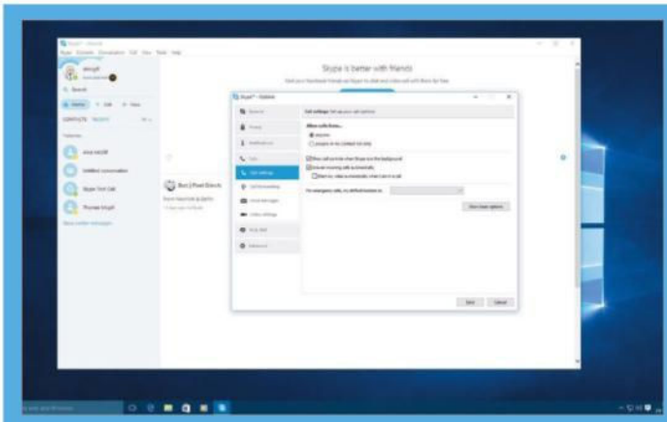
At any point before or during a conversation you can use the onscreen controls to make changes. In a call, you will see video, audio, add a new participant and end call buttons

See yourself

Throughout any video conversation, you will be able to see yourself in this small window. This is useful for making sure that the person you are talking to can see you

Essential Skype features and tips

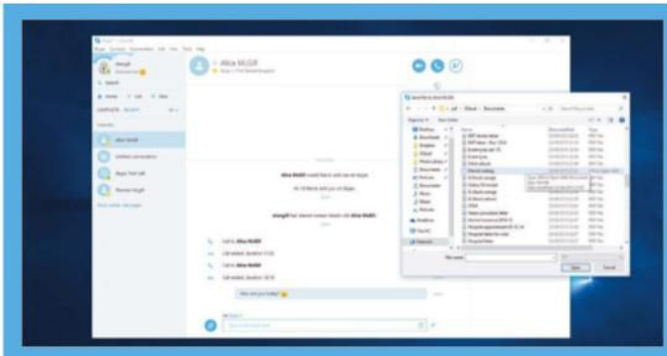
The more you know, the better it works



1: Answer calls automatically

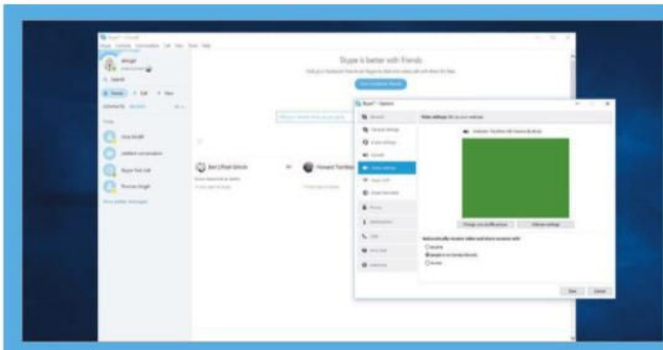
If you are likely to be at your computer for some time, you can set Skype to answer incoming calls automatically. To do this, click Tools at the top followed by Options. Now look for the Calls option in the left-hand column and then click 'Show advanced options' where you will see an obvious box to tick. You may not need this feature often, but it will come in handy on occasion and save you time.

"You will be able to use Skype and benefit from its ability to save you money, keep in touch with those you love and make new friends"



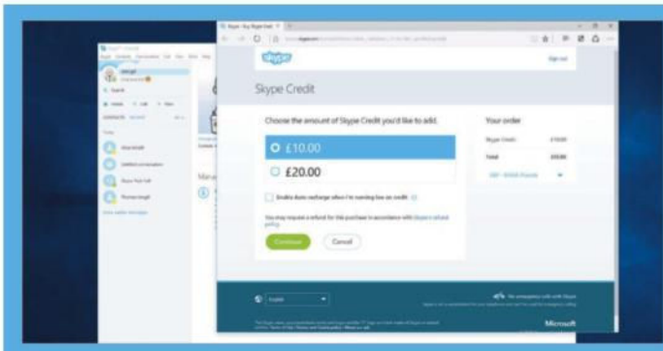
4: Send files in Skype

Did you know that you can send files to Skype contacts? If not, you may find that it is much more convenient than dealing with emails and makes a lot of sense if you are already having a conversation with someone. In the message list, look for the paperclip and click it to then select a file to send.



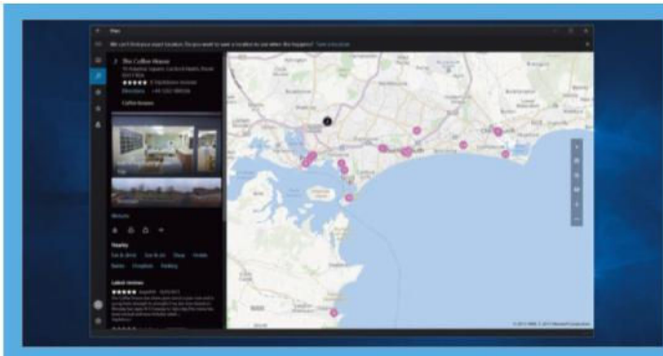
2: Deal with video settings

If you find that the general quality of your videos is not as good as you would like, try going to Tools, Options and then click 'Video settings' followed by 'Webcam settings'. It may be the case that your computer's camera is unfortunately not offering the level of quality that you need and a new standalone camera is needed.



3: Add some funds

You can add funds to your Skype account to speak to people around the world who do not use Skype all of the time. The vast majority of your calls will be free, but even the paid calls through Skype will be much cheaper than using a traditional landline. Click Skype at the top followed by 'Buy Skype credit' to start the process.



5: Use Skype anywhere

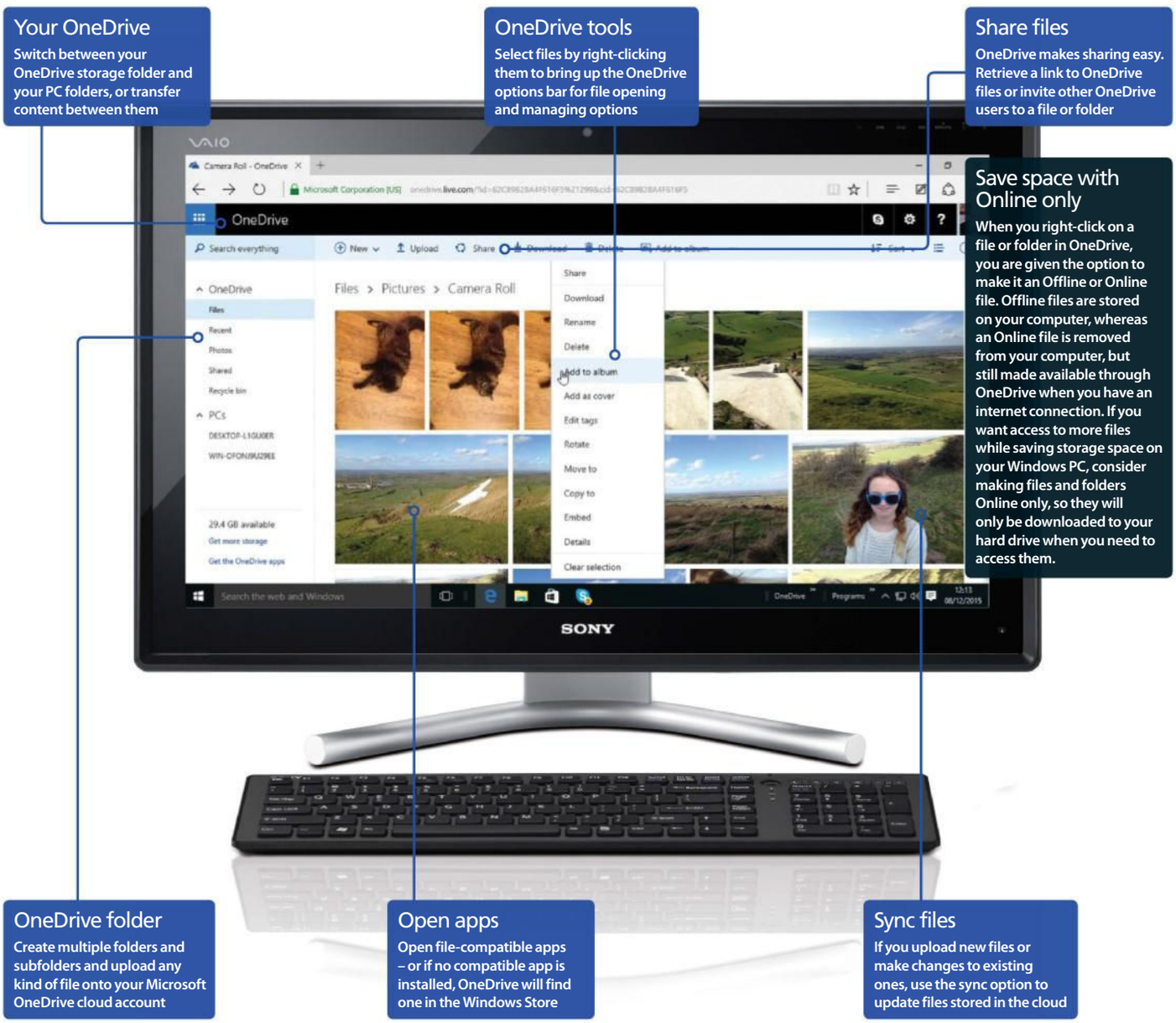
Skype can be used from within a variety of Windows 10 apps, which makes it the ideal tool to use when searching for new places or a business. Click a phone number in the browser or Maps and it will use Skype to make the call immediately. It is a seamless process which really does work very well indeed.

Back up files with OneDrive

Store and access your files from anywhere

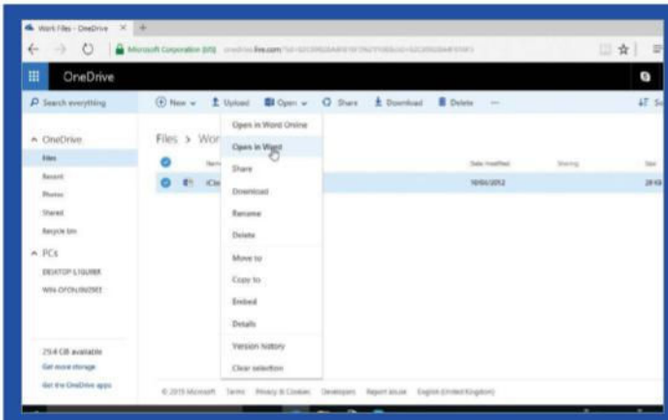
Microsoft's OneDrive is the company's rebranding of its previous SkyDrive service. OneDrive provides Microsoft account holders with 15GB of free cloud-based storage for their digital possessions. The OneDrive cloud is a remote storage space that you can upload files to via the internet. You can use this space to back up all of your most important files, including text documents, music and photos.

Once you've got everything uploaded to the cloud, you can then access these files from any computer or OneDrive-compatible device such as a tablet or smartphone. Whether you own a Windows, Android or Apple device, you will be able to download the appropriate OneDrive app to access all of your files, all of the time. The Windows 10 native OneDrive app presents your files in a tidy folder structure, which can work as an effective replacement to browsing through folders on your desktop. Create folders and upload files to them, organising them as you like. Go to **OneDrive.live.com** for more options that allow you to open, edit and share photos, start up software for a spreadsheet, collaborate on a text document with another user, or even watch a movie.



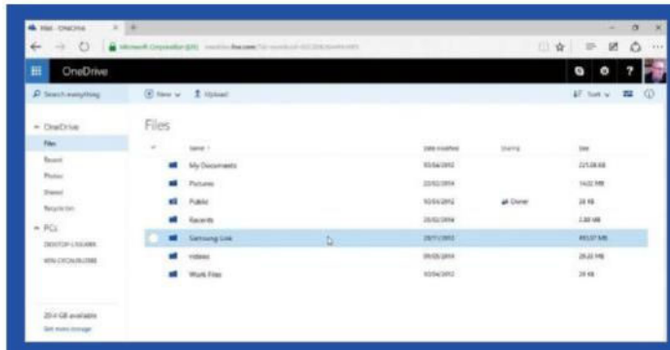
Store your files in the cloud

Keep files backed up with OneDrive



1: All your files safe and sound

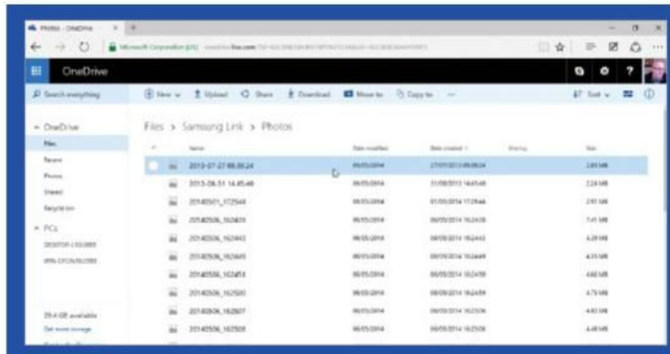
Find and open your spreadsheets, text documents, presentations and other files straight out of OneDrive. OneDrive connects itself with all of your Windows apps and software so you can browse for files in OneDrive, then right-click on them to open them up in the appropriate app, as well as duplicating, removing and reorganising them. You can also share files from OneDrive via any sharing app.



2: Access your files anywhere

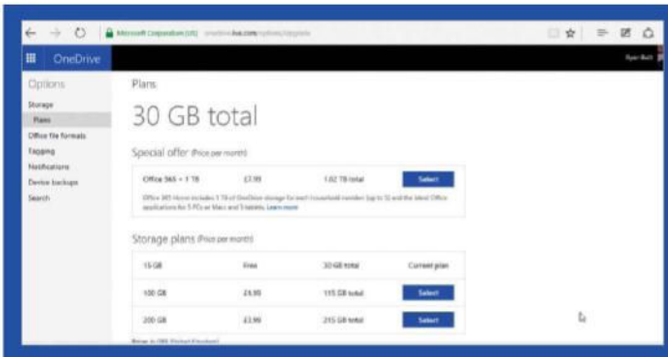
Visit OneDrive.live.com from any computer and you can access, organise and upload your files. As soon as files have been uploaded to your OneDrive account you'll be able to access them from wherever you log into OneDrive. Files can be shared from OneDrive.live.com as long as you're connected to the internet.

"Whether you own a Windows, Android or Apple device, you can download the relevant OneDrive app to access all of your files"



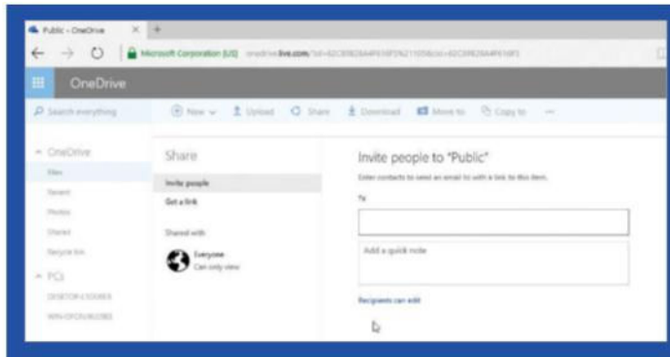
3: Build a media library

Put all of your PC's media in one remote location so they can be accessed from any computer. Back up your most important files to OneDrive and you won't have to risk losing them. You can create entire galleries and folder systems for all your media on OneDrive, making it your computer's new image, music and video gallery.



4: Upload your computer's files

Use OneDrive to browse and upload your files, backing them up to your OneDrive cloud storage space. By default, a Microsoft account comes with 15GB of free storage on OneDrive. Visit OneDrive.live.com to upgrade your account to 115GB or 215GB of cloud storage space, so you could store you entire computer in the cloud.



5: Sync and collaborate

Once a file is stored in OneDrive, it can be opened, amended and saved, updating the OneDrive file for you. Then, with the auto-sync option, any updated files will be uploaded to the OneDrive cloud service. This means you can collaborate on a single document with other OneDrive users without having to duplicate it.

Master Windows 10

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Master Windows 10

Set up your Windows 10 desktop

Customising the Windows desktop

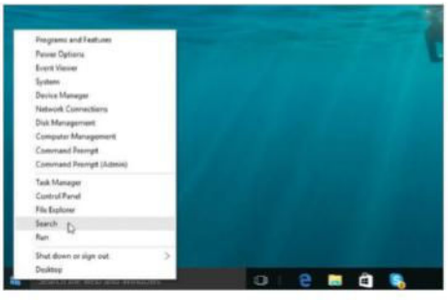
Windows 10 introduces new ways to control your PC. Windows 8 was created with touch screens in mind and for those without a touch screen, the interface proved difficult to use. Fortunately, Windows 10 addresses these problems by adding features that allow its desktop mode to become a more prominent replacement for the tiled interface. One of the key features is the 'boot to desktop' option, which you'll be shown how to activate here. We'll also reveal several ways in which you can make use of features that either enhance the Windows 10 desktop or that have been carried over from previous versions. In addition to improving Windows 10's usability, there are ways to quickly access 'Modern UI' features. Specifically, we'll look at making the lock-screen background image the same as the desktop wallpaper, and how to use the Quick Access menu to open the search box.

QUICK TIP

Keyboard shortcuts

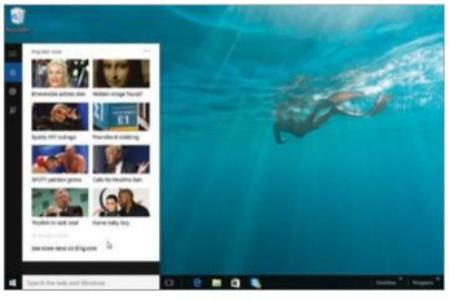
As an alternative to using the Quick Access menu, the Search function can be activated from the keyboard. To search everywhere, press ⊞+Q. To search for files, press ⊞+F. To search the web, press ⊞+S. To search settings, press ⊞+W. These shortcuts launch the Search sidebar with the correct search mode.

Search with the Quick Access menu



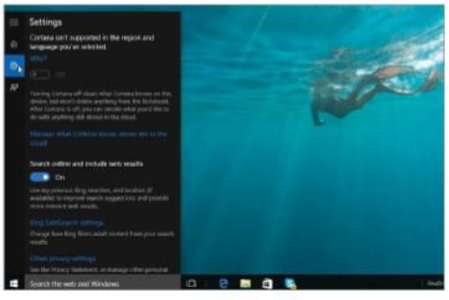
1: Launch the Search box

Rather than use the Search field, press ⊞+X or hover the cursor in the bottom-left corner of the screen and right-click. That will launch the Quick Access menu; now click on Search.



2: Narrow your search

Once the Search sidebar appears, a drop-down list lets you only search within specific types of content, such as settings, files or Bing web results for pages and videos.



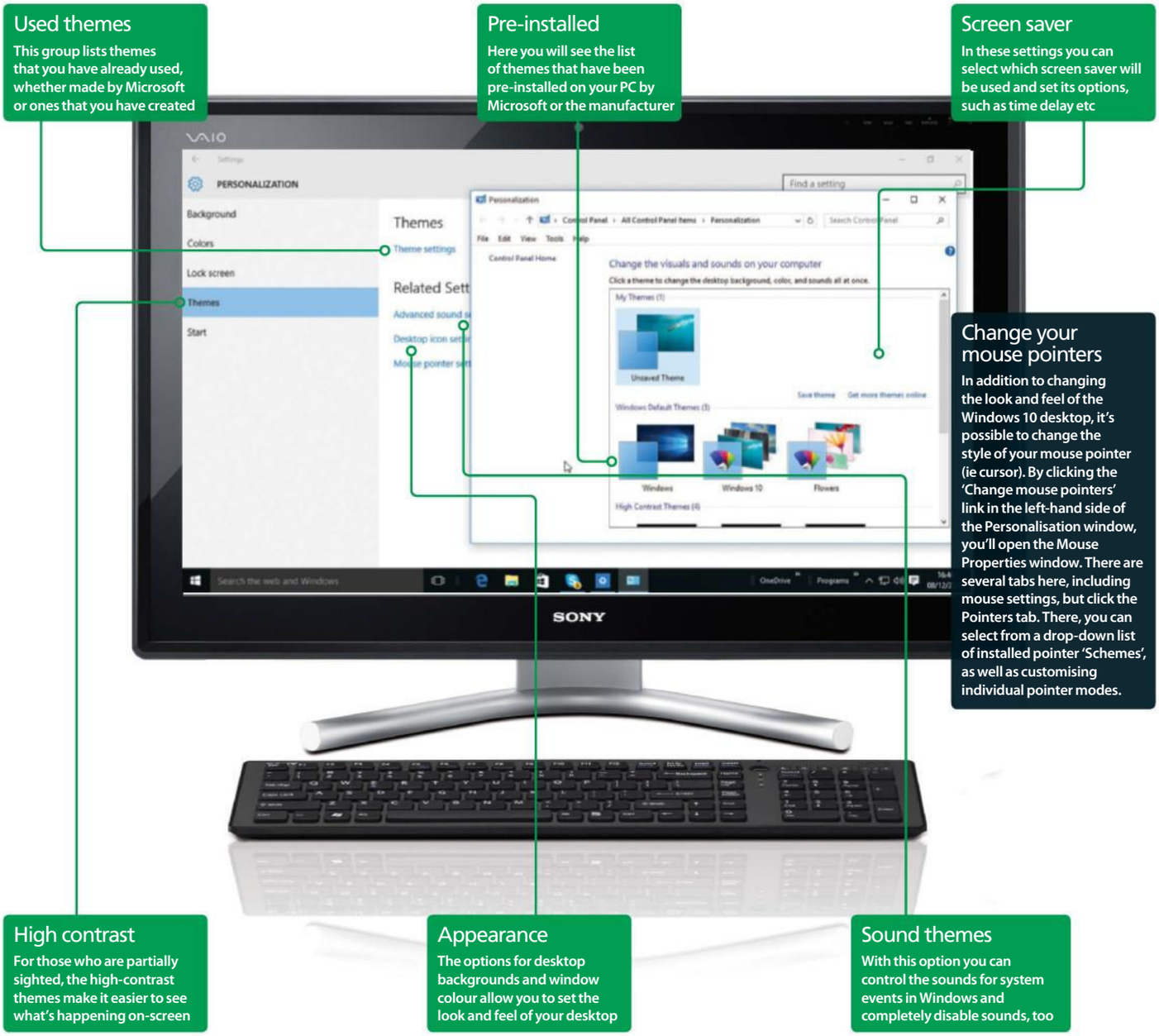
3: Browse results

Most search results will be listed in the Search sidebar, such as apps, settings and files. If you were searching the web for pages or videos, those results will be shown in the app.

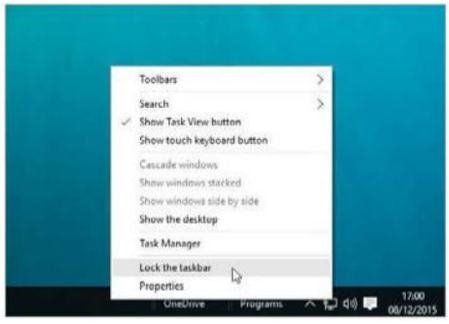
Customise your Windows PC with themes

A new installation of Windows 10 starts out with a prescribed look and feel – but it by no means has to stay that way. By right-clicking on the Windows 10 desktop and selecting Personalise, you gain access to many options in Windows 10 to change the appearance of the desktop mode. The background image can be changed and can even be set as a slideshow of multiple images. The colour of windows and the screen saver can also be changed, along with the sounds theme in use.

Fortunately, 'None' is a valid option for system sounds. Windows 10 also comes with a set of ready-made themes of co-ordinated wallpapers, colour schemes and screen savers. However, if none of the pre-installed themes is to your taste, a single click can take you to the Windows themes download page to find more. In addition to the features covered below, the left-hand navigation bar of the Personalisation window provides links to other settings that allow you to change the look and feel of your desktop.

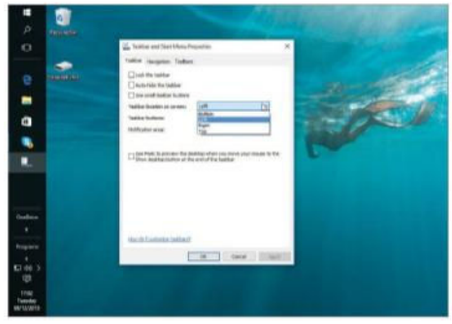


Tweak the taskbar's appearance and style



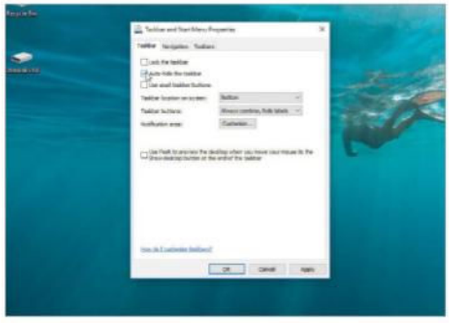
1: Unlock the taskbar

The taskbar needs to be unlocked to be moved. Right-click on it, being careful to avoid application buttons and uncheck the 'Lock the taskbar' option. Repeat to relock the taskbar to prevent accidental changes.



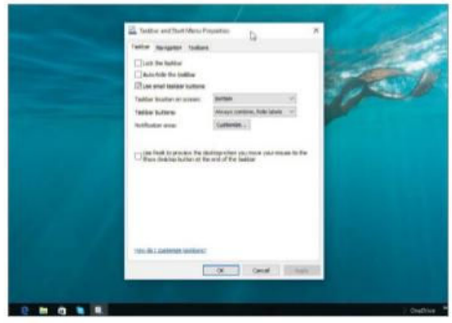
2: Move the taskbar

Once the taskbar is unlocked, it can be moved to any side of the screen, vertical or horizontal. A vertical taskbar helps to maximise the vertical space on your screen. Right-click and choose 'Properties' to set the position.



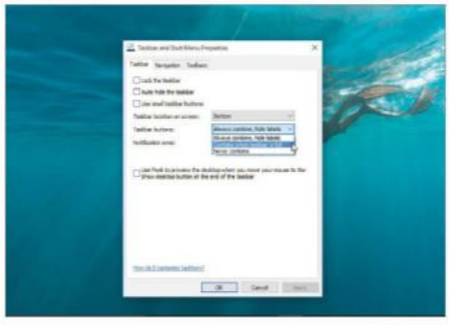
3: Hide the taskbar

To have the taskbar disappear until needed, right-click on it and select Properties. In the Taskbar tab, check the Auto-hide option. The taskbar will now disappear until you move the pointer close to its side of the screen.



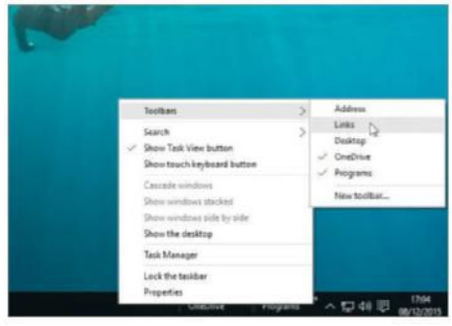
4: Shrink taskbar buttons

To make the taskbar thinner, application buttons can be made smaller. Right-click on the taskbar and select Properties. Next, check 'Use small taskbar buttons'. This will reduce taskbar thickness and improve title readability.



5: Combine taskbar buttons

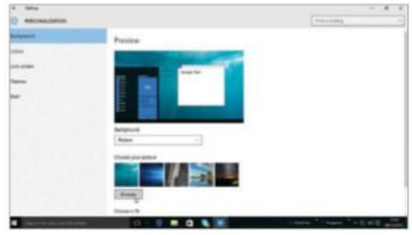
Right-click on the taskbar and select Properties. In the Taskbar tab, look at the 'Taskbar buttons' drop-down. You can select whether application buttons are combined always, when needed, or never at all.



6: Add toolbars

Toolbars are supplementary taskbar menus giving access to other features of Windows, such as files and weblinks. To access them, right-click on the taskbar, move the pointer to the Toolbars submenu and choose a toolbar.

Set desktop wallpaper

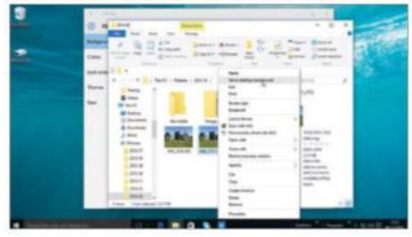


1: Set from the desktop

Right-click on the desktop, click Personalise, then Background. Use the menu to select a source.

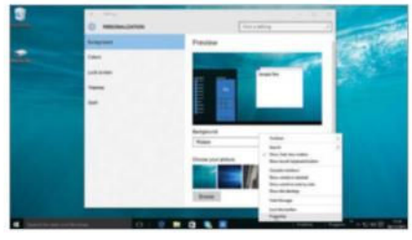
2: A simple background

Repeat step 1, but select Solid Colour from the drop-down menu. A solid colour can help with readability of icons.



3: Use as background

A faster alternative when browsing images in File Explorer is to just right-click and select 'Set as Desktop Background'.



4: Sync Start background

Right-click the taskbar and click Properties. In the Navigation tab, check 'Show my desktop background on Start'.

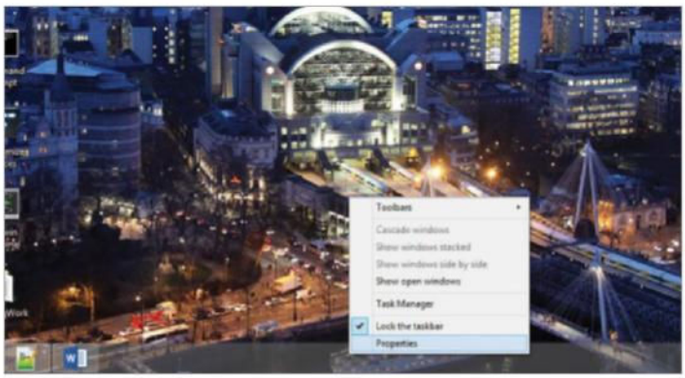
Boot to the Windows desktop instead of the Start screen

Before Windows 10 came along and provided the happy medium between the desktop system of Windows 7 and the tile-based system of Windows 8, Windows 8 users were stuck with the mandatory use of the tiled interface, which favoured devices with touch screens over traditional input methods. This was a problem for the majority of users who were using PCs that had no touch screen. Furthermore, there weren't many new models of PCs actually being produced with a touch screen. Meanwhile, those using Windows 8 with a non-touch PC were having to use their mice or trackpads to emulate touch-gestures in order to interact properly with the new interface.

Tiles behaved like smartphone widgets that give useful information; however, they may not be appropriate for some users. Those who use a PC as a practical tool may not spend long enough looking at their screen to make having the tiles worthwhile. If your PC is still running Windows 8 and is a workhorse that you only use to perform tasks like emailing or word processing, you'll spend very little time looking at tiles.

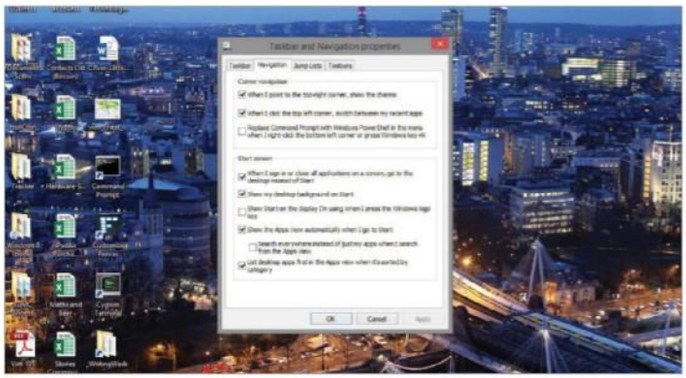
In an effort to cater to its established non-touch users, Microsoft included an option to automatically start a PC in desktop mode, rather than the tile-based Start screen, with the Windows 8.1 update. But if you are still running Windows 8 because your PC or laptop cannot run Window 10, then you can bypass the tiles and go straight to listing desktop apps. By doing so, the Start screen can be much more like the Start menu of previous versions of Windows (and, indeed, the new Windows 10). This guide will show you how to do it.

"Before Windows 10 came along, Windows 8 users were stuck with the mandatory use of the tiled interface"



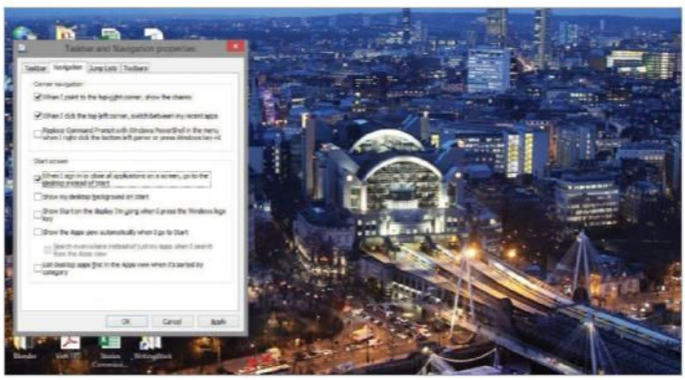
1: Open properties

To begin setting up your PC to be more desktop-like, you need to open the taskbar properties. Make sure you're in desktop mode (press ⊞+D). Right-click on some empty space in the taskbar and select Properties.



2: Navigation tab

In the 'Taskbar and Navigation properties' window that opens, click on the second tab, named Navigation. The options we need are in the second section, called 'Start screen', which has six checkboxes.



3: Desktop boot

To enable the 'boot to desktop' mode, look for the line that says 'When I sign in or close all applications on a screen, go to the desktop instead of Start'. It should be the first line in the 'Start screen' options.

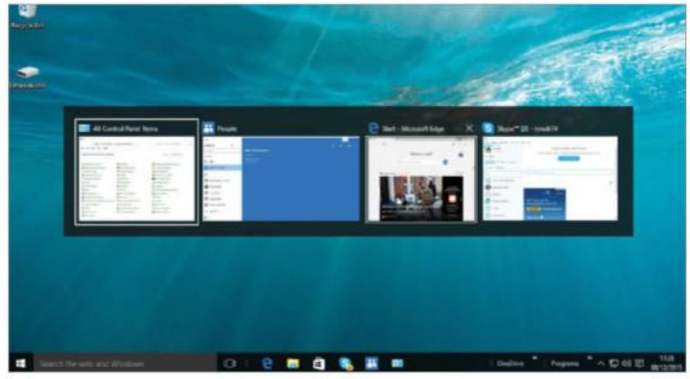
4: Desktop lists

Set the Start menu to show desktop apps first, rather than tiles. Check the following: 'Show the Apps view automatically when I go to Start' and 'List desktop apps first in the Apps view when it's sorted by category'.

Switch between open programs

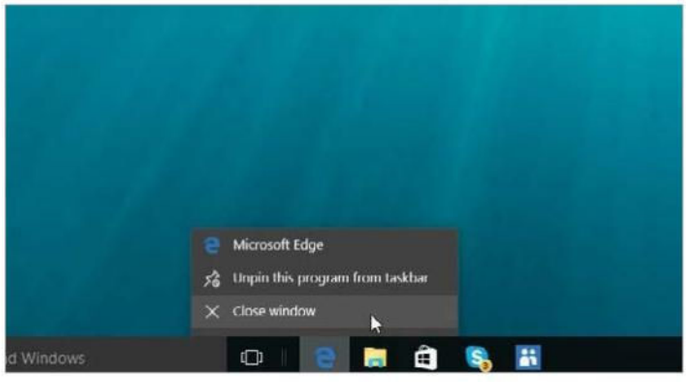
1: App cycling

The traditional Alt+Tab key combo for switching between apps still exists in Windows 10. When holding down the Alt key, repeatedly pressing the Tab key allows you to switch between all active programs.



2: Alt+Tab click

The mouse pointer can be used with Alt+Tab, too. Press Alt+Tab to bring up the application switcher, then release Tab but continue to hold Alt, and use your pointer to select the desired application.



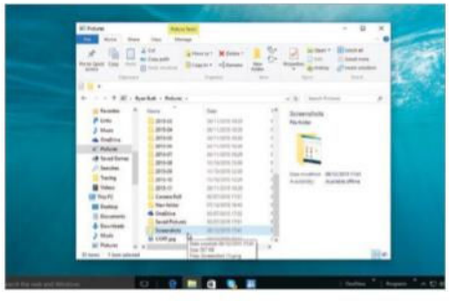
3: The taskbar

The taskbar is the main way that you can see which apps are running and you can click any of their taskbar buttons. Furthermore, right-clicking a taskbar button allows the app to minimise, maximise or close.

4: Taskbar peek

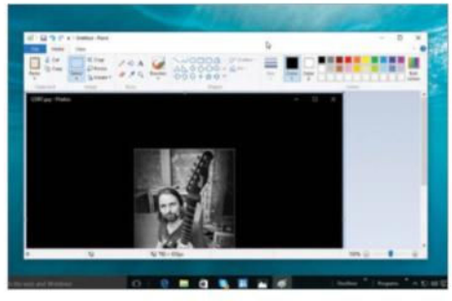
Hover the pointer over a taskbar button to see a thumbnail of the related window. Next, hover the pointer over the thumbnail. All other windows will be hidden, just showing the selected application window.

Take screenshots of your desktop



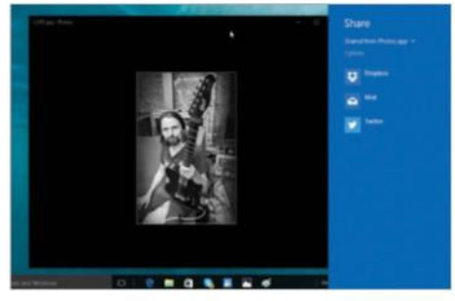
1: On keyboard

By pressing ⊞+PrtSc key, the screen will dim and a screenshot will be saved into the Screenshots folder in your Pictures folder; eg C:\Users\Name\Pictures\Screenshots.



2: App windows

To capture an individual window, press Alt+PrtSc. An image is saved to the clipboard. Open Paint. Click the Paste icon followed by the Crop icon. Finally, save the image.

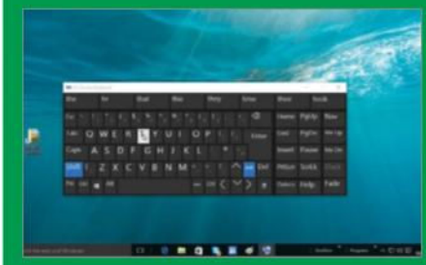


3: Share charm

By pressing ⊞+H, you will find the option to share a screenshot. This automatically saves a screenshot into the app you choose, such as Mail, or the various social networks.

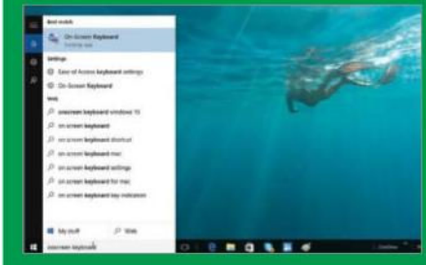
FAQs

Why would I need an on-screen keyboard?



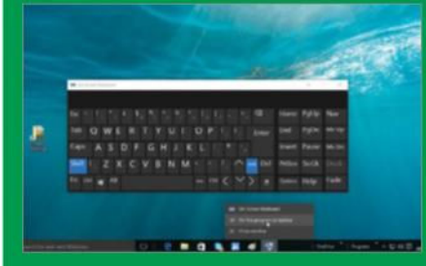
Windows 10 provides an on-screen keyboard. This is useful for laptops with touch screens and detachable keyboards or even desktop PCs, where the mouse can be used to interact with the on-screen keyboard if needed.

How is the keyboard accessed from the desktop?



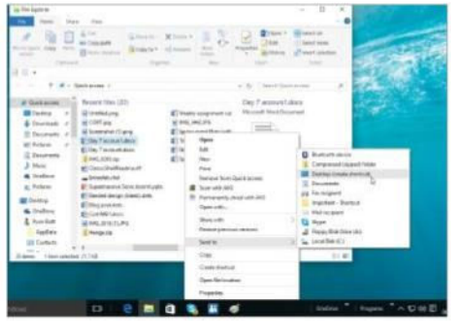
On the desktop, the on-screen keyboard is accessed via an app. Enter 'onscreen keyboard' into your search field and the desktop app will appear at top of the results. Select it from the menu to bring up the onscreen keyboard.

How do I use the touch keyboard with a mouse?



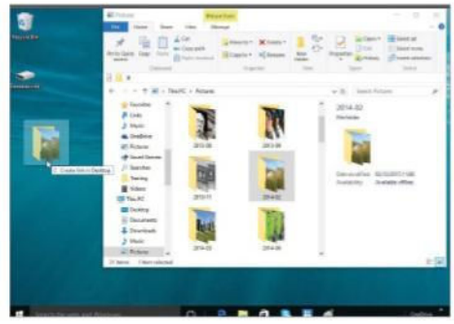
If you intend to use this desktop app frequently then it is a good idea to pin it to the taskbar for easy access when you need it. To do this, right-click on the On-Screen Keyboard icon in the taskbar and choose 'Pin this program to taskbar'.

Add desktop shortcuts to your important files



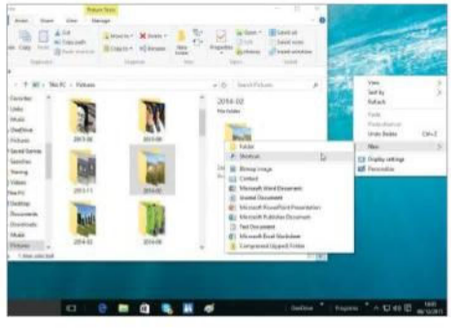
1: Right-click to add

When browsing files in Windows File Explorer, whether they're documents or applications, right-click on the desired file, go to Send To and click 'Desktop (create shortcut)'. A shortcut to the file is created on the desktop.



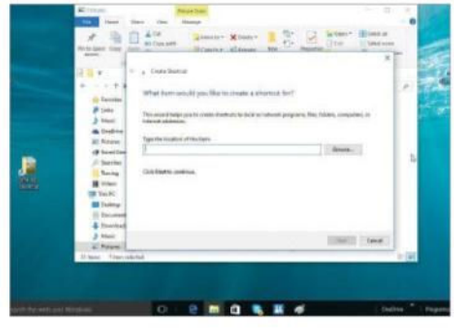
2: Drag and drop documents

When browsing personal files, such as documents or photos, a shortcut can be made on the desktop via drag and drop. Hold the Alt key and drag a file to the desktop. Rather than moving the file, this creates a shortcut.



3: Create on the desktop

View the desktop (Press ⊞+D) and right-click. Navigate to the New submenu and select Shortcut. Next, you will see a new window in which you need to set the location of the file that you want to create a shortcut for.



4: Set target location

In the window described in step 3, you can type the location of the file. However, it's usually easier to click Browse to visually locate the file you wish you set a shortcut for. This method is difficult for program files.

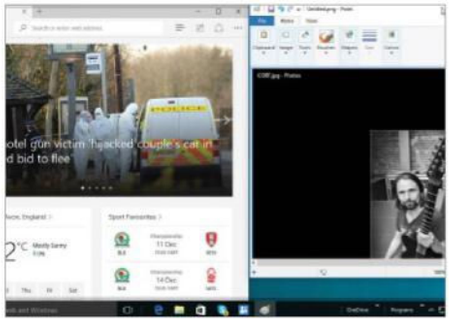
5: Shortcuts from Start

Open the Start menu app list. Search for the desired application. Right-click, select 'Open file location'. In the Explorer window that opens, right-click the shortcut and click Copy. Next, right-click on the desktop and click Paste.

6: Pin to taskbar

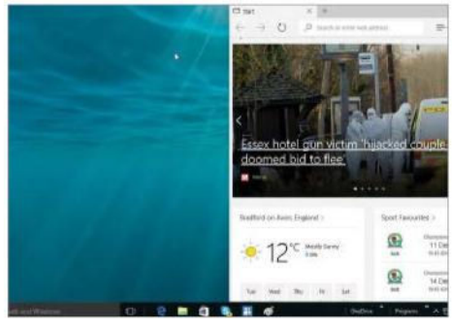
Open the Start menu app list. Search for the desired application. Right-click the icon and select 'Pin to Taskbar'. This will place a shortcut for the application on the desktop's taskbar. Note: this cannot be dragged to the desktop.

Open multiple apps side by side



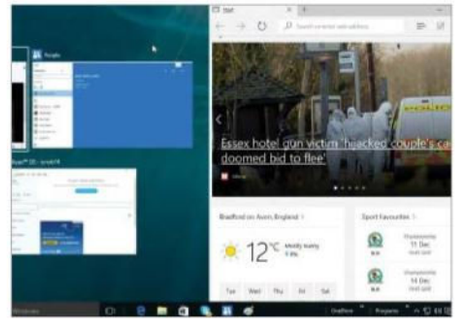
1: Drag and snap

The easiest way to place two app windows aide by side was introduced in Windows 7 and has been retained in Windows 8. Simply drag a window to one side of the screen, and another to the opposite side.



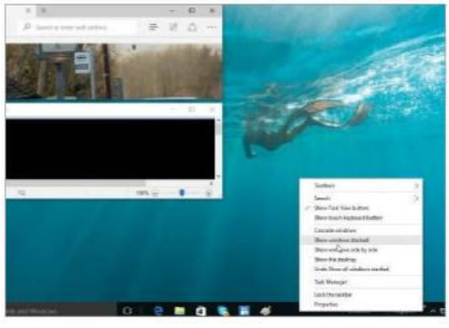
2: Snap with keyboard

Windows can also be set to occupy half of the screen by using the ⊞ key, with either the Left or Right cursor key. To tile two windows together, select one and press ⊞+Left, then select another and press ⊞+Right.



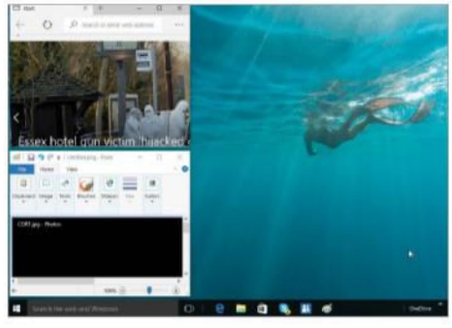
3: Desktop and Modern snap

Follow either step 1 or 2, then launch a Modern UI and snap it next to the desktop. You may need to use the Modern UI task switcher to reselect the desktop, then drag the Modern UI app to the side of the screen.



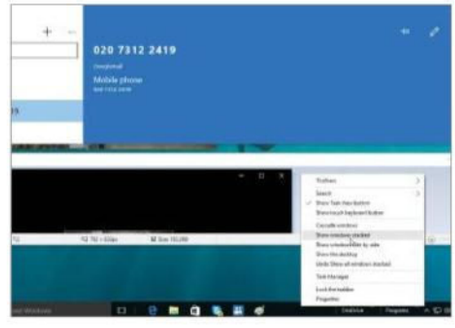
4: Horizontally stack

It is possible to arrange windows horizontally across the screen, although it's not quite so easy. First, minimise all but two windows you wish to tile. Next, right-click on the taskbar and select 'Show windows stacked'.



5: Arrange in a grid

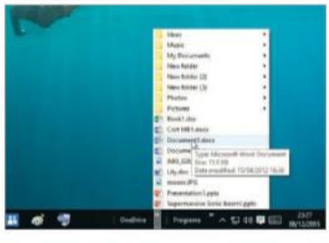
To arrange windows in a grid-like pattern, make sure all windows you wish to see are not minimised (and minimise the ones you don't want to include). Then, right-click the desktop and select 'Show windows side by side'.



6: Set up a wide grid

If step 5 made windows too narrow, you should try the other option from the taskbar context menu, 'Show windows stacked'. If there are fewer than four windows, they'll be expanded to the full width of the screen.

Make a new toolbar

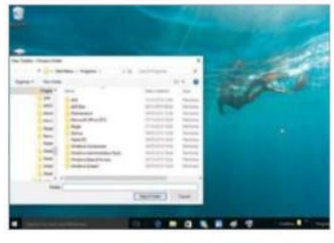


1: Getting started

If you use a particular app or folder frequently then it is a good idea to have it reside in your taskbar for easy access.

2: Go to Properties

To add a new item, right-click on the taskbar at the bottom of the screen and then click on the 'Toolbar' option.



3: Add items

You can pick items to add from the list or pick the 'New toolbar' option to navigate to the things you wish to add.

4: Arrange items

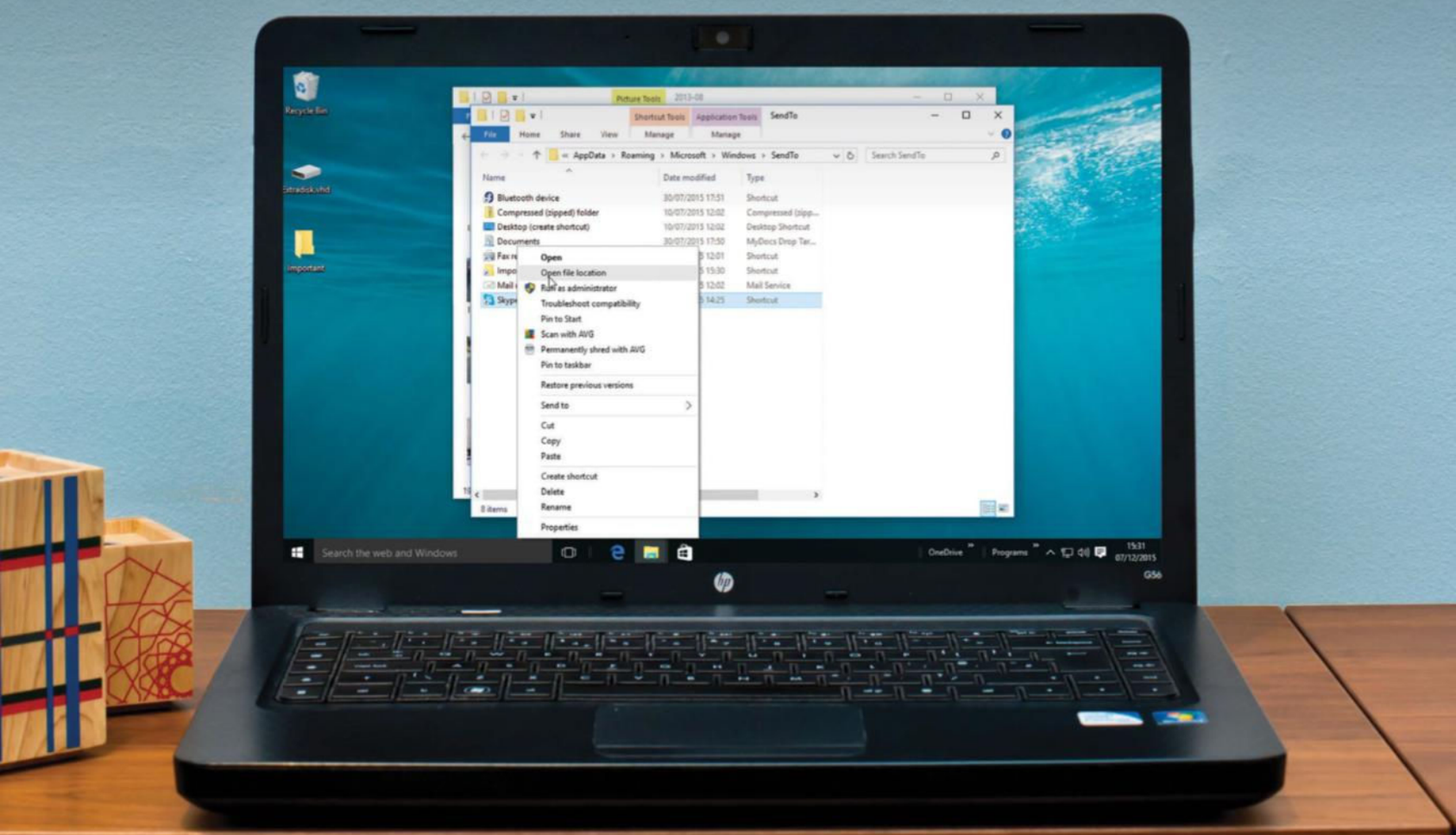
You can drag the edges of the taskbar item to change how much is revealed and click the arrow to see the contents.

Organise and search with File Explorer

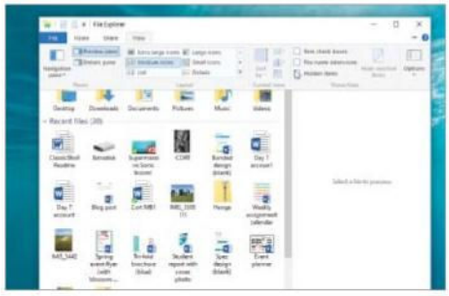
Learn effective file management

While Windows 10 provides the best of both Windows 8's tile-based operating system and the more traditional desktop system of yore, getting around it and managing your files can still take some getting used to. In this guide we will look at the various ways in which files can be managed in the desktop mode of Windows 10. We'll cover basic file management techniques such as creating folders, searching for files and opening files. Beyond the basics of file browsing, you will learn how to customise File Explorer's abilities to suit your needs. Windows 10 also features the Ribbon UI that was introduced in Microsoft Office; we'll show how to use it in File Explorer.

We will also look at making files easier to find with the Library system, which will likely be familiar to Windows 7 users. In addition, we'll take a look at some older features of Windows that still exist in Windows 10, such as the Quick Access Toolbar and the right-click 'Send To' menu, both of which can expedite routine activities.

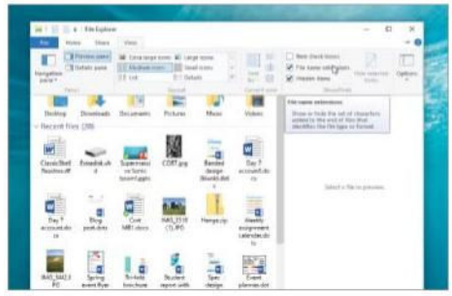


Change how file lists are displayed



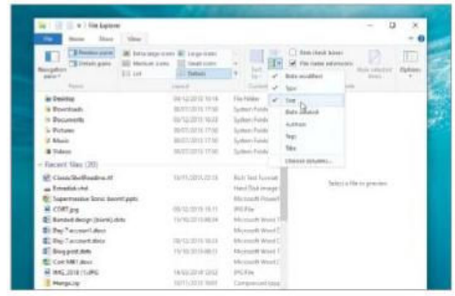
1: Show hidden files

Open a File Explorer window by pressing the ⊞+E keyboard shortcut. Click the View tab on the ribbon bar. In the fourth section from the left, tick the 'Hidden' files box.



2: Show file extensions

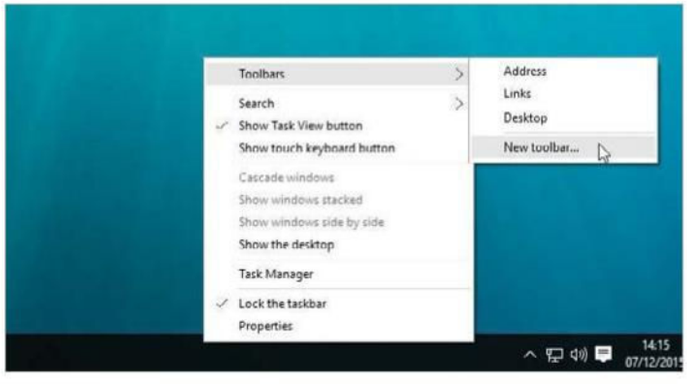
Again, open a File Explorer window by pressing the ⊞+E shortcut. Click the View tab on the ribbon bar. In the fourth section from the left, tick the 'File name extensions' box.



3: Detailed view

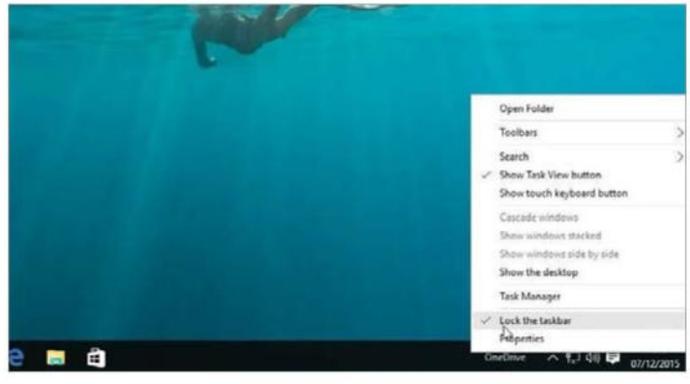
Click the View tab in an Explorer window. In the second section, click the Details view mode. Beside the Sort icon, click Add Columns and select the required number.

Create custom Quick Access Toolbars



1: Add new toolbars

On the desktop taskbar, right-click and select the Toolbars option. From the submenu, select the final option, 'New toolbar…'. Next, select a folder from your hard drive that the toolbar should display.



2: Stretch to fit

To ensure the new toolbar is visible, right-click on the taskbar and make sure 'Lock the taskbar' is *not* checked. A dotted grip mark appears beside the new toolbar. Drag this to a width that fits your needs.

3: Recreate the Start menu

To create a toolbar that reflects the old Windows Start menu, make one where the desktop app shortcuts are stored. Repeat step 1 and create a toolbar for: C:\ProgramData\Microsoft\Windows\Start Menu\Programs.

4: Your own quick launcher

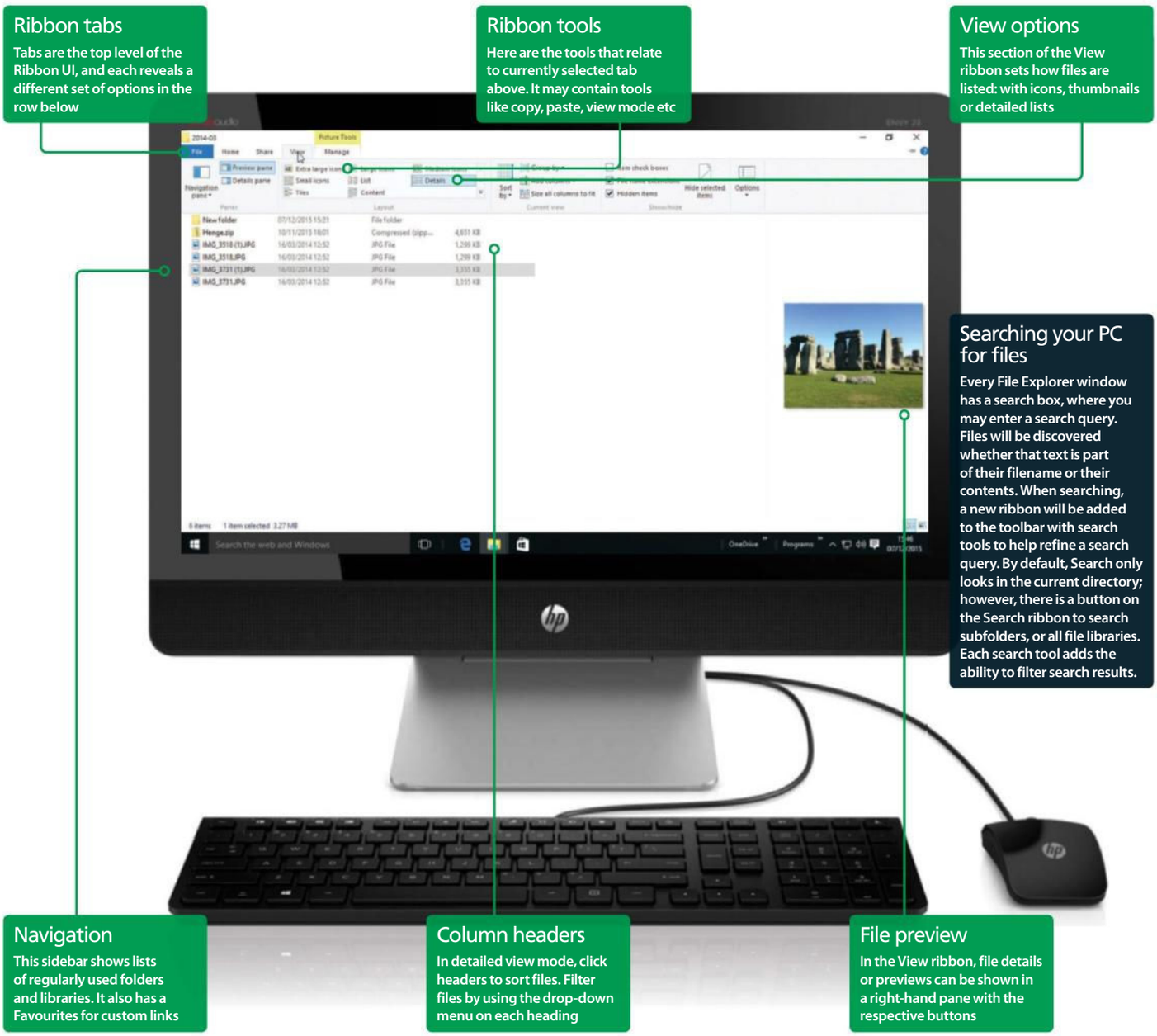
The Quick Launch toolbar is not included in Windows 10. To make your own version, create a new folder and copy the required application shortcuts to it. Next, create a toolbar for that folder.

Navigate Microsoft's new menu system

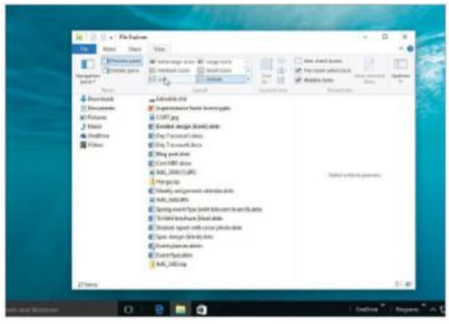
The so-called 'Ribbon UI' (user interface) was introduced with Microsoft Office 2007. It still enjoys something of a 'love it or loathe it' reputation among Office users. Regardless, Microsoft has implemented it in the Windows 10 desktop File Explorer.

The Ribbon has two main zones: there are the tabs which relate to old-style menu titles, and then there are the individual options beneath each tab. Rather than the lists found nested in the old-style menus, the options beneath each tab are much bigger and have large icons. This makes the File Explorer easy to navigate, and usable for both mouse pointers and touch screens.

The File Explorer has five tabs: File, Home, Share, View and Manage. The Home and View tabs are the ones you'll need to be most familiar with as these have the most common tools, such as options for how files are listed. Lastly, the Ribbon UI can actually be hidden, leaving only the top-level tabs, and shortcut icons can be placed in the title bar for frequently used tools.

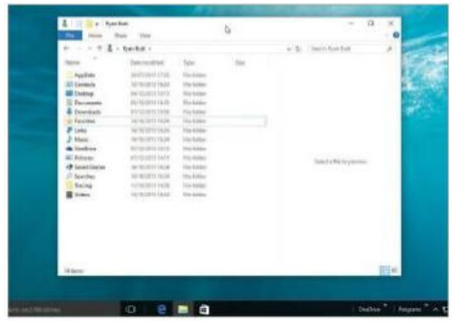


View, search and create in Explorer



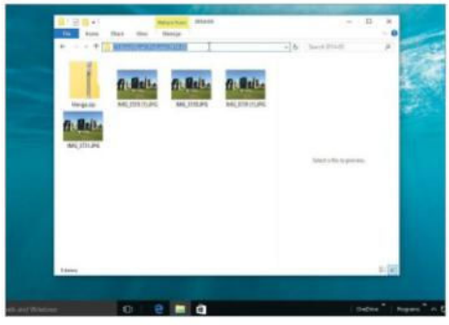
1: Set view mode

In File Explorer, click the View tab. Here, several view modes display icons (ie image thumbnails). The List view simply shows all files listed alphabetically, while the Details view shows a list of files with all their details.



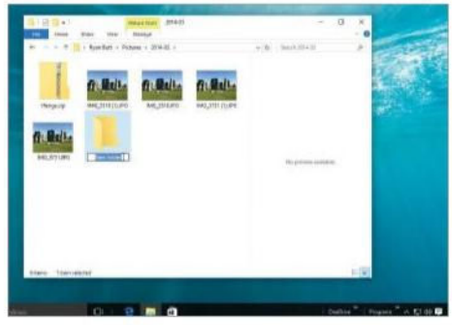
2: Use the navigation bar

The navigation bar on the left of the File Explorer window provides shortcuts to locations on your hard drive. 'Favourites' are personal bookmarks. Simply click a location to open it in the main area of the window.



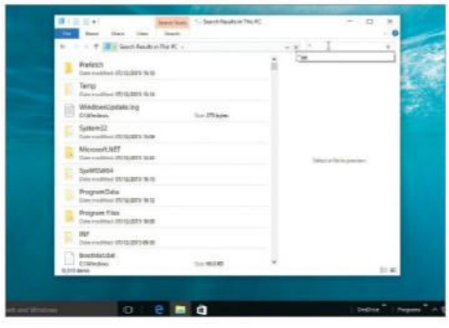
3: The location bar

File Explorer works in a similar way to a web browser, in that it displays your current location in a text field – which you can also type into to manually set a location. To access the location bar, either click it or press Ctrl+L.



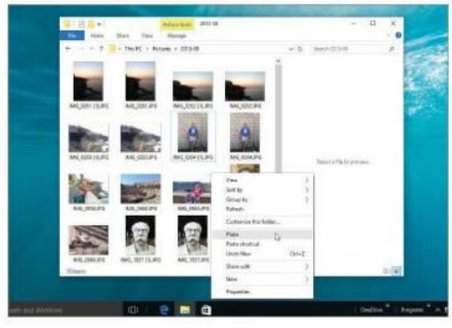
4: Create a folder

Select the folder that you wish to create a new folder within. Either press Ctrl+Shift+N and click 'New folder' on the Home ribbon, or right-click and select Folder from the New submenu. Then enter the name of the folder.



5: Select files via Search

In a folder with many files, the Search tool can be used to filter the list down to a manageable amount. Search also accepts wildcards; for example, '*.txt' would find all text files. To quickly select all files found, press Ctrl+A.



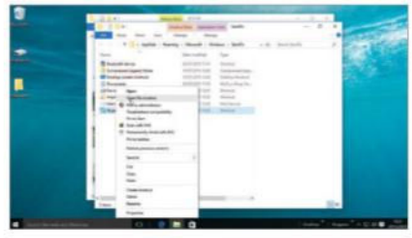
6: Cut, Copy and Paste

In File Explorer, the metaphors of the clipboard are used for file management. If you wish to copy a file, you must 'copy' it to the clipboard, or 'cut' if you intend to move it instead. Then, you would 'paste' into the destination folder.

Tweak Send To menu

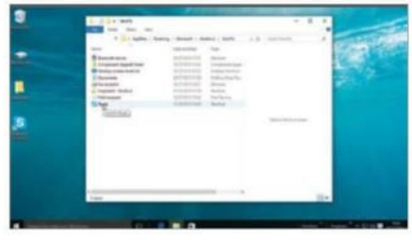
1: Add a folder

Press ⊞+R and enter 'shell:sendto'. Copy the target folder to the clipboard. In the Send To folder, paste a shortcut.



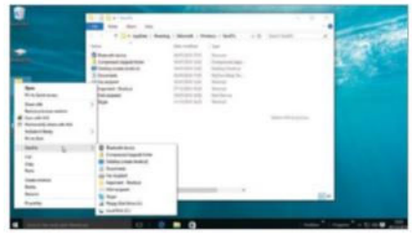
2: Add an application (1)

Search for the desired app. Right-click and select 'Open file location'. In Explorer, copy the shortcut to clipboard.



3: Add an application (2)

Press ⊞+R and enter 'shell:sendto'. In the next Explorer window, right-click to paste the shortcut from the previous step.



4: Review options

From anywhere, right-click a file and open the Send To menu. App shortcuts will open files; folder shortcuts will copy files.

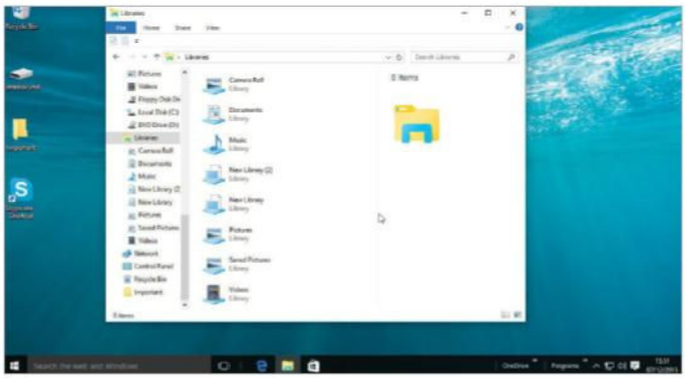
Create and edit virtual file libraries

File libraries provide a way for Windows users to organise related files without having to change their real location on the hard drive. By default, Windows has libraries for Documents, Music, Podcasts, and Videos. Each of these libraries, by default, list files in the corresponding default folders (for example, 'My Documents'). However, other folders can be added to these libraries, so that the files contained within will also be listed as part of the library. For example, a folder on a cloud storage service, such as Dropbox, that contains documents you're collaborating on, could be added to the Documents library. Similarly, you can create custom libraries for any reason. For example, if you're working on a project with files that are spread across your drive, you could list them all together in a library for that project.

Many times, simply moving a set of related files into a single folder structure may be simpler than arranging a library. For instance, because a library is a virtual arrangement of files, you cannot put a library into Dropbox or OneDrive and have all those files backed up– whereas a bunch of files stored in a directory structure can be physically moved into a backup folder. Conversely, a library can be helpful when there are files which you would like to have listed together but, for whatever reason, should not be moved from their current location. In this case a library a useful way of grouping them together, acting as a virtual folder. One example of this is files stored on different devices across a network.

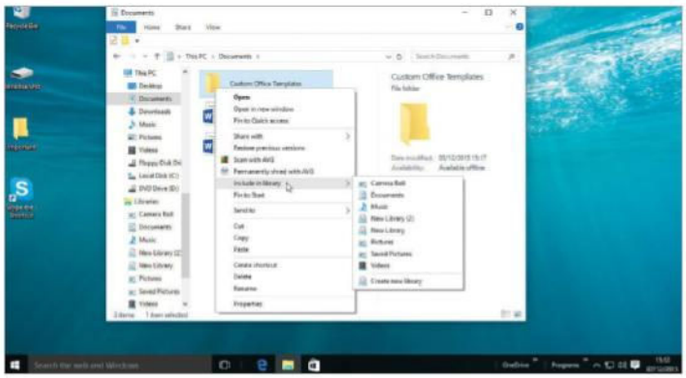
Libraries can be found via the left-hand navigation bar of File Explorer, or by entering 'Libraries' into the address bar of an Explorer window.

> "File libraries provide a way for Windows users to organise related files without having to change their real location"



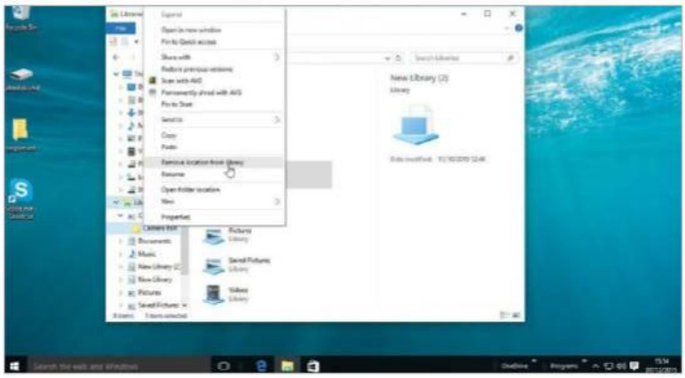
1: Find libraries

In the Explorer address bar, either type 'Libraries' or the name of the library. Alternatively, check the left navigation bar. Libraries may need to be enabled in the Navigation drop-down in the View ribbon.



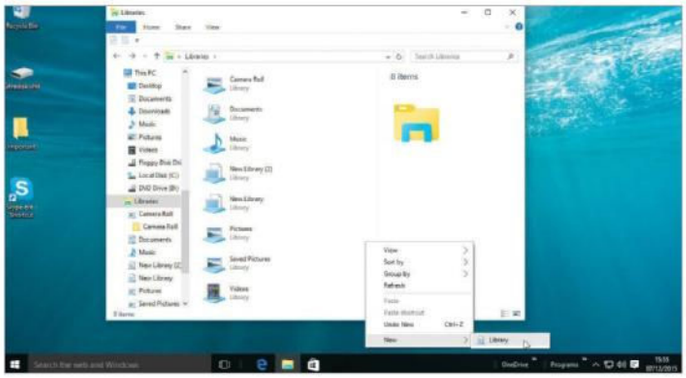
2: Add to library

Find the desired folder in a File Explorer window, but stay in the directory above – do not open the folder. Right-click the folder and select 'Add to library', followed by the desired library.



3: Remove folders

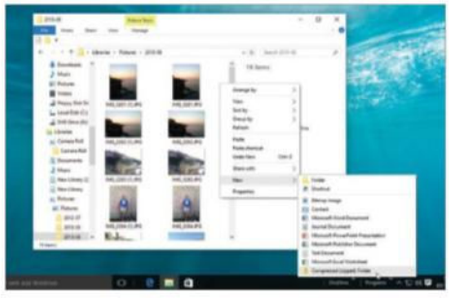
Make sure libraries are shown in the left navigation bar. Click the arrow beside the library you wish to remove a folder from to expand it. Right-click on the folder, then select 'Remove location from library'.



4: New libraries

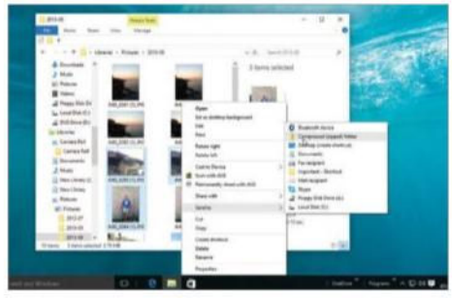
In File Explorer, type 'Libraries' into the address bar. In the main area of the window, right-click on empty space and go to the New submenu. Click Library, then enter the name of the new library and press Enter.

Compress files into zipped folders



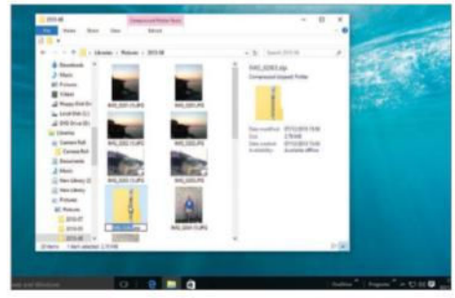
1: New archive

Right-clicking in the white space of an Explorer window, go to the New submenu and select 'Compressed (zipped) Folder'. This creates the file 'New Compressed (zipped) Folder.zip'.



2: Send to ZIP

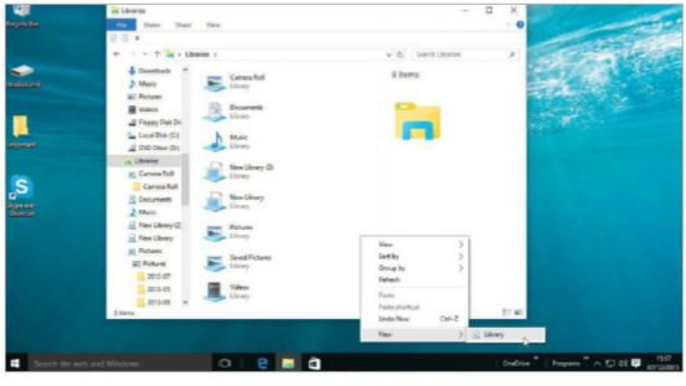
Alternatively, select a file or folder (or multiple), right-click and go to Send To. A ZIP file will be created in the same directory, named after the last selected file or folder.



3: Add to ZIP

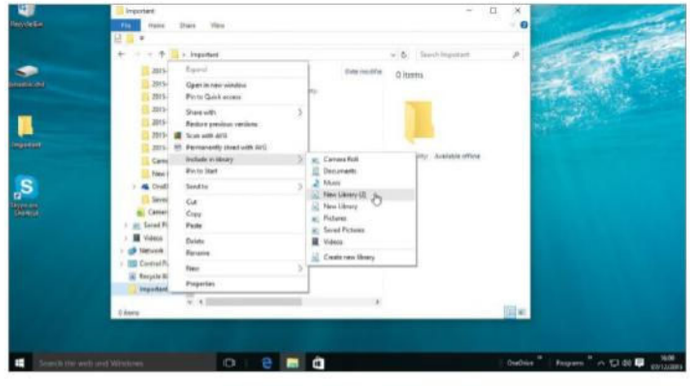
If a ZIP file has already been created, files and folders can be added simply by dragging and dropping them to the ZIP icon or its own window, as if the ZIP file were a folder.

Organise network files with libraries



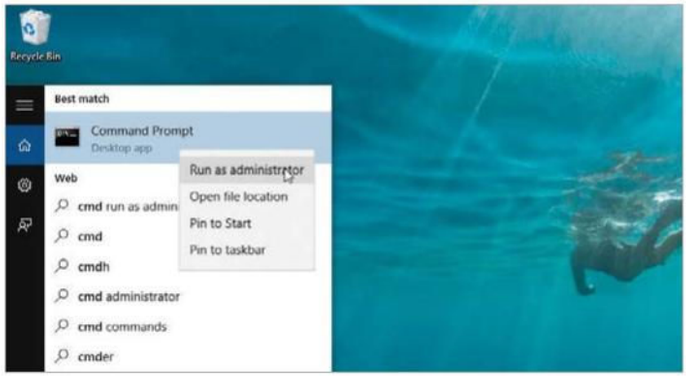
1: New library

Before adding network locations, a new library must be created. Open an Explorer window (⊞+E) and type 'Libraries' in the address bar. Then right-click and use the New submenu to create a new library.



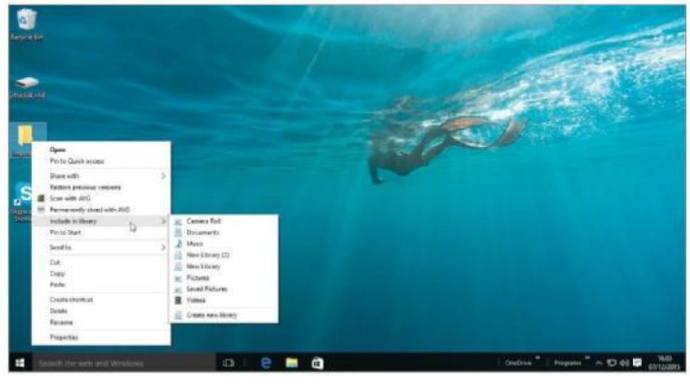
2: Remote add

Use the File Explorer window to browse the network and find a folder you wish you add to your library. Right-click on the folder. Then, use the 'Include in library' submenu to choose the desired library.



3: Links – part 1

A 'directory junction' is a sophisticated shortcut between locations. Go to Start, type 'cmd', right-click and select 'Run as administrator'. In the terminal, type 'mklink /d "[target location]" [\\SERVER\FOLDER\PATH]'.



4: Links – part 2

In File Explorer, navigate to the directory junction created in the previous step. Right-click on it, then use the 'Include in library' submenu to add it to the desired library, just as described in step 1.

Manage users and accounts

Control how Windows 10 is used

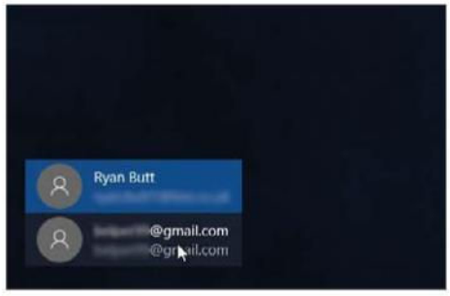
Whether it's for other members of the family, or a shared computer at work, adding extra user accounts to your Windows 10 PC is a good idea from a security and control point of view. It also means that when adding accounts for children you can control web permissions and prevent access to unsuitable websites.

It used to be the case that being the main user of your Windows PC was simply that: you were a user account. However, Windows now prefers you to use Microsoft accounts to sign in and so already have a valid email address for it. If you don't, you can create a Microsoft account and get a new email address. This email address and account are then used to access the Windows store. You can create a user account whereby they can sign in without a Microsoft account, and you can create a child's account which is also limited, but it isn't recommended. The advantage of having a Microsoft account is that files and settings, email and photos are synced to all your other Microsoft devices, if you have any of course.

Switch between accounts

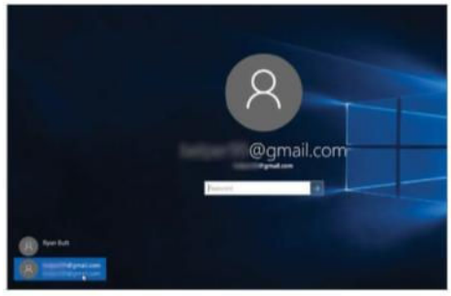
1: Sign out of account

While you can switch accounts without signing out, if you do so, any background activities (like Mail) will continue to run and slow the PC down. Click on the account name and sign out.



2: Select new account

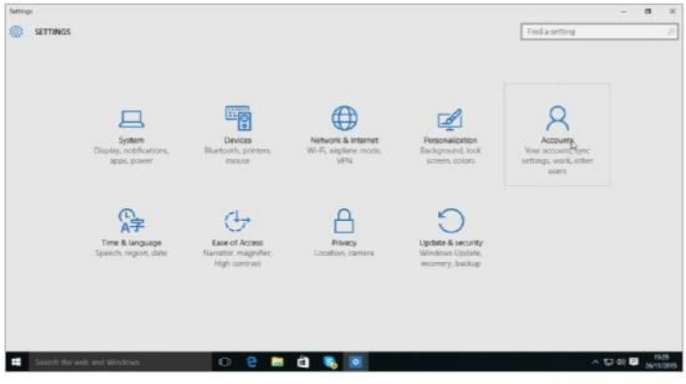
Signing out closes everything down and goes to the initial Windows 10 screen. Click anywhere and all available accounts will be displayed. Click on the account to use.



3: Log-in to account

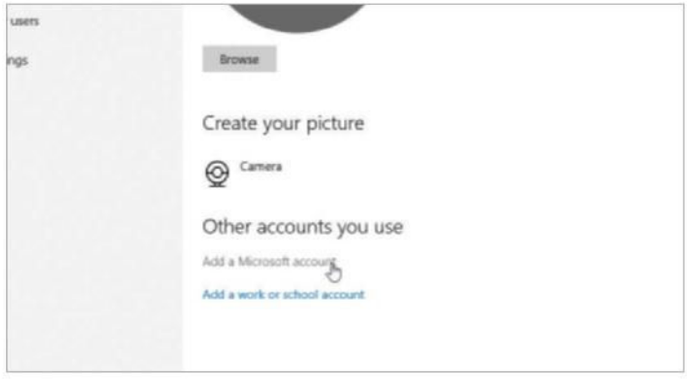
Enter your password and hit Return to go to your new account. To log out or switch to any other account, repeat the process by firstly clicking on the name of the account holder.

Create a new account



1: Go to Settings

Activate the Start menu and then select the Settings option. Once you are at the main settings page, select the 'Accounts' pane and all of the settings relating to your account will be displayed.

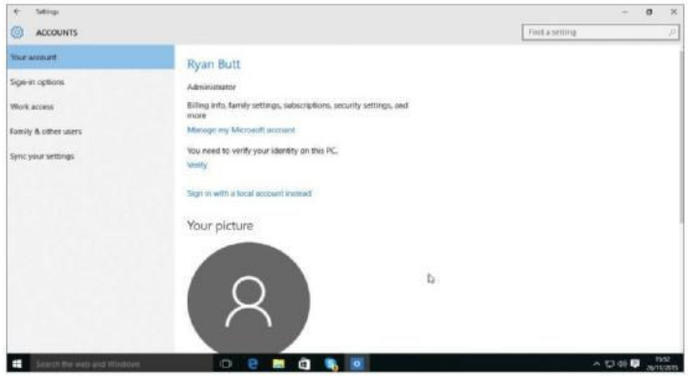


2: Create an account

Now you can sign in without a Microsoft account, but to get the full benefit of Windows 10, it's better to have one. So, while in the 'Your Account' settings, scroll down and click 'Add a Microsoft account'.

3: Add info

Now enter the email/phone number of the Microsoft account and the password. If you don't have an account, click on the 'Create one' link and then enter all of the required details.



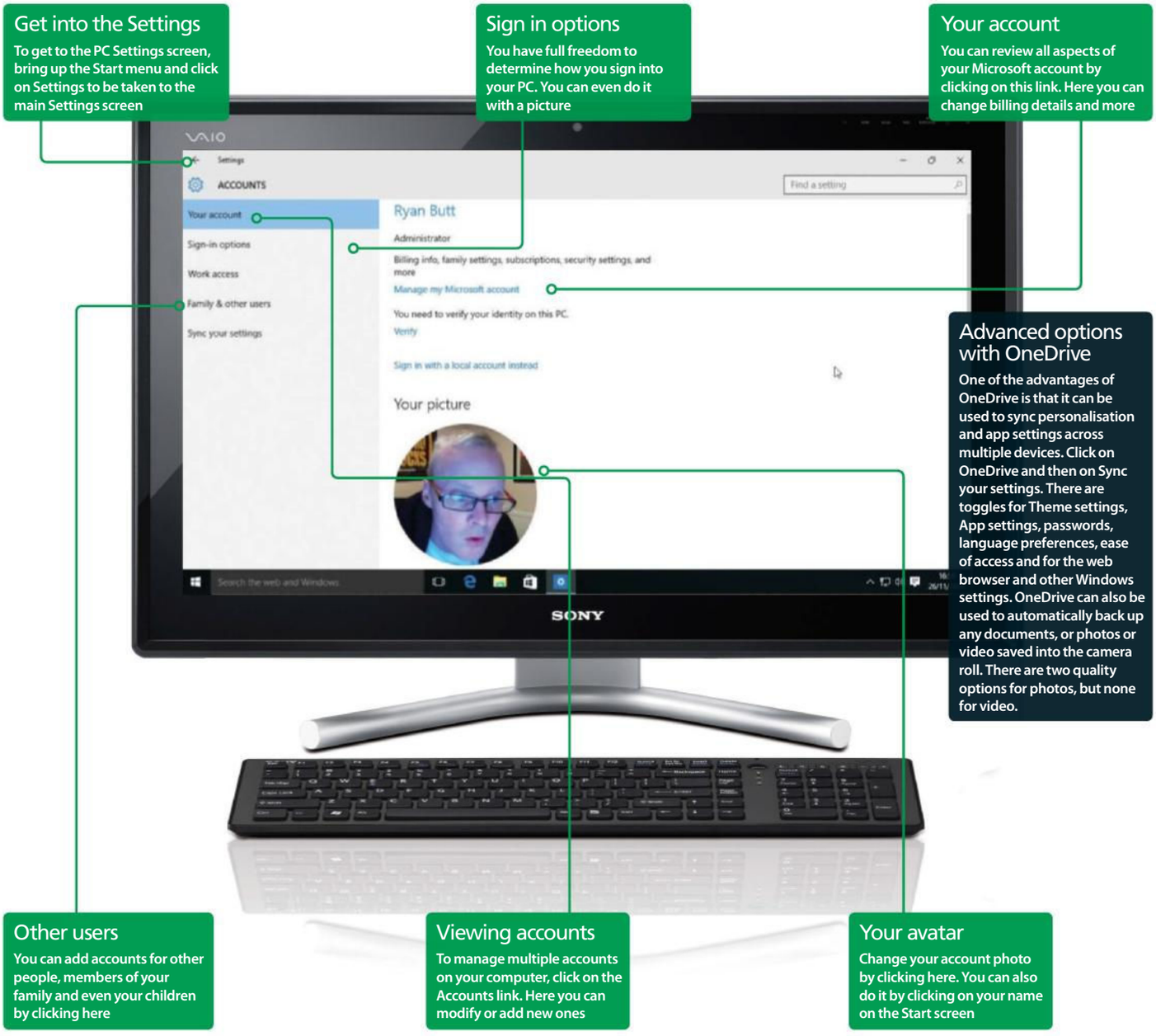
4: Sign-up completed

With your account created you can then go on to toggle other aspects of it, such as adding a profile picture and choosing how you sign into your account. All of this can be done in Settings.

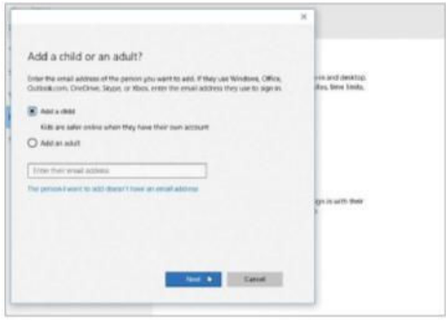
Add features and new users to your PC

Go into your Settings via the Start menu, to bring up a screen packed with categories. It provides quick access to a number of features related to your account and Windows 10 installation. You can do things like remove some of the Start screen apps to save hard drive space, by clicking on 'Apps & features'. To remove desktop applications, click on 'Sort by size' to see a list of them and click on one and choose 'Uninstall'.

From the Accounts link you can modify your own account details or add new accounts, while also find options for personalising your account. These include adding a photo for the lock screen and account name, and using a photo password. Virtually any aspect of your PC and the operating system can be explored through the Settings, so take time to get accustomed to what options reside there and how they affect your Windows 10 PC.

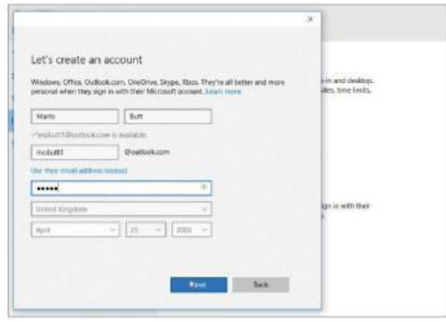


Create a child's account in Windows 10



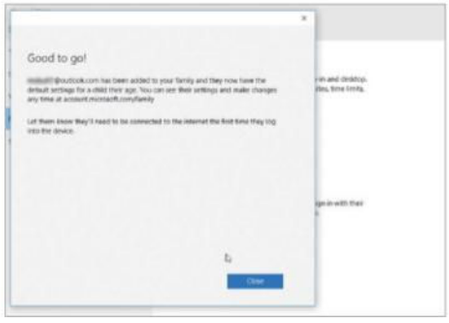
1: Manage your accounts

When creating a child's account, it can use a Microsoft account email address or you can set it up without any email access. Go to Settings> Accounts>Family & other users. Now, click on the 'Add a family member' option.



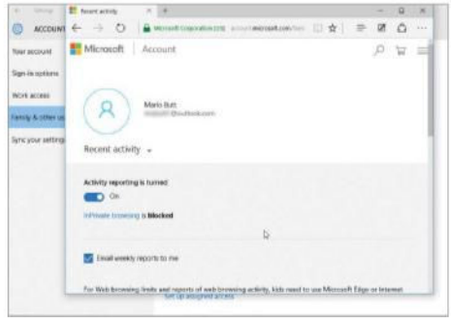
2: Add an account

Now, click 'Add a child'; don't enter anything for email here. Instead click on the 'The person I want to add doesn't have an email address' option and then start entering the details of the person you are adding.



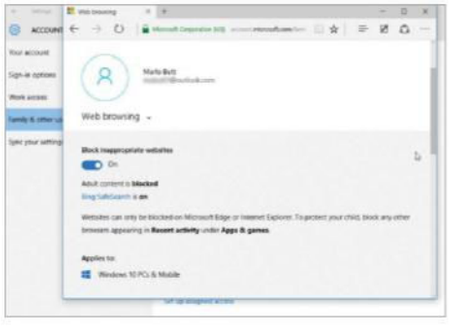
3: Finish adding account

After adding the required details, the new child account will be added as a Local account. They will require your help to use the Windows Store, and Family Safety monitoring will be automatically turned on.



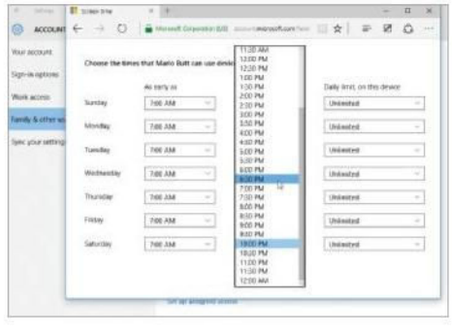
4: Setting child limits

To control what your child does or can access, click on the 'Manage family settings online' link that is listed on the Family & other users settings page and start off by turning the Activity Reporting option to 'on'.



5: Setting the limits

Scroll down and you will see other options to turn on blocking for web browsing, apps and games. Click on an option and you will be able to ensue that inappropriate content is make inaccessible to the child.



6: Set time restrictions

Limit the amount of time the child can spend on the PC by clicking on 'Set allowed times' next to the Screen Time option. Turn on the 'Set limits…' option and then toggle the times your child can use the PC.

Log in with a picture

1: Go to Settings

To log into your account with a photo, bring up the Start menu and go to Settings>Accounts>Sign-in options.

2: Select the option

Click on 'Sign-in options'. Then, under 'Picture password', click on Add. Enter your account password when prompted.

3: Choose a photo

Click on 'Choose picture' and select one from your library. Drag and position it how you want, then click on 'Use this picture'.

4: Trace the shape

Make three shapes in turn with the mouse, over specific areas that you'll remember. Repeat and click Finish to apply.

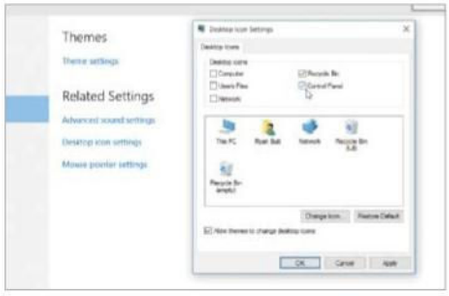
Improve your settings using the Control Panel

Manage a PC with Control Panel

Fortunately, the huge number of Windows settings are all housed together in a facility called Control Panel. Settings and options are grouped by topic and can be browsed just like with a web browser. Control Panel settings can either be grouped by categories or listed alphabetically. The categories are: system, security, networking, hardware, users, localisation and appearance, plus disability aids.

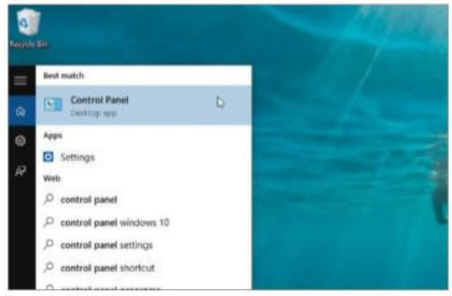
Control Panel also has a search box where you can enter the setting you're looking for; results will be presented in real-time as you type. To change anything in Windows, the Control Panel is the place to be – with the exception of Modern UI settings accessed via the Settings options. However, if you are using your PC in a desktop-centric way, Control Panel does exactly what its name suggests. It can be accessed from any Explorer window by typing 'Control Panel' into the address bar.

Launch Control Panel from the desktop



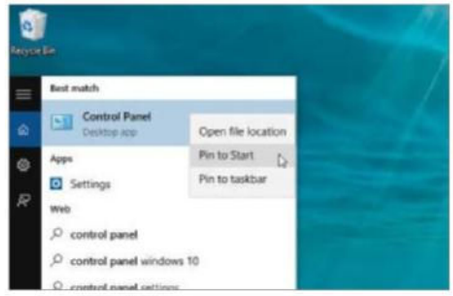
1: Add desktop icon

Right-click some empty space on the desktop; select Personalise. Now select Themes followed by 'Desktop icon settings' and then tick the Control Panel box.



2: With the Start menu

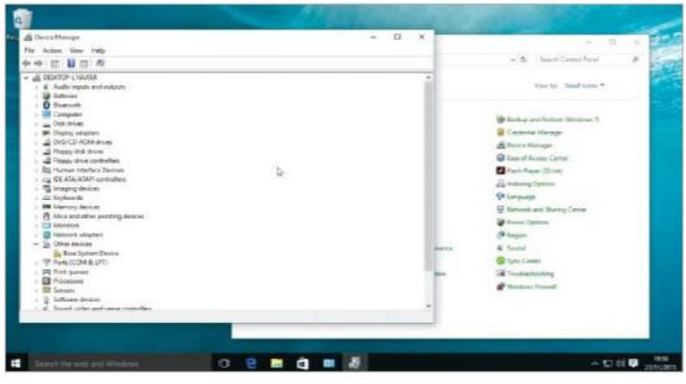
Alternatively, access te Start menu and then type 'Control Panel' into the search field to locate it on your PC. It should appear as the top hit so simply select it.



3: Pin to taskbar

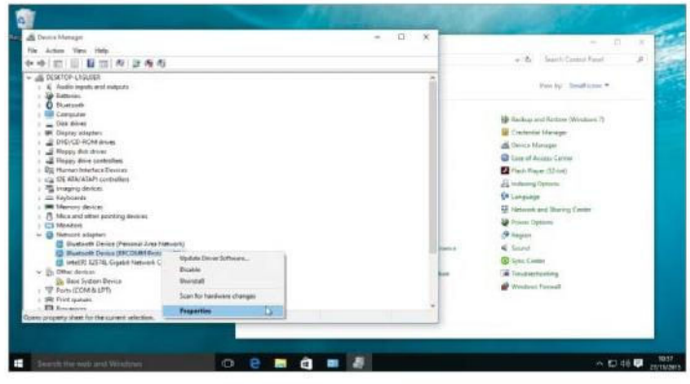
After completing the previous step, if you then right-click on the Control Panel search result you will be able to pin it to your Start screen or Taskbar for easy access in the future.

Find device events



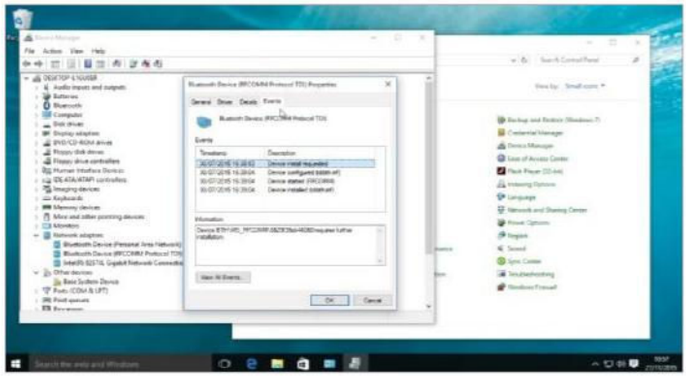
1: Open Device Manager

Open the Control Panel and then click on the Device Manager option. Alternatively, just search for 'Device Manager' in Control Panel's search box and click the corresponding link in the results.



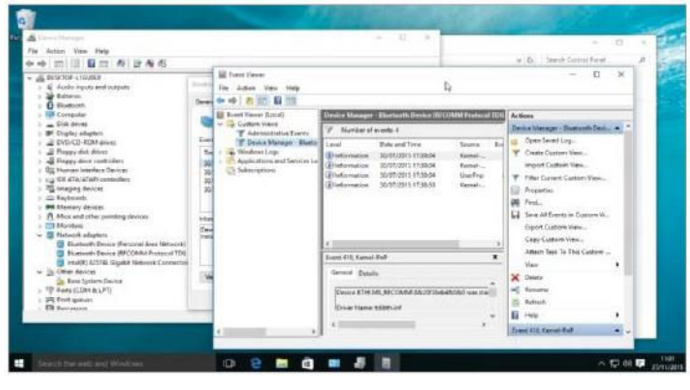
2: Device properties

In Device Manager you'll see a hierarchical list of all devices. Click to drop down the corresponding section for your device (eg Network Adapters). Right-click on the device to be investigated and select Properties.



3: View device events

In the device properties dialog, click the Events tab. This will display system events related to the device in question. Note the events listed, as they may need to be passed to a technical support professional.



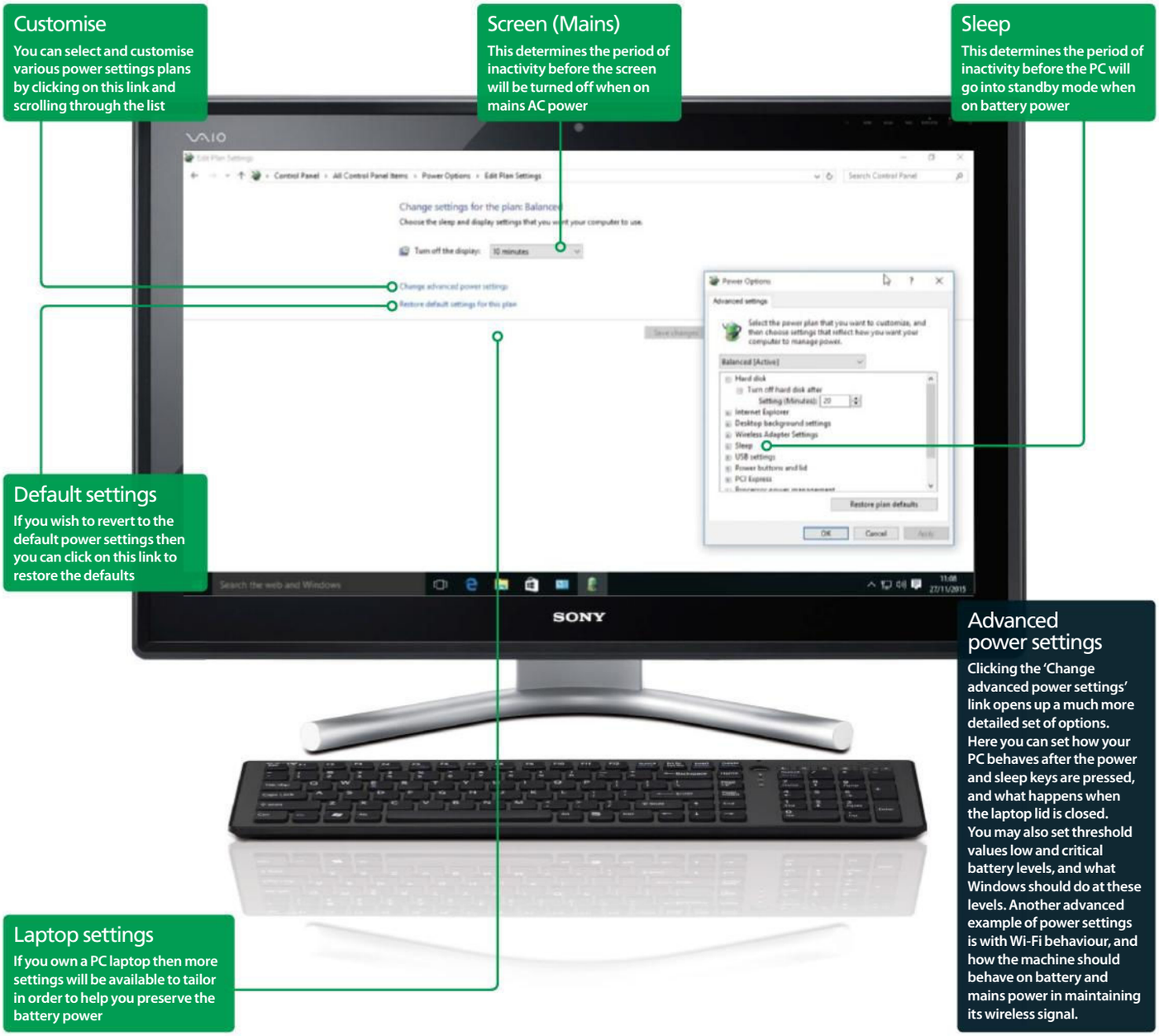
4: View all events

On the Events page of the device properties dialog, click 'View all events' to see the system-wide events log. Other events occurring around the same time as the device events may provide diagnostic info.

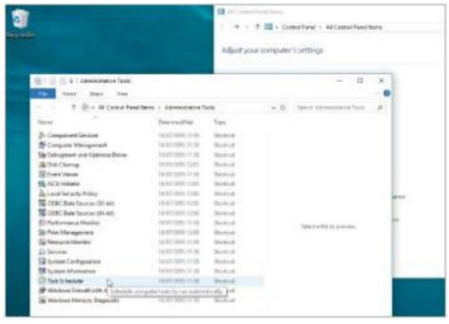
Manage your PC's power consumption

There are many ways to control power usage in Windows. Individual components can be powered down, such as the screen or hard drives, and the entire system can also be put into sleep mode. These events can usually be set to occur after a prescribed period of inactivity. Clearly, desktop PCs, as used in the home or office, do not have to worry about running out of battery. However, controlling when a PC deactivates its screen or spins down its hard drives can make a significant difference to electricity bills. Conversely, when running an important application, you may want to disable the inactivity time limits to ensure you don't lose any work when your computer goes to sleep.

Power conservation is even more important to laptop and tablet users. Most power settings have two modes: 'On AC power' and 'On battery power'. There are also laptop-specific settings, such as what should happen when the screen/lid is closed. Most settings are further duplicated for different built-in power plans: Balance, Power Saver and High Performance.



Set programs to run at certain times

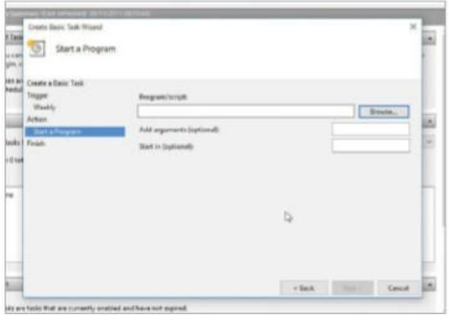


1: Open Task Scheduler

In Control Panel, click on the 'Administrative Tools' section and click on the 'Task Scheduler' option. Alternatively, use the search box to look for 'Schedule'. Either method opens the Task Scheduler app.

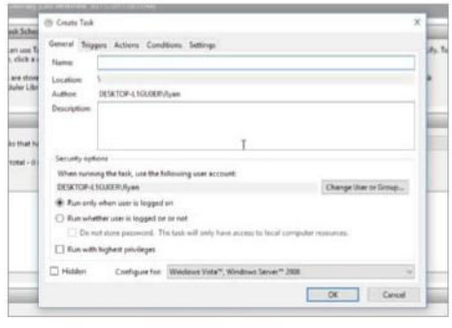
2: Create basic tasks

Look to the right side of the Task Scheduler window and click on Create Basic Task. Enter a name for the task and click Next. On the Trigger page, select a time period, click Next, then set the corresponding time and date.



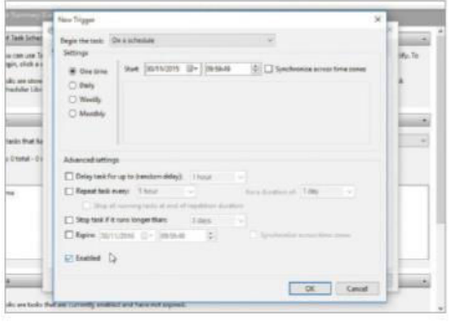
3: Set which program

On the Action page, set the radio button to 'Start a program', then click Next. On the 'Start a Program' page, click Browse and navigate to the desired program file (.exe). Hint: Try 'Program Files' or 'Program Files (x86)' folders.



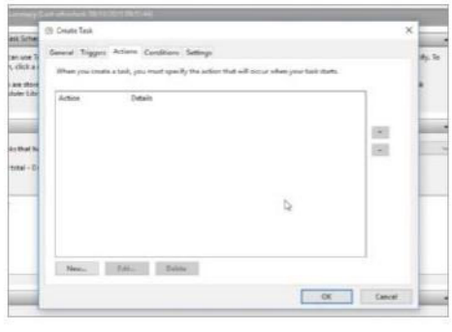
4: Create advanced tasks

Reopen the Task Scheduler window and click Create Task from the right-hand side. As before, enter the task name. This time, however, you can set whether or not you should be logged on for the task to run.



5: Set advanced launch rules

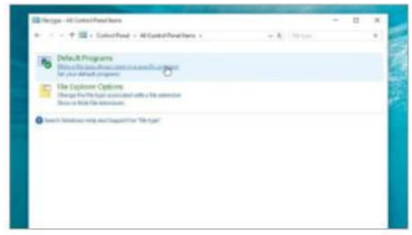
Click the Triggers tab and then New. You will find advanced date and time settings to control when the desired program will be launched, set repeat conditions, and when (or not) the repetition should expire.



6: Set advanced conditions

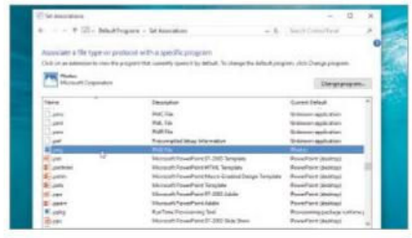
Click the Actions tab to set which application will run when the launch conditions are met. Then click the Conditions tab to set advanced conditions and exceptions for whether or not the app is launched at each schedule interval.

Choose default apps



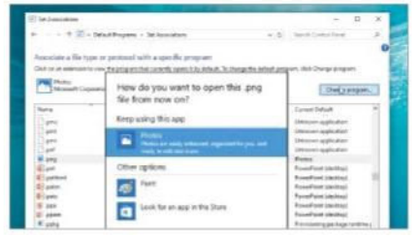
1: Getting started

Open the Control Panel and enter 'file type' into the search box. Click 'Make a file type always open in a specific program'.



2: Find file type

In the next window, scroll through the available file extensions. Select the desired one and click 'Change program'.



3: Select app

A list appears, showing apps that Windows knows can open the selected file type. Choose the desired program.

4: Other PC apps

To find an alternative option, click More Options, then 'Look for other apps on this PC' and browse for the .exe file.

Protect your PC with restore points

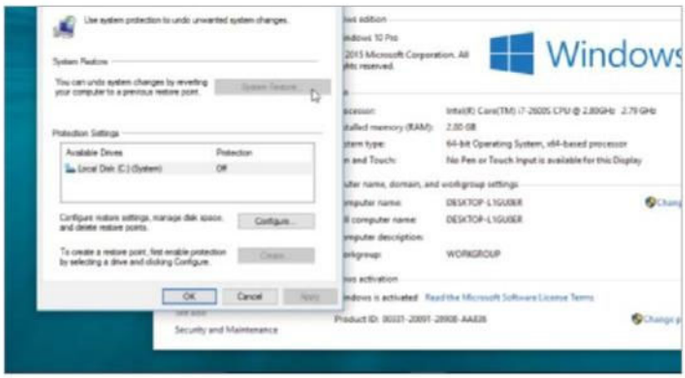
System restore points are not new to Windows and fortunately they are still present in Windows 10. System restore points are how Windows saves versions of a PC's system settings – in other words, it saves system configuration states. System restore points are saved periodically (eg weekly, depending on settings) and are also automatically created prior to any major system changes, such as the addition or removal of a device driver or operating system update.

A PC can be restored to an earlier state without losing personal files or applications. When restoring a system state, it is possible to browse through all the dates that have restore points; and thus take your machine back through time to a good known state. This is useful as sometimes applications or drivers can cause unexpected results and the most efficient way to fix such problems is to roll back to a state that worked properly. If you are particularly concerned about an intended change to your system, you may create a restore point manually.

It should be noted that system restore points are not an alternative to anti-virus and malware software, because malicious software can easily infect the restore points too. Therefore, if you believe your PC has been infected by a virus, restoring your system to an earlier state will not necessarily get rid of the virus.

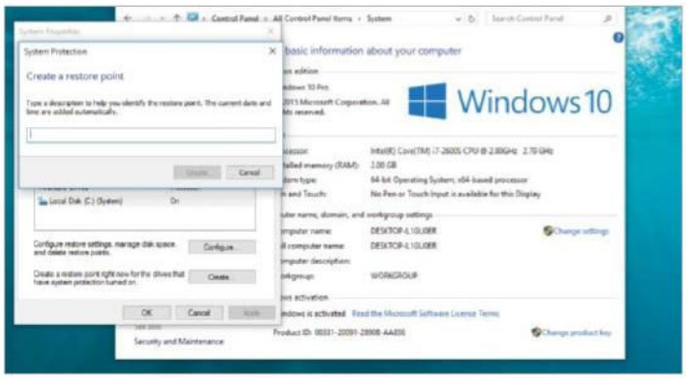
Because system restore points do not change your personal files, they are by no means a way of backing up your personal data. For that you should employ a removable or network drive and use Windows 10 File History. For a complete system backup, try creating a System Image.

> "If you are concerned about an intended change to your system, you may create a restore point manually"



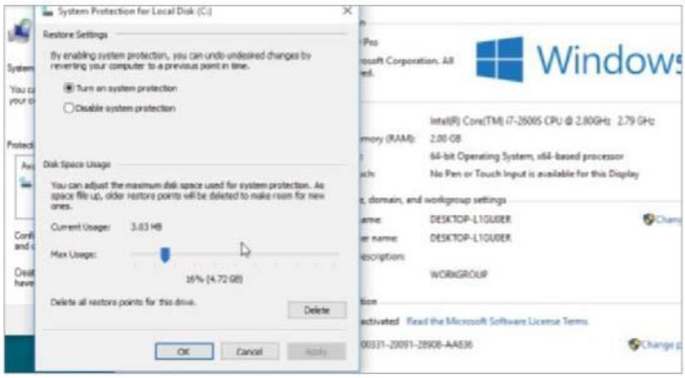
1: Get started

Open the Control Panel and click on 'System'. In the following window, click 'System Protection'. This will open the System Properties dialog at its System Protection tab.



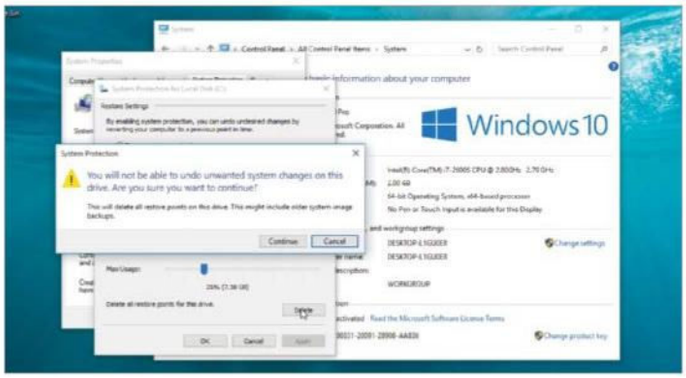
2: Save a state

In the System Protection page of the System Properties dialog, click the Create button. Next, enter a descriptive name for the restore point. After entering the name, you'll see a progress bar while Windows works on it.



3: Drive space

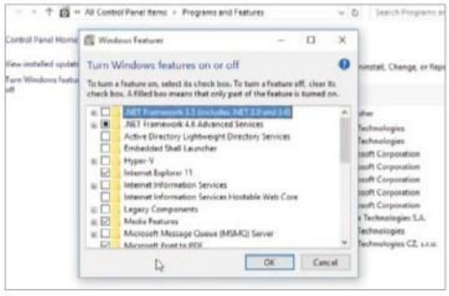
In the System Protection page of the System Properties dialog, click the Configure button. Use the Disk Space Usage slider control to set how much of your PC's hard drive may be used for system restore points.



4: Delete points

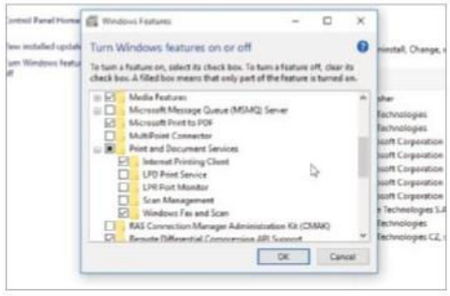
In the System Protection page of the System Properties dialog, click the Configure button. Click on Delete at the bottom of the window to recover drive space. Note that restore points cannot be undeleted!

Turn Windows features on and off



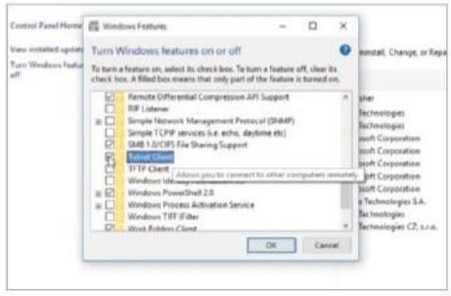
1: Get started

Open Control Panel and click 'Programs and Features'. Click the 'Turn Windows features on or off' link. This will open a window showing a list of all features.



2: Selections

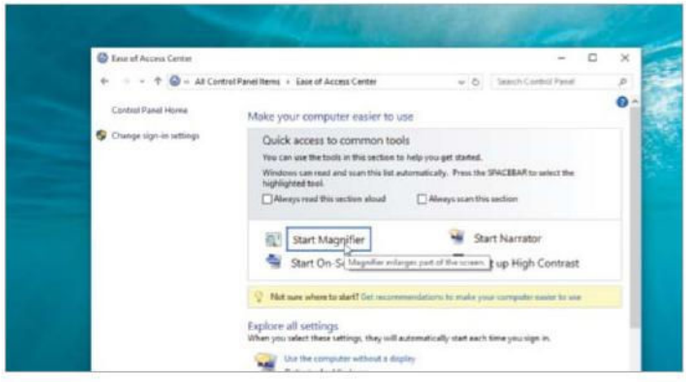
Scroll through the list of features and groups. Features with a '+' are groups and their tick enables the full group, but click on the '+' to selectively enable specific components.



3: Be careful!

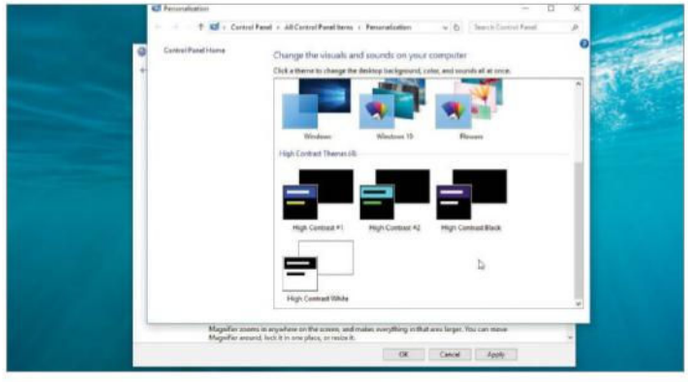
Do not enable extra features without knowing what they are for. For instance, enabling Telnet or IIS services could leave your system vulnerable to remote code execution.

Explore Ease of Access options



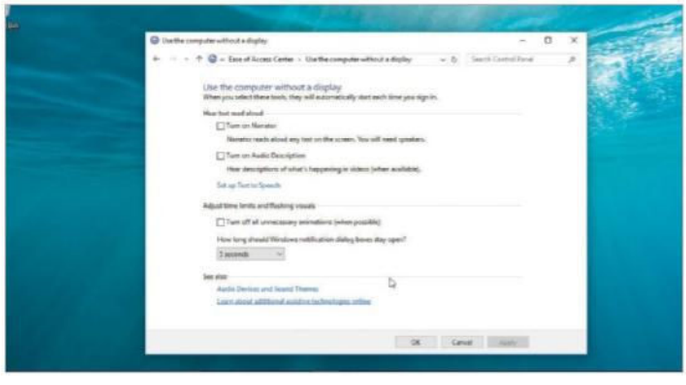
1: Magnifier

Go to Control Panel>Ease of Access Center>Start Magnifier to create a magnified view, controlled by your mouse. Move the pointer over the magnifying glass icon to access the zoom level and view mode.



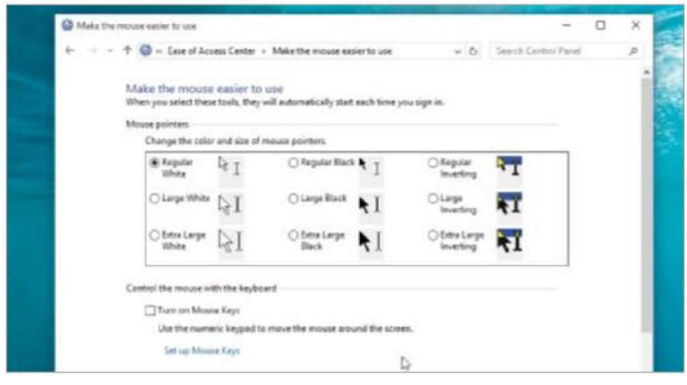
2: High contrast

In Ease of Access, click 'Set up high contrast'. Enable the 'LEFT SHIFT + LEFT ALT + PrtSc' keyboard shortcut. Next, click the 'Choose a high contrast theme' link, which opens desktop personalisation options.



3: Sans screen

In Ease of Access, click 'Use the computer without a display'. Enable options for Narrator (reads texts aloud) and Audio Description, which describes video content. Also review 'Text to Speech' settings.



4: Easy mouse

In Ease of Access, click 'Make the mouse easier to use'. There, select options to make the pointer easier to see (eg colour inverting). Tick 'Turn on Mouse keys' to control the pointer with the keyboard.

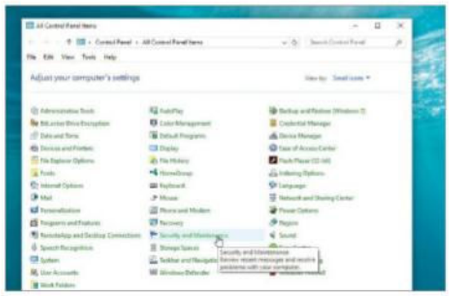
Track your PC's performance with Action Center

Keep your Windows 10 PC in check

Most of your time with Windows 10 will be smooth sailing. There may come a time, however, when a little maintenance is required in order to keep things in check. Perhaps your anti-virus needs updating, maybe you need to troubleshoot a particular problem. Whenever such an incident occurs, the Windows Action Center is there to provide the notifications and help you address them immediately.

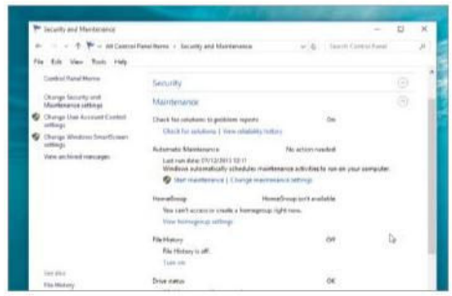
You can also keep a track of your computer's efficiency by going to your Control Panel and clicking on the 'Security and Maintenance' option. Here you will be able to get the complete rundown of how your computer is running and any issues relating to the security or general well being. You can then take the necessary measures to rectify any issues that crop up – and you will be guided through the entire process so you don't really need to worry about not knowing how to fix problems.

Run maintenance checks



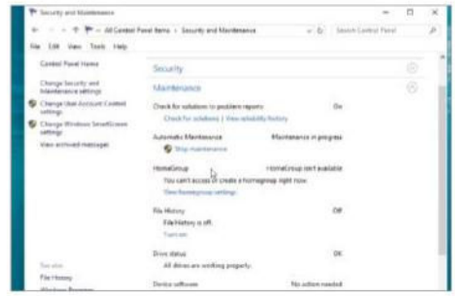
1: Opening the settings

Start off by accessing your Control Panel and locate the 'Security and Maintenance' settings. Click on this and then you will see the main screen displaying various options.



2: Open Maintenance

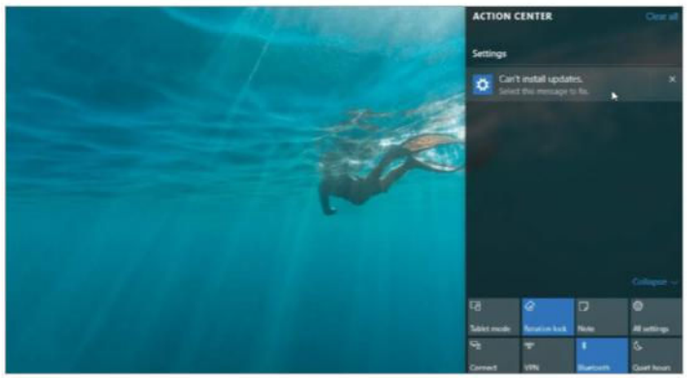
Move the mouse over the Maintenance tab and click the arrow on the right side. This opens the rest of the Maintenance options. Scroll to the Automatic Maintenance section.



3: Start Maintenance

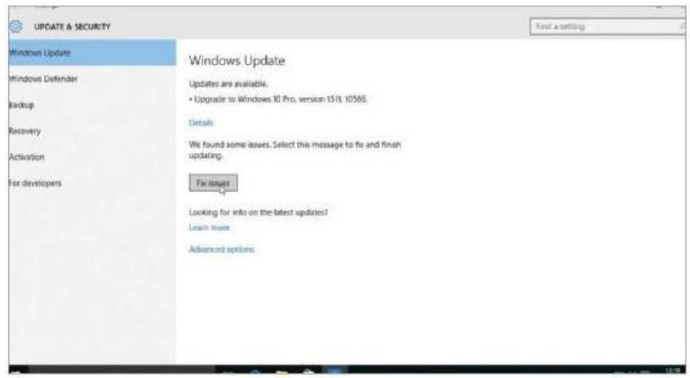
Click on Start Maintenance. Windows 10 will run through tasks such as defragmenting the hard drive. Performance may be impacted during this time. Stop the process if need be.

Sort Windows 10 alerts and problems



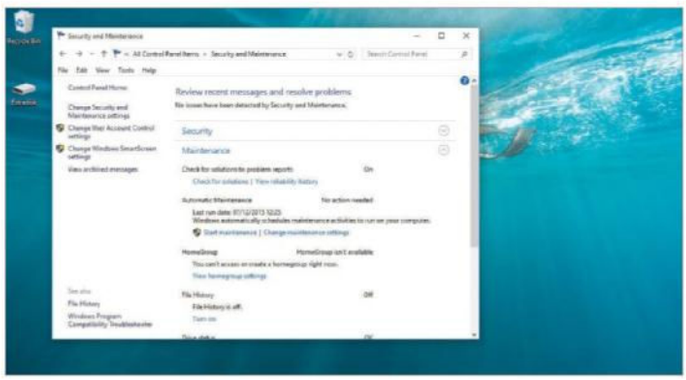
1: Action Center alert

If there is a system issue on your Windows 10 PC, the Action Center will notify you about it. An alert will appear in the bottom right of the display. Using your mouse, highlight the entry and select it.



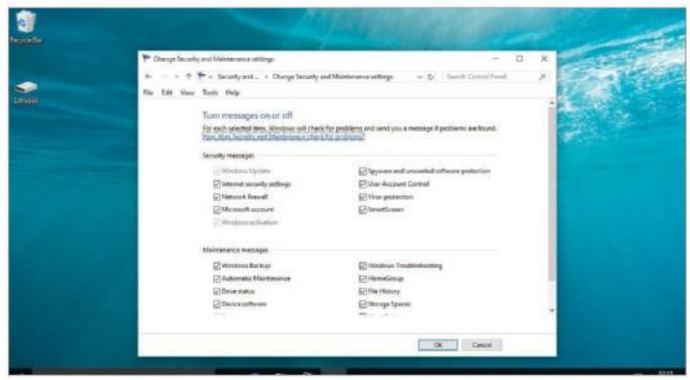
2: Fixing the problem

The Action Center will open a new window specific to the problem in hand. From here you can highlight and select the required option. Action Center will then take the necessary steps to fix the current issue.



3: Viewing all notifications

Rather than viewing one problem at a time, you can choose to list all the current issues in one place. Open the 'Security and Maintenance' Control Panel to view all the current problems. Then work through them.



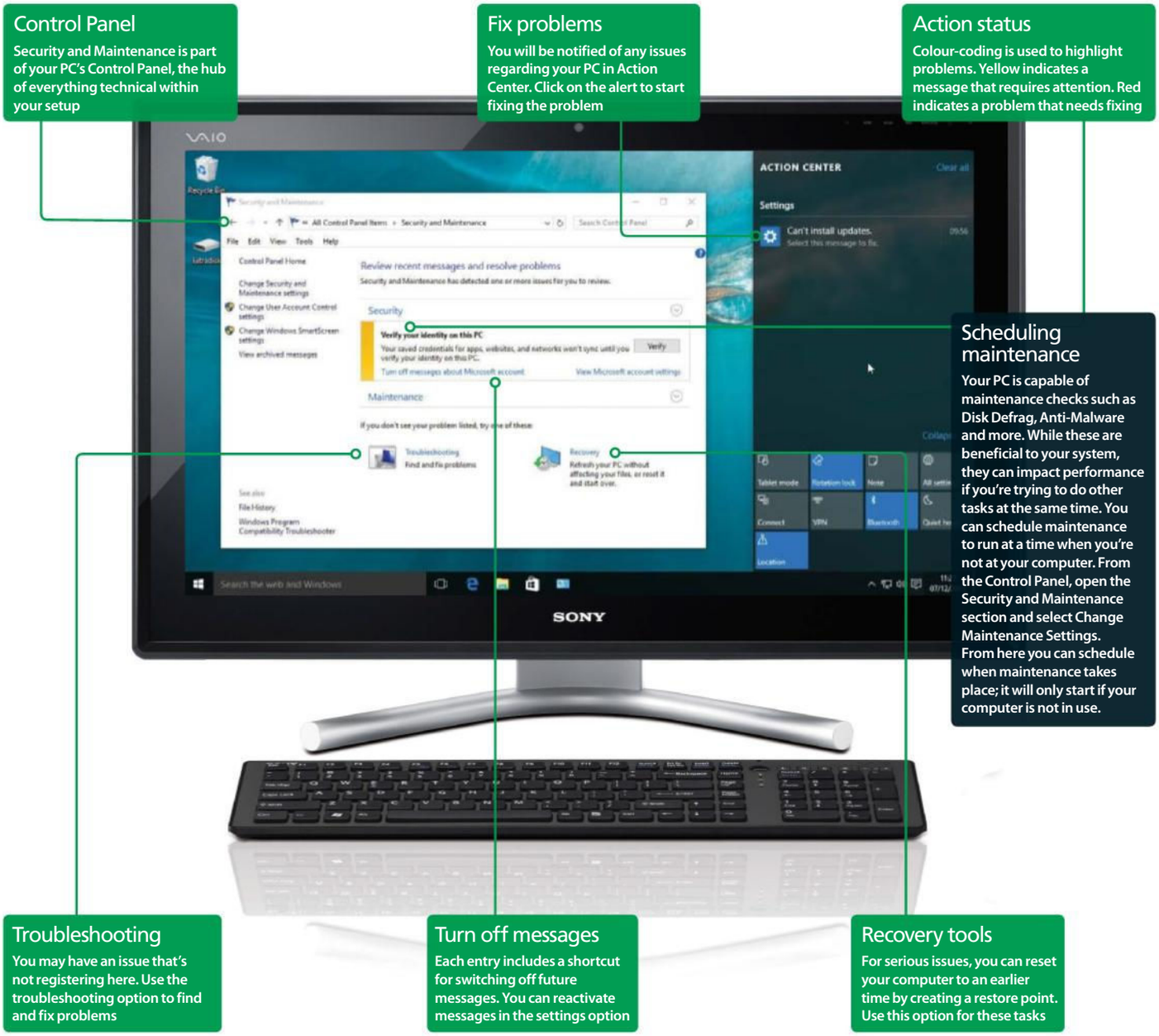
4: Adjusting Action Center settings

If you wish, you can also change the settings of Action Center so it only notifies you of specific system issues. Click on 'Change Security and Maintenance Settings' at the top left. Untick any unnecessary entries.

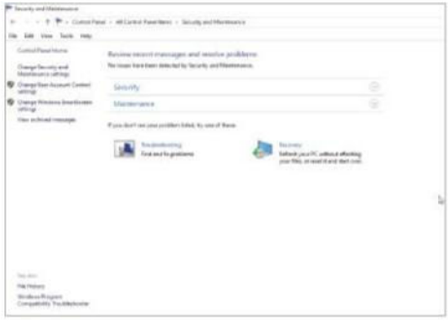
Understand the layout of Action Center

Action Center has been present since XP, although its name has changed over the years. It was first introduced as a way of helping customers ensure that they were taking steps to protect their systems. Back then it was known as the Security Center and the focus was mainly on anti-virus and firewall capabilities along with notifications on Windows updates. This trend continued in Vista with Windows Defender.

When Windows 7 was released, the tool was expanded to encompass both security and maintenance aspects. It was at this point that it was renamed to Action Center. In Windows 10 the Action Center has been further updated to monitor a variety of new items. These include Windows Activation, Smartscreen and File History. Though it's name has changed over the years, Action Center's general functionality has stayed the same.

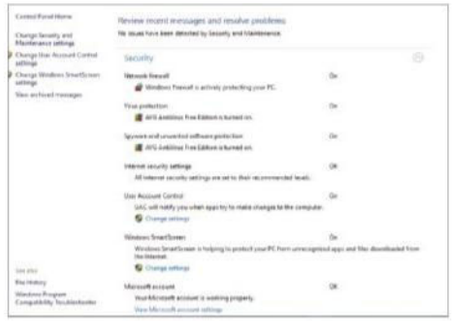


Manage security with Action Center



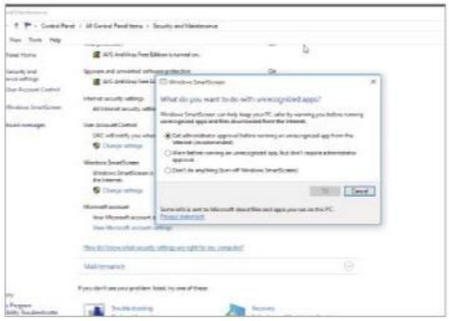
1: The Security tab

For taking stock of your security setup, you'll need to refer to the Security section of the Security and Maintenance Control Panel. Click on the down arrow next to the title header to display every entry.



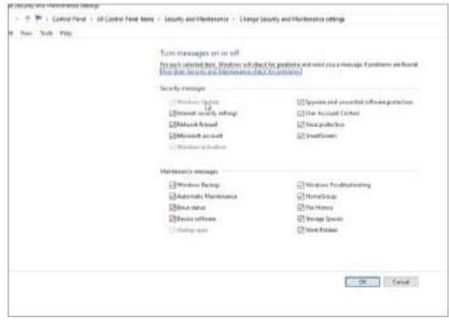
2: Security settings

The Security section will now open up to list all the available security features and their current status. If you use a third-party program such as an anti-virus, it should also be listed among the entries along with how it's behaving.



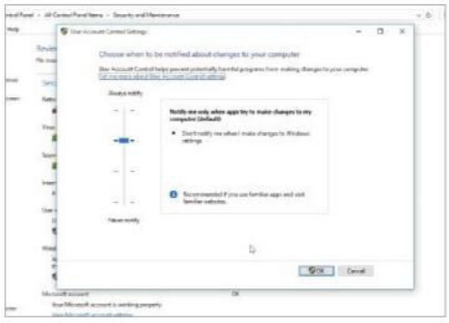
3: Changing settings

Any urgent issues are pushed to the top of the list for your attention. You can use the adjacent Change Settings option to quickly access the required options. Once you've set things up as required, click OK to return to the main screen.



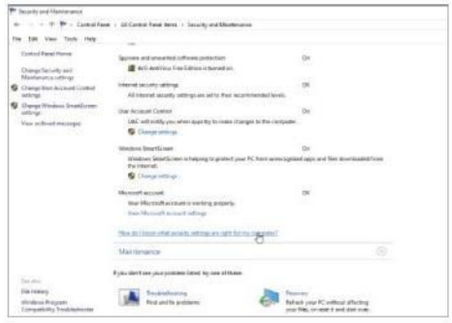
4: Recommended settings

Some recommended settings may not fit your own preferences. In our case we're handling Windows Updates manually. Your PC prefers auto-updates, so to stop the repeated prompts we've selected Turn Off Messages.



5: User Account Control

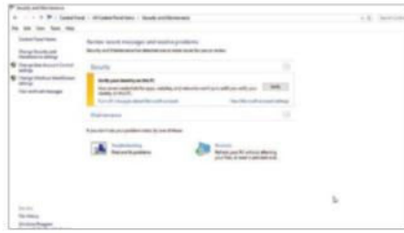
When first installed, Windows 10 displays pop-up messages when you open certain programs. This is the User Account Control that some may find annoying. You can tone down the pop-ups via the UAC Settings option.



6: Understand security

For a better understanding of the various security tools, it's worth selecting the link titled 'How do I know what settings are right for my computer?' This will open a list of descriptions for the various tools that are available.

Confirm user account

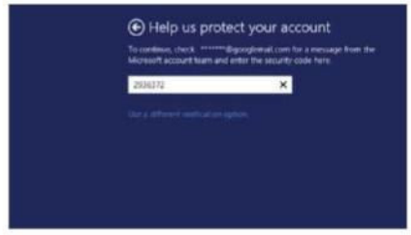


1: Why verify?

If you've recently upgraded to Windows 10, you may need to verify your identity. This will help sync your setup.

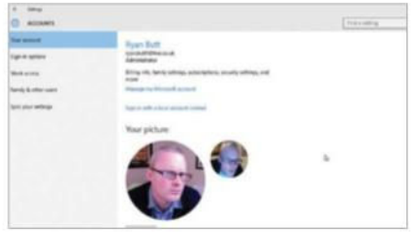
2: Start the process

Open the Security and Maintenance Control Panel and go to Security. Select the 'Verify your identity on this PC' option.



3: Verifying via email

Microsoft can use your email address as a means of verification. Confirm your email address and a code will be emailed to you.



4: Account settings

Enter this code and your account will be verified. You're then taken to your account screen to make any adjustments.

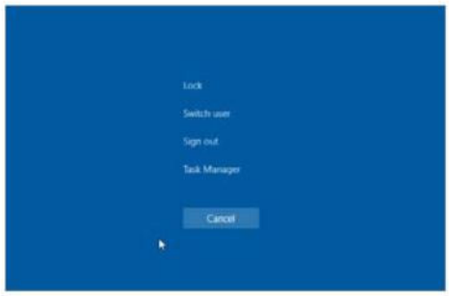
Manage applications & processes in Task Manager

Check running programs and performance

Task Manager is a long-running Windows feature that has been present since the release of Windows '95. The latest iteration of Task Manager within Windows 10 features the most comprehensive set of tools yet, so it's even more useful.

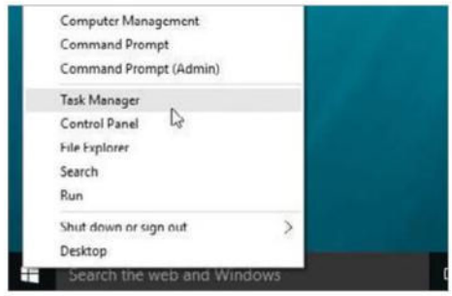
Fortunately, the extra functionality doesn't mean that it's more complicated. In fact, Task Manager is more user-friendly than it has ever been. In the past Task Manager has been seen as more of a go-to tool for quick fixes (largely for frozen programs). Now it can be used to monitor information such as data usage or for handling programs that start when Windows 8 is booted up. Now that Windows 10 also utilises apps, the Task Manager also reflects this by having a dedicated section for apps and how they operate on your system.

Access Task Manager



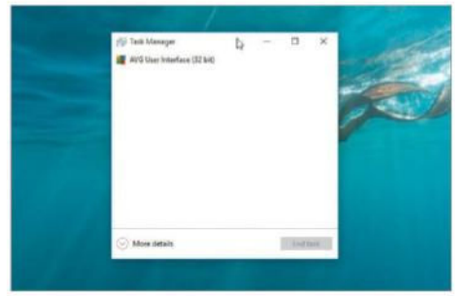
1: Ctrl, Alt, Delete

Windows 10 includes several quick ways to access the Task Manager. The most commonly known method is by pressing the Ctrl+Alt keys together and then tapping Delete.



2: The Start button

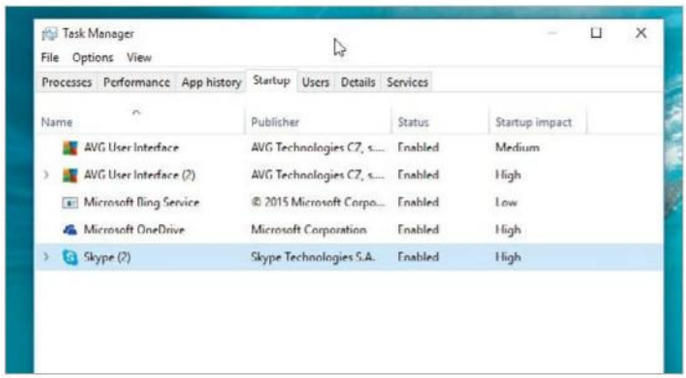
Windows 10 features a Start menu in the bottom-left corner. You can right-click on this and then select Task Manager from the resulting menu.



3: Compact View

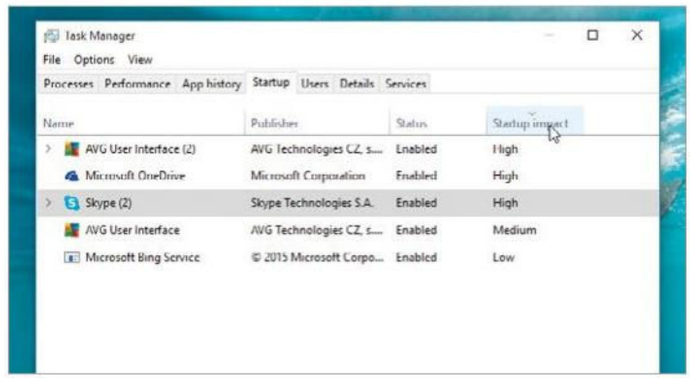
If this is the first time that you've used Task Manager it will open in Compact View mode. Click the 'More details' option to open up the window for a more complete overview.

Control which programs open at boot



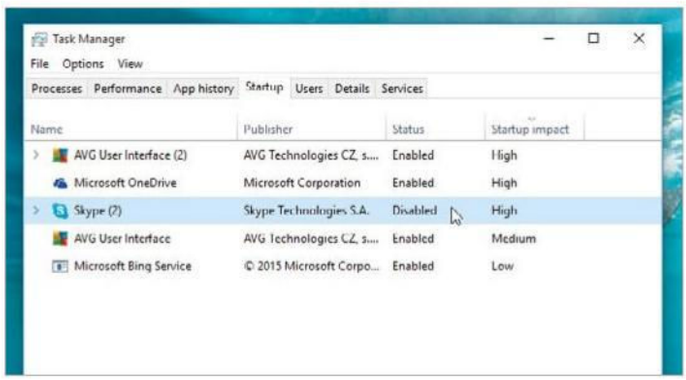
1: The Start-up tab

If you find Windows 10 is taking a long time to start up, you can disable programs that normally load during boot-up. This may help shorten your boot time. Open the Task Manager and select the Start-up tab.



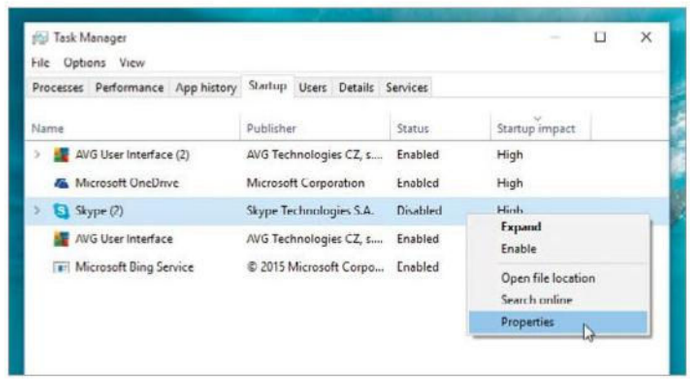
2: Organising your entries

You'll now have a list of programs that start when your computer boots up. By using the column headings, you can reorder the entries by name, publisher and status. In this example we've ordered by startup impact.



3: Disabling a program

Task Manager makes it easy to disable a program from starting up. All you need to do is click on the desired program and then Disable. The Task Manager will update that entry to show that it is now disabled.



4: Exit and reboot

You'll need to exit the Task Manager and reboot for the changes to take effect. Be careful when disabling programs: some may be required for your computer to operate correctly. If in doubt, research it first.

Understand what Task Manager can do for you

Task Manager has been around for a while, but in its latest incarnation it really is a tool to be reckoned with. It features the familiar monitoring tools for system processes, performance and services. These can provide insight into the performance of things such as your hard drive, memory and network connection. It now also contains tabs that can provide details on your regularly used Metro-style apps. Such details include how much data an app is using, how much CPU time it is taking up and more. There is also a section that lists the users logged in on a particular system and the processing power being used by each account.

The Processes section lists the services that are currently running. These are broken up into apps, background processes and Windows processes. It's a screen that packs a few extra tweaks to help you get the most out of your Windows set-up. These include rearranging and adding columns, researching a running process online and opening the file location

Adding columns

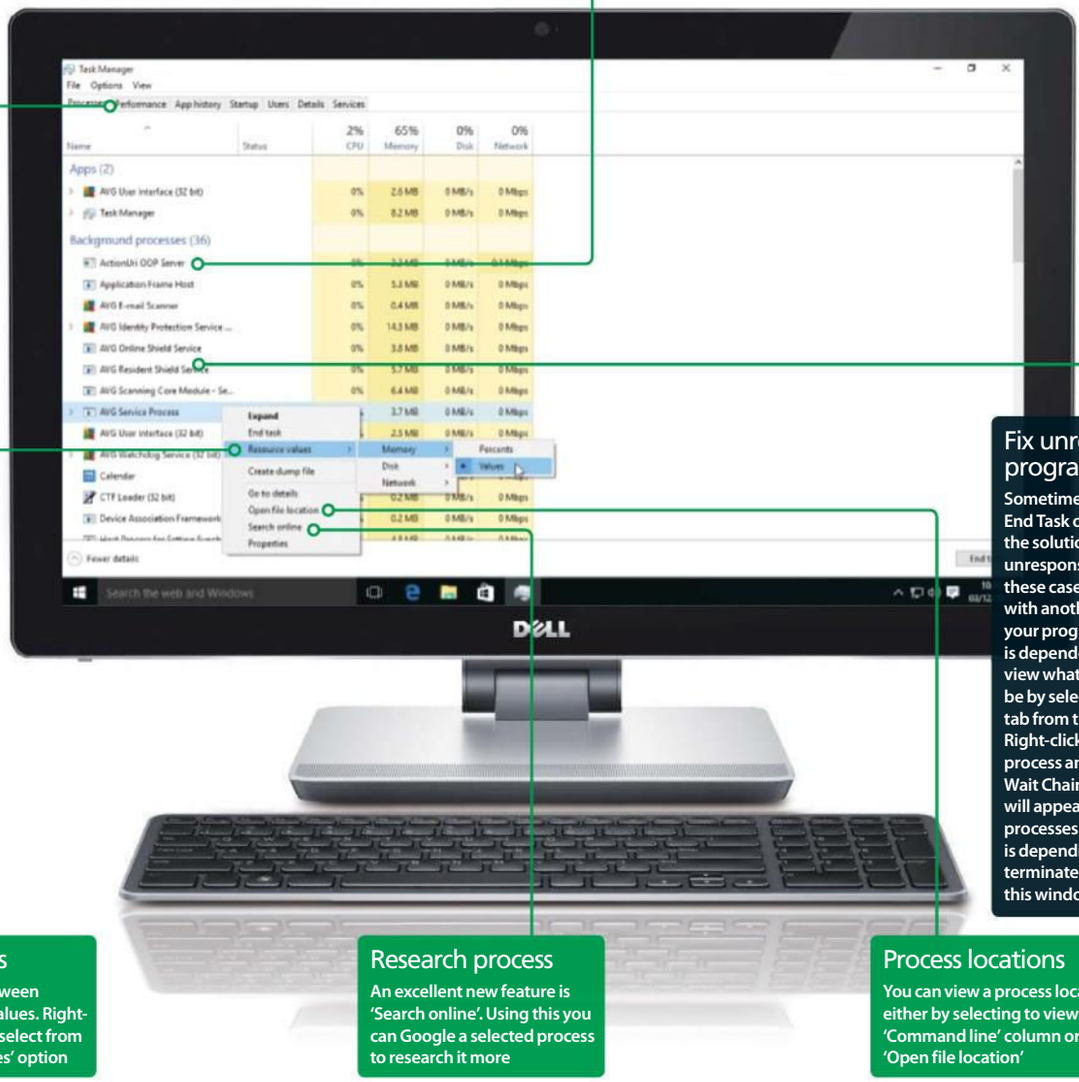
You can add more information on the current processes by right-clicking a column header and selecting from the menu

Switch to app

Click the arrow icon next to an app. Right-click on the entry underneath and you can switch to that app immediately

End a task

If a process is unresponsive or refusing to shut down, you can use the 'End task' option to stop it in its tracks



Fix unresponsive programs

Sometimes using the End Task option is not the solution to fixing an unresponsive program. In these cases the fault may lie with another process that your program is waiting for or is dependent upon. You can view what the hold-up may be by selecting the Details tab from the Task Manager. Right-click the problematic process and select Analyse Wait Chain. A new window will appear listing the processes that your program is depending on. You can terminate the process from this window to fix the issue.

Report values

You can toggle between percentages and values. Right-click a process and select from the 'Resource values' option

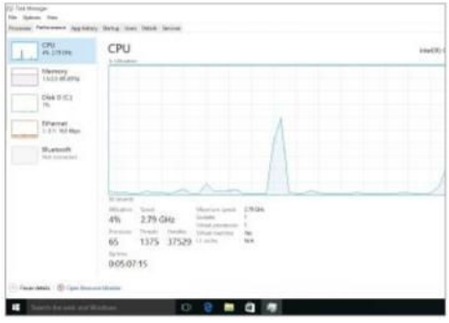
Research process

An excellent new feature is 'Search online'. Using this you can Google a selected process to research it more

Process locations

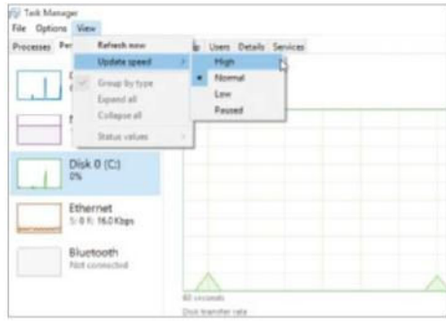
You can view a process location either by selecting to view the 'Command line' column or via 'Open file location'

Monitor Windows system performance



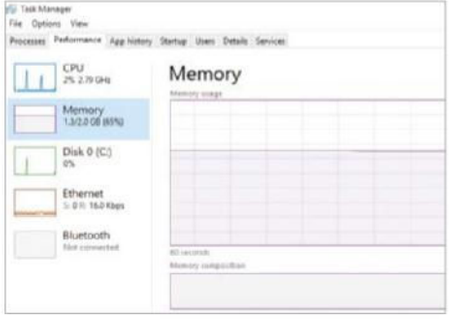
1: Revised Performance tab

In Windows 10 the Performance tab has undergone a notable upgrade. There are now more system aspects to check, all with graphs that constantly update. It's a useful tool for checking on how your system is performing.



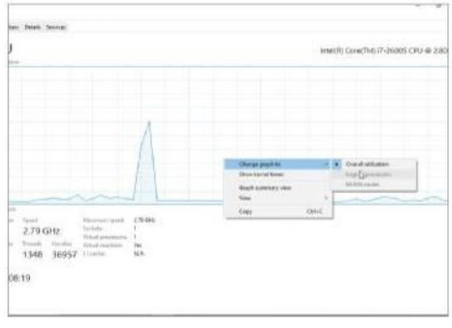
2: Graph refresh settings

By default the performance graphs will update at a normal rate. If you wish, you can alter the speed of this refresh rate. This is done by clicking View>Update Speed. You can also use the Refresh Now option to update the graph.



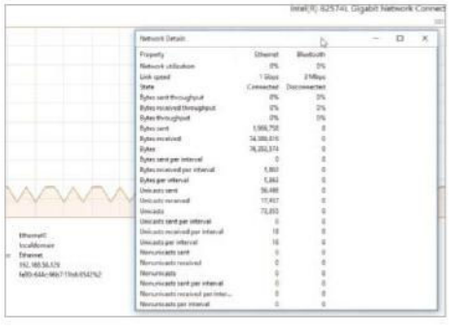
3: System information

Each category in the Performance Tab has its own section of specific information at the bottom of the display. In this example the Memory section tells us how much memory is free, how many slots are used and more.



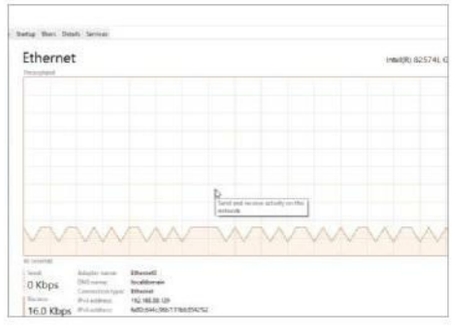
4: Extra analysis

Depending on your CPU you may be able to open extra graphs to view other types of CPU use. To do this, right-click on the graph and select 'Change graph to', then the required mode. You can also view kernel times.



5: View connections

There is also a section dedicated to your network connections. Along with your send and receive speeds, it shows your signal strength. If you right-click the graph you can also view your network details.



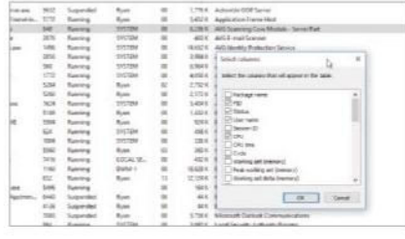
6: Summary view windows

At any point you can also scale the Performance tab down to a simple graph or summary view. This can run in the background in an unobtrusive fashion. Double-click a section to scale it down to a summary view.

Explore the Details tab

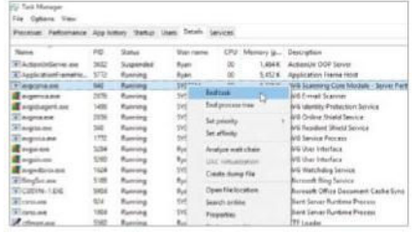
1: Performance vs. Details

While the Performance tab contains lots of information, the Details tab is more in line with previous Task Manager iterations.



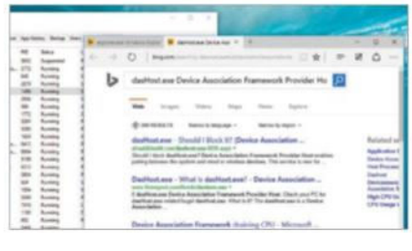
2: Add/remove columns

If you right-click on the column headers, you can use the Select Columns options to decide which topics appear in the table.



3: Further options

You can right-click on an entry and access a menu featuring options for closing a task or a process tree (ie linked processes).



4: Search and locate

As per the Performance tab, you can search online for a process, or go straight to the file location for a process.

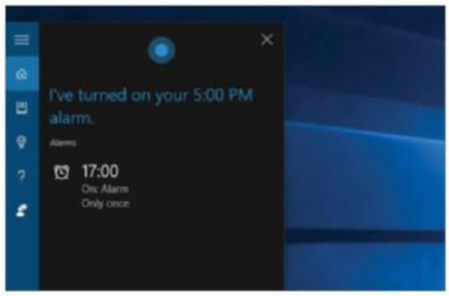
Delve deeper into Cortana, your personal assistant

Create appointments, reminders and alarms, check your schedule and more

Windows 10's digital personal assistant, Cortana, is a time-saving tool that can perform tedious tasks for you, such as creating calendar appointments. Instead of going to the Start menu, clicking the Calendar app, finding the right view and day, and clicking to create an appointment, simply tell Cortana to create one on a particular day and time.

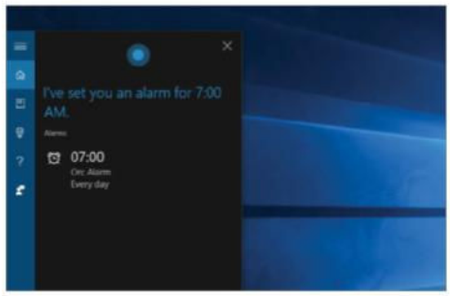
It can set alarms so you don't miss anything important, let you view alarms that have been set, and also cancel alarms. Appointments and reminders are similar and it is very easy to ask Cortana to set a reminder so you do not forget to do something. You can view reminders, see your schedule and even move appointments. Cortana can display maps, convert currencies, take notes and much more.

Set and manage alarms



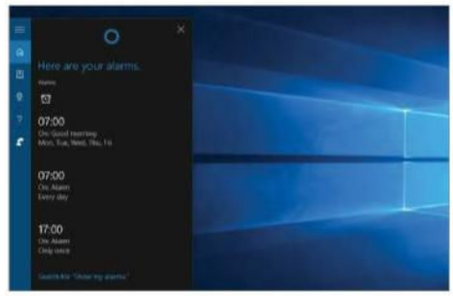
1: Set an alarm

Click the microphone button in the Cortana box and say "Set an alarm for…" and add the time. You can say 5 PM, for example, or even something like "for 30 minutes."



2: Set repeating alarms

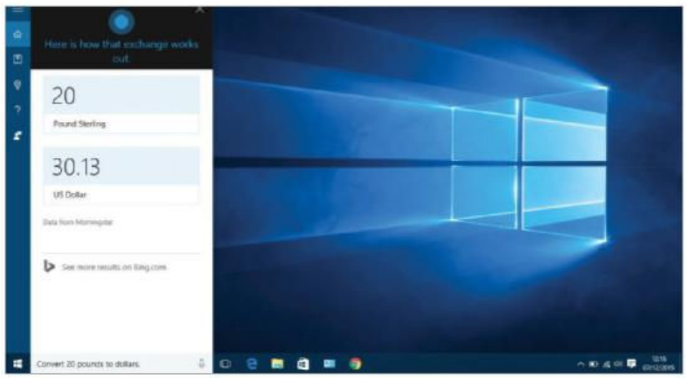
You might want an alarm to alert you every day. To do this, say something like "Set an alarm every day for…" and add the time the alarm is to occur.



3: Check your alarms

Have you lost track of the alarms you have set? Ask Cortana to show them to you. Say "Show my alarms" to see a list of one-off and repeating alarms.

Top tips for Cortana

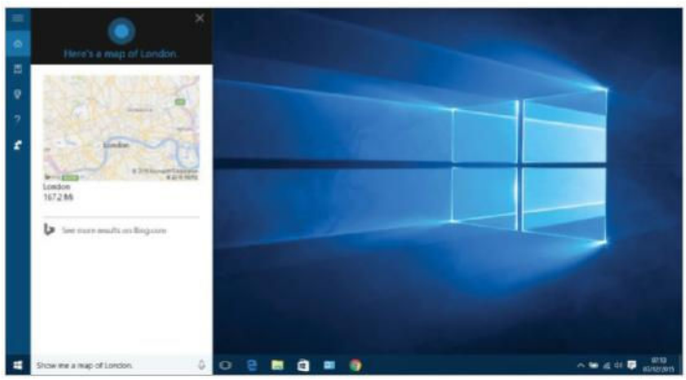


1: Convert any units

Cortana can convert distances, weights, currencies and more. Click the microphone in the Cortana box and say "Convert 20 pounds to dollars," or "Convert 35 miles into kilometres," and other conversions.

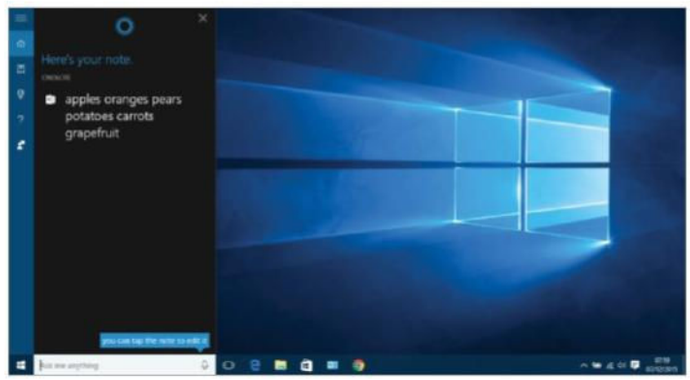
2: Use Cortana's calculator

Cortana has a built-in calculator. Just state the calculation to see the result, such as "What is 27 multiplied by 36?" Use the mouse or ask Cortana to perform another calculation.



3: Get maps and distances

Say "How far is it to Manchester?" to find distances and the time it will take to get there. Get a map of a place by saying "Show me a map of London," and click it to open it in Maps.



4: Create and store notes

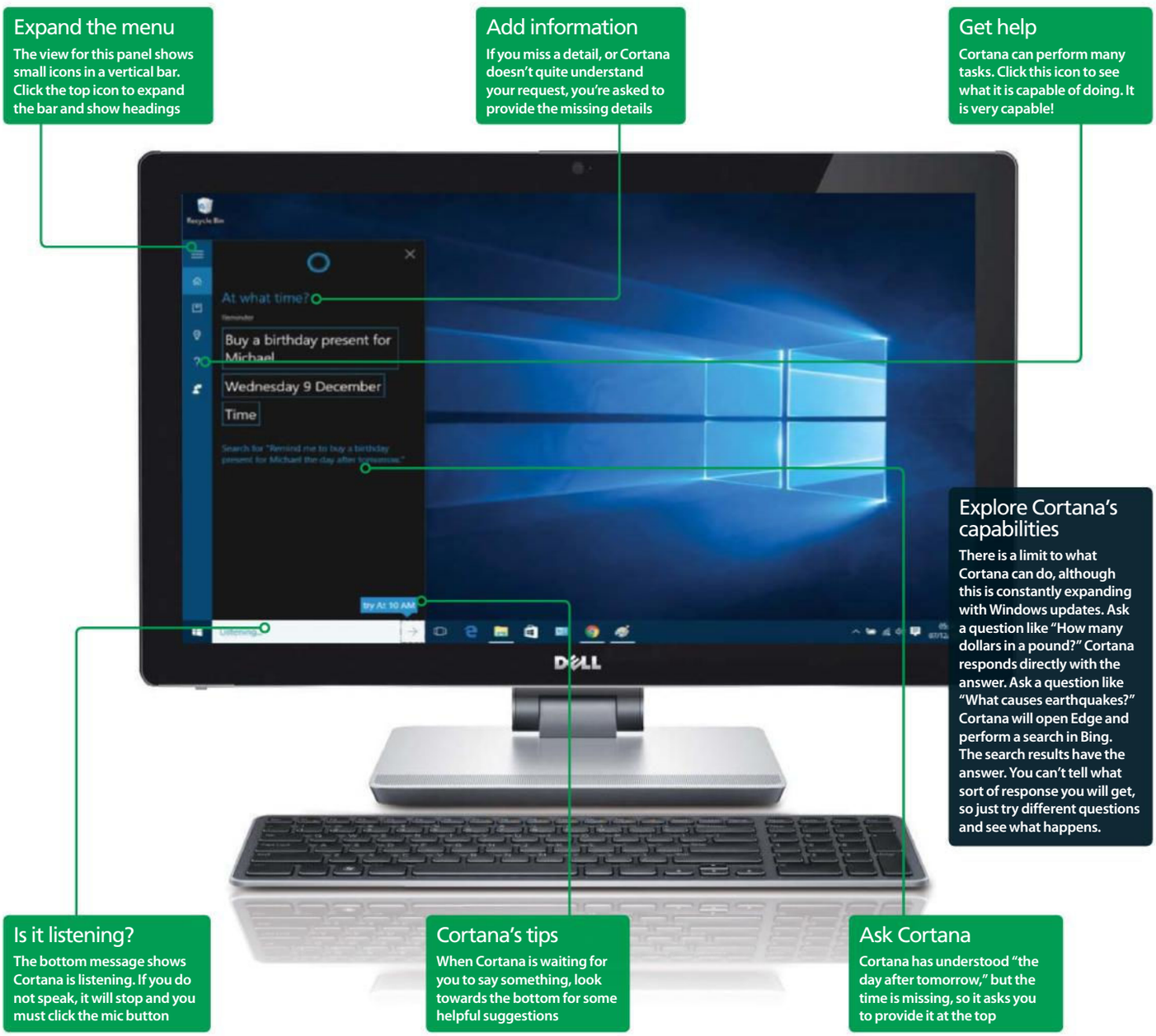
When you need to remember information, say "Take a note…" followed by whatever you want, such as a shopping list, things to do and so on. Click it to view it in OneNote.

Familiarise yourself with Cortana's features

Cortana is a program that is designed to understand natural speech, so you do not need to speak in a special way. Just say what you would like Cortana to do in your normal voice. An example of this is the ability to say things like "Remind me tomorrow." Cortana understands words like today and tomorrow, and even more complex phrases like "the day after tomorrow." You don't even need to say the exact date, because Cortana can work it out and create the reminder on the correct day.

You can provide all of the information that Cortana needs in order to perform a task, such as creating a reminder or an appointment, or you are able to just give partial information. When you do this, she will actually ask for the missing details, such as the time, the day, the subject and whatever else is needed.

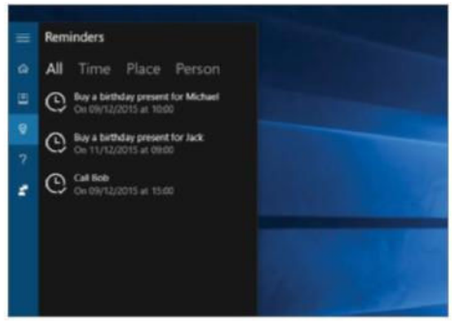
Cortana even suggests what you might want to say next in little tip boxes, and these help you to complete the information or confirm the action to be taken.



Create reminders and appointments

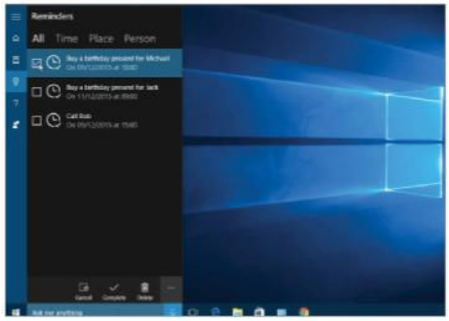
1: Create reminders

You might want to create a reminder that repeats every day, week or month. Just say something like "Remind me every day to…" followed by the subject, and Cortana creates a recurring reminder.



2: View your reminders

After creating several reminders, you might want to see them, either to check them or to remind yourself of what reminders you have! Say "Show my reminders" and click Time, Place or Person.



3: Show complete reminders

Click the first of the three icons at the bottom of the Cortana panel and tick the reminders or tasks that you have completed. Simply click the Complete icon if you want to remove them from the list.

4: Create an appointment

Appointments are created like reminders. Say "Create a dentist appointment this afternoon at 3.30 PM" or something similar. Today, tomorrow, the day after tomorrow and weekdays are recognised.

5: Move an appointment

Calendar appointments can be moved. Say something like "Change the dentist appointment today to 5 PM." The appointment is rescheduled at the new time. Try variations on this, such as extending the time.

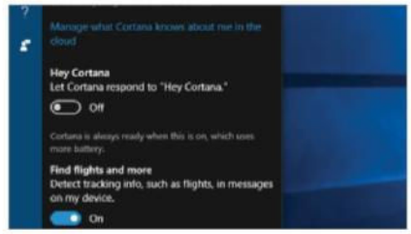
6: See your schedule

Say "What is happening this weekend?" or "What is going on this week?" to see your scheduled appointments and reminders in a list. This is a great way to see what is coming up soon.

Get Cortana to listen

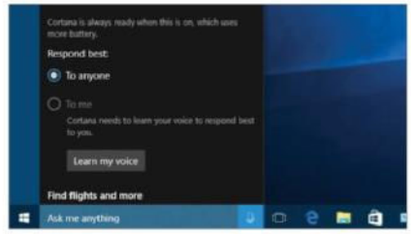
1: Go to Settings

Click in the Cortana box in the taskbar to open the panel, click the third icon and select Settings.



2: Hey Cortana!

Turn on Hey Cortana to enable Cortana to listen all the time. It saves clicking the microphone icon.



3: Teach it your voice

Cortana works better if you teach it the sound of your voice. Click the 'Learn my voice' button that appears.

4: Speak the phrases

Cortana learns fast and six sentences are displayed on the screen one after the other. Just speak them.

Improve your security

Get better security in Windows 10, scan for malware and much more

There are many types of malware that can affect the computer and most of it is on the internet. If you never used the internet then security would not be an issue, but it is pretty much essential these days because so much of what we do on computers makes use of websites and online services.

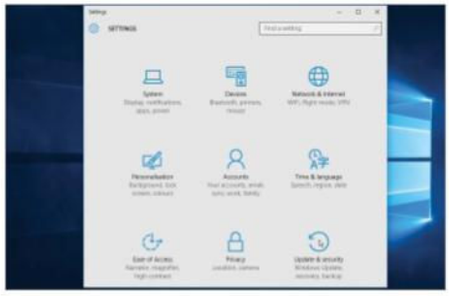
The good news is that Windows 10 is more secure than previous versions of the operating system. In the tips and tutorials here we will take a look at many of the security features that are built in to it.

These include Windows Defender for protecting from viruses and spyware, Windows Firewall to protect from hackers, and many settings in the Settings app and Control Panel. As soon as you can, you should review the security settings on the computer as outlined here.

We also take a quick look at third-party security software like Avast and ZoneAlarm.

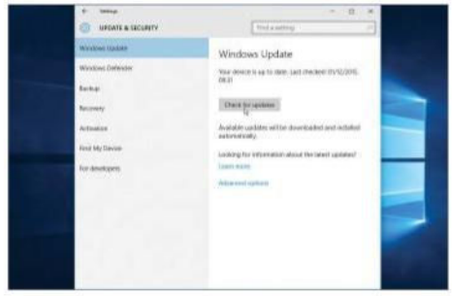
"Windows 10 is more secure than previous versions of the operating system. We look at many of the security features that are built in to it"

Turn on protection



1: Open Settings

Go to the Start menu and click Settings. The last item in the list is Update & security. Click it to access important settings that affect safety and security.



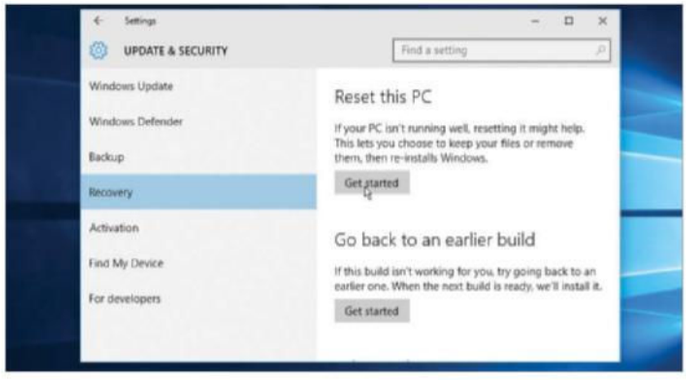
2: Use Windows Update

Security flaws are exploited by malware and hackers, so make sure Windows has all the latest security patches by selecting Windows Update and then click Check for updates.

3: Enable protection

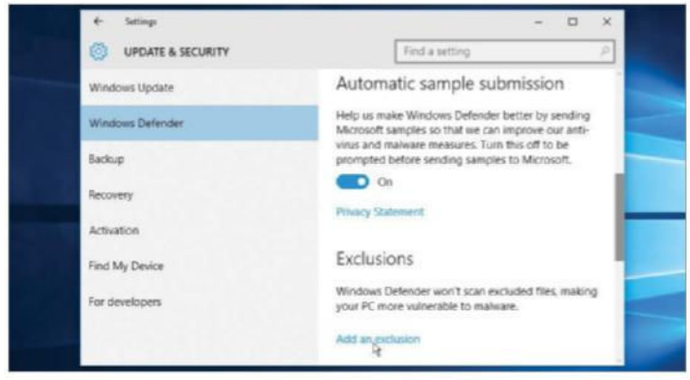
If you do not use third-party security software, make sure that Windows is protected by turning on real-time and cloud-based protection for Windows Defender.

Four top security tips



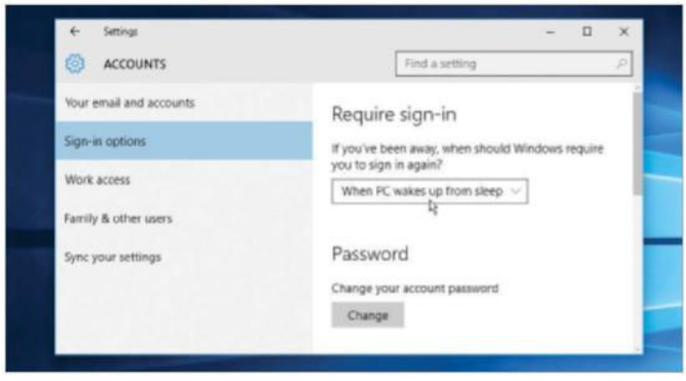
1: Recover from problems

If you have a serious security problem and the computer is infected with malware, go to Settings>Update & security>Recovery>Reset this PC. Click Get started. Use it only as a last resort though.



2: Clear the exclusions

Go to Settings>Update & security>Windows Defender. Click Add an exclusion. Normally there should be none and exceptions are suspicious. Select the exclusions, if there are any, and click Remove.



3: Wake to a password

When the computer is idle or a laptop's lid is closed, it can enter sleep mode. Go to Settings>Accounts>Sign-in options>Require sign-in then click 'When PC wakes up from sleep'. This is more secure.

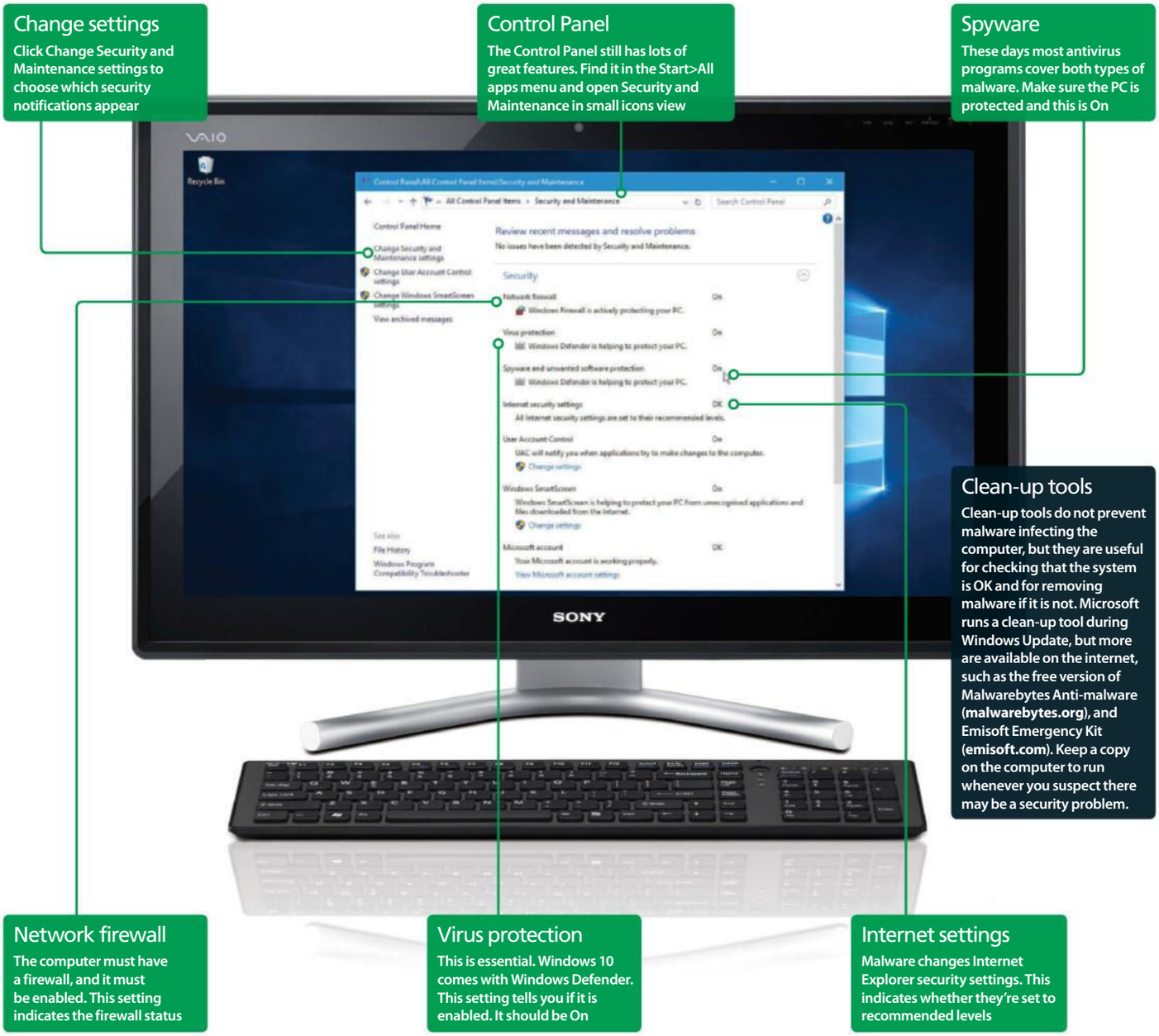
4: Use standard accounts

A standard account is more secure than an administrator account. Go to Settings>Accounts>Family & other users. If other people use your computer, click Change account type and select Standard User.

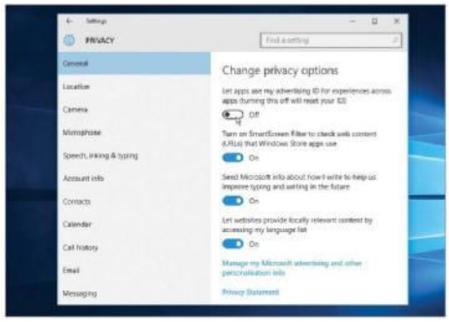
Review the PC's security settings

There are many different settings and features that affect the security of the computer, and they happen to be scattered across several different sections of Settings, the Control Panel and various other places. There is not a single place where you can view everything related to security, but one of the best overviews is Security and Maintenance. The easiest way to find this facility is to click the search box in the taskbar and enter 'security and maintenance'. Click it in the search results.

The Control Panel opens, but you might need to expand the Security section by clicking it in order to view all the settings. It lists many security features and also indicates whether they are active or not. If you install third-party security software, it usually shows up here, however, occasionally it does not, so don't immediately panic if no firewall or virus protection is indicated. Make sure that you check your security software in order to see if it is working. Check out the image below to familiarise yourself with everything.

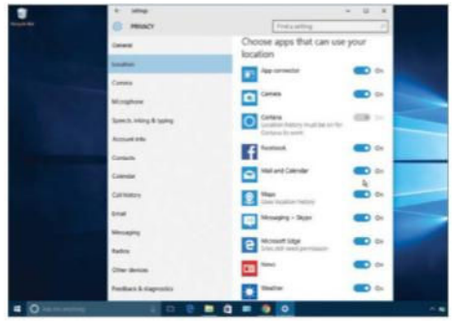


Increase security through privacy settings



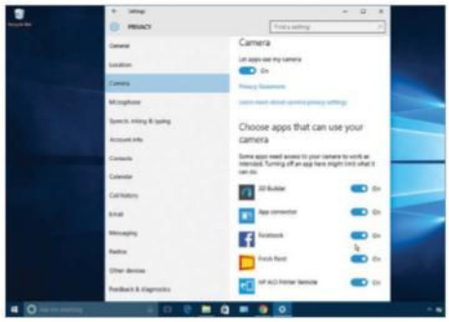
1: Set privacy options

Click Start>Settings, then Privacy. Select General on the left-hand side, and on the right turn on SmartScreen Filter and turn off 'Let apps use my advertising ID'. This improves privacy and security.



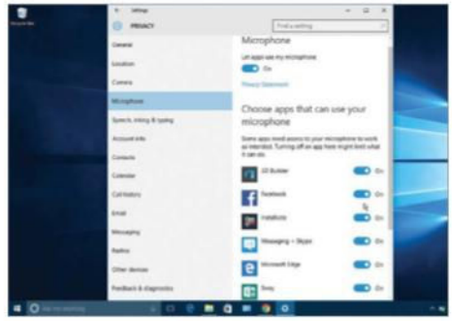
2: Hide your location

Some apps need to know your location, such as the Weather app so that it can display a forecast. The others will work without a location. Turn off apps to hide your location from them.



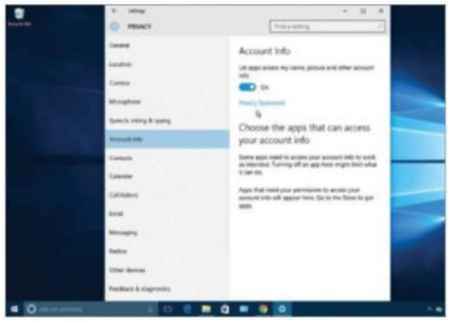
3: Block the camera

All modern laptops and some desktop PCs have a camera. But could someone be watching you? It's unlikely, but not impossible. Keep an eye on the list of apps that have access to the camera.



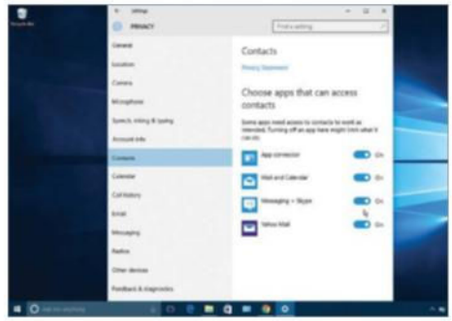
4: Who is listening?

Some apps require access to the microphone, such as Skype for phone and video calls. However, if there are apps here that have no business listening with the microphone, simply turn them off.



5: Monitor account access

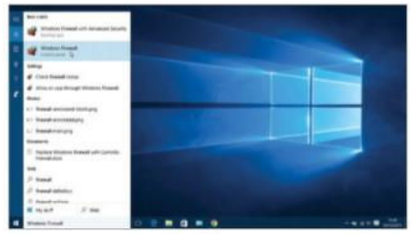
Select Account to see a list of apps that can access information in your Microsoft account. Make sure you're suspicious of any apps here and check they are legitimate. Turn them off to block them.



6: Monitor contact access

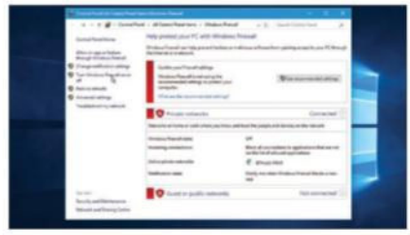
Visit Contacts to see a list of apps that can access your contacts. Messaging and email apps are safe, but you should be suspicious of anything else. Use the On/off switches to allow or block apps.

Configure your firewall



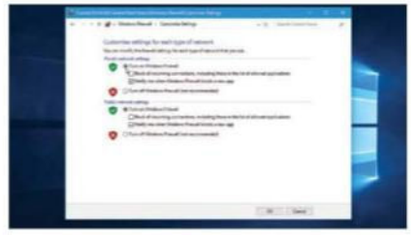
1: Search for it

Click in the search box and enter Windows Firewall. Click Windows Firewall>Control Panel, and not the advanced one.



2: Check the status

If Windows Firewall is turned off and you don't have another firewall installed, click Turn Windows Firewall on or off.



3: Turn on the firewall

In the absence of another firewall, turn on Windows Firewall for both public and private networks.

4: Allow or block apps

Return to step 2 and click 'Allow an app or feature through Windows Firewall'. Clear the ticks to block apps.

Scan for malware with Windows Defender

There are many programs on the internet that you can download and use on your computer. Software downloaded from the Windows Store is safe and unlikely to have malware, but this is not true of software elsewhere on the internet. There are malicious programs that can cause problems and they must be avoided.

Email attachments also pose a problem, and sometimes a file attached to a message is a virus or other type of malware. It usually encourages you to click the attachment, open or run it. Never do that.

Windows Defender is provided with Windows 10, and this is a tool that protects the computer from viruses, Trojans, spyware and other types of malware. It runs in the background and blocks infections. The tutorial below shows how to make sure it is updated and how to scan the system for malware. This should be performed regularly, such as once a week.

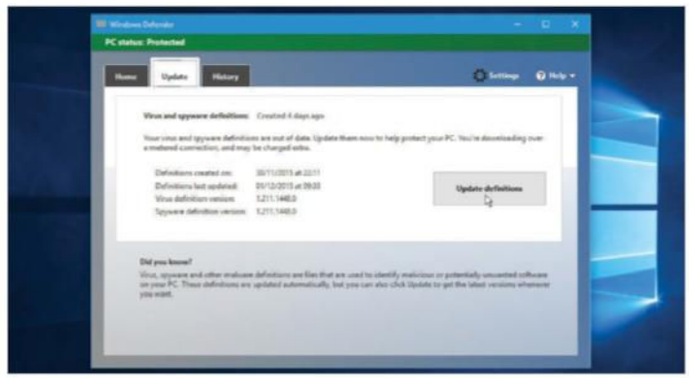
There are alternative security suites and antivirus programs. Most are better than Windows Defender and it is recommended that you install Avast (**avast.com**), ZoneAlarm (**zonealarm.com**) or some other security software. These two programs are both good and free, but if you have the money, it is best to buy an even more powerful security suite.

The protection provided by third-party security software is far superior to Windows Defender and Windows Firewall, and it makes Windows 10 safer to use when browsing the web, using email and online services. Let's look at Windows Defender first, followed by a quick look at Avast and ZoneAlarm.

> "Windows Defender is provided with Windows 10 and this is a tool that protects the computer"

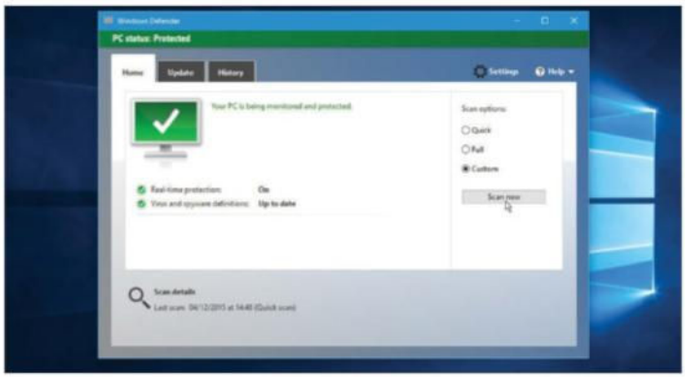
1: Use the search facility

The easiest way to find Windows Defender is to simply type it into the search box. Click Windows Defender (Desktop app) to open it. It can also be found on the Start menu right down at the bottom.



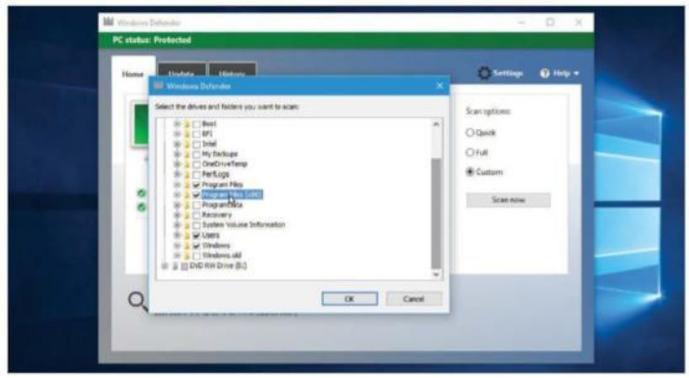
2: Update the definitions

Security software relies on a database of virus and spyware definitions, which must be kept up to date. Select the Update tab in Windows Defender, then click the Update definitions button.



3: Check the status

Select the Home tab to see the status. It should say the PC is being monitored and protected, real-time protection is on and it is up to date. If third-party security is installed, Windows Defender is disabled.



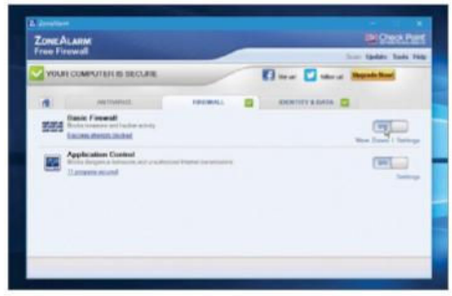
4: Scan for malware

Select a scan option on the right. Perform a quick scan once a week and a full scan once a month. The Custom option enables you to tick the folders on the disk to scan. Click Scan now.

Use ZoneAlarm Free Firewall

1: Get ZoneAlarm firewall

Open Edge, go to **zonealarm.com**, click Free Firewall and then Free Download. Run the file in the Downloads folder afterwards, and ZoneAlarm is installed and enabled.



2: Turn it on or off

Click View Details under Firewall on the home screen. When setting up wireless printers and other devices, it can help to temporarily turn off ZoneAlarm. Click the switches.

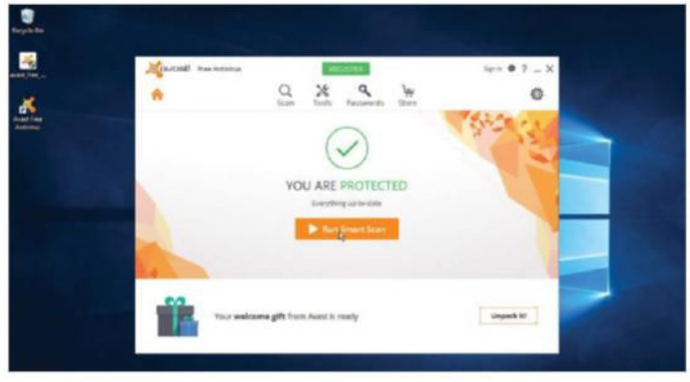
3: Set the security level

Click Basic Firewall and there are two sliders for setting the security. Set Public Zone to high (Wi-Fi hotspots) and Trusted Zone (your home network) to Medium.

Replace Windows Defender with Avast

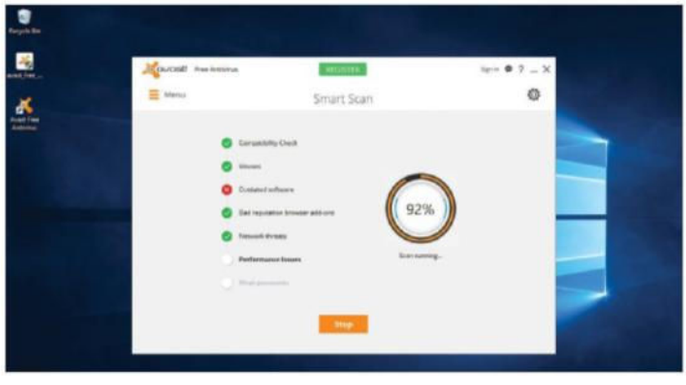
1: Install Avast

Go to **avast.com** and click the Download button followed by Free Download. Click the program in the Downloads folder afterwards and Avast Free Antivirus will install and replace Windows Defender.



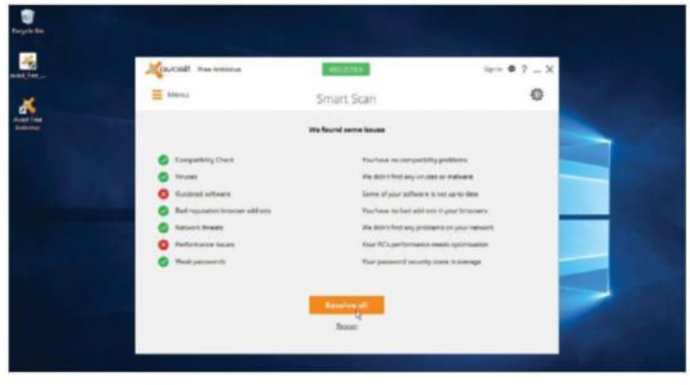
2: View the status

When installation is complete or any time you open the program, it shows the protection status. The green tick and messages says this PC is OK. If it is not, it will say what's wrong.



3: Scan for malware

Click the Scan button at the top if you want to choose the type of scan to run. A Smart Scan is the best scan and clicking the button in the middle of the windows starts it.



4: View the scan results

As the scan progresses, green ticks indicate things that are okay, and red crosses highlight problems. At the end of the scan is a 'Resolve all' button to fix the problems. Click it.

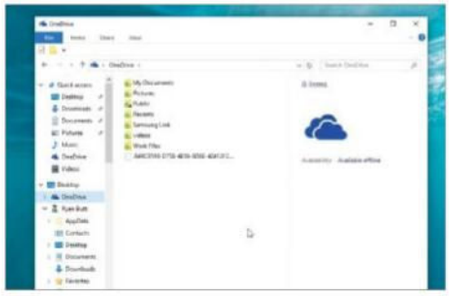
Explore Windows 10's cloud computing & network options

How to maximise Windows' online services

Windows 10 heartily embraces the cloud with its newly retitled OneDrive service. OneDrive is a free online storage service that can be used to back up your files in the cloud. It works in the same way as any normal folder that resides on your computer. Files can be uploaded to your OneDrive account in the same way you would save a document or copy/paste a file.

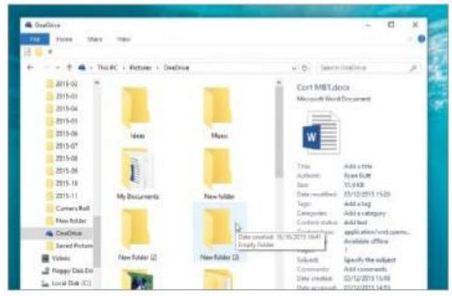
These files can then be viewed and accessed via a mobile phone, tablet or a web browser. You can keep your files private, set them to public or only grant access to certain people. You can also create links so content can be quickly and easily shared via online services like Facebook, Twitter, and more. Windows users are granted 15GB of free storage with which to sync files, photos and videos. It's also possible to gain additional space at no extra cost by automatically uploading your photos from a mobile device or by referring friends.

Using your OneDrive folder



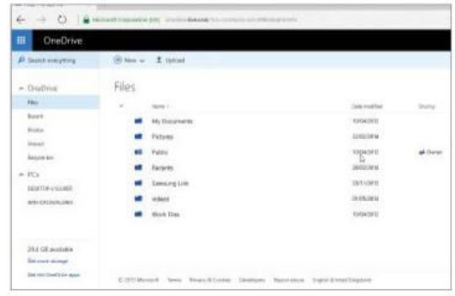
1: Find the OneDrive folder

In Windows 10, open your File Explorer by clicking on the icon in your taskbar and your OneDrive folder will be listed in the Navigation Pane to the left under 'Quick Access'.



2: Browsing and uploading

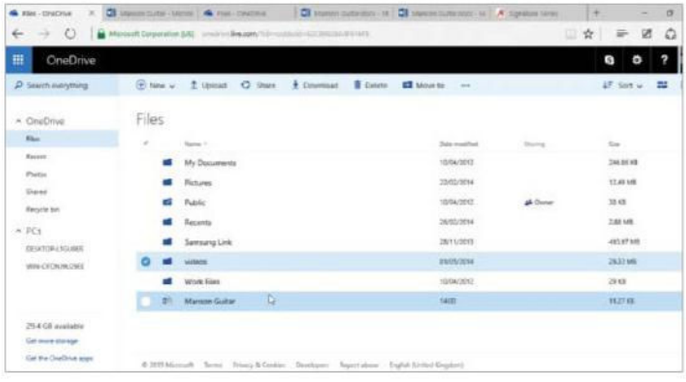
You can upload and sync files with your OneDrive by dropping them into this folder. The contents of your drive will be neatly arranged by folders.



3: More features

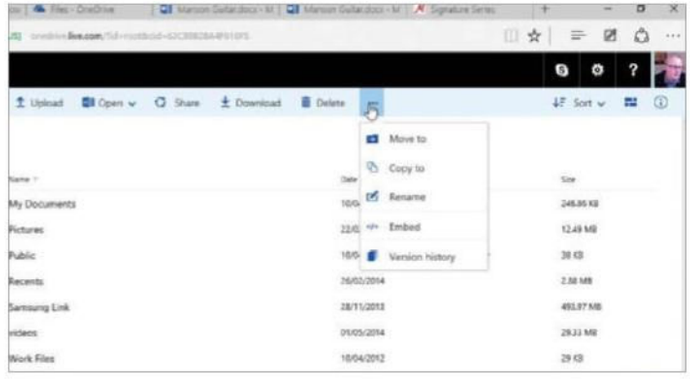
If you go to **onedrive.live.com** then you will be able to access all of the features we have come to associate with OneDrive, such as opening in applications, sharing and collaborating.

OneDrive web interface features



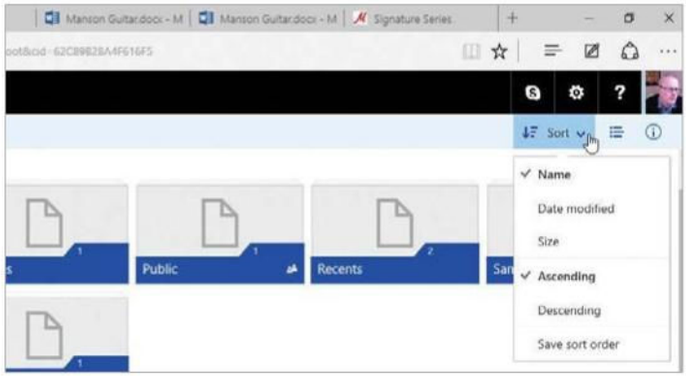
1: Online taskbar

The design of the OneDrive web interface is very easy to navigate with all of the key features laid out in the open. You will see a taskbar of options across the top of the screen, including 'Upload' and 'Share'.



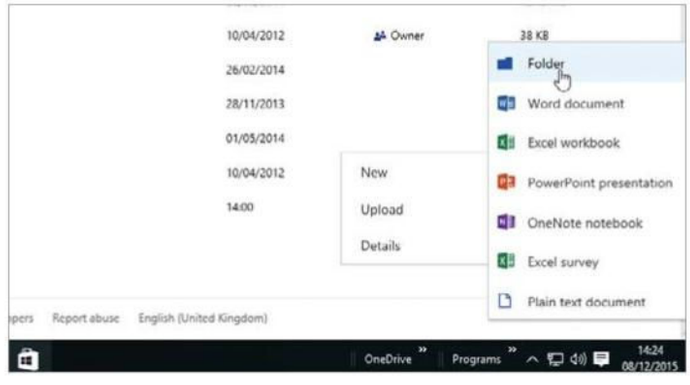
2: Document-specific options

The amount of options available in the taskbar varies depending on the type of document you have selected. Click on the '…' icon to reveal a menu of further options, including 'Copy To'.



3: Viewing your files

Two options are present in the top-right corner that affect how your files are displayed. Click 'Sort' to choose how they are arranged and the icon next to it to switch between tile or list views.



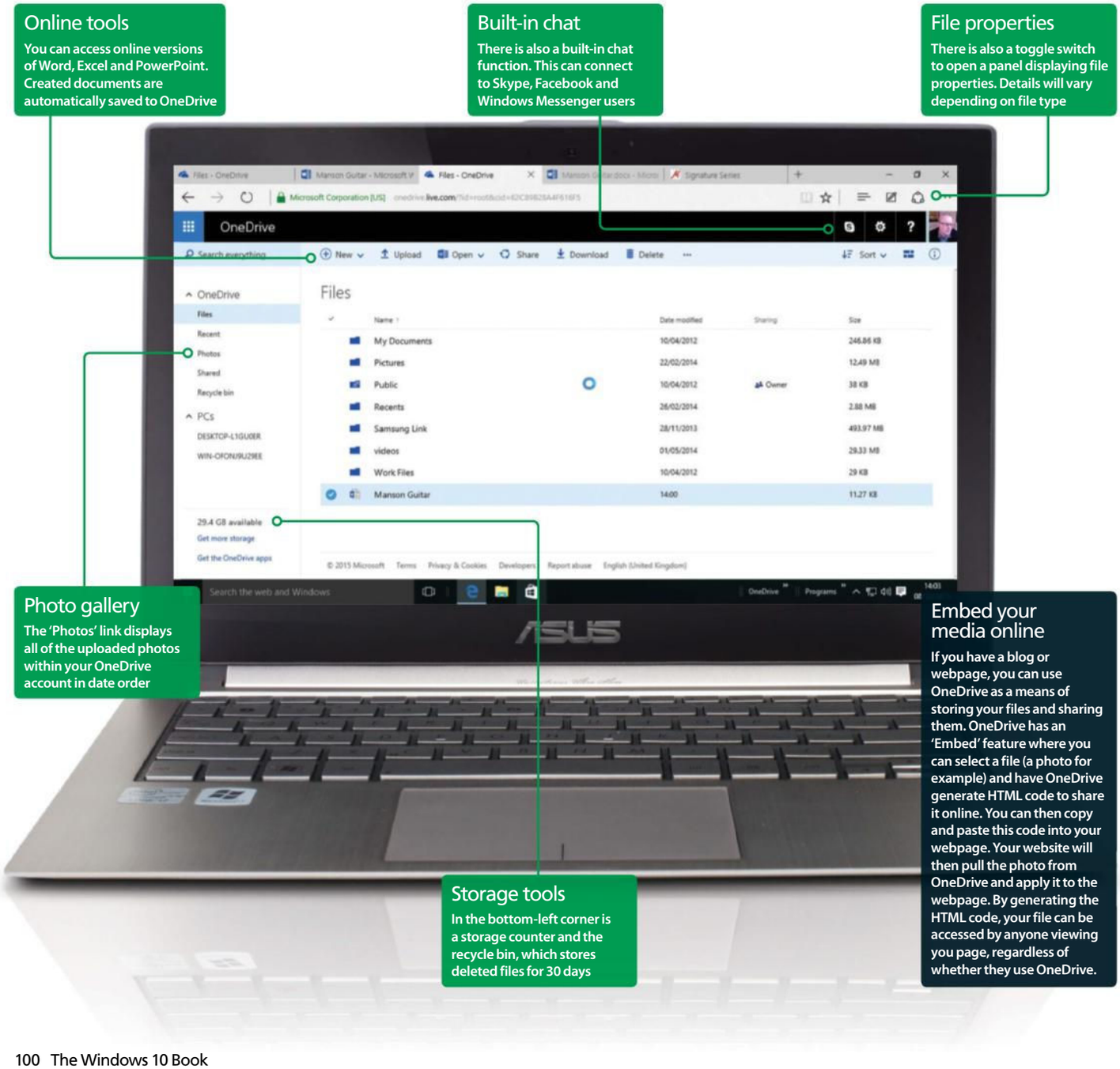
4: Create a new folder

If you right-click on the background of the OneDrive web interface then you can bring up a menu of options. Most of these relate to create new files, but you will also see the option to create a new folder.

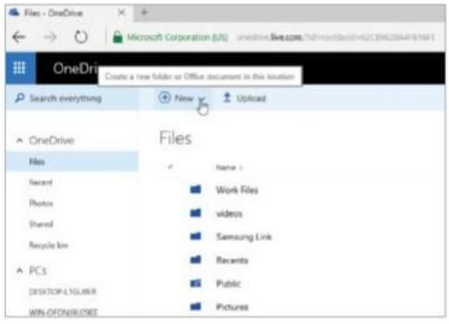
Use OneDrive's online service

Being a cloud-based service, OneDrive permits access to the files stored within it from a variety of places other than just your Windows desktop. Apart from mobile phones and tablets, there is also the OneDrive website itself. This can be accessed from any online desktop web browser via **onedrive.live.com**. Once you have logged into your Microsoft account on the site, your folders will appear in a tiled view. You can click a folder to open it or click the upper right corner in order to select it.

When a file is selected, OneDrive displays a series of context-sensitive actions such as download, share and rotate. There is also a Manage function where files can be moved, copied, deleted or applied as a cover to the current folder. When on the website, you can do more than just view and manage files: you can also create folders and upload content within your web browser. The website interface also has a search function, which comes in handy as you keep adding files to your OneDrive account.

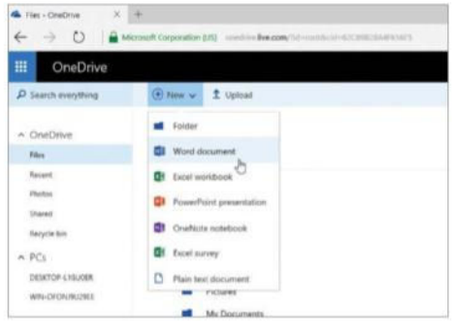


Create new documents while in OneDrive



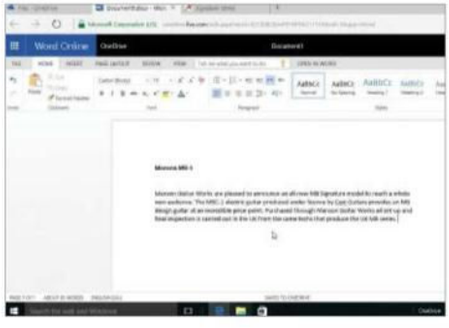
1: Getting started

The OneDrive web interface provides many great tools, one of which allows you to create new documents in a range of formats, including Word and Excel. Click on the 'New' icon at the top of the screen to get started.



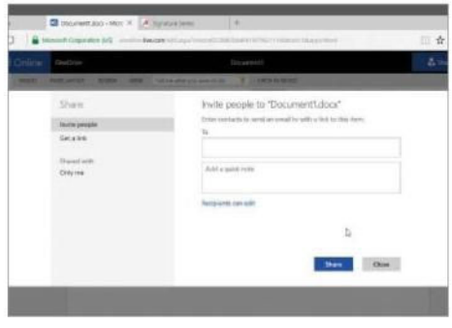
2: Choose file

From the open menu, choose the type of new file that you want to create and the online version of the respective application will launch. This makes it very simple for you to work remotely.



3: Using the apps

If you are familiar with Microsoft's office suite then their online counterparts are just as intuitive to use. The ribbon at the top of the screen provides access to the various formatting options.

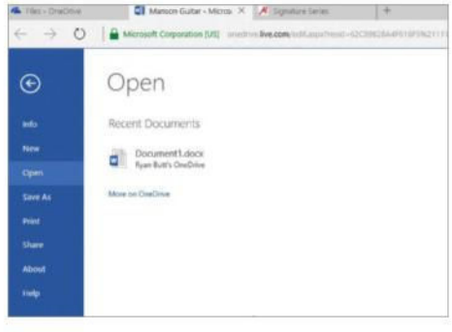


4: Share files instantly

You can share your hot-off-the-press documents instantly by clicking on the 'Share' icon in the top-right corner. You can then enter the contact details of the person you wish to share with get collaborating straight away.

5: Name your piece

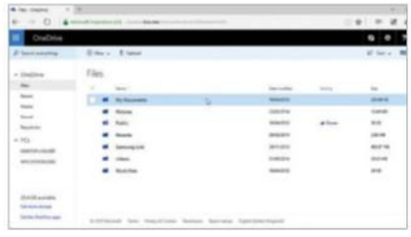
You can change the default name for the document you are working on by clicking on the title at the top and renaming it. All changes are instantly saved and synced to your other OneDrive devices.



6: Other options

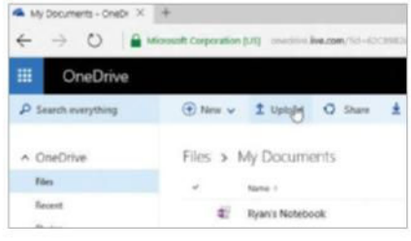
If you click on the 'File' tab then you will bring up a menu of other options. All files are automatically saved, but here you can opt to 'Save As', print, share and more. It's a very intuitive system that is effortless to use.

Upload files via the web



1: Go to folder

While in the OneDrive web interface, files are uploaded to the folder that you are currently in – make sure it's the right one.

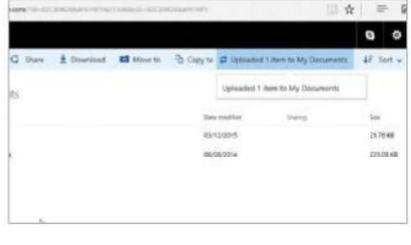


2: Click on Upload

While in the OneDrive web interface, click on the 'Upload' button in the taskbar at the top of the screen.

3: Navigate to the file

A file browser window will then appear to help you locate the file you wish to upload. If you know the name, type it in.



4: Copy file

When you have located the file, click 'Open' and it will be copied to the current folder and you will be notified.

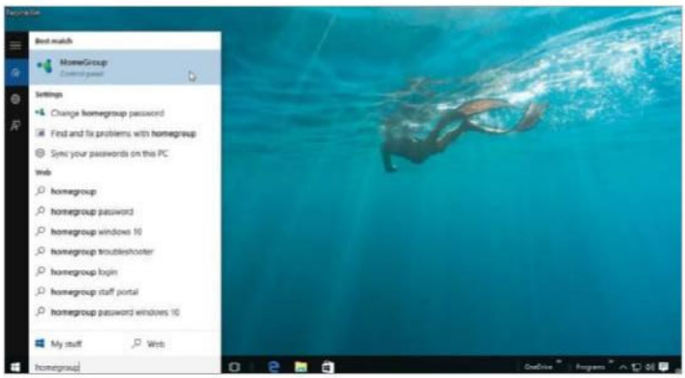
Share files locally across your devices

While OneDrive is all about syncing content in the cloud, Windows 10 also has a more local-based option in the form of HomeGroup. This allows a group of PCs to wirelessly share files – such as music, videos and pictures – across a home Wi-Fi network. You can also share printers with anyone who connects to your HomeGroup (if granted permission). This means that you only need to connect your printer to one device and the others will have access to it via HomeGroup. Overall, it makes the process of sharing across computers that little bit easier.

Once you have created a HomeGroup, you can decide which libraries are shared on your network. You can also block specific files and folders from being shared. With shared files, you can choose to share with the entire HomeGroup or limit file access to specific people. For peace of mind, you can password-protect your HomeGroup network – in effect this gives you control over who has access to your shared content. There are also controls in place that dictate the kind of file access other users have. They can be granted permission to edit documents, or they can be limited to read-only access. The settings for HomeGroup also include options for media streaming to devices such as televisions and videogames consoles. In turn, your Windows 10 computer can act as a media hub that streams content to your connected devices.

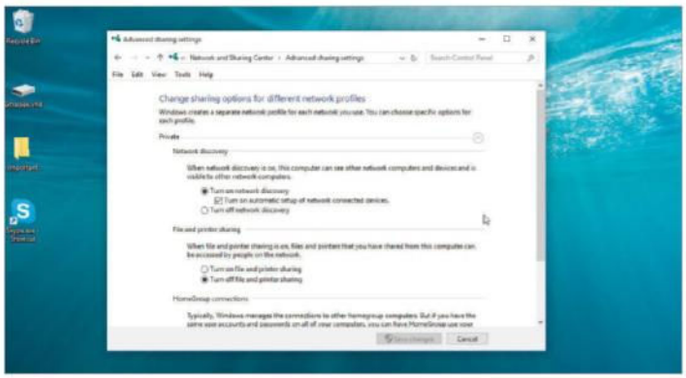
HomeGroup is available on Windows 8.1 and Windows 7. When connecting from Windows 7 to Windows 8 devices, you may notice limitations like being able to join a HomeGroup but not create one.

> "HomeGroup allows a group of PCs to share files – such as music, videos and pictures – across a home Wi-Fi network"



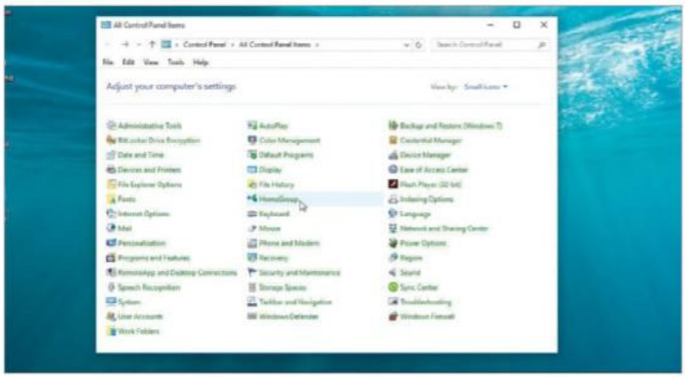
1: Create HomeGroup

When you first install Windows 10, a HomeGroup is created automatically. If you need to create a HomeGroup, press ⊞+S and type 'Homegroup'. Select HomeGroup settings and click on Create.



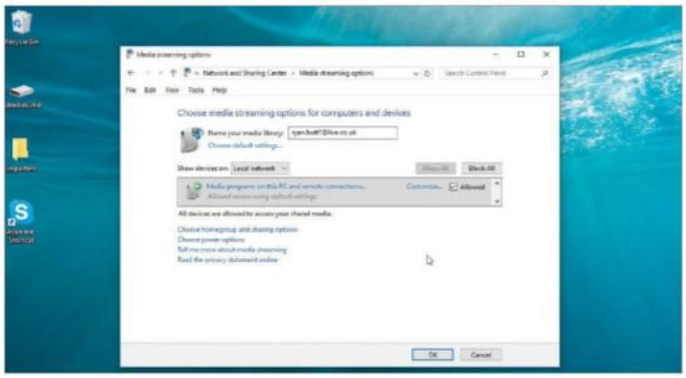
2: Sharing content

You can control the type of content accessible by other devices in your HomeGroup. Within the HomeGroup menu is a series of switches that determine whether you share music, video, documents and printers.



3: Control Panel

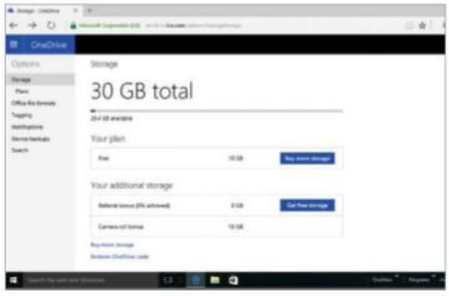
You can set up HomeGroup preferences via the Control Panel. Open up the Control Panel via your Start menu and click on 'HomeGroup'. This lists what is shared and lets you make changes.

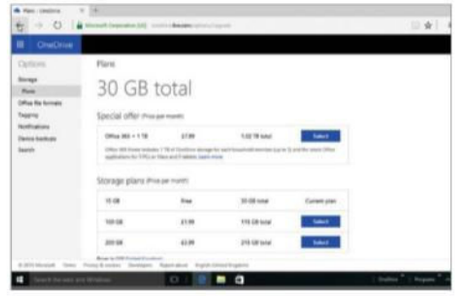


4: Other devices

You can also share files with TVs and games consoles on your network. These can stream content from your PC. Select the 'Allow all devices on this network' option and set up your devices as required.

Increase your OneDrive storage space





1: Free additions

You get 15GB of free space. If you install the OneDrive app on a mobile or tablet device, you can activate the auto-upload function to claim an extra 3GB of space for free.

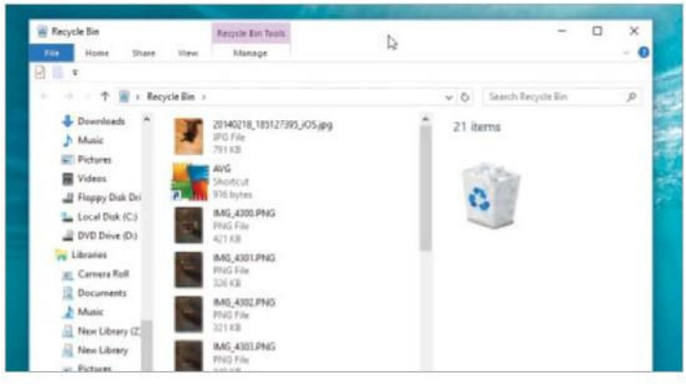
2: Refer friends

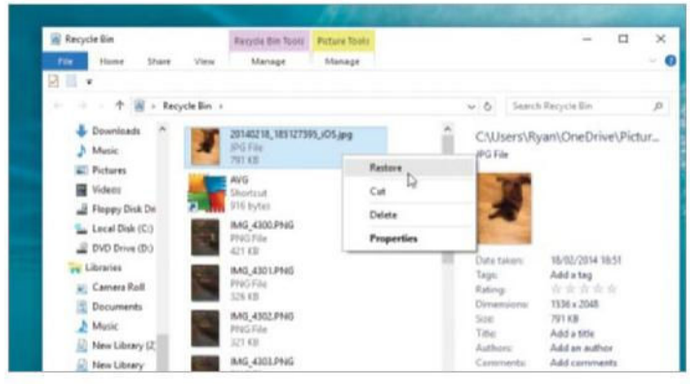
Recommending OneDrive to friends via the website earns you both an extra 500MB. Log in and select Get More Storage from the bottom-left menu left. Click the Get More Storage link.

3: Purchase more storage

You can always purchase extra space if you're so inclined. Prices start at $1.99 per month for 100GB of additional storage. Purchases can be made from the OneDrive website

Restore deleted OneDrive files



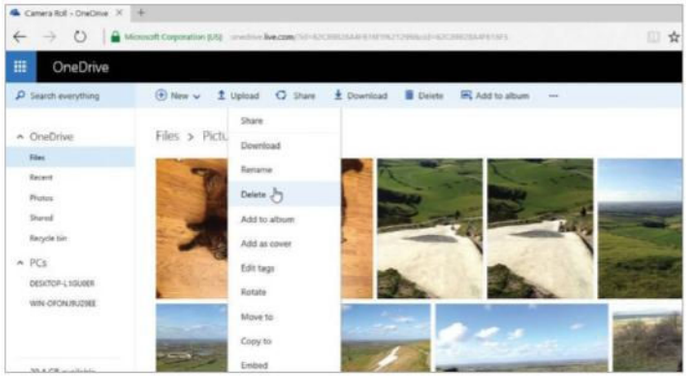


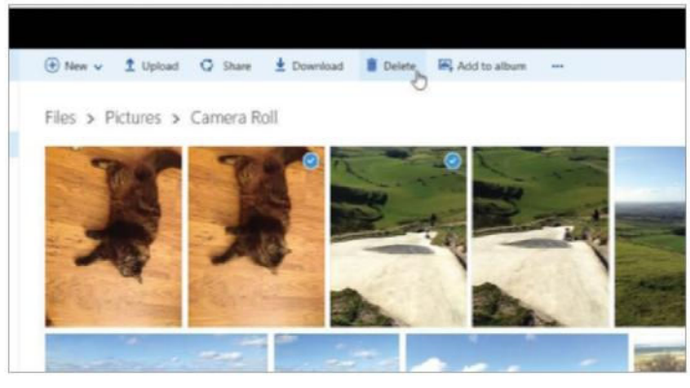
1: Deleting files

Unlike other cloud storage services, OneDrive is part of the Windows 10 ecosystem. This means it is tied to system-based services such as the Recycle Bin. Files deleted from OneDrive are moved to the Recycle Bin.

2: Restore file

Once a file has been deleted and moved to the Recycle Bin, it will stay there until the Recycle Bin is emptied or until the file is restored. To restore a file, right-click it in the Recycle Bin and select Restore.





3: Website files

This even works when deleting files from your OneDrive website. If you delete a file through the web interface then it will still appear in the Recycle Bin on your Window 10 desktop.

4: Deleting multiple files

You can select multiple files through the web interface by clicking on the tick icon of the ones you wish to include. You can then deal with these files as one by clicking on the 'Delete' option at the top.

Customise Edge for better browsing

Browse the web with Edge and tweak the settings to enhance the features

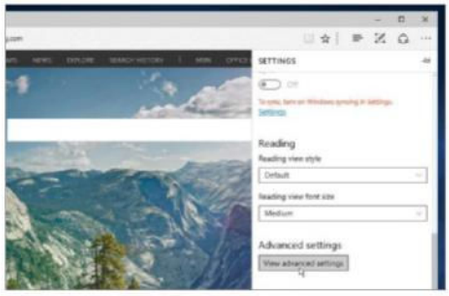
Edge is a great web browser and it has some unique features that are not in rivals. It is very different to Internet Explorer, which was used previously in Windows and it has new menus, new settings, and new tools. For example, Edge lets you write and draw on web pages, which is actually more useful than you might think and the internet is a fantastic resource for researching topics. Drawing, highlighting and attaching notes to web pages is a brilliant way to save your ideas and web finds.

There are new startup options and the page that is displayed when Edge opens is not limited to a home page. It can be one of several different views and we look at these in one of the tutorials. Microsoft has made it easy to change the search engine that is used when you type a keyword or phrase into the address box. Bing can be used, or any alternative that is on the web, such as Google or Yahoo!.

There are many privacy and security settings in Edge that you can enable to keep your computer and personal details safe, and we show where they are and how to configure them. Flash, for example, can easily be turned off when it is not needed.

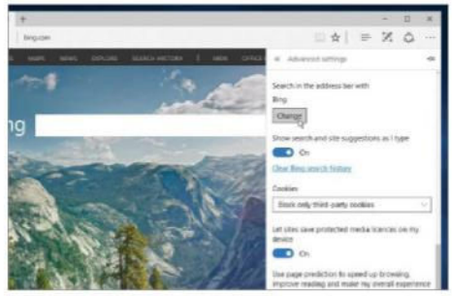
"It is very different to Internet Explorer; it has new menus, new settings and new tools. For example, Edge lets you write and draw on web pages"

Set Edge's search engine



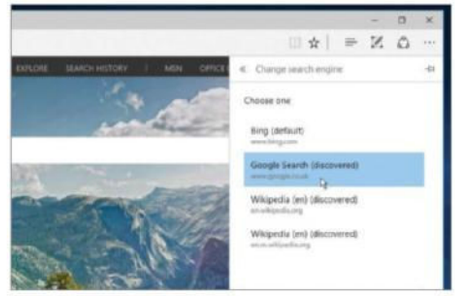
1: Open the settings

Click the three dots in the top right corner to open the menu and then select Settings, Scroll down to the bottom and click the 'View advanced settings' button.



2: Change search settings

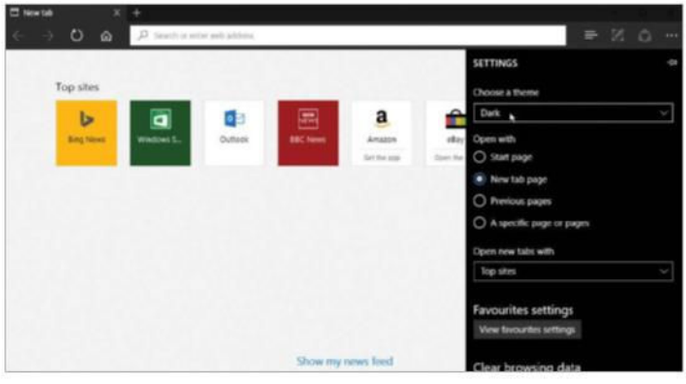
Under Search in the address bar is Bing and it returns search results when entering words or phrases into the address box. Click Change to use another search engine.



3: Choose a search engine

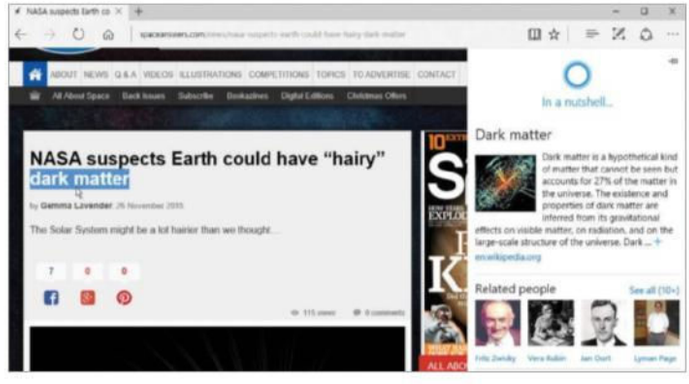
A list of search engines discovered while browsing the web are displayed. Select the search engine to use, such as Google Search and click 'Set as default'.

Top tips for Edge



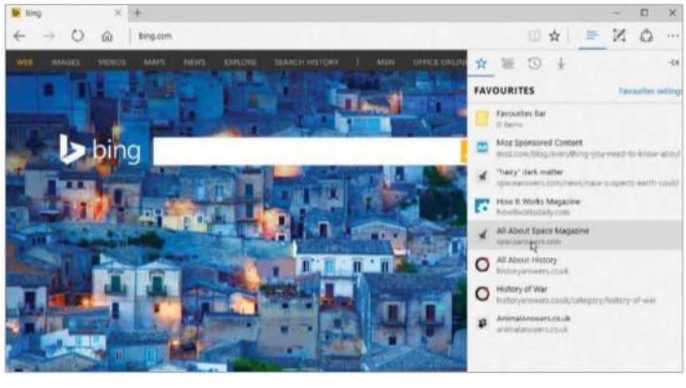
1: Pick a theme

Coloured themes have been introduced into Edge and two are available. Click the menu button (three dots top right), select Settings and then choose either Dark or Light under 'Choose a theme'.



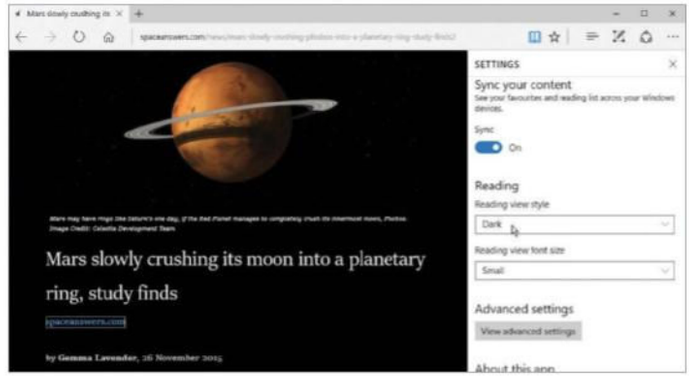
2: Ask Cortana for answers

If you see something on a web page that requires further information, drag the mouse over it to select it, right click it, and select Ask Cortana. A panel opens with the explanation.



3: Rearrange your favourites

Click the Star icon to add a web page to your favourites. Click the hub and select Favourites to view them. Click and drag favourites in the list to rearrange the order.



4: Configure Reading View

If a web page is cluttered with distracting adverts, click the Book icon in the Toolbar for Reading View. Use the options in Settings to set the font size and the theme, such as Dark.

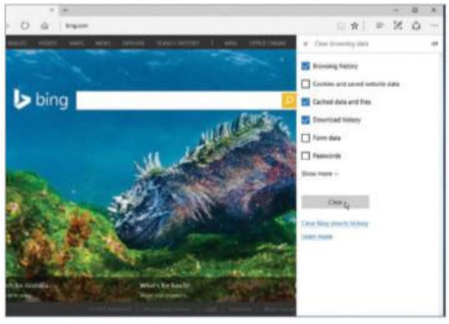
Annotate web pages and store notes

If you use Edge to research subjects, perhaps for a work or personal project, or for school and college, the ability to annotate web pages can be extremely helpful. As you browse the web and discover useful information on web pages, you can create notes and store them on the pages. It is similar to writing in the margin in text books, which students will be familiar with. You'll soon wonder how you ever managed to cope without this handy function.

When interesting passages of text are found, they can be highlighted so that the next time you view the page, you can instantly see the important parts that you noted on your first visit. It is also possible for you to draw on the page and lines, arrows and circles can be used to draw your attention to page elements like photos, headings, and other notable objects. You can even add your own annotated notes to the page, perhaps to remind yourself what a certain word means, or to help somebody else understand a point.

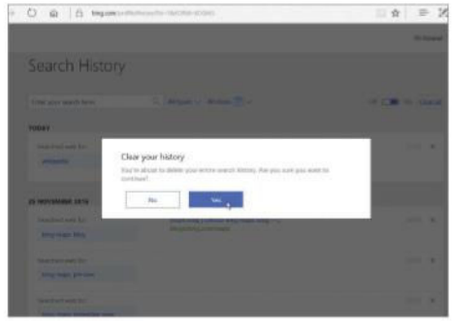
After annotating a page, it can be saved, so you can return to it later and refer back to your notes. It is also possible to share it via email or on social networking sites with your friends or colleagues.

Increase your security and privacy in Edge



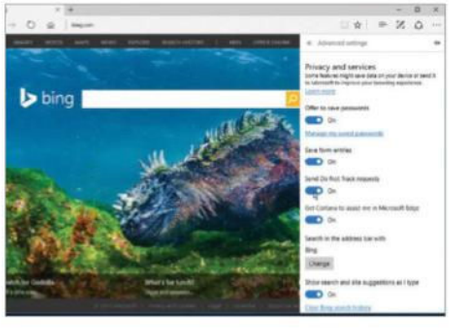
1: Cover your tracks

Go to the menu and select settings. Under Clear browsing data, click the 'Choose what to clear' option. Select the items you wish to clear, such as the items shown here and click the Clear button.



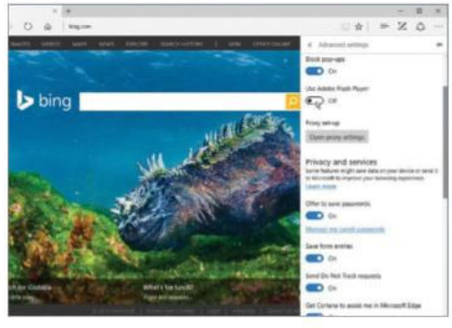
2: Clear Bing search history

Follow the last tip, then click the Clear Bing search history option. Bing saves every search you have ever made. Click the cross next to items to delete them, or click Clear all to remove everything.



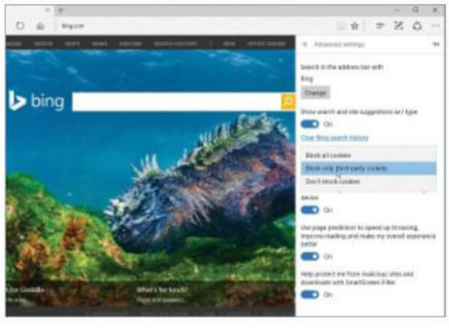
3: Do not track me

Websites can track your activity and record what you do, but there is an option to stop this. Click Settings on the menu, View advanced settings, and turn on Send Do Not Track requests.



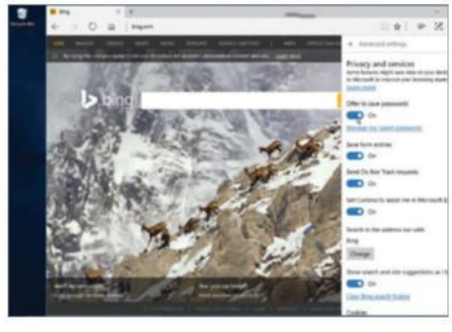
4: Avoid using Flash

Flash is known to have some security flaws, so make sure to turn it off. Go to Settings>Show advanced settings, and set Flash to Off. Turn it on only if a website needs it and turn it off after use.



5: Limit the cookies

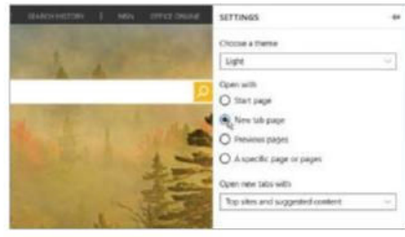
Advertisers and others track you on the web, but limiting cookies reduces this. Go to Settings, Show advanced settings, and under Cookies, select Block only third-party cookies in the menu.



6: Clear your passwords

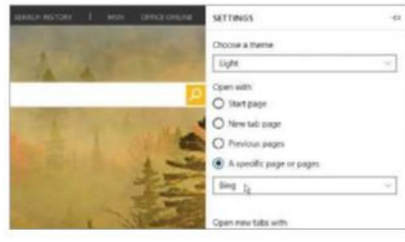
Do you prefer security or convenience? Go to Settings, Show advanced settings and click the link Manage my saved passwords. Delete stored passwords, but only if you can remember them.

Set the start page



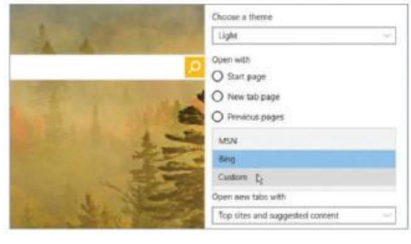
1: Choose a start page

Go Settings and choose what to show when Edge starts up, such as the New tab page or a specific page of your choice.



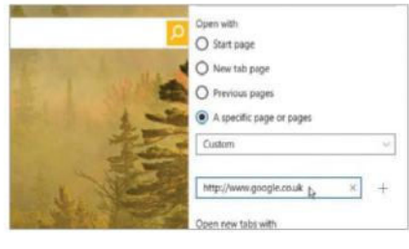
2: Start with Bing

To start up with Bing search, select A specific page or pages. Bing is an option available shown below.



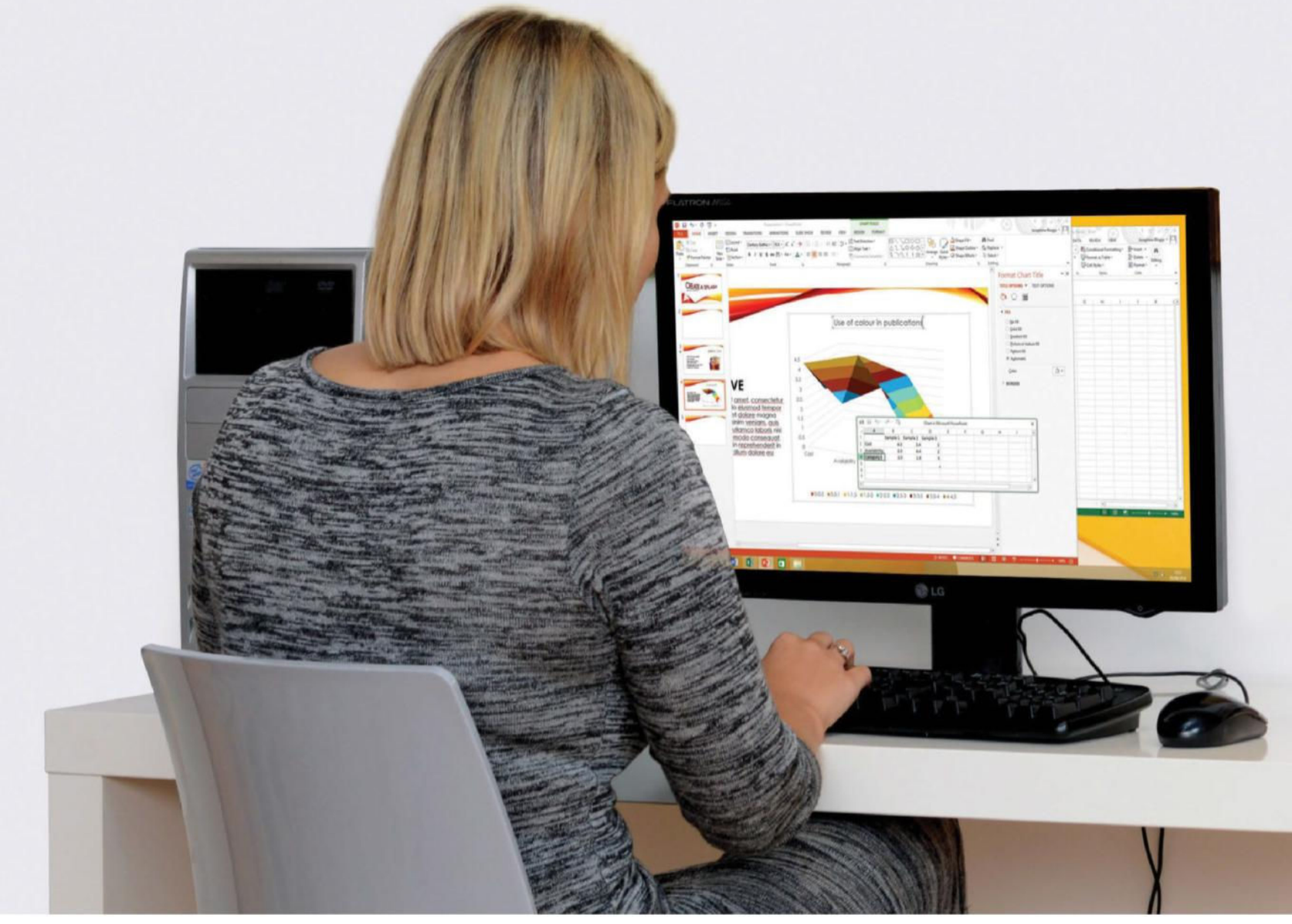
3: Choose another start page

Click the list and select MSN for a news page or choose the Custom option.



4: Enter a URL

If you select the Custom option, type in the URL of the start page below, like Google or your favourite news site.



Get started with Microsoft Office

Bring the office into your home

Microsoft Office is a suite of tools that will help you produce documents for home, education and work. Since its debut in 1990, the product has evolved into a mainstream document standard used by millions worldwide. Until recently, Office was considered more a standalone product. Today however, Office 2013 is more cohesive and – as of Windows 8 – more social, with integration of cloud services, web content from the likes of Skype and Flickr, and new options for adding interactive video.

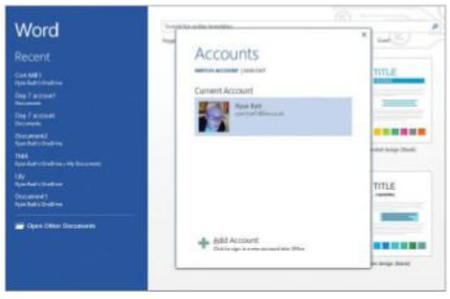
Documents can be edited across multiple devices, and web versions of applications allow for real-time collaboration. Use Microsoft Word to produce your CV, or a colourful report; Excel to graph seasonal rainfall or track monthly budgets; PowerPoint to produce a sleek slideshow with transition effects; and OneDrive to save it all to the cloud. In this guide we will look at the basics.

QUICK TIP

A template for all

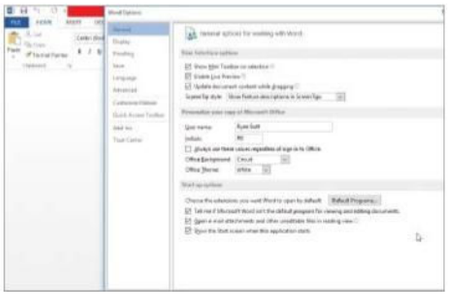
Available in all Office applications, templates provide an eye-catching start for your documents. If there is no suitable default, use the application Search on the Start screen for more downloadable content. Selecting a Ledger template in Excel, for example, will provide a great starting point with the formulae you need, ready to go.

Sign in to Office



1: Use your account

The first time you start an Office application, you will be prompted to sign in. Top right of each application shows who is signed in and the drop-down will let you switch accounts.



2: Keep your options open

Later in this tutorial, we will look at how to choose options for each Office application. The options you set will synchronise with your account for use wherever you sign in.

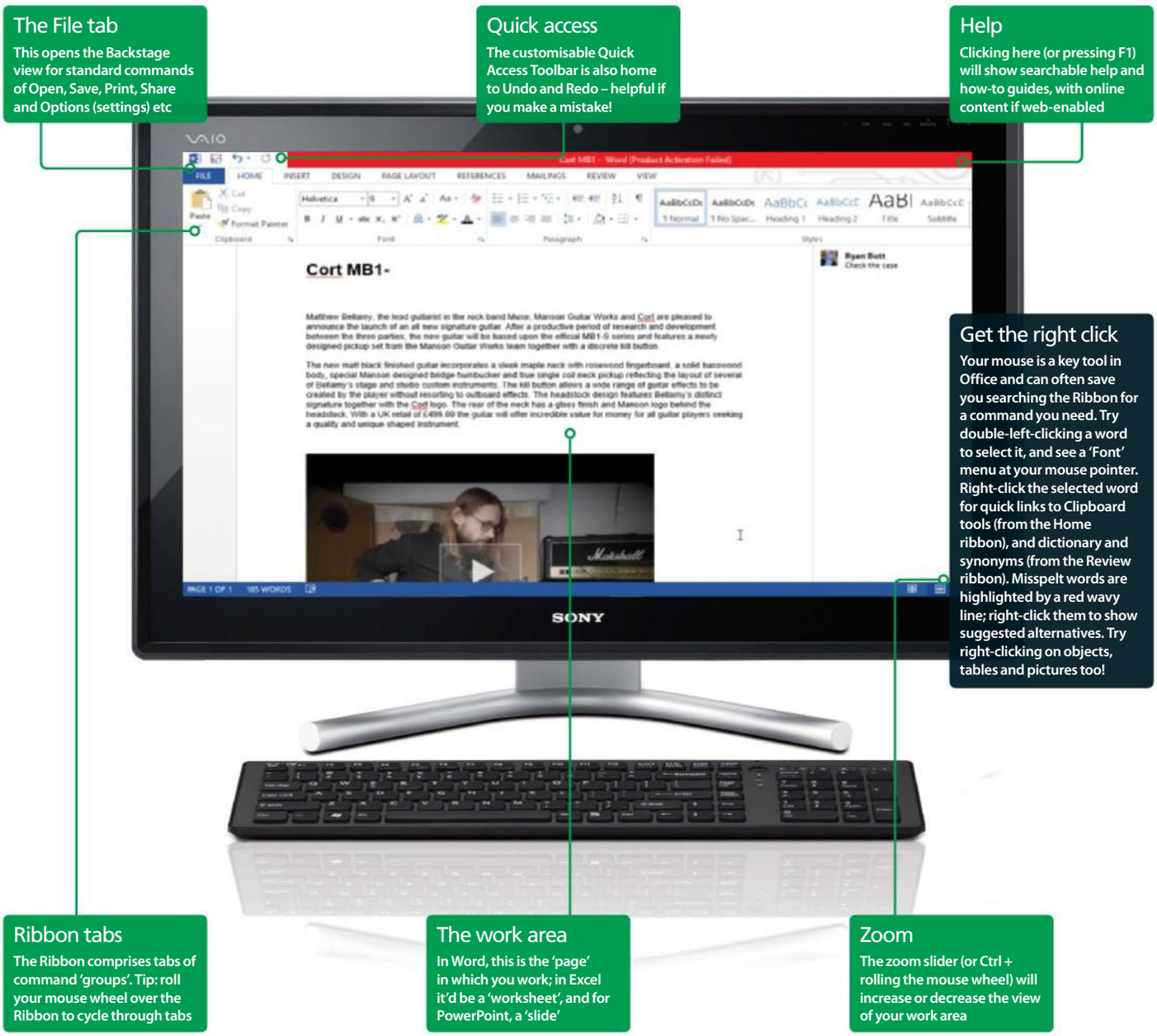
3: And there's more

Signing in also gives access to new web services, cloud storage, configurable file sharing and the Office web suite for working online and collaboratively with your contacts.

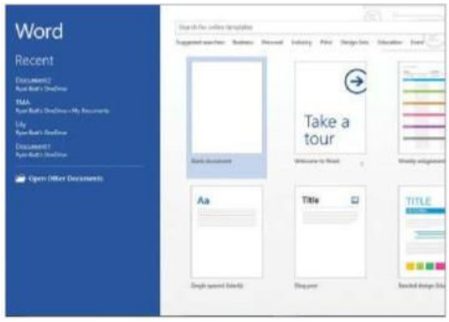
Explore the Microsoft Office interface

Office 2013 applications share a common visual experience based on the 'Fluid User Interface' introduced in 2007. Until then, the look and feel of Office had remained largely unchanged, using familiar drop-down menus and buttoned toolbars. The 2007 release introduced a tabbed 'Ribbon' as a new home to command icons, along with a customisable 'Quick Access Toolbar', and the 'Office Button' which echoed the Windows Start button of Vista, giving access to File Open, Save, Print and so on. Subsequent releases have evolved the interface into one that is cleaner and whiter, with subtle animations as you work.

Starting any Office application (Outlook aside) will first launch a home screen offering a range of handy premade templates to choose from, access to recently edited files, a search facility and the standard Open command. Of course, there is always the option of starting with a blank document. Having made your selection, the main working area will subsequently appear. Using Word as an example, let us take a look at the Fluid User Interface found in Microsoft Office.

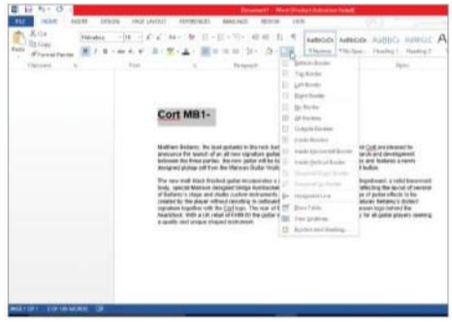


Create and format a .docx in Word



1: Choose a template

Launch Word 2013 and select a 'Blank Document' or template to get started. Enter some text and try out formatting options from the Home ribbon: select a font, size and colour from the Font group.

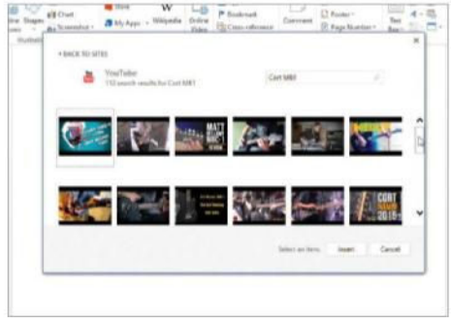


2: Get the right look

Writing a title, an address or need a numbered list? Check out the Paragraph group to position your text, change line spacing and add bullets or numbering. Select text with your mouse to change the formatting at any time.

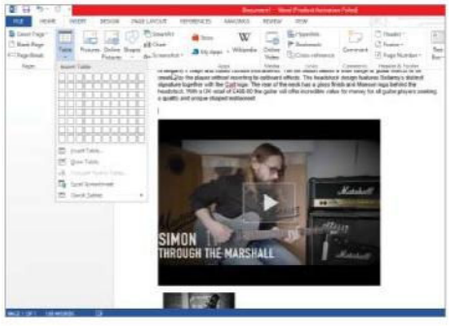
3: Insert some interest

The Insert ribbon helps place pictures, shapes and more. Selecting a placed object shows 'handles' to resize and rotate, a Layout Options icon for changing its position in text, and displays a Format ribbon for more options.



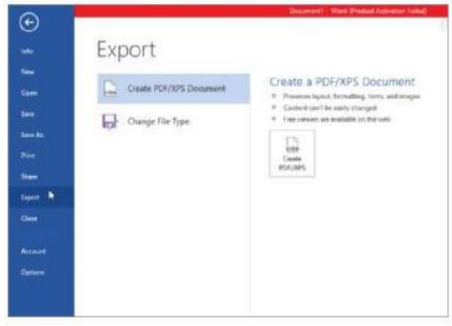
4: Add video interaction

A new feature of Word 2013 is an ability to add video to your documents. From the Insert tab, select Online Video from the Media group. In the search dialog that appears, find a YouTube clip or link to a video of your choice.



5: Tidy text with tables

Tables are a simple way to group text and objects. From the Insert tab, click Table and move your cursor around the fly-out to select a size; left-click to place. Selecting a table shows two new Table Tools ribbons for formatting.



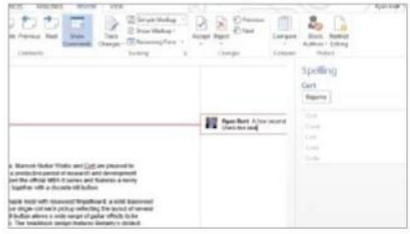
6: Save and share

When your document is complete, use commands in Backstage view to save, print or share. Try the Export tool to create a PDF of your work to ensure all can view it, regardless of their version of Word.

Use Review options

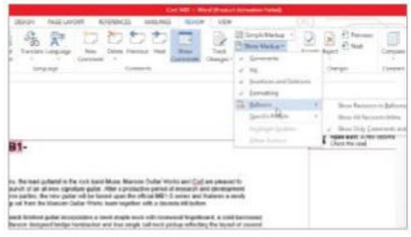
1: The Review ribbon

Tools you need to check your vocabulary, word count and translate text are available in the Proofing group.



2: Get a fresh perspective

Add notes to words or complete phrases, using Add Comment. and enter remarks in balloons that appear alongside.



3: Markup visibility

Use the Tracking group tools to show or hide any 'markups' made to your work, either globally or by individual reviewer.

4: Editing restrictions

Restrict access to your work via Backstage view: select Info and choose an option from the Protect Document drop-down.

Do more with the Office tools at your disposal

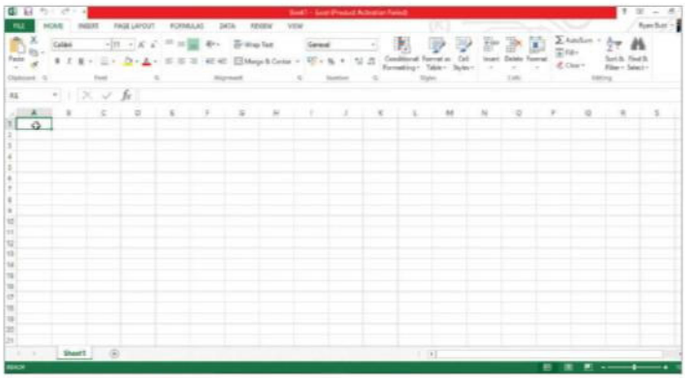
So we've seen the basics of Microsoft Word, but that is just the start. There are 11 more applications in the Office 2013 series, including Access for databases, Outlook for email, and Visio for diagramming and flow charts: what is in your suite will depend on the version of Office you have. Content from one Office application can be brought easily into another, while switching applications should feel quite natural, thanks to the Fluid User Interface.

Excel is one of the standard tools available in all versions of Office. On the face of it, the program can appear rather less interesting perhaps, than others in the suite; however, Excel is an incredibly powerful tool, containing hundreds of functions that many of us will never fully understand. In the right hands there is far more to the software than formulas: try searching the web for images of 'Japanese Excel Art' to see remarkable work by digital artists, simply using Excel.

PowerPoint is in many ways is the modern successor to the overhead projector. Used well, your presentations will hold audience attention with animation, sound, object transition effects and embedded video. The latest release includes better tools for shape creation and motion and will let you host presentations online.

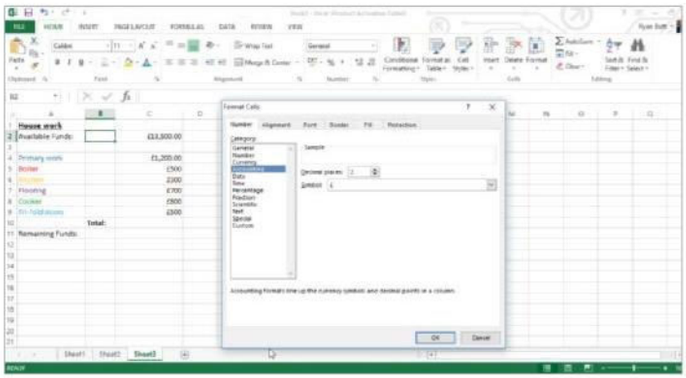
While it won't transform you into a digital artist, our Excel guide will help you with formulas and charts. The following guides introduce OneDrive – available to everyone for storing data their online – and PowerPoint with the basics of slide creation, the use of media and exporting your finished presentation to video.

> "Try searching the web for images of 'Japanese Excel Art' to see remarkable work by digital artists, simply using Excel"



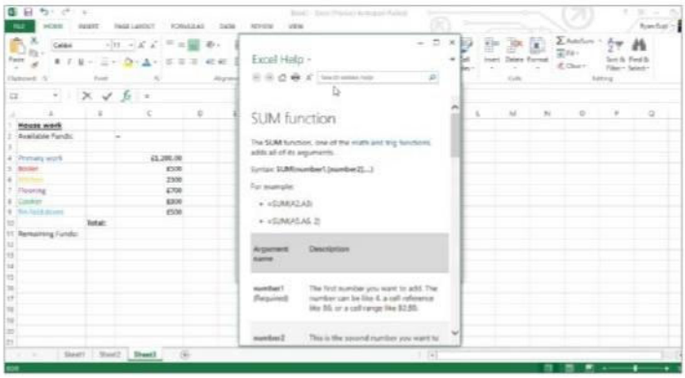
1: Begin with Excel

Open Excel and select 'Blank workbook'. Your workbook contains three blank 'worksheets'. Enter numbers and formulae into rows and columns of 'cells'; cite cells in formulas using their number/letter reference.



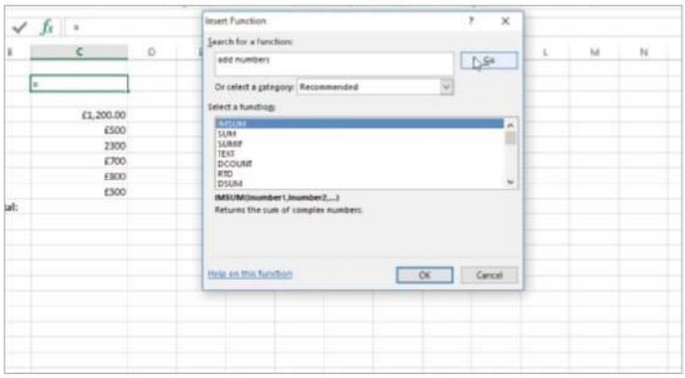
2: Use a category

Left-click a cell and drag to select a 'range'. On the Home ribbon in the Number group, choose a Category for the cells (text, currency etc), Add or remove rows and columns using 'Insert…' from the right-click menu.



3: Research formulas

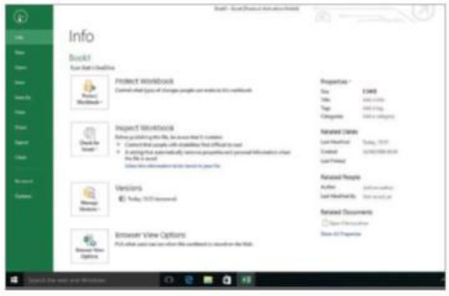
In order to fully grasp the basics of formulae, it is well worth searching Excel Help for 'Formulas' and experimenting with the Insert Function assistant (fx). Find fx below the Ribbon, adjacent to the Formula Bar.



4: Try the fx command

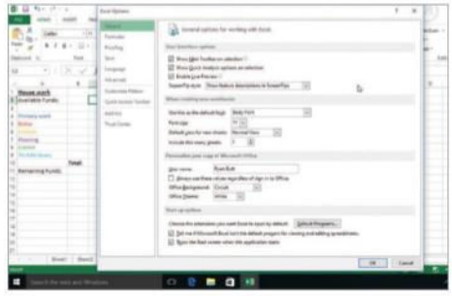
Pick a cell and click fx to input a formula: try searching for 'add numbers' and click Go. Select SUM from the list, then click Next'. Input numbers and click OK to view and modify the result in the Formula Bar.

Find and tweak application settings



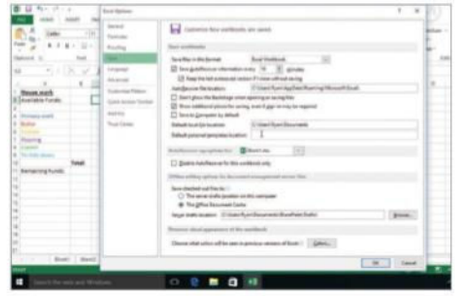
1: Go Backstage

Excel, like all Office applications, uses individual options to tune the way you work. To find them, click File to open Backstage view and then select Options from the sidebar.



2: Customise

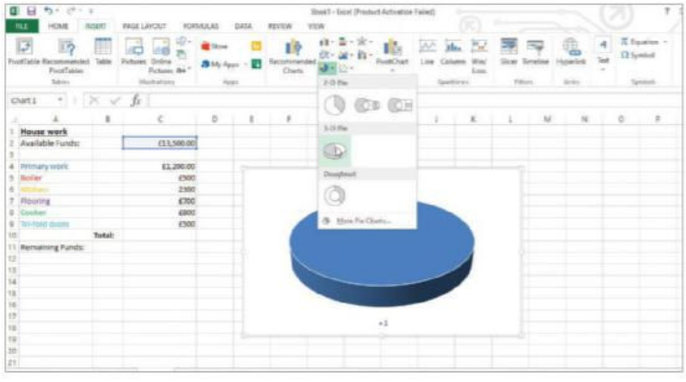
Options let you select colour schemes, change the language, switch around commands on the Ribbon and add commands to the Quick Access Toolbar. Use Office the way you like!



3: Save silently

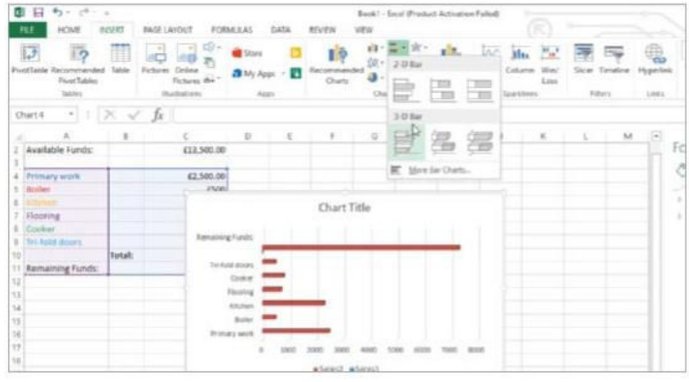
If you have ever lost hours of work, your most important option is found under Save. Check the box for 'Save AutoRecover information every' and select a time of your choosing.

Visualise your results



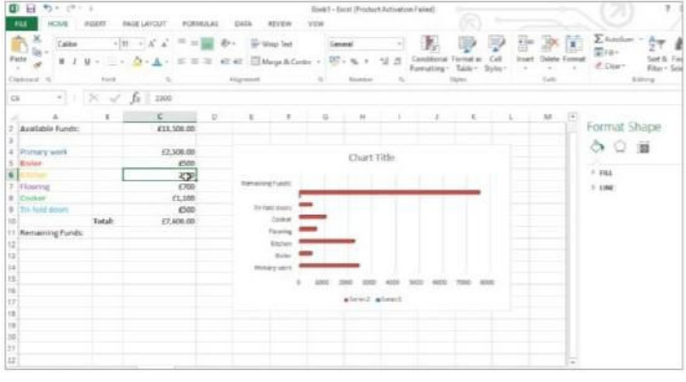
1: Get visual

They say a picture paints a thousand words, and that is true of Excel. It is often easier to interpret a table of figures with a chart or graph. The Insert ribbon has the tools you need to add clarity to your work.



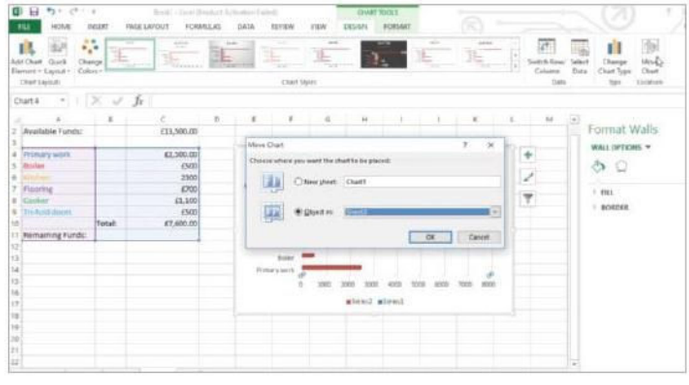
2: Pick a chart

Select the cell range you wish to show graphically and pick a Chart type from the Insert tab. Creating a chart displays two new chart-specific ribbons under Chart Tools, for formatting or changing the chart type.



3: See change

Try altering numbers in the range and watch how the chart dynamically updates. Modify your data selection using Select Data from the Data group in Chart Tools>Design (or right-click the chart for a shortcut).

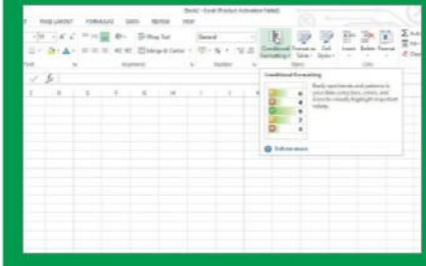


4: Free up space

If your worksheet is getting busy, you might consider moving your chart to a new sheet: use Move Chart from the Location group in Chart Tools> Design. Switch sheets using the tabs at the bottom left of the work area.

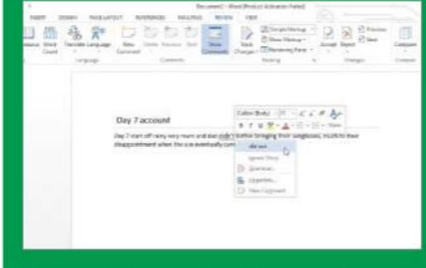
FAQs

How can I tell exactly what each ribbon icon does?



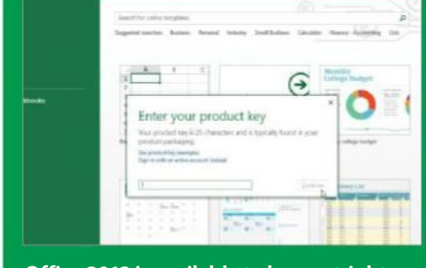
In recent Office versions, Microsoft introduced icon labels to help users identify commands, but it can still be difficult to glean an icon's exact function. To assist, hover your mouse pointer over an icon for a more detailed explanation.

Why do blue lines appear under my text?



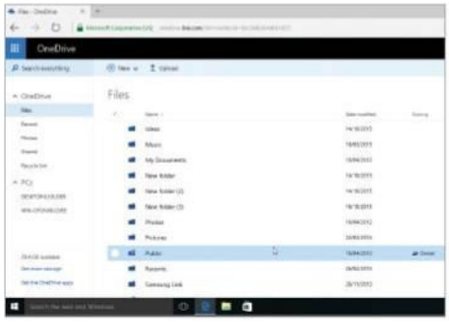
Text underlined with a blue wavy line indicates an error in grammar or misuse of a word, checked automatically as you work. Right-click on underlined text to see suggestions, run a grammar check, or to Ignore Once and clear the line.

I have heard Office 2013 is subscription-based?



Office 2013 is available to buy outright or to lease. Use Office 365 on a pay-monthly basis on a number of devices (dependent on subscription) with full access to Office online, through Microsoft OneDrive. See office.microsoft.com for more info.

Virtually access your files anywhere

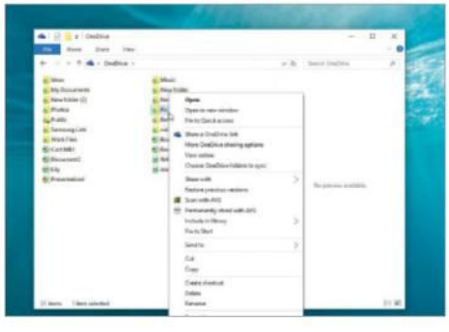


1: All for OneDrive

OneDrive provides 15GB of free online storage, linked to your Microsoft account. Use it to store any kind of file for remote access via a web browser, tablet or other mobile device. Plans are available to lease more space if needed.

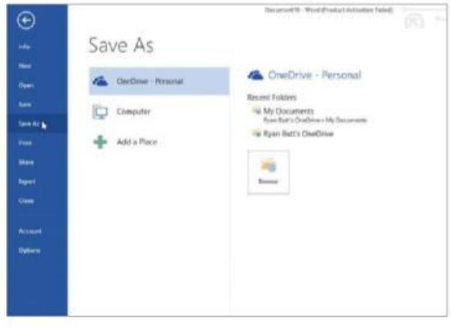
2: Use OneDrive locally

Using Windows 10, you'll find a OneDrive folder in File Explorer. This folder provides direct access to your online storage space; files can be added, removed and managed in the same way as any folder on your hard drive.



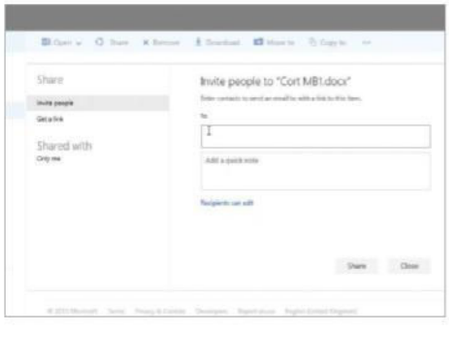
3: Lost connection?

To work with OneDrive files when you have no internet connection, you need to cache them locally. To do this, right-click on the OneDrive folder in File Explorer and click 'Make available offline'. Files will sync when you are online.



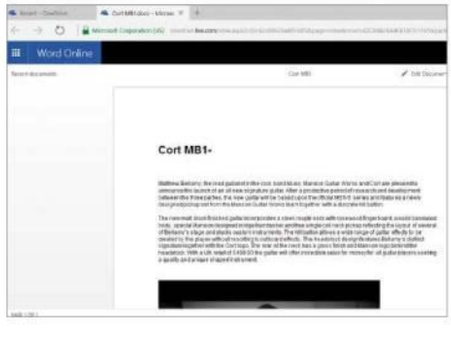
4: Upload your documents

In any Office application, open Backstage view, select Save As and OneDrive (the first time you do this you will be asked to sign into a Microsoft account). Alternatively, transfer files to your OneDrive folder in File Explorer.



5: Try online sharing

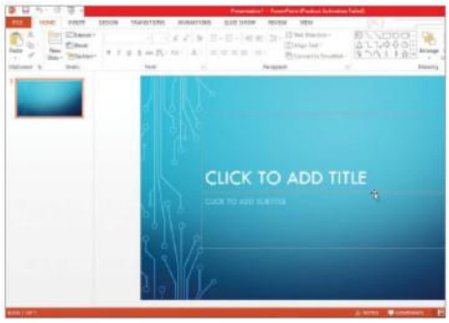
You can access and edit all your files online: sign in at **onedrive.live.com**. Locate files to share and check the corner-box of each. From the OneDrive bar, click Share and follow the prompts to invite contacts.



6: Collaborate in the cloud

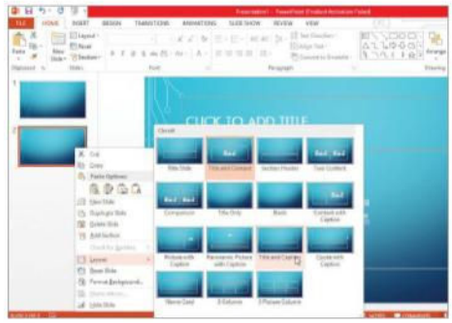
You can work remotely on shared files with any contacts who also use Office and OneDrive. Online, open shared files or start new ones with the OneDrive Create button. Try split-screening with Skype!

Begin presenting with PowerPoint



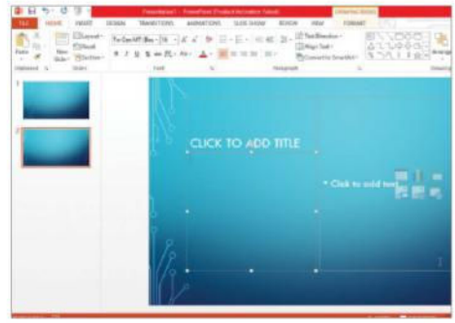
1: Create a new slideshow

Launch PowerPoint and choose a template, followed by a scheme. Click on Create to get started. Your opening 'title slide' will appear in the work area, with a sidebar ready to list all your slides, to the left.



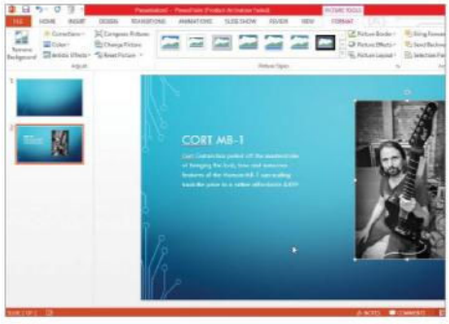
2: Add and format slides

Title the first slide and add formatting as you would in Word. Now you'll need more slides: simply click New Slide on the Home tab. For layout choices, right-click slides in the sidebar for a Layout fly-out of themes to choose.



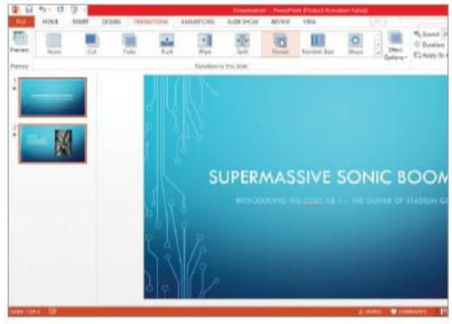
3: Use quick-access content

Notice how new slides show a bulleted comment and six insert links in the main text box: use these to add content, pictures, tables and more. Click and drag content to move it around and add more via the Insert ribbon.



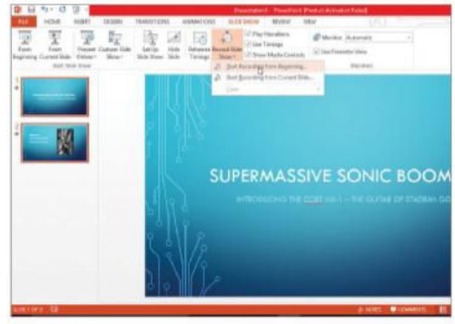
4: New tabs in the ribbon

Selecting items on your slide will display object-specific ribbons. Try setting fade-in effects for a YouTube video on the Video Tools>Playback ribbon, or make a 'Basic Box List' 3D via the SmartArt Tools>Design ribbon.



5: Add animation

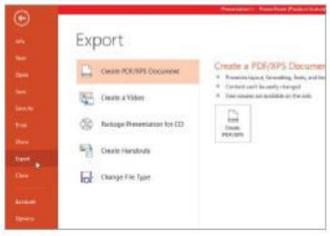
Try picking one or more slides in the sidebar, switch to the Transitions ribbon and add some effects, sounds and slide-advance Triggers. Do the same with individual text and objects using options from the Animations ribbon.



6: Include some narration

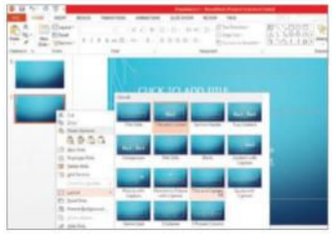
Add narration and slide timings with Record Slideshow on the Slideshow ribbon. Click on Start Recording, read your script and advance to the next slide using the space bar. When you are done, press F5 to watch your show.

Record your presentation



1: Choices for export

From File, open Backstage view and select Export in the sidebar. Click through to see a description of each available option.

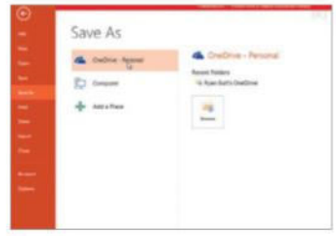


2: Create a video

Select 'Create a Video'. PowerPoint offers three quality options; make a selection based on the output you need.

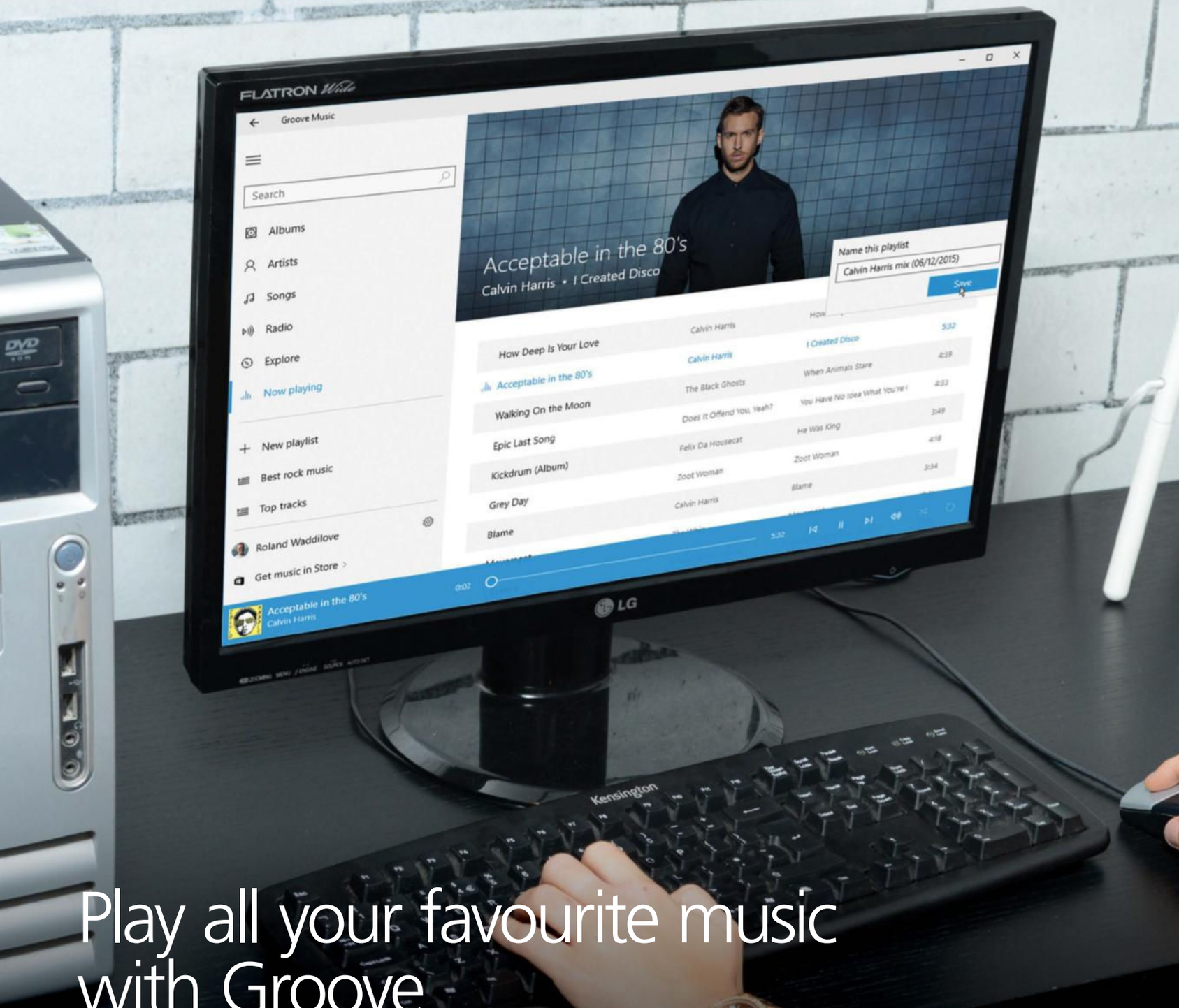
3: Need to narrate

If you've not already done so, the second option here will allow you to record narration and set slide-advance timings for your show.



4: Save final product

When done, click 'Create Video'. In the Save As dialog, pick a folder on your PC (or OneDrive for sharing) and click Save.



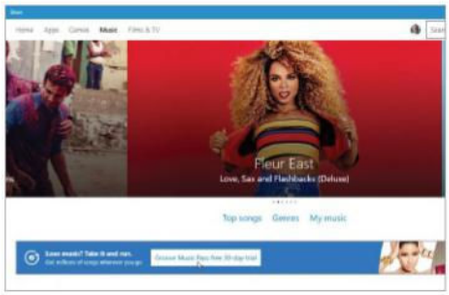
Play all your favourite music with Groove

Get a Groove Music Pass and play millions of tracks

Groove can be used in two ways: it can play your music on the computer's disk drive or OneDrive, and access Microsoft's online streaming music service. Get a Groove Music Pass and you instantly have access to a vast catalogue of music consisting of thousands of albums and millions of tracks. There is music from almost all artists, and with a subscription you can play any albums or tracks as often as you want on any device with the Groove app.

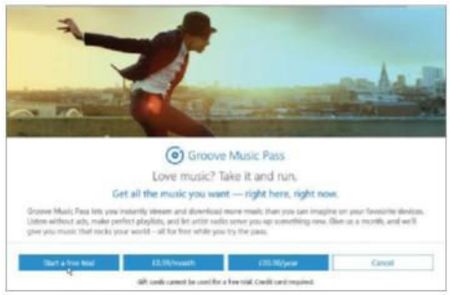
Groove enables you to explore the music catalogue and click and play any track without downloading it to the computer, and the music doesn't use up any disk space. The music covers over a dozen genres, and there are buttons and links to select your favourite genre and see top albums, or to search and explore the artists you love. Playlists can be created for all occasions and moods that contain top tracks and albums.

Sign up to Groove



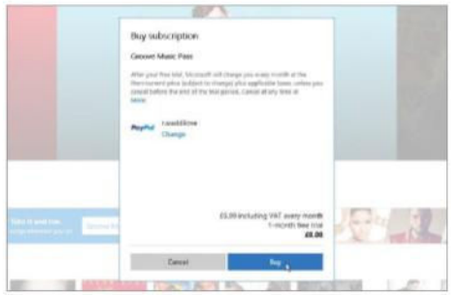
1: Visit the store

Open Groove on the Start menu and click 'Get music in store' in the bottom-left corner. Click 'Groove Music Pass free 30 day trial' when the Windows Store opens.



2: Select a subscription

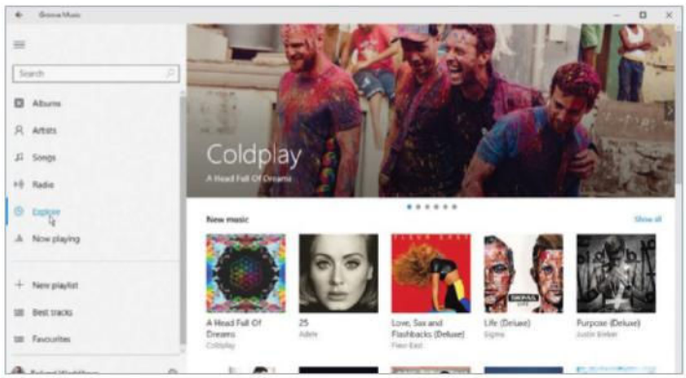
There are three options. You can choose the monthly or annual subscription, or the free trial. Click 'Start a free trial' and choose the subscription option later.



3: Buy a subscription

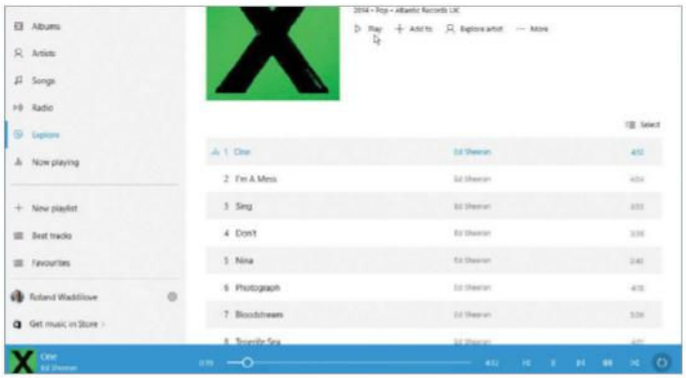
You must select a payment option, even if you want just the free trial. If you have a payment method already, click Buy. Otherwise follow the links to set one up.

Top tips for Groove



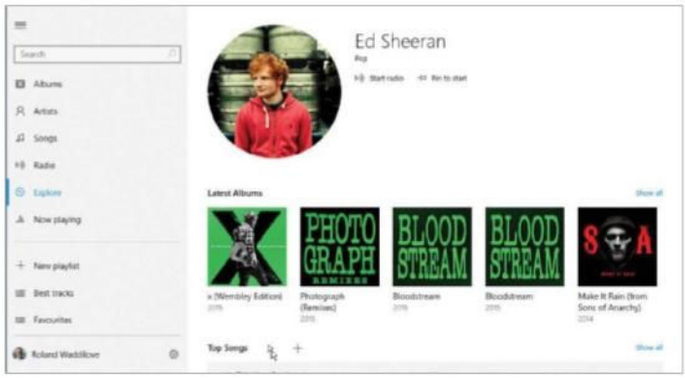
1: Explore the catalogue

A huge catalogue of music is available once you have signed up to Groove. Click Explore on the left and then browse the new music, top songs, albums and artists for your favourites.



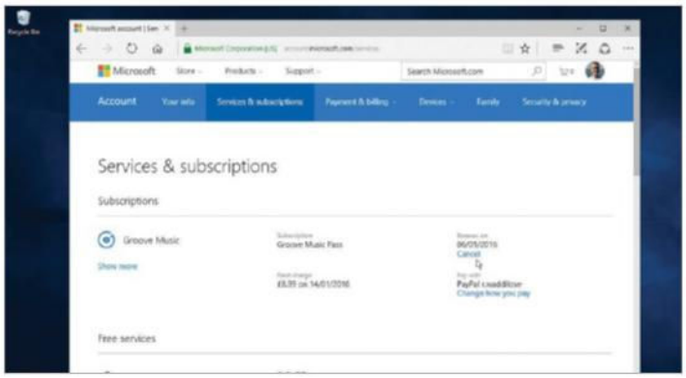
2: Listen to music

Click an album to view all the tracks. Click Play next to the album, or mouse over the track you want and click Play. Use the controls at the bottom to control the playback.



3: Check out an artist

On the home screen, click 'Show all' next to 'Top artists', or click 'Explore artist' on an album page. Then browse all their albums and songs. Simply click one to play it.



4: Manage your subscription

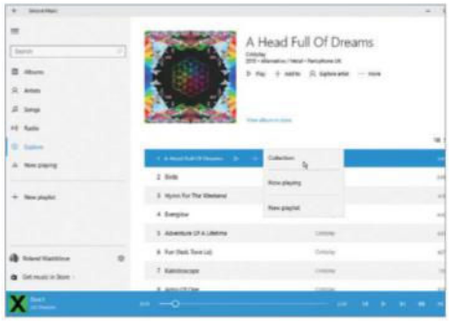
Click the gear icon in the bottom-left corner and click 'Manage subscription'. Edge opens and displays your services and subscriptions. Click Cancel if you want to stop the service before the first payment.

Explore the 'Now playing' screen

Whenever music is playing, whether it is a single track, an entire album or a radio station, you might wonder which artist and which track will be coming up next. Select the 'Now playing' link on the left-hand side to view information about the artists and tracks that are playing now and will be playing soon. The track title and the artist or album artwork is displayed in the top half of the screen, and it also lists the album name. In the bottom half of the screen is a list of tracks. There are many more than are initially visible, so scroll down to see them all.

If you do not like the track that is currently playing, the play controls at the very bottom of the screen enable you to skip to the next one. You can keep doing this until you find a song that you want to listen to. There are also controls to add tracks to playlists and to save the 'Now playing' song to a playlist.

Create collections and playlists

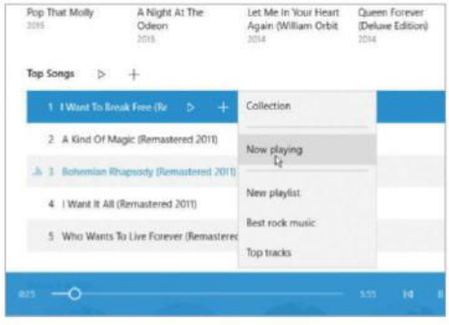


1: Add to your collection

A collection is the music stored on the disk drive. Add any music in the Groove catalogue to your collection by simply clicking the plus buttons and selecting Collection on the menu that is displayed.

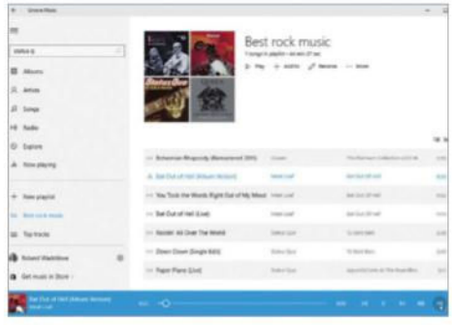
2: Create a playlist

A playlist is a convenient way to organise music that you love to listen to. Create one by clicking any plus button and selecting 'New playlist'. Name it and click Save. It appears on the left.



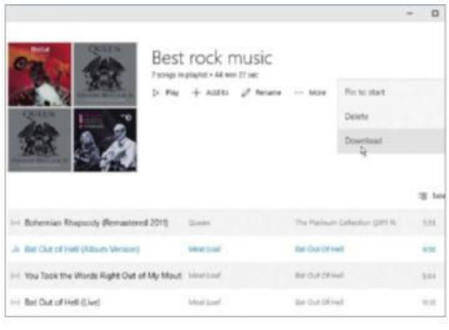
3: Add to 'Now playing'

Click a plus button and you'll see some options to add the music to an existing playlist, add it to a new one, or even add it to the 'Now playing' list. 'Now playing' is the queue of tracks to be played.



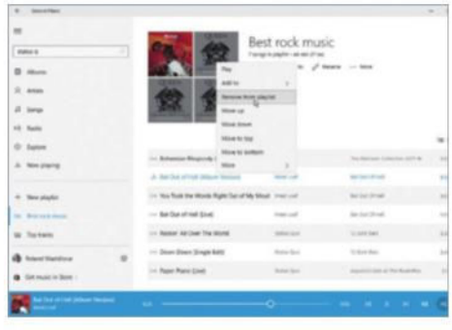
4: Play a playlist

Select a playlist on the left-hand side in order to view it. Click the shuffle button in the bottom right-hand corner to select the tracks in a random order if you would prefer, and then click Play.



5: More playlist actions

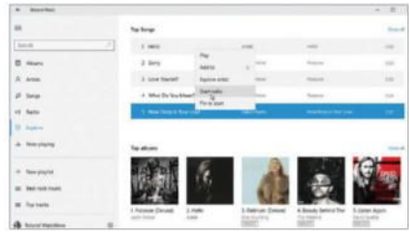
Click the More link under the playlist title and select Pin in order to make the playlist accessible from the Start menu. You can also download all of the tracks to the disk or delete the playlist altogether.



6: Put tracks in playlists

Right-click on a track in a playlist and there are a number of useful options. You can click 'Remove from playlist' in order to delete it, or move it up or down to move it to the top or bottom of the list.

Play radio stations

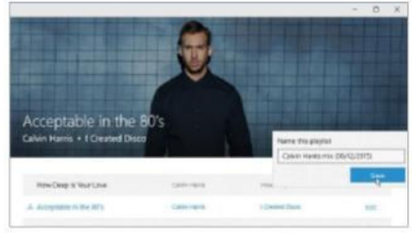


1: Create a station

Right-click on a track, such as in an album or a top-songs list, and then select 'Start radio'.

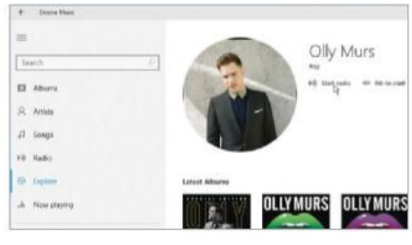
2: View station playlist

Want to know what music the radio station will play? Simply click 'Now playing' on the left.



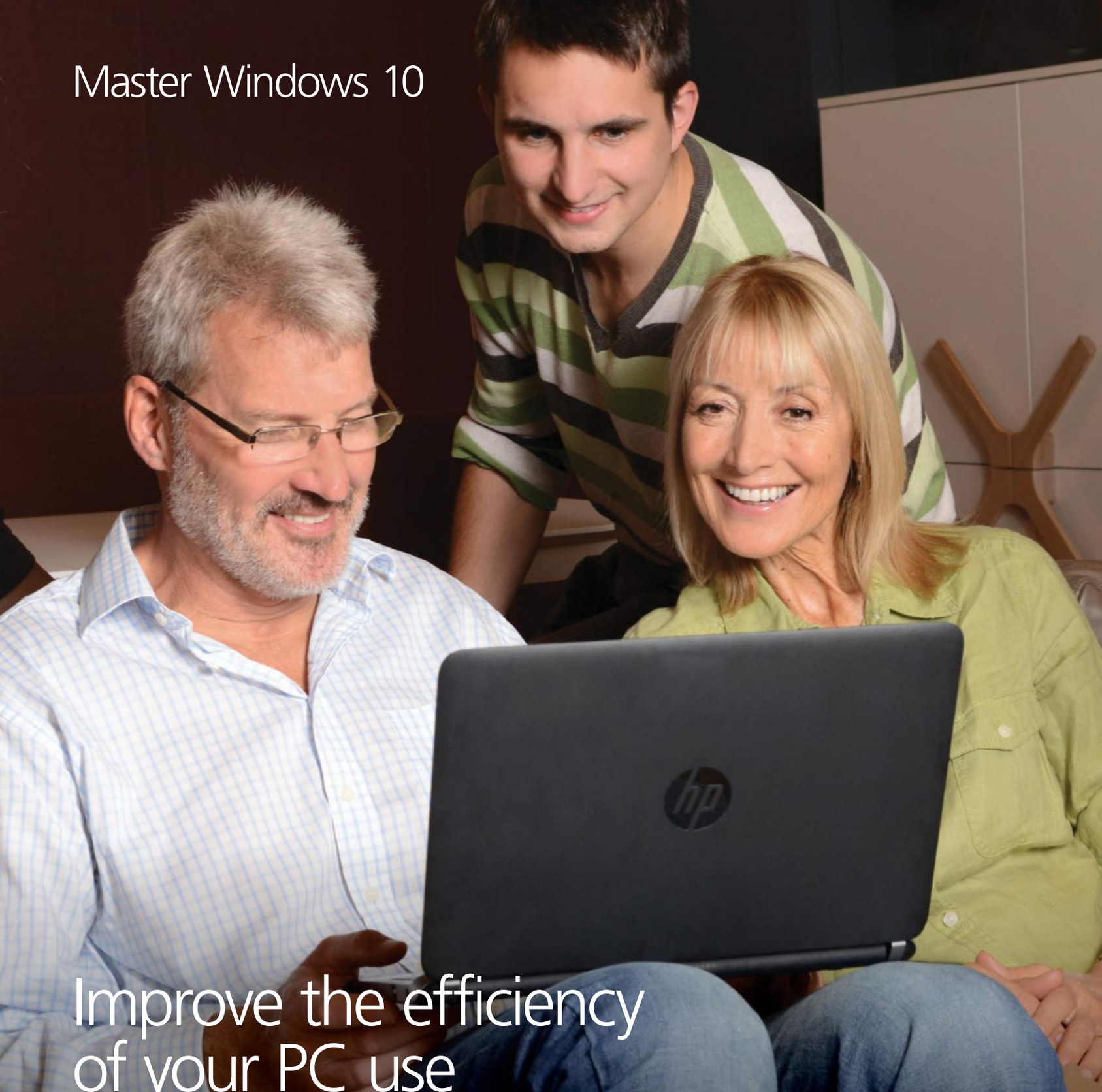
3: Save radio stations

Radio stations can be saved by clicking the Save button on the right and naming the playlist.



4: Select favourite artists

Find your favourite artist and click 'Start radio' in order to listen to their music and similar tracks.



Improve the efficiency of your PC use

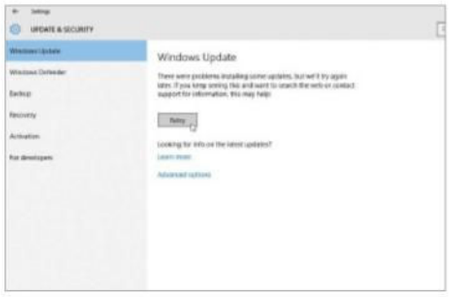
Use less and get more out

Improving the efficiency of the way you use your computer can not only increase your own productivity but also the performance of the PC.

On laptops, batteries are far better than they used to be: a charge will last several hours rather than the couple you used to get a few years back. While the extra time is great, there are normally ways you can squeeze a bit more out of your battery. Making your computer perform more efficiently can have you running a faster machine that lasts longer.

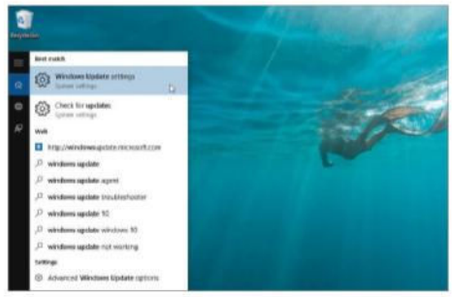
In this tutorial we'll show you both software and hardware tricks to getting more from your laptop or desktop machine. This should hopefully have you running for longer, and more quickly. Adopting ideas you use here and applying them to general use cases when doing thing things with your machine leads to a much more enjoyable general user experience with Windows 10.

Update your version of Windows



1: How it happens

Updates to Windows come in more than one form. One is an OS upgrade from the Windows Store; the other is in Windows updates. An OS upgrade will often contain updates.



2: Use Windows Update

Type 'Windows Update' in the Start menu and press Enter to open the Windows Update app. Click on 'Check now' – if any updates are available, you'll be given the option to install.

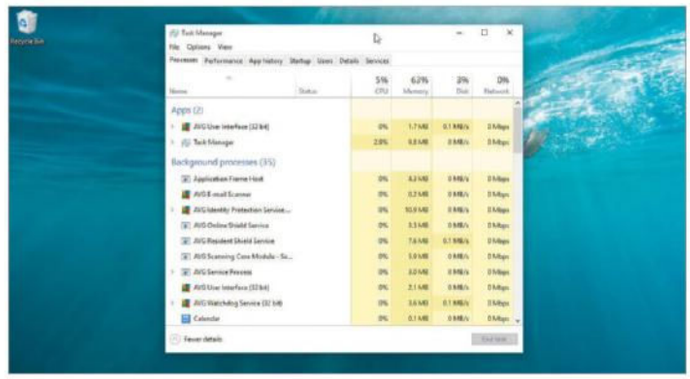
3: Upgrade from Store

As yet, this has only been for users upgrading to Windows 10 Pro. If an upgrade is available, it'll be on the left tile in the store. You can then install the upgrade as though it were an app.

Increase laptop battery life

1: Dim the screen

Perhaps the single biggest battery saver is to have your screen's backlight set lower. On some laptops, this will give you up to another hour of stated battery life, depending on what you're doing with it.

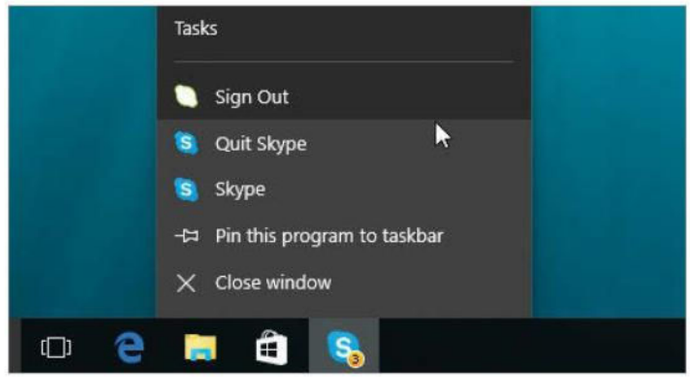


2: Close apps using CPU

Apps that are using a lot of CPU cause extra battery drain. Look under the Process tab in Task Manager to see if you can close anything using a lot of CPU. Giving the CPU less to do will vastly increase battery life.

3: Disconnect other devices

Do you have a mouse plugged in? What about your phone or tablet? When they're plugged in, your laptop will be charging them. If you're charging another device, you're going to use a lot of battery.



4: Stop multitasking

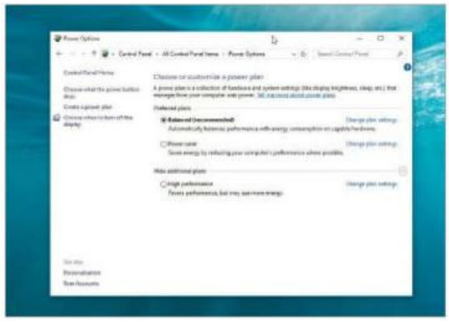
As well as closing apps using a lot of CPU, closing apps running at the same time can make a huge difference – besides, most of the time you're only looking at one thing. Don't run anything you don't need.

Find your way around system tools

With a vast range of features in Windows, it's important to know how to get around the system, and know what tools are going to help with any issues. There are many ways to do all of these things, and some way more advanced than others. Items like the Windows Event Log will store detailed information about lots of different things – from general information when something specific happens, to very specific troubleshooting and error info when something has gone wrong.

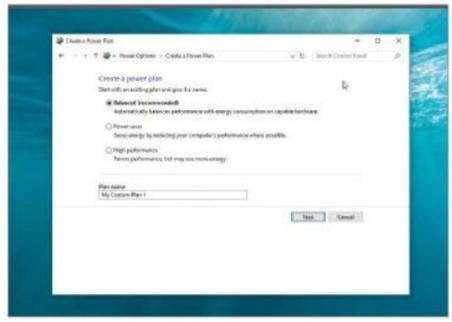
Simpler tools such as the Task Manager can often help us identify a problem or resource hog more quickly and efficiently, though, so that's what we'll be taking a look at right now. The Task Manager gives you a very quick and easy-to-understand view of what's currently happening with your computer, but also links to other more advanced tools. We'll detail how to get to them, but it is beyond the scope of this guide to cover the use of them. Some aren't that difficult to understand, so take a look!

Create custom power plans for every occasion



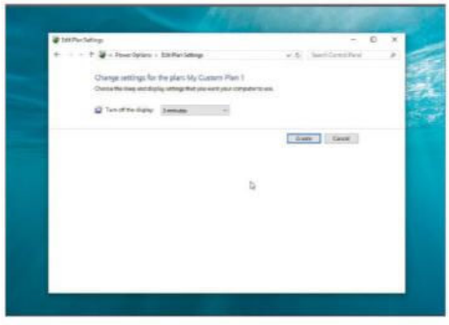
1: Why do it?

Power plans are a very quick way to switch between different power settings on your desktop or laptop. With a laptop they provide extra benefit by being able to select default brightness settings etc to improve battery life.



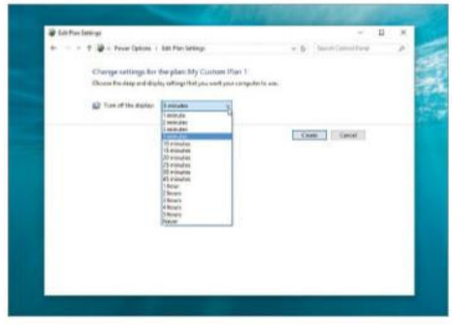
2: Create a new plan

To create a new plan, simply hit the hyperlink at the side of the Power Options dialog. You'll be presented with three options – these set the basic parameters of a power plan so that they're easier for you to tweak.



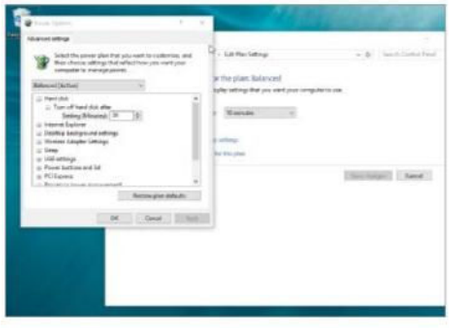
3: Set it up

As soon as you've selected a type of plan, you'll be asked how long it should be before the display turns off – either on battery, or plugged in. You'll the be taken to Power Options, where you can Change Plan Settings.



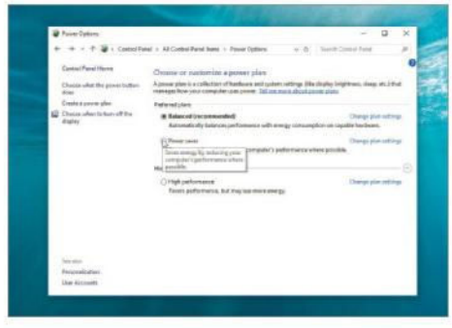
4: Into the specifics

On a laptop you'll be able to select things like default brightness on this screen – otherwise, you'll just have the options for turning off the display here, plus a link to more advanced settings. We'll look at that next.



5: More advanced settings

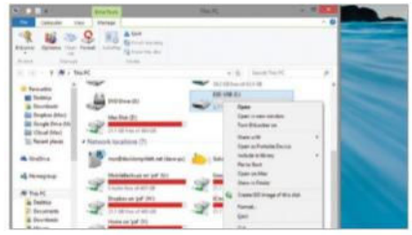
By clicking the 'Advanced power settings' link, a dialog will come up. This will allow you to select what the computer does during certain operations, or whether certain devices are allowed to wake it up, etc.



6: Select your plan

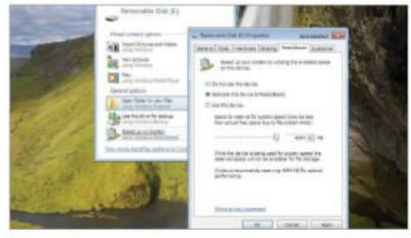
Switching between power plans is pretty quick. In the system tray, you'll see a battery icon. Click it. This will bring up a selection box that you can use to quickly switch to another power mapping. The change is instantaneous.

Make use of ReadyBoost



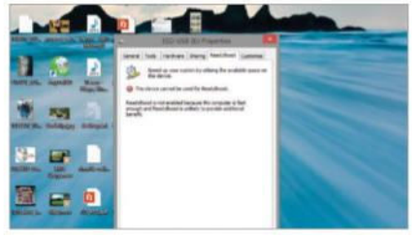
1: What it does

ReadyBoost utilises space (or a whole device) on a USB drive to speed up your computer using flash storage.



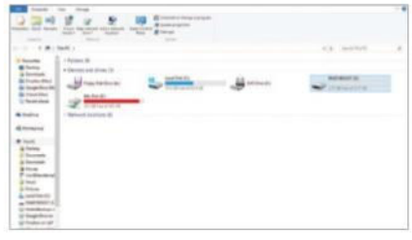
2: Turn it on

Right-click the drive to use in My Computer, click the ReadyBoost tab and choose your mode of operation.



3: You're fast enough!

On desktop or laptop computers running a solid state drive, ReadyBoost will be unavailable to you.



4: Reap the benefit

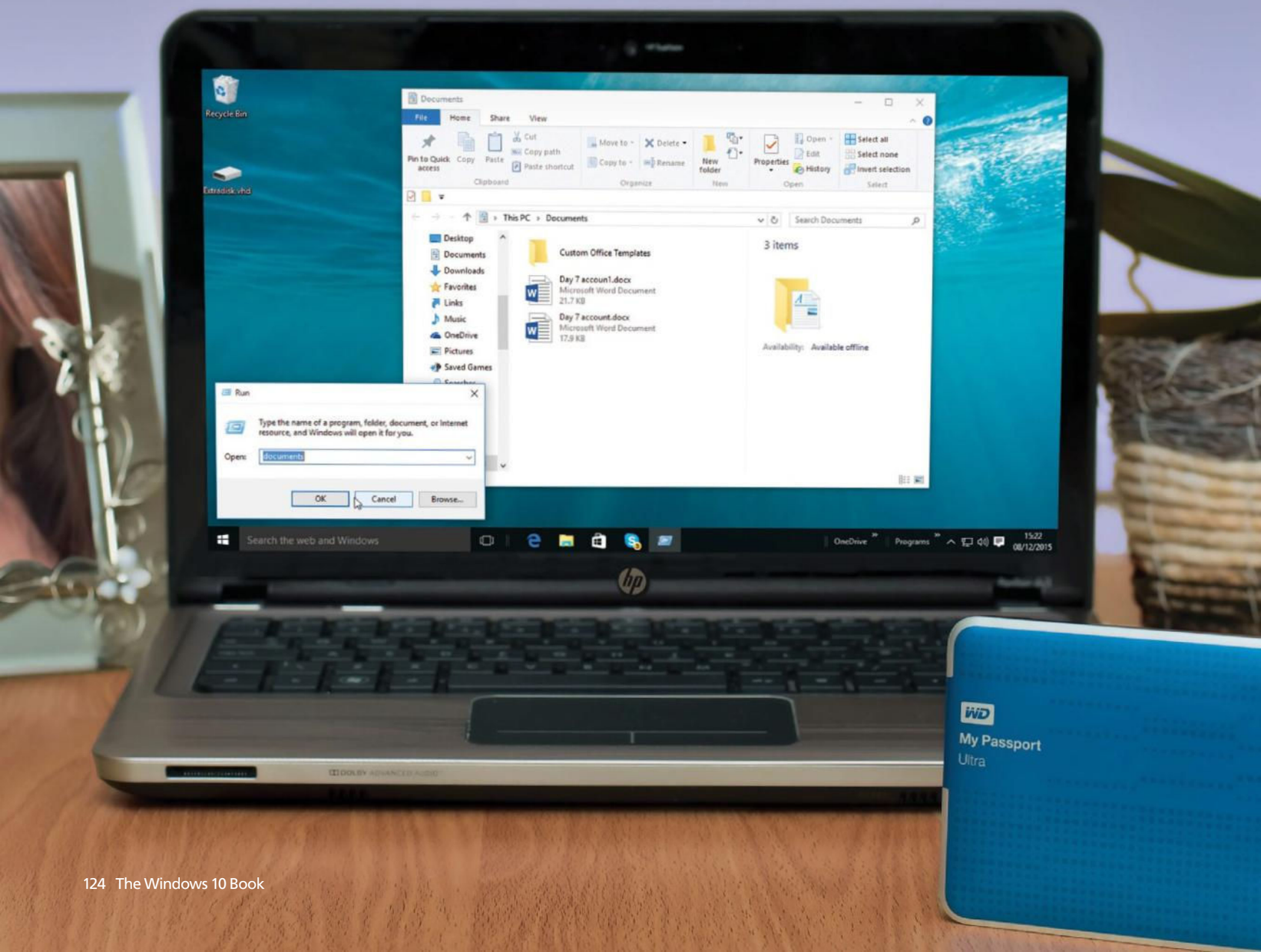
To use the ReadyBoost disk, leave it plugged in. Windows will use this for some system files first, improving speed.

Begin using Windows' advanced functions

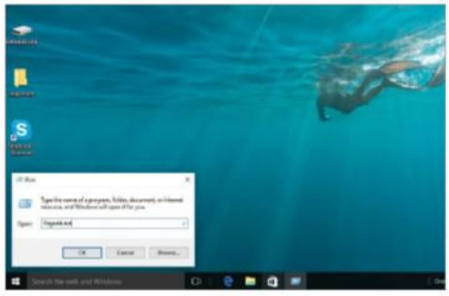
Get more from your Windows PC

Advanced functions are not as complex as they may sound and a quick look around at what is available will open your eyes to the possibilities. We will detail some parts of Windows 10 that you can use to keep your files secure, speed up your computing and even record what you are doing. There are many features available and it can be difficult to know what to look for, but excitingly, the tips outlined in this section are merely the top of a very large iceberg.

As always, you will need to be confident in your knowledge and be aware that some changes can have negative effects. If you are careful, however, you will only see benefits from the tutorials here and will be able to delve deeper into the workings of your system. The more you know, the more likely you'll be able to fix problems if they occur in the future. Let's start looking at the advanced functions.

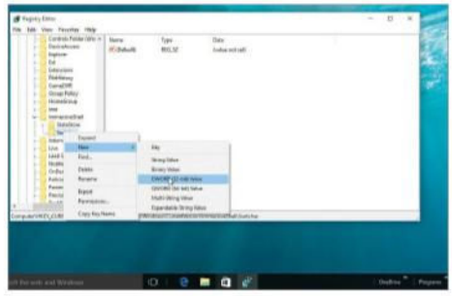


Manage application closures



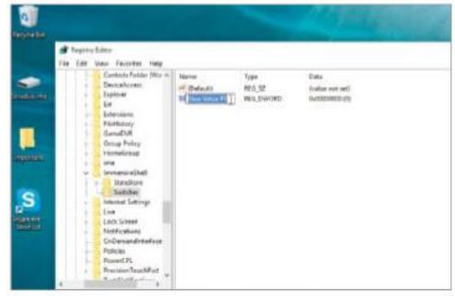
1: Open the Registry

Right-click on Start and then click Run. Now type 'Regedit.exe' in the field and proceed past the warnings to enter the Registry. Be very careful when making changes here.



2: Find the right area

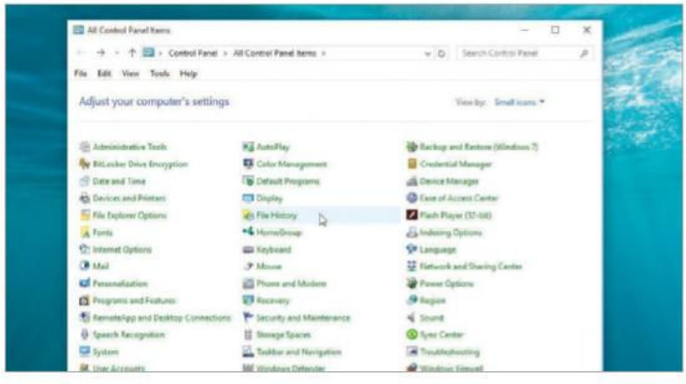
Go to HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\ImmersiveShell\Switcher, then right-click, select New, then 'DWORD (32-bit) Value'.



3: Set a value

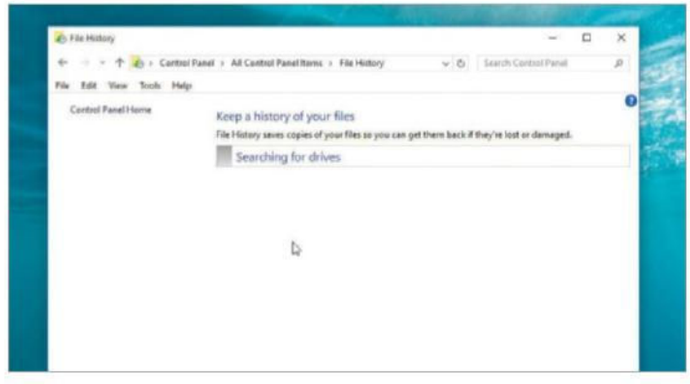
Set a value of 100 and play around with the number to see which works for you. This tweak lets you define the mouse range when closing apps. In effect, it changes the closure speed.

Back up and restore documents



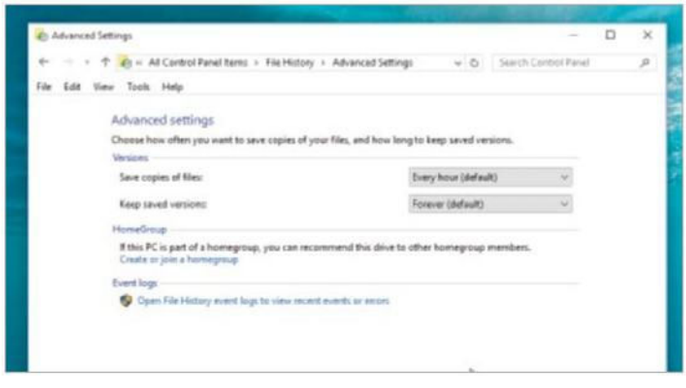
1: Find the feature

Open the Control Panel and look for the File History option. This is a feature that you'll likely use every day in the background, so it's worth spending time setting it up for your specific needs to secure your files.



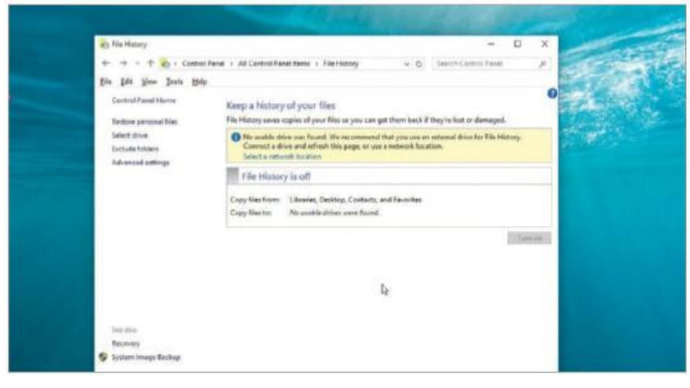
2: Choose a drive

Choose a drive that you would like to use to back up your files and then click the 'Exclude folder' option on the left if there are folders that do not need to be backed up. You are almost ready to start using File History.



3: Set up advanced settings

Click 'Advanced settings', then spend some time choosing how often files should be backed up, how much disk space should be used by File History and, crucially, how long saved versions of files will be stored for.



4: Your files are safe

The initial backup may take some time, but once done you will be able to access any saved file and preview it with one click. At this point, you'll be able to use arrows to navigate through multiple versions of each file.

Use God Mode to access major features

God Mode is a powerful name for any feature, but in this case it holds much relevance. Any Windows 10 PC gives you the ability to make changes over the entire system and doing so will usually involve having to navigate through settings, folders and at times very advanced areas of the setup. This means that you are less likely to accidentally make changes that cause harm. However, once you are more familiar with everything, you may want all of these changes in one handy place.

When you create a God Mode folder, it will contain a huge number of tweaks that you can make and information about the system which may come in useful. Indeed, the use of a simple list for navigation actually makes it easier to understand than the default set-up in Windows 10 and all of the sections are logically laid out for even more efficient usage. If you take some time to understand everything that is included in the God Mode folder, you will be able to make changes quickly and understand system tweaks.

A handy folder

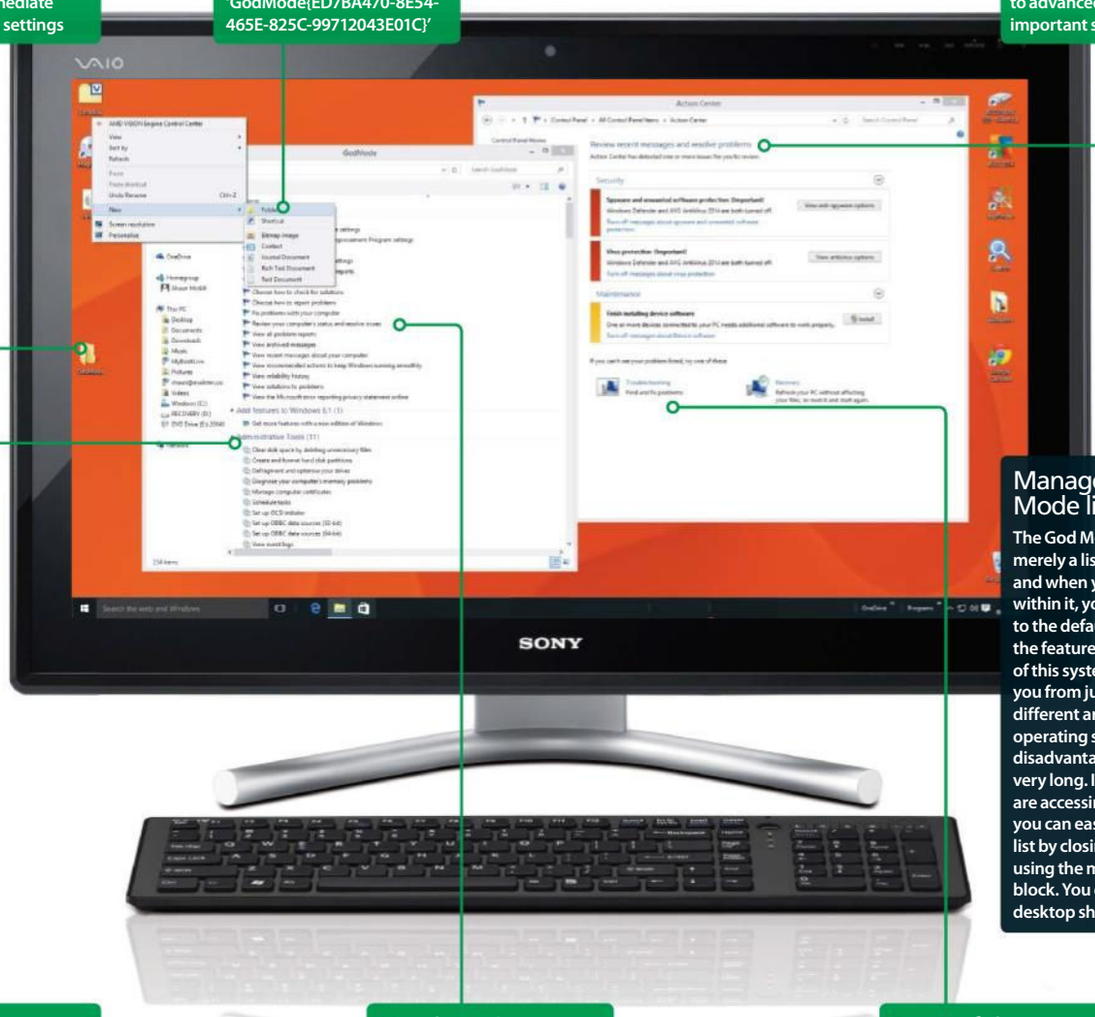
Try to create the folder on your desktop if possible, so that you have immediate access to all of the settings

Create a folder

Your very first task is to create a new folder and to name it 'GodMode{ED7BA470-8E54-465E-825C-99712043E01C}'

System access

When you open the folder, you will now have quick access to advanced settings and important system messages



Manage the God Mode list

The God Mode folder is merely a list of shortcuts and when you click on items within it, you will be taken to the default location for the feature. The advantage of this system is that it saves you from jumping through different areas of the operating system, but the disadvantage is that the list is very long. If you find that you are accessing certain sections, you can easily cut down the list by closing other sections using the markers above each block. You can also create desktop shortcuts to features.

Crucial tools

The list is very long and really does offer quick shortcuts to every single conceivable feature you will need

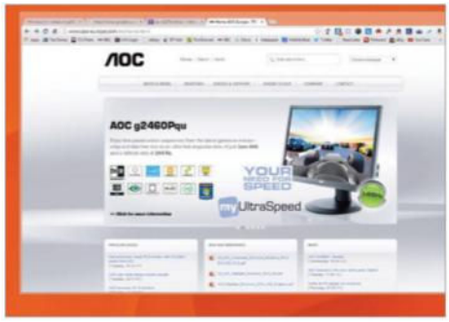
Handy options

At the top of the list in the God Mode folder you will see 'Action Center' items which offer useful information

Be careful

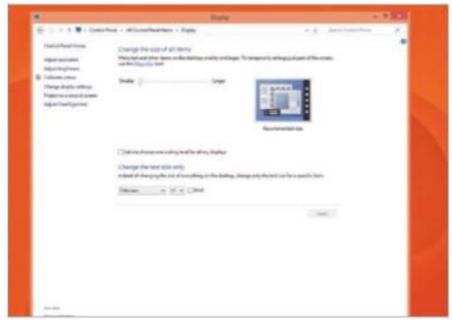
Some of the tweaks in the list are crucial to the running of the system so be careful when making changes

Add extra monitors and change settings



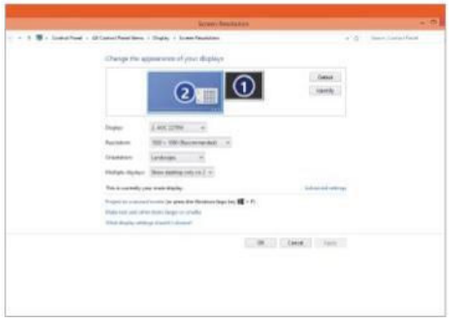
1: Find a driver

Make sure you have access to an official manufacturer driver for the monitor you wish to add. This will give you many extra options including some basic functionality such as brightness control and sound adjustments.



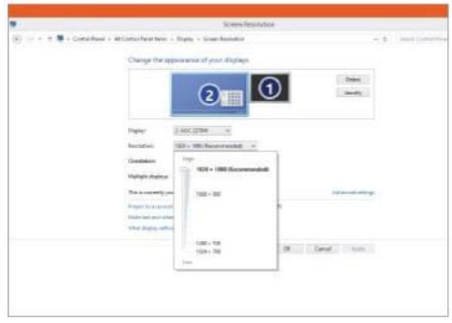
2: Connect the new monitor

You will see obvious indicators as to how well a new monitor is working from the moment you turn it on and attach it to your PC. When you can see the display, go to the Control Panel and navigate to the Display option to proceed.



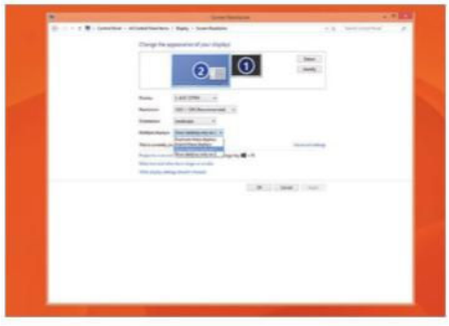
3: The main settings

Click 'Change display settings' in the left column and immediately you should see two monitors shown at the top. They will be shown at the top visually, with the main display set as the larger icon. Now click the Display option.



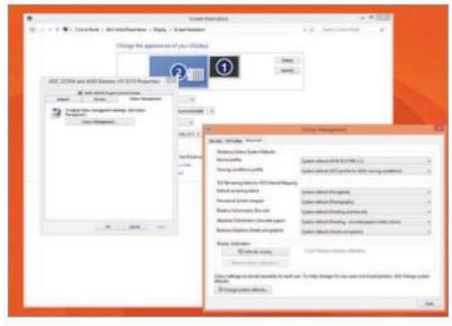
4: Choose a monitor

Select the monitor you want to configure from the drop-down box and then deal with the resolution first. Take some time to ensure that it looks crisp and, perhaps more importantly, that it looks consistent with the other monitor.



5: The crucial settings

Click 'Multiple displays' and take some time to choose how the monitors will work together. You can choose to duplicate displays, extend over one landscape or show the desktop on only one of them. There are many options.



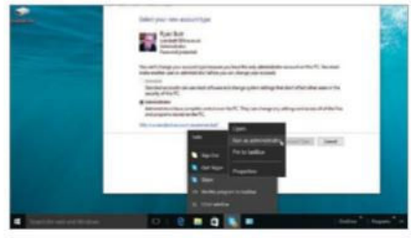
6: Adjust every area

Click 'Advanced settings' with a monitor selected, and you'll get access to much deeper settings such as refresh rate and colour management. If a driver is installed, you may be surprised at how much control you have.

Run apps as an admin

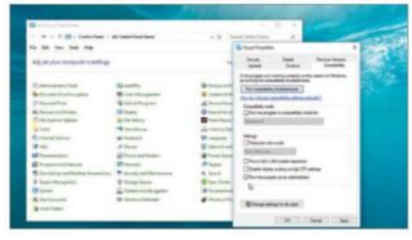
1: Wide-ranging access

You'll need to access User Accounts in the Control Panel and make sure your account is already set up as an administrator.



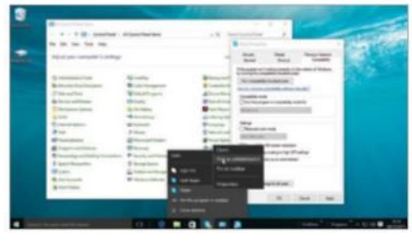
2: Admin from anywhere

To run an app as admin from the taskbar, right-click it, then right-click the app name and select 'Run as administrator'.



3: Always run as admin

Right-click apps anywhere and select Properties. Click on Compatibility and tick to set the app to run as admin at all times.



4: Be very careful!

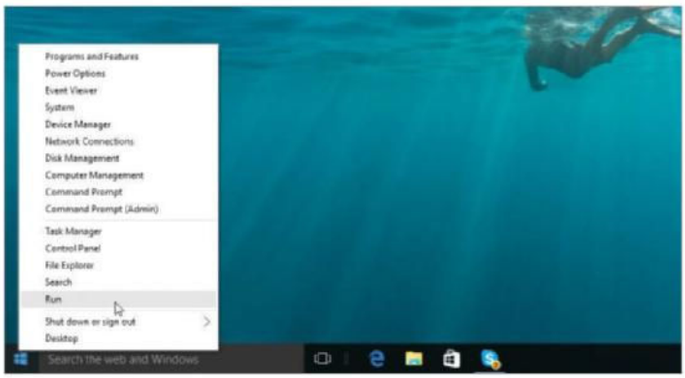
Running as an admin allows an app wide-ranging access to your PC. Be careful with browsers in case of malware and viruses.

Understand Windows run commands

It is likely that you have seen people using Run commands in Windows in the past and considered them to be the remit of programmers and people with advanced knowledge of Windows. However, you are missing out if you do not take advantage of what Run commands offer and the efficiency they can bring. These commands do not need programming knowledge and are very easy to input and execute once you understand a few of them. Familiarity will soon take hold and many of the commands will simply require typing a word to initiate, and potentially this method is much quicker than scouring the various screens and areas in Windows 10 to find specific settings. Also, using Run commands gives you precise control over what you are doing and as your experience increases, you will be able to tweak parts of the system that you would not touch before and be confident that nothing untoward will happen. Above all else, Run commands give you the power to manipulate your PC and the software installed on it in almost unlimited ways and they are extremely beneficial when used correctly.

It may feel antiquated at first to use such a basic interface to input instructions, but there is a reason why these commands have lived on for decades and that is the fact that they are still incredibly versatile and efficient when an experienced user is inputting them. They also represent an area that you can grow your confidence in over time as you start to take more control over your PC, which will then let you quickly deal with any problems. You will also be able to make improvements to your system in seconds and ultimately save yourself time.

> "You will miss out if you do not take advantage of what Run commands offer and the efficiency they can bring"

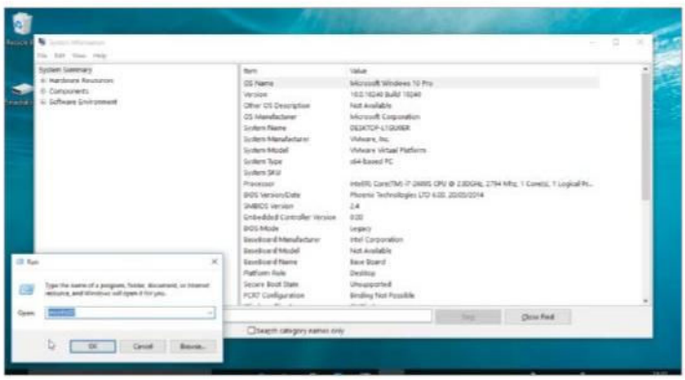


1: The Run shortcut

Right-click Start and select Run to bring up a small window with one field available to input data in. You can also add quicker shortcuts to the Run command to the Windows 10 Start menu or the desktop.

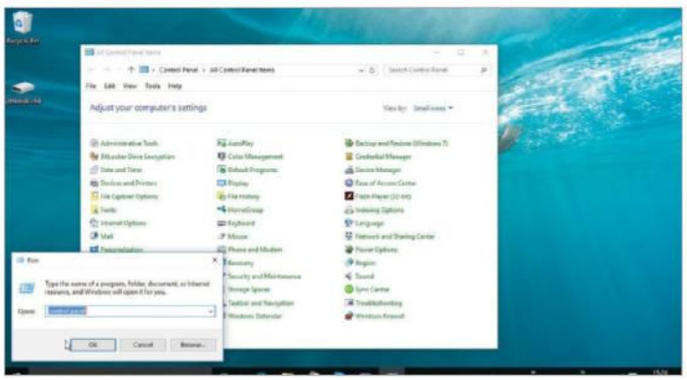
2: Simple commands

A simple command could be entering 'documents' to open the Documents folder; 'notepad', 'downloads', 'videos' and 'calc' are obvious and give you immediate access to apps and locations.



3: Quick information

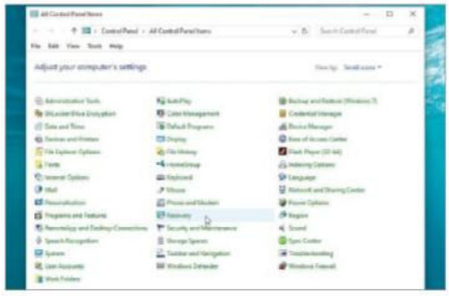
You can also view vital information about your PC with one command such as 'msinfo32', which starts the System Information feature. From here you can check your system to make sure it is all working properly.



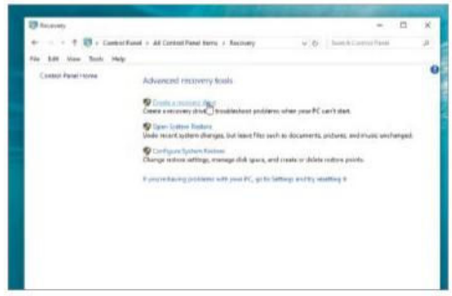
4: Run everything

From managing ClearType settings to checking the time and date to seeing a character map, you can do it all with Run commands. Find a list on the internet and check to see which ones will be most useful to you.

Create a recovery drive



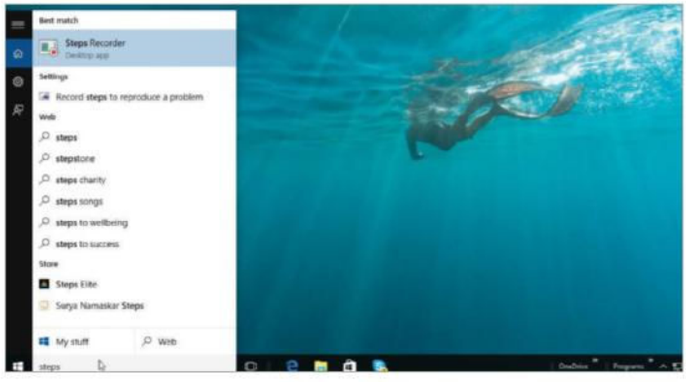
1: Access mode
Go to the Control Panel and search for Recovery. In this folder you will see an option to 'Create a recovery drive' to troubleshoot problems when you PC doesn't start.



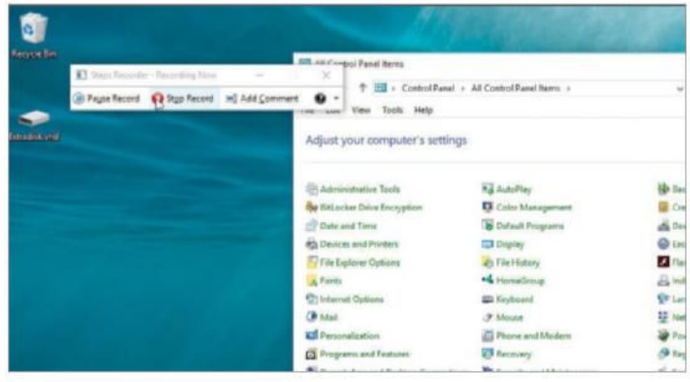
2: Select option
Click on this option and then authorise the changes to be made to be taken to the start of the setup process. You will now need to work through the various steps outlined.

3: Initiating setup
The setup process will take a few minutes but before too long you will have a safety net in place in case your PC experiences problems starting up.

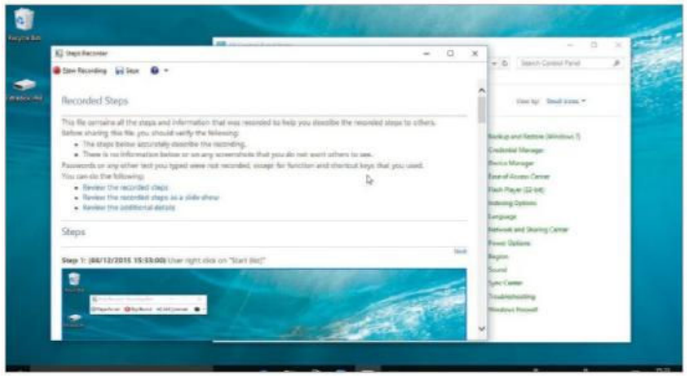
Demonstrate processes with Steps Recorder



1: The feature
Search for 'Steps' and you will see Steps Recorder pop up as an option. Click it to start the process – but if you are likely to use it often, we would suggest creating a handy shortcut to the feature. It is extremely useful.



2: Start recording
A small box appears with some options included. Start the recording and go through each of the steps you want to capture. The software will run in the background and not interrupt what you are doing.



3: A presentation
When you stop the recording, a neatly presented document will be shown with multiple screenshots and annotations to show exactly what you did at every stage. It is well presented and looks highly professional.

4: The document
When you save the presentation, you will have a ZIP file that you can share with anyone immediately. Upon opening, it will look exactly as it did to you and is very easy to navigate and understand.

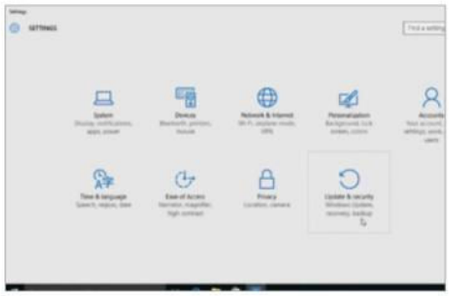
Install and boot Windows

Understand advanced install and boot options

Booting Windows may not appear to be an important part of the Windows 10 experience, but it is at this point that a lot of useful tweaks can be made and you can resolve problems efficiently. For example, booting in Safe Mode means that no important processes are running and this gives you the chance to make changes that would otherwise be blocked. You can also analyse your boot-up times to see if major problems are occurring and ensure that a setting is enabled to stop rogue applications.

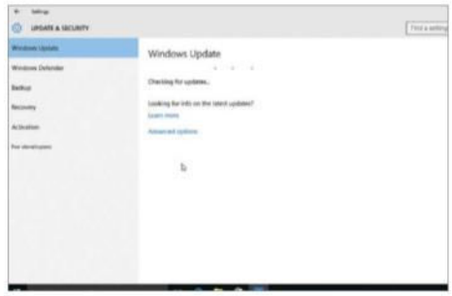
You can check for updates to your Windows 10 software at any time by gloing to Settings and you can even install a simple app that will give you back some of the functionality that you may miss from previous versions of Windows. We will show you how to undertake and manage all of these tasks and at the end of it you should understand a lot more about how Windows 10 works.

Updating your copy of Windows 10



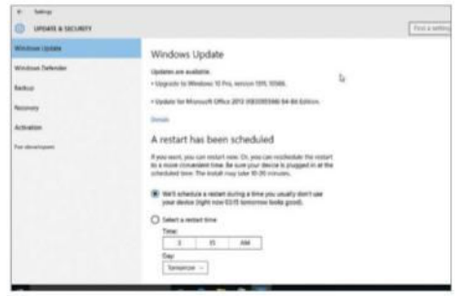
1: Go to Settings

Bring up the Start menu and then select the 'Settings' option. When the screen of categories appears, click on the 'Update & Security' pane.



2: Check for updates

Click on the 'Windows Update' tab and your PC will immediately start checking if any updates to your system software are available. Your PC will always keep an eye out for them.



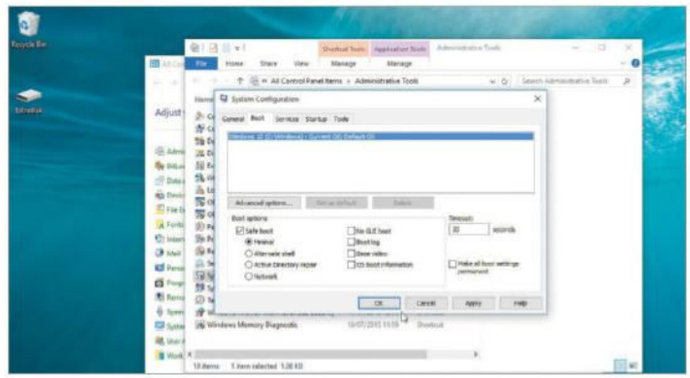
3: Installing updates

If updates are found then they will immediately start downloading to your computer. You can then determine when they are installed and your computer restarted.

Boot Windows in Safe mode

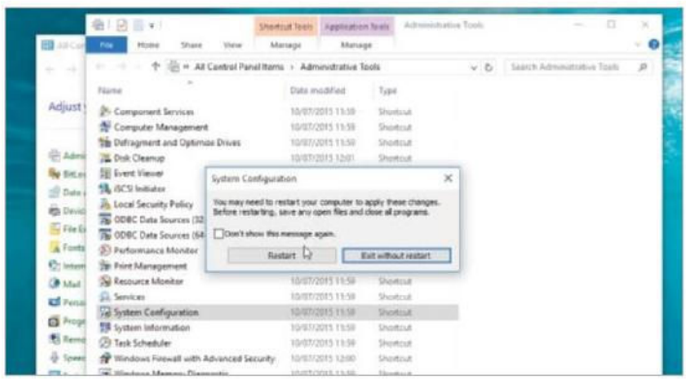
1: Find System Configuration

Go to the Control Panel and click Administrative Tools. Now search for System Configuration in what may be a long list of applications and double-click it. Now click Boot to proceed with the configuration.



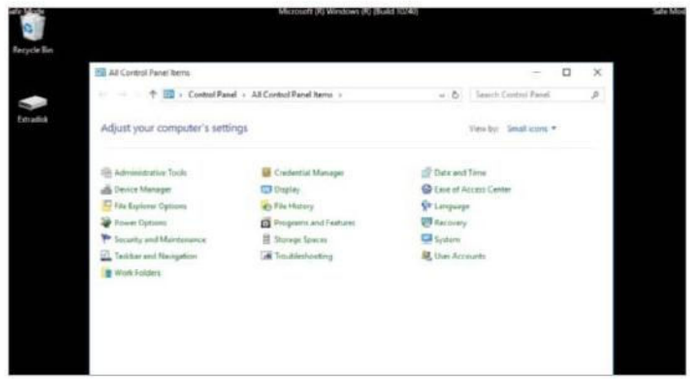
2: Set up boot options

You now need to tick 'Safe boot' and ensure that 'minimal' is the chosen option on the left. Check the correct version of Windows is shown at the top if you have more than one installed and then click Apply to restart.



3: Time to restart

You'll now be prompted to restart your PC – the quickest way to enter Safe mode. If you choose not to do so, when you next restart you should be booted straight into the minimal Safe mode as you initially required.



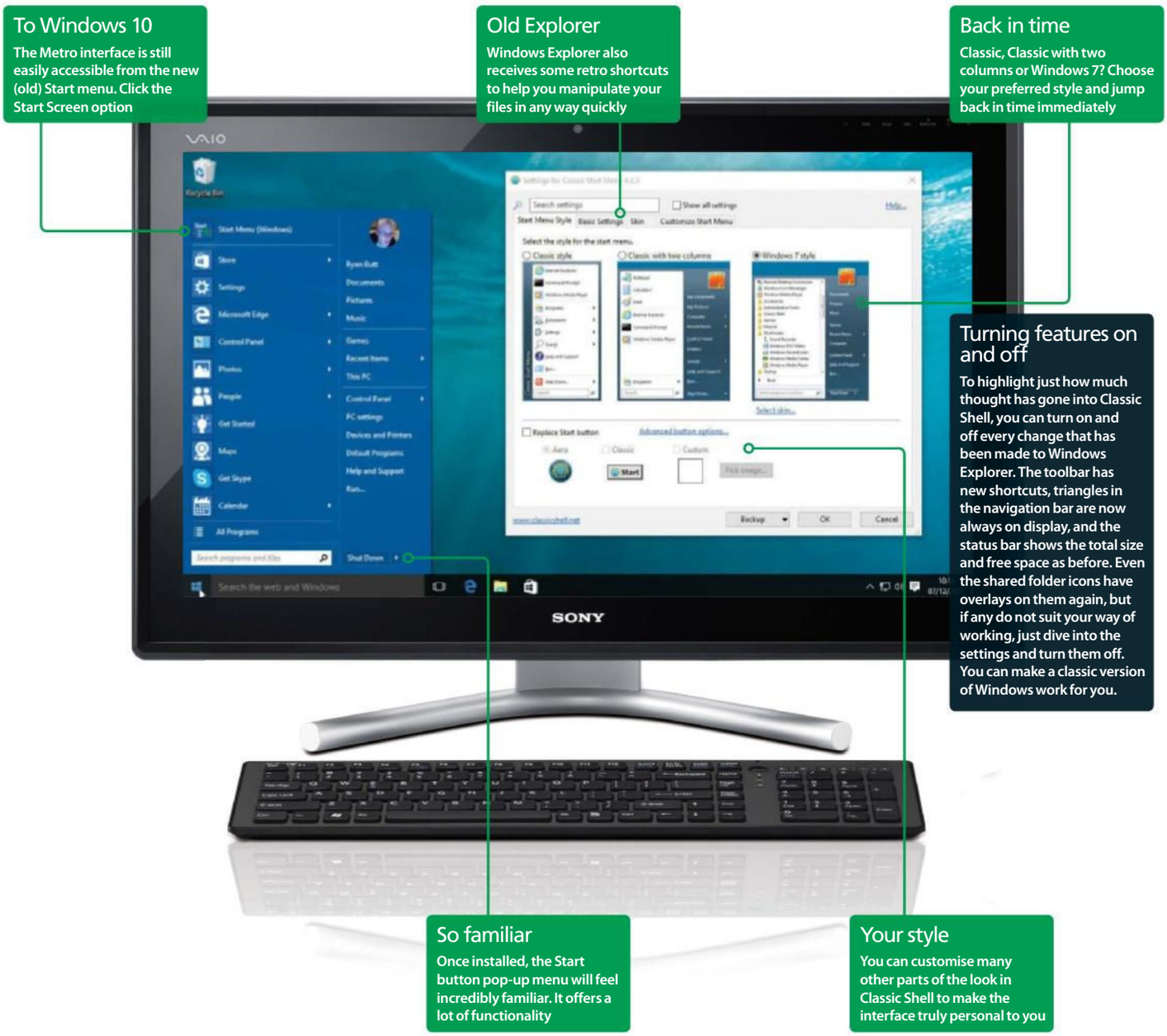
4: Back to normal mode

Safe mode will look different once your PC restarts and all you need to do to get back to normal mode is to follow the same steps and remove the tick in the 'Safe boot' box. Now restart and every feature will return.

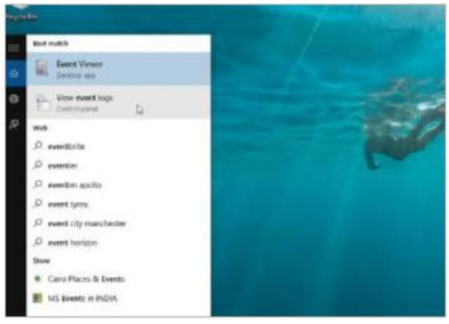
Bring back Windows 7 style functionality

Windows 8 and 10 have proved a major departure for a platform that millions of people have become used to over many years. It is so different that some have struggled to get to grips with the wholesale interface changes, but if you are also struggling, there is a simple app you can install that will make everything feel more familiar and still retain all of the benefits of Windows 10. Go to **www.classicshell.net** and download the free Classic Shell to bring back the traditional Start menu to Windows 10.

You can choose from varying styles and even customise certain aspects of the OS to your exact requirements. It also customises Windows Explorer and Internet Explorer to bring back some familiar functionality, but at no point does it make wholesale changes to the Windows 10 system. The Metro interface is still only one click away if you like using the apps and feature tiles, and the update really does represent the best of both worlds between old and new versions of the Windows OS.

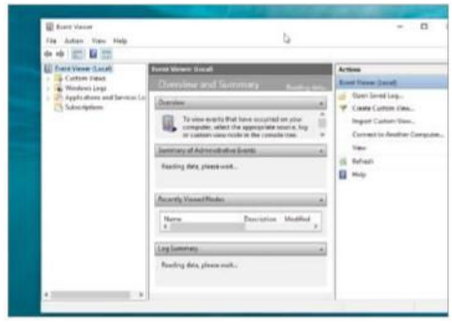


Check for boot errors and track shutdown times



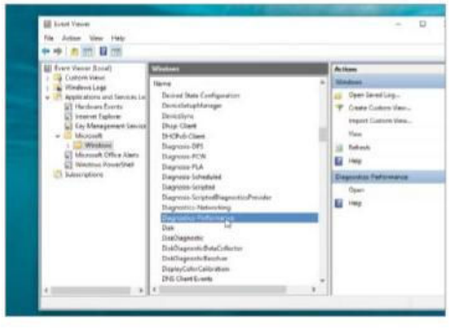
1: Search for Event Logs

Search for the word 'Event' and then click the View Event Logs, which should be the first option that appears at the top. The feature you are now accessing lets you see almost every event that has occurred in the past on your PC.



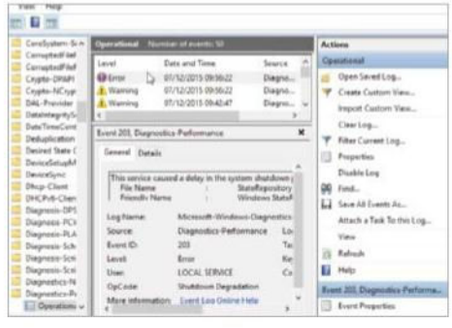
2: A busy interface

The screen that appears is confusing at first, especially since many of the options will not have been populated. But once you get used to how it works, you will be able to navigate it with ease. Go to the left-hand panel.



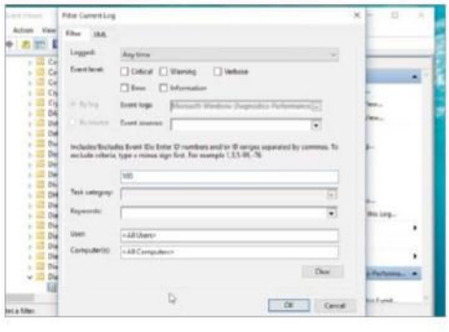
3: Find the timings

In the left panel, navigate to 'Applications and Services Logs', then Microsoft>Windows> Diagnostics-Performance and expand it to bring up Operational. Double-click this and the main window will populate immediately.



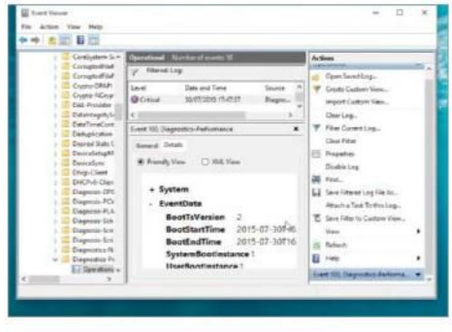
4: Filter the logs

Click on Filter Current Log on the right and input '100' in place of 'All Event IDs'. 100 is used to show boot events, 200 for shutdown events and 300 for events during standby. The results you get can highlight potential problems.



5: Check event timings

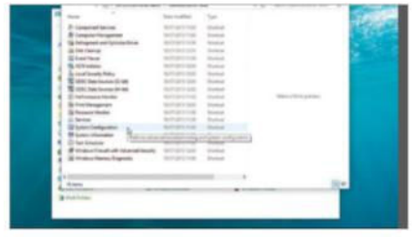
Click any event and you'll see a timing in the bottom screen, which is shown in milliseconds. For example, if you see 331220ms, this would need to be divided by 1,000 to see the time in seconds. In this case, it's a long 331 seconds.



6: You need more detail

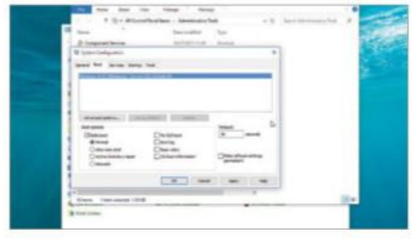
If a boot-up or shutdown event appears to be too long, view more info about the event by clicking Details in the bottom box. You may also see an icon warning next to an event at the top to alert you to a possible problem.

Be safe with SecureBoot



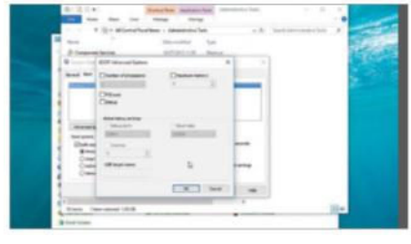
1: You need UEFI

Enter 'msinfo32' as a Run command to see your system status. Scroll down a little and check that the BIOS Mode is set to UEFI.



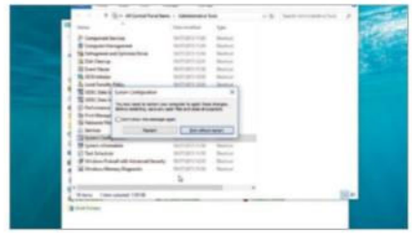
2: Is SecureBoot enabled?

Look further down to find the Secure Boot State. If it is 'On' then you are all set and need to make no further changes.



3: Turn it off

To turn it off, go to Advanced Startup Settings>Troubleshoot>Advanced Options, then UEFI Firmware Settings.



4: The tricky bit

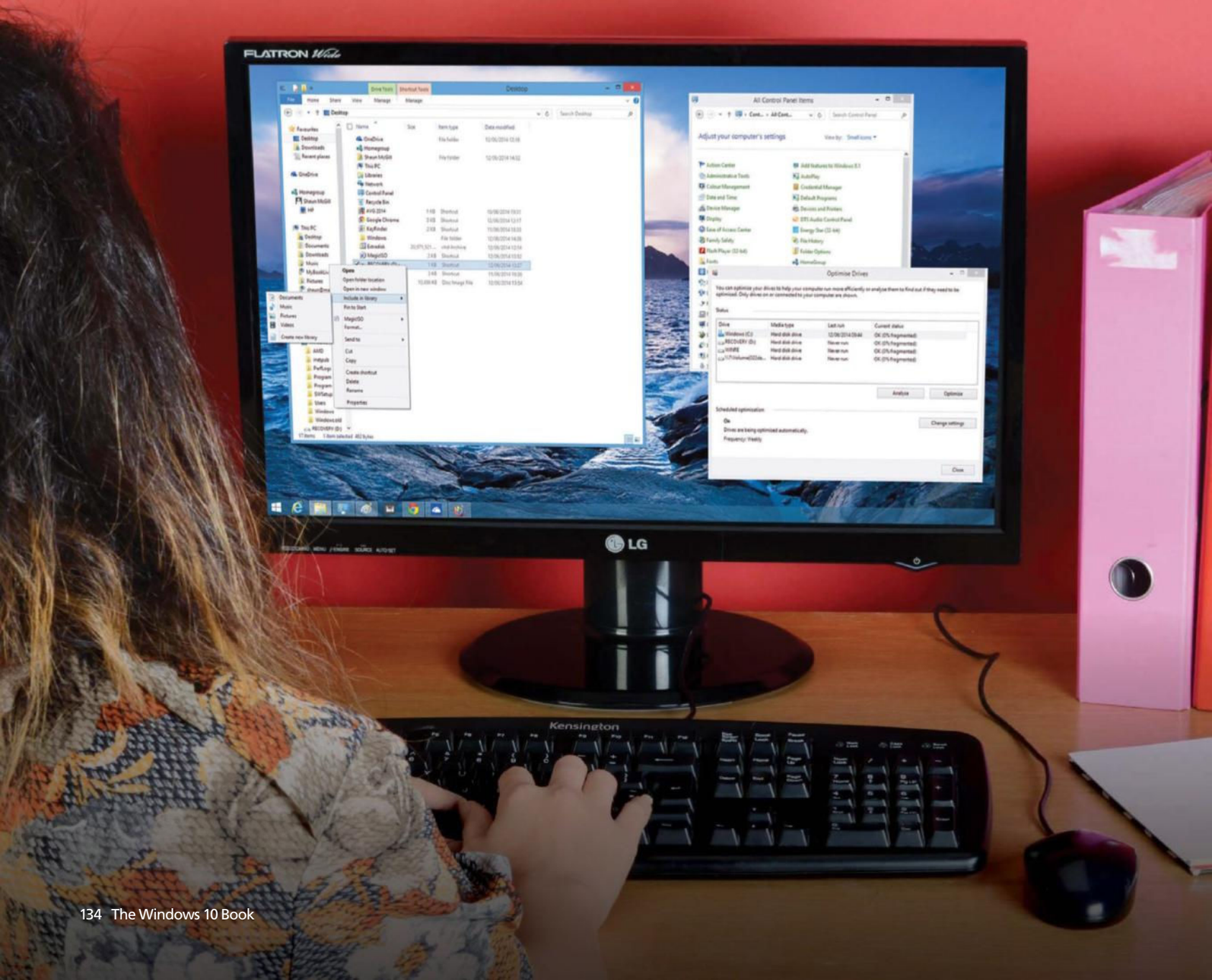
Restart, press F1 in power up. Find Security Settings, then 'Secure boot config'. Disable 'Secure boot', hit F10.

Manage your Windows 10 drives

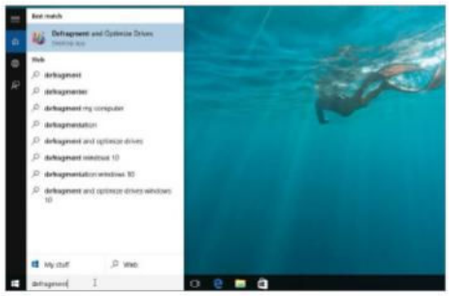
Extend and customise your drives

The fact that most Windows PCs have one storage drive should not deter you from looking at ways to customise and add more flexibility to your Windows 10 experience. There are many options available to you which are not always obvious, but we will attempt to show you what is possible with a little effort. The end result will be a setup that works exactly as you need, and can potentially be used for multiple projects and even increase general stability.

From creating virtual drives that will not be touched by the installed software to ensuring that your main drive is running as smoothly as possible, the options are endless. Shortcuts to any part of your drives and bridging the gap between the Start menu and desktop can also be managed in minutes, so you have nothing to lose by exploring these clever tricks. Take your time to understand all that is involved and you will be rewarded.

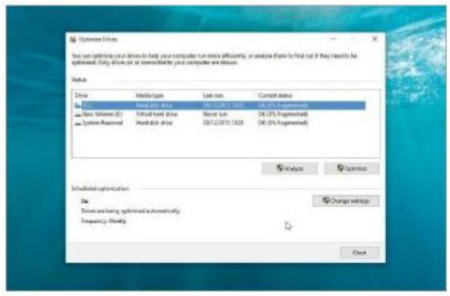


Defragment hard disk



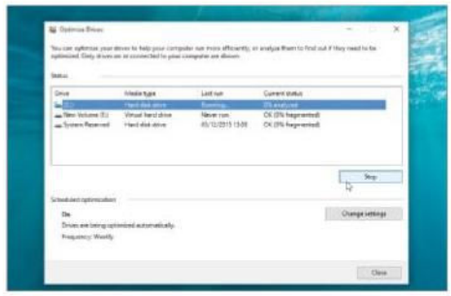
1: Find the defrag option

Bring up your Start menu and then and enter 'Defragment' into the search field. You will now see 'Defragment and optimise your drives' appear. Click it and wait for a window.



2: Analyse a drive

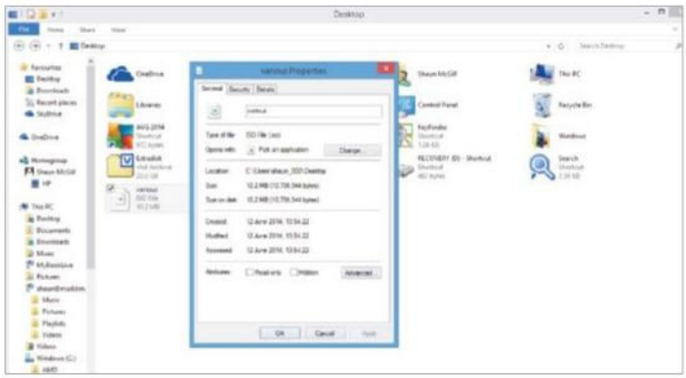
Select one of the drives shown in the list and then click Analyse. This process will run for some time and show you if defragmentation is required. Only use the next step if necessary.



3: Time to optimise

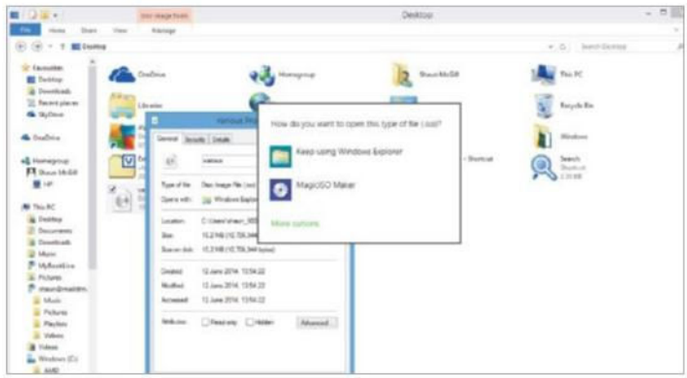
Click the Optimise icon with the drive selected and the process will begin to clean up the hard drive. Be patient because this process can take a long time to complete on some drives.

Mount an ISO file



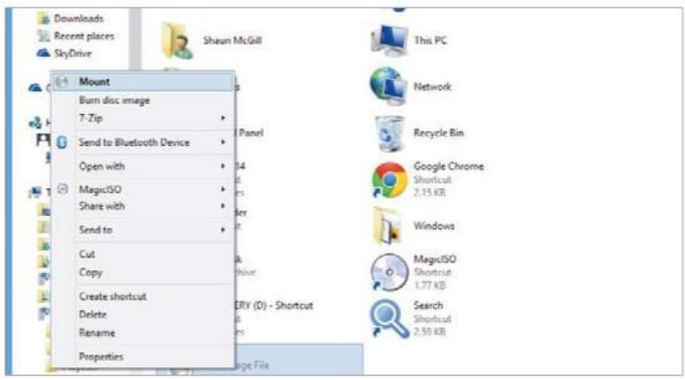
1: Change the properties

The ability to mount an ISO file is not set up by default in Windows 10, so you will need to enable it. Navigate to any ISO file using File Explorer, right-click it and select Properties. Click the Change option to proceed.



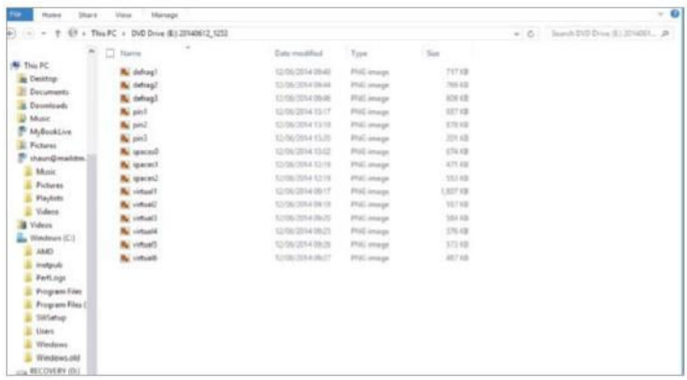
2: Set a default

You should now choose a default application to open ISO files and here you will need to select Windows Explorer. This simple step will activate all that is needed to mount ISO files in the future with two clicks.



3: A new menu option

When you now right-click the same ISO file, you'll see a Mount option at the top. Click this and you have mounted an ISO file, and the facility will always be available in the future when you want to repeat the process.



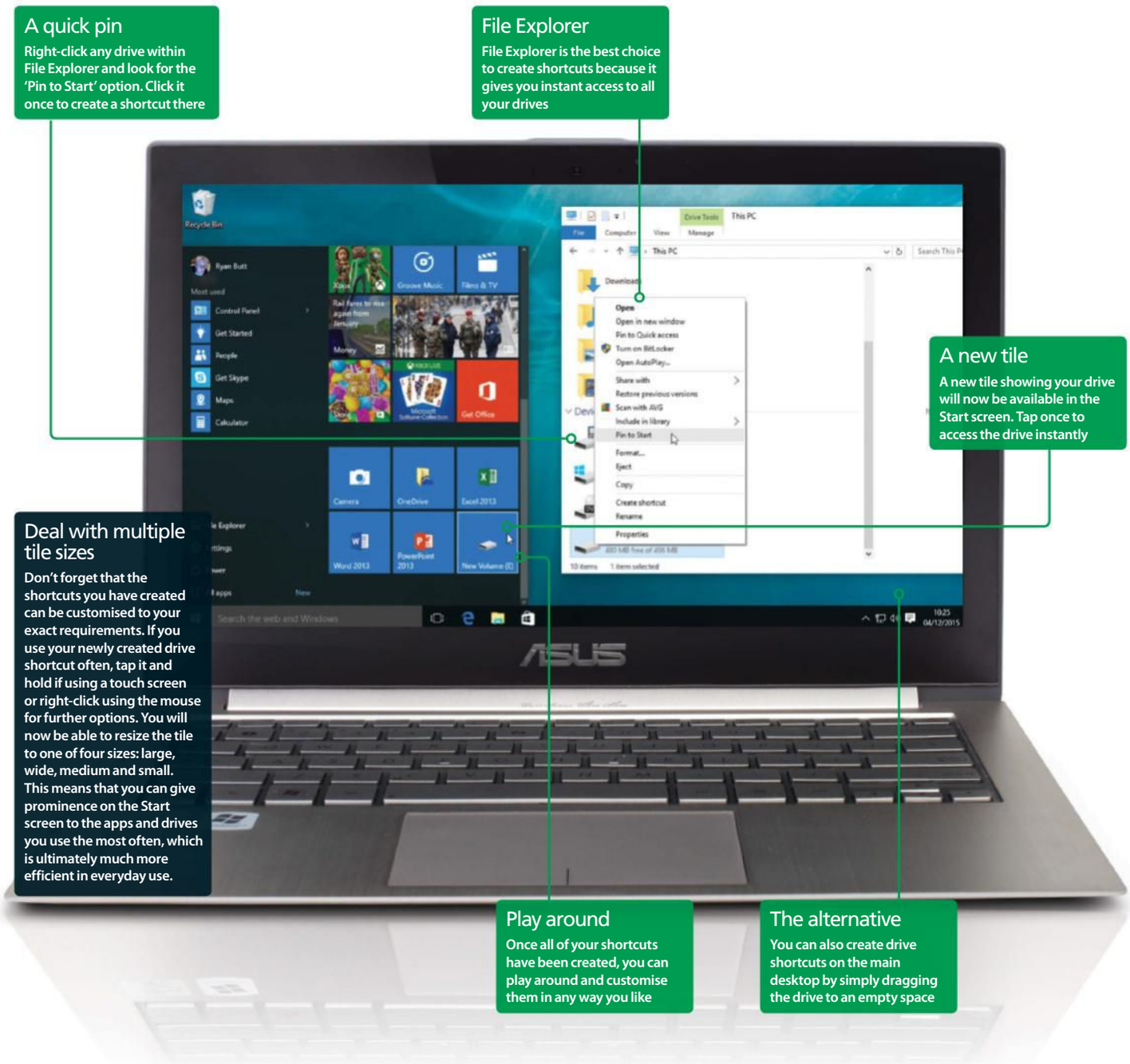
4: A mounted file

You will now see the file mounted in the left navigation column and the contents displayed in the main window. This is a useful facility to be aware of and use in the future for your daily computing tasks.

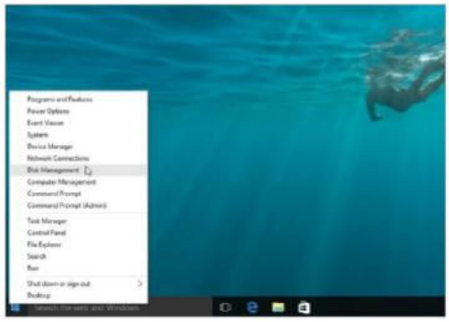
Pin any drive to the Start screen

It is easy to access all drives using File Explorer and this, of course, is a logical use of the software. All of your drives will be housed together and you can quickly move data and files between them in no time. However, if you find yourself using the Start menu every day, it may be that you would prefer to have direct shortcuts to drives you use often. File Explorer is by far the quickest way to add shortcuts to drives and simply requires right-clicking and choosing one option. At this point you can then customise the shortcut(s) you have created and decide how they will be presented on the main Start screen.

Indeed, the process is so simple that the temptation to create too many shortcuts is always threatening, so try to use the feature with care and don't negate the need for File Explorer as the initial access point altogether. You can also create many shortcuts on the main desktop screen and in other places, so think about your specific requirements.

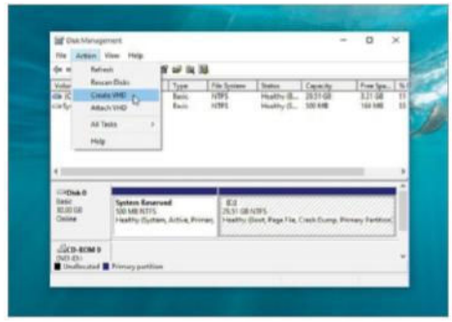


Build a virtual hard drive in minutes



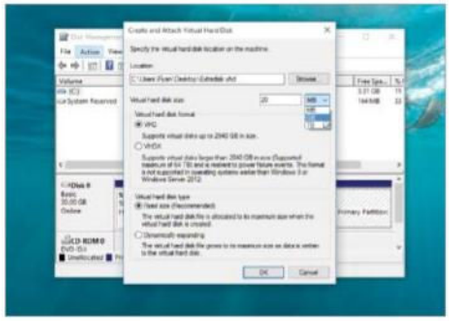
1: Find Disk Management

From the main desktop, right-click on the Start button, then select Disk Management. This facility is a simple trick to bring back the traditional Start button functionality to Windows 10. Wait for it to open.



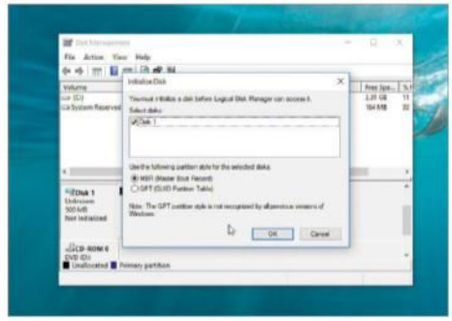
2: Time to create

Within the Disk Management window, tick the Action menu item, then select Create VHD. You'll already see your main hard disk listed in the main window and we are attempting to build a second one with this process.



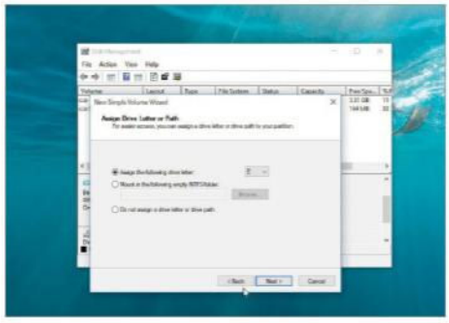
3: The important selections

You now need to click Browse to specify the location and name of your new drive. Next, choose how large you want it to be by considering available space and your needs, and select Fixed Size as this is a safer option.



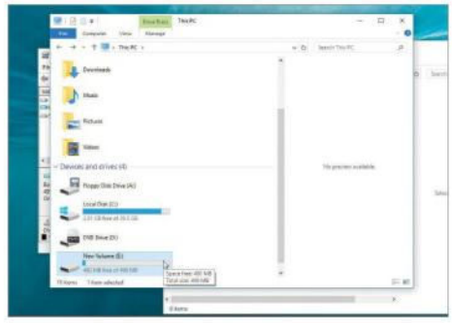
4: Initialise the disk

The disk will take some time to build, but once it has completed you will see it listed below your hard drive. Right-click on the name and select Initialise Disk. Now choose MBR and then click OK to complete the setup process.



5: The final step

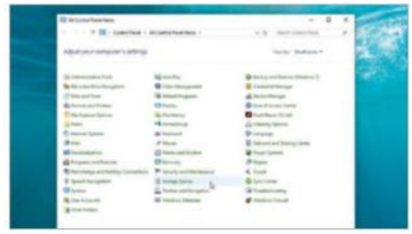
Right-click within the drive and select New Simple Volume. Choose a size for the volume and then assign a drive letter to your new creation. Follow the steps until completed and you should have a working drive ready to use.



6: Is it working?

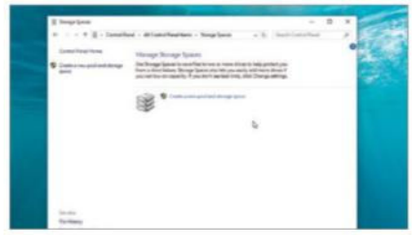
Open File Explorer and search for your new drive, which should be located under 'This PC'. It will have the drive letter you assigned it and is now ready to use copying files to and from. A quick and easy process.

Storage Spaces



1: A hidden feature

Open Control Panel and search for Storage Spaces. Click it to open a new window with one obvious instruction.



2: Create a storage space

Click the option in the main window to proceed, at which point the software will look for compatible drives to use.

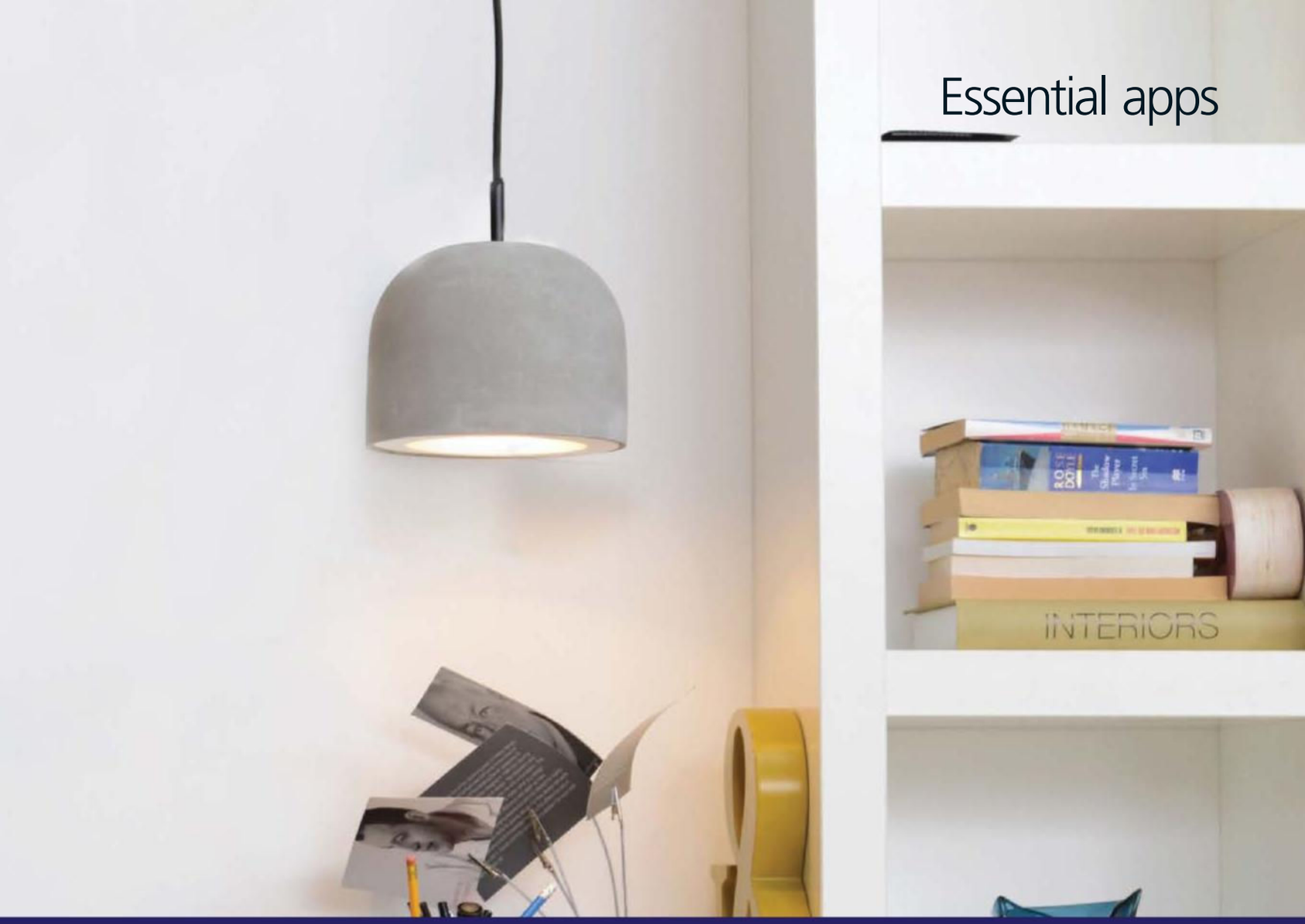
3: Select some drives

Select the drives you want to use and then choose 'Two-way mirror' as the resiliency type. Now input the total pool capacity.

4: A new storage pool

The created storage pool will be shown in the main screen and you can edit how it works or create a new one at any time.

Essential apps



100 best apps for Windows 10

Get the most out of your Windows 10 PC with these must-have apps

Every modern computer operating system worth its salt comes with a built-in online app store these days, and Windows 10 is no exception. The excellent Windows Store that takes pride of place on your Start screen is ready to take you gently by the hand and lead you through an exciting and enticing assortment of apps spread around 20 different categories. You can download them to your computer (in a lot of cases completely free of charge) and enjoy them for a multitude of different purposes, whether work or leisure.

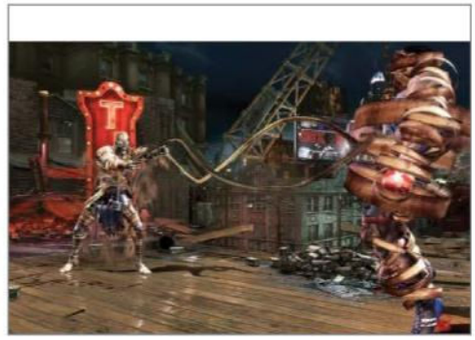
In this feature we carefully go through each category in the Windows Store and hand-pick the very best apps to help you get the most out of your PC. As you will soon discover, there most definitely is something for everyone and buying and downloading the apps is a quick and easy process that involves setting up a payment method and clicking on the price. Whether you're looking to use your Windows 10 system for gaming, entertainment or even as an educational tool, there's sure to be several apps out there for you. Now, let's roll out the software…

Games

Time to relax, have fun and play a great game

Unlike other recent app-based platforms, the PC has a rich history of creating games that reaches back towards the dawn of computing. There are millions of the games available to play, with new titles being created all the time. Similarly, the type of games available for the user is quite staggering. From the shoot-'em-up, mindless action-type apps to the role-playing games that often combine action with a measure of puzzle solving. There are also the puzzle-based titles that require serious thought. The PC has a wealth of examples on offer that will appeal to all ages and all interests. The following list of titles doesn't even scratch the surface of what's available, but it does provide a flavour of the sort of games that you can download – often for free – and a sense of where the PC is at in terms of gaming development.

"There are millions of things available… the PC has a wealth of examples that will appeal to all ages"



Killer Instinct

Price: Free **Developer:** Microsoft Studios

Some older gamers may remember this fighting game from the smokey arcades of the early 90s or the Nintendo 64 home console – well it's had a bit of a dust off since then and modernised to be in-keeping with more recent combat games. Old characters return alongside new and the appearance of the game has been radically enhanced to make it more captivating to brawl with. Who want's some?

The Escapists: The Walking Dead

Price: £14.99/$19.99 **Developer:** Team17 Digital Ltd

Merging the popular indie game The Escapists with the phenomenon that is The Walking Dead, this game is an 8-bit delight as you must lead a group of survivors against the shambling hordes, finding vital supplies and safe escape routes out of each zombie-infested area. What works well is how you can craft your own survival tools and weapons and assign routines to each group member.

FIFA 15: UT

Price: Free **Developer:** Electronic Arts

The world's most popular football game looks brilliant and plays a blinder on your Windows machine. You can assemble your dream team from over 10,000 real players from over 500 fully-licensed teams and compete in over 30 different leagues from around the world. You can also choose your own play style and put your players through their paces on the training pitch.

Quantum Break

Price: £44.99/$54.99 **Developer:** Microsoft Studios

Due to the high price, this game isn't impulse buy material, but if you do decide to splash out, and if your PC is powerful enough to actually run it, you will be treated to a stunningly entertaining game featuring intense combat and a narrative where every decision you make has an impact on how the story plays out. Every ounce the epic blockbuster that features enough original ideas mixed with classic gameplay to keep you enthralled.

Modern Combat 5: Blackout

Price: £3.09/$3.99 **Developer:** Gameloft

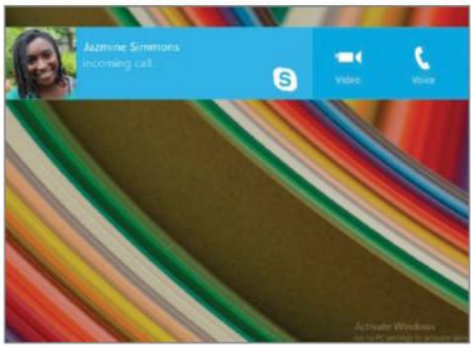
This series has steadily grown in quality to be a worthwhile alternative to the Call Of Duty games in the first-person-shooter field. For good reason, too, because the graphics are crisp and the online multiplayer action relentless. It boasts a decent single-player mode comprising intense action spread over varied locations, but it is best played by building your own squad of friends and then taking the battle to the masses online.

Social

Keep in contact with friends and family

One of the great things about recent software and hardware developments is the ever-increasing progress in the field of communication. The computer has become a force for good in communications, in terms of keeping you in touch with people you love, making friends, forging links with like-minded individuals and hobbies and bringing down the costs of telecommunications. Technologies like Skype have forced phone companies to look again at their tariffs, which have produced far more competitive and enlightened price points, especially when communicating abroad. Add immensely popular services such as Facebook and Twitter and you can see how complex our communications are today and, with the continuing 'Arab Spring' movement, for example, how much it has changed the entire world.

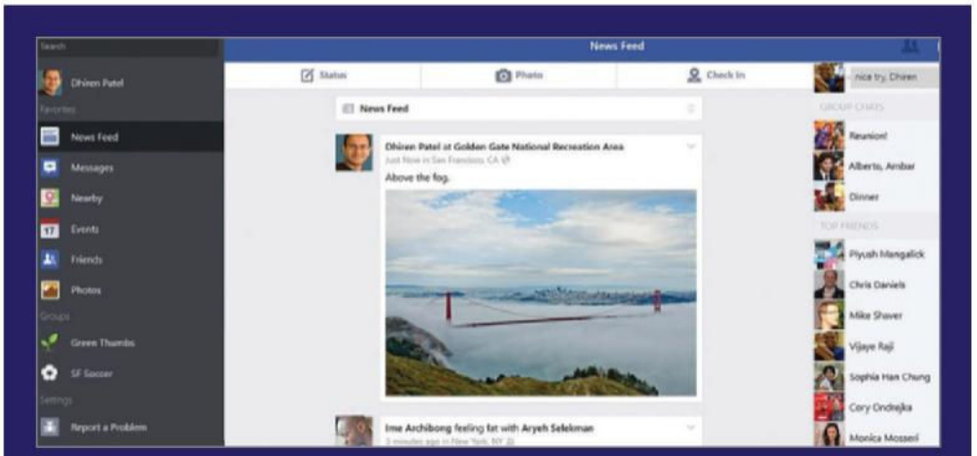
> "The computer has become a force for good, keeping you in touch with the people you love"



Skype

Price: Free **Developer:** Skype

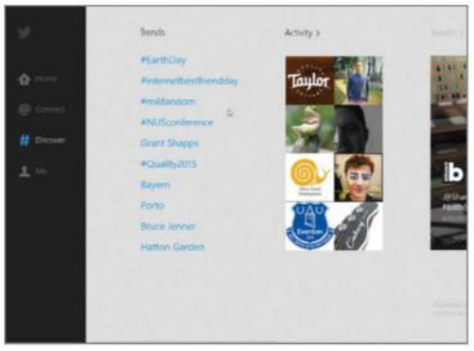
One of the world's most popular communications programs. You can contact friends, family and colleagues for free via either voice or video as well as utilising the app's superb Instant Messaging feature. It doesn't matter what platform you want to communicate with, either. You, on your PC, can talk to a friend running a MacBook or a colleague running an Android phone. It's an ideal method for reducing communication costs.



Facebook

Price: Free **Developer:** Facebook, Inc

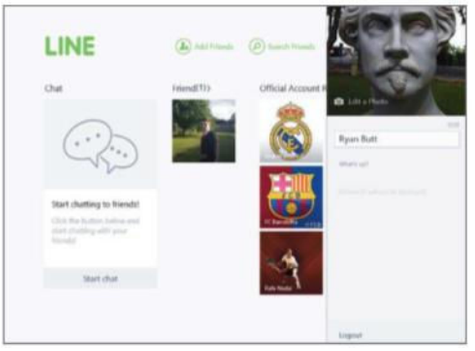
What is there to say about the most popular social networking app in the world? The Windows app features a cool and accessible interface that's in keeping with just about every other version you will have experienced and navigating your way through the various sections and posting your own thoughts, comments and media is a quick and easy process. If you want to stay in the social loop, this should be one of your first downloads.



Twitter

Price: Free **Developer:** Twitter, Inc

This official Twitter app sits nicely on your Home page and provides a clean and accessible interface for viewing your Twitter timeline easily. You can also discover what's currently trending and connect with interesting new people. Once installed, Twitter can also be used a sharing option from Microsoft Edge, making it effortless to tweet spectacular content that you find online.



Line

Price: Free **Developer:** LINE Corporation

In the market for a sleek and intuitive messaging app that lets you ping messages between computer and mobile devices? Line lets you send simple text messages, photos and emoticons and also features a wide range of fun stickers that you can use to punctuate your messages and help convey your emotions. In an ever-expanding pool of me-too messenger apps, Line is better than most.

IM+ Instant Messenger

Price: Free **Developer:** SHAPE GmbH

Already popular across mobile devices, IM+ is a handy service that allows you to send unlimited free text messages to all of your friends. Through the simple interface that lets you connect your other social networks, you can group chat, send photos and set personal status messages so that other people know if you are available to chat.

Entertainment

Make computing a fun experience

Your computer is made for productivity. From word processors to databases, it has helped businesses become more efficient and industrious. Furthering business, after all, was one of the main reasons for creating the personal computer in the first place. Yet, as technology has progressed, PC productivity is also doing a terrific job of delivering an unwelcome by-product: stress. Therefore, entertainment on that same platform has been recognised as a salve to the user's sanity. More than a counter for over-working, though, the PC has now been welcomed into the living room, becoming more widely accessible and is now offering a realistic way to integrate entertainment within the home. From movies to music, the PC has become an essential friend of the family to not only escape a hard day's work but to inform, expand choice and broaden everyone's horizons.

Perfect – Piano

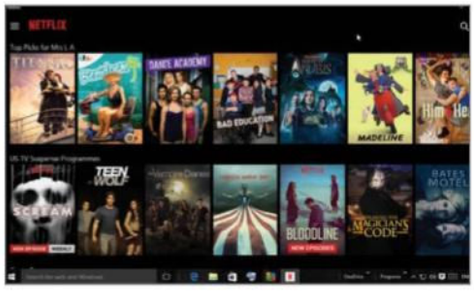
Price: Free **Developer:** JetSoft Studio

Quite simply, this app transforms your Windows 10 PC into a piano featuring 31 simultaneous notes and stereo HQ sounds for real music production. Simple to use, you can choose your octave using the arrows at the top of the interface and then tinkle the virtual ivories to your heart's content. There is precious little to this app beyond the ability to play piano, but we can't emphasise how good it sounds – so if you need something to practise on, look no further.

Fresh Paint

Price: Free **Developer:** Microsoft Corporation

A simple paint program that can be used by the entire family, Fresh Paint even allows you to turn your own photographs into great artistic paintings. All you have to do is import the photo and browse through the simple options to explore what you can do to unleash your creativity. The program will allow you to brush over an image or even blend the colours of the photo into the program's colours. There's also a zoom function included.



Netflix

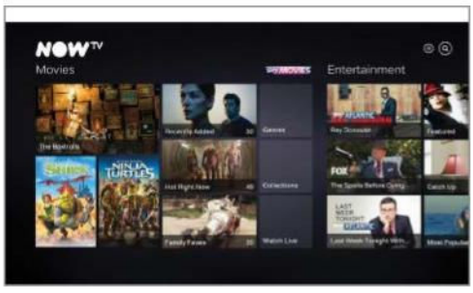
Price: Free **Developer:** Netflix, Inc

A TV and movie subscription service, with Netflix, you can watch thousands of TV episodes and movies upon signing up and paying a regular monthly fee. You can watch the media on your PC, of course, but also via a game console, tablet, phone and Blu-ray player. The choice is yours. After you have watched your fill, you can also rate and review the broadcasts.

StumbleUpon

Price: Free **Developer:** StumbleUpon, Inc

As it says in the title, this app helps you come across new things that interest you. Simply select your areas of interest (from a list of around 500), whether you're crazy about history or music or food or whatever it might be and then the app will present information to you connected with those subjects. This is in the form of a live tile that links you to the media itself, whether that be text, images or video.



Now TV

Price: Free **Developer:** Sky UK Limited

Now TV is Sky's on-demand service that enables you to watch movies, shows and live sports events on your PC. Through this app you can browse through the many Sky TV channels and their wealth of content, purchase a special pass to watch your preferred channel for a certain amount of time and then sit back as the content is streamed to your PC.

Photography

Record your precious memories in a flash

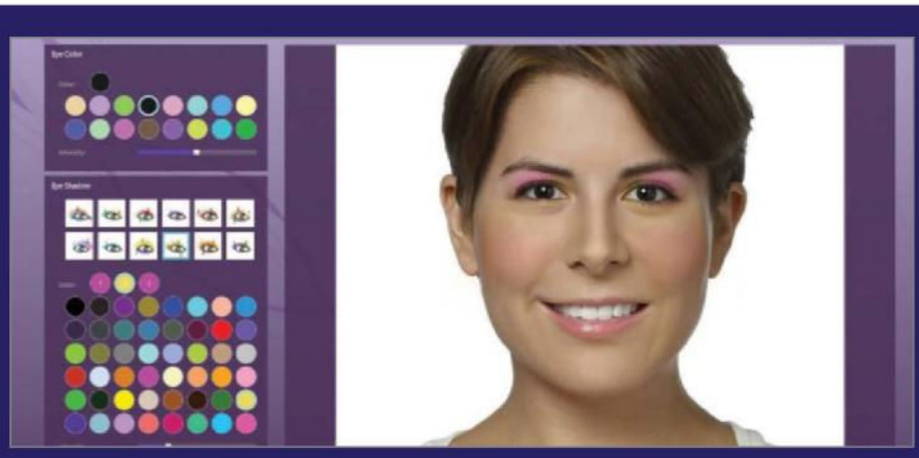
Photography is one of the most vibrant sections of the app store. There is a gamut of impressive cameras and technology out there: from specialist digital cameras or the increasingly complex phone-based affairs. Along with digital technology, modern photography also takes advantage of cloud technology (like OneDrive), syncing photos snapped on a phone, for example, to virtual storage, as well as to a Mac or PC, streamlining the process of backing up photos or sharing them with friends. It's another convenience that makes the new breed of smart cameras a killer type of technology. Using this kit, users often build some wildly inventive images. Whether you're a professional photographer or a just complete beginner, you can't help but appreciate the variety and quality of photography apps that are on offer here.

"Modern digital photography takes advantage of cloud technology, syncing your photos to virtual storage"

Adobe Photoshop Express

Price: Free **Developer:** Adobe Systems Incorporated

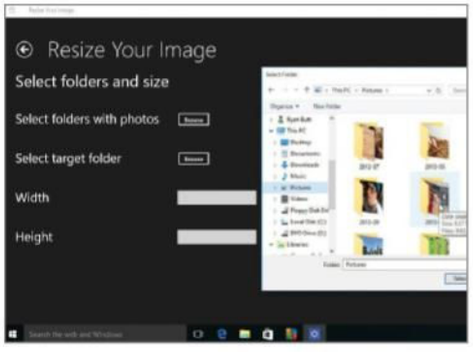
For over 20 years Adobe has offered cutting edge picture editing facilities through its Photoshop range and this app allows you to enjoy some of Photoshop's most popular photo editing features for free. You can crop, straighten and flip your photos, auto-fix the brightness, exposure and shadows, adjust the colours and apply a wide range of filters to really make your images stand out. It's easy to use and perfect for pimping up your pictures.



Perfect365

Price: Free **Developer:** ArcSoft, Inc

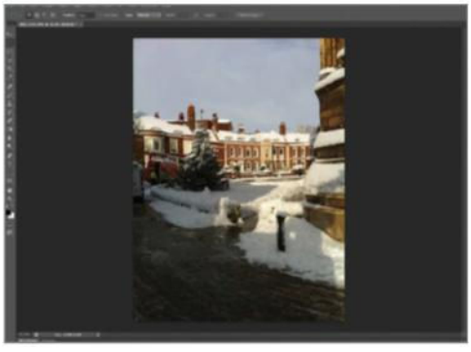
This amazing make-over app allows you to place a portrait image on the screen and then alter it with make-up-derived tones and applications that affect different parts of the face. You can alter the complexion, eye shadow, lipstick and more, as well as face shape and eye colour. Great for experimenting, you can make gentle, subtle enhancements to your shots, or you can create obvious or even outrageous and daring edits, it's up to you!



Resize Your Image

Price: Free **Developer:** MikasasaPL

Using this simple image-manipulation app you can load up an image and then easily resize it. You can also crop the same image or compress it by zipping the file and then sharing it with other people. It's also possible to batch-process a series of files and folders at once and output those files as a JPEG image or compressed into ZIP. Other formats supported include PNG, GIF, TIFF and BMP.



Adobe Photoshop CS6 Extended

Price: Free **Developer:** Adobe Systems Incorporated

The free trial version of this app has to be downloaded off-site, so when you access its details, it will be at the Adobe site where you will need to download it. You'll find that this app will take a fair while to transfer to your PC. But once installed, you will be able to create 3D graphics, 2D images, plus movies, using an array of top-quality tools. The sky is the limit here, so set your creativity free and create some masterpieces!

Fotor

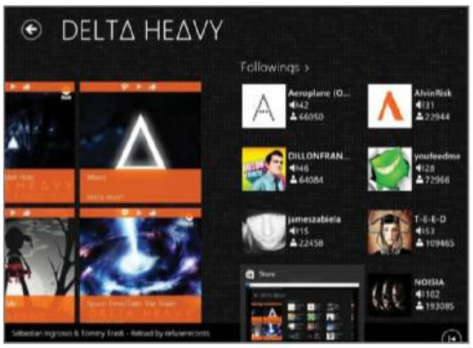
Price: Free **Developer:** Chengdu Everimaging

This app provides cutting-edge tools to making photo-editing on your Windows 10 PC a intuitive experience. Included in the package are tools to resize images, tweak the colour levels, add frames, one-touch enhancement, tilt shift and more – so you can really go to town taking your images to a whole new level of brilliance in minutes.

Music & Video

You can watch, play and listen

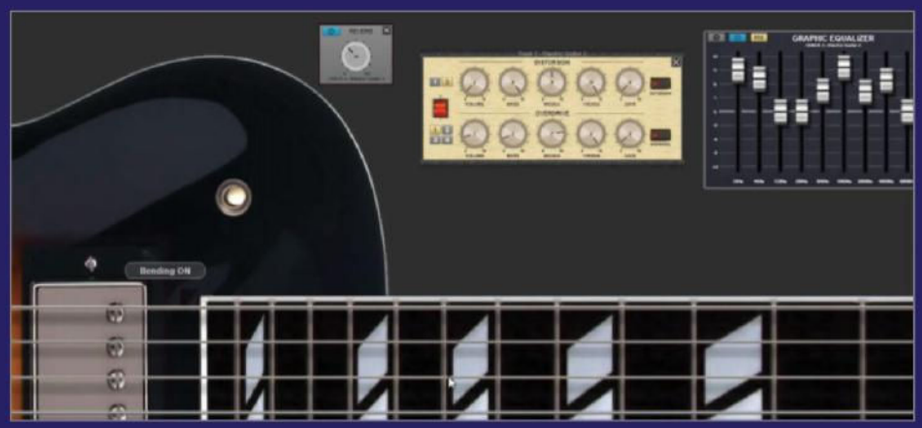
Both of these app genres ask you to search for downloadable files or provide the option to load up and play such content. Some of them allow you to handle both data types from one app. Hence both variants being bundled together into one section. Both music and video have, like much of the other data content types, been evolving at a tremendous pace, becoming more sophisticated with new features hanging off them like fruit from a tree. Some offer official video or music from major record labels or broadcasters, others give independent content creators a look-in. Some ask for money to experience the full experience while others give away their files free. Whatever the deal, be sure that, no matter what genre of music or video you enjoy, there is bound to be a wide selection on offer in the Windows 10 Store.



Clouder!

Price: Free **Developer:** Nicollet Fabien

This app allows you to browse and play thousands of tracks from the popular SoundCloud service. Whatever your musical preferences are you'll find a variety of music on offer from novices and accomplished artists alike, including plenty of exclusive tracks from some of the world's best artists. Why not dive in and start exploring? You're sure to discover something new to listen to in no time at all thanks to the extensive user base of connect musicians.



Recording Studio Pro

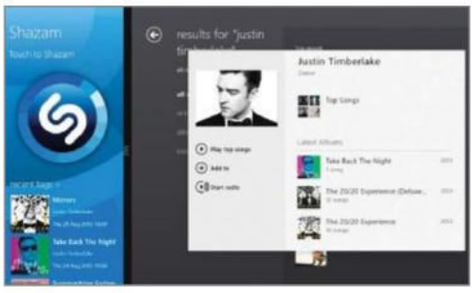
Price: £6.19/$8.99 **Developer:** Glauco

This app turns your PC into a multi-touch music making and editing suite in which you can record up to 24 audio and virtual instrument tracks and piece them all together expertly. Through the console you can split or loop tracks after recording them and have fun experimenting with a range of sonic effects to get the sound you crave. There are 11 virtual instruments included and you can also plug in real ones with the right connection leads.

edjing 5

Price: Free **Developer:** DJiT

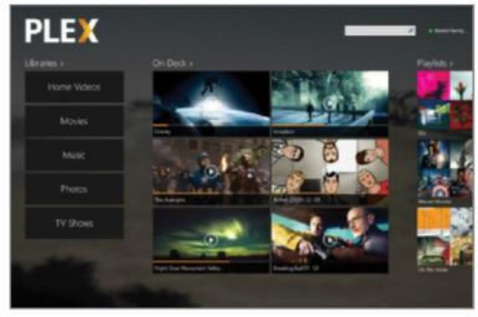
This neat app lets you become a desktop DJ by importing tracks and then using the onscreen turntables to mix them together. All of the tools you need to achieve seamless blends and perfect mixes are at your fingertips and you can also apply all manner of special effects to spice them up. A great free app that you can have great fun exploring.



Shazam

Price: Free **Developer:** Shazam Entertainment Ltd

Have you ever heard a snippet of song on an advert that you like the sound of but have never managed to track down exactly what it was? Shazam is the quickest and easiest way to discover more about music, TV and ads. This app will handily identify what you are listening to surprisingly quickly and allow you to buy it, share it, watch the video and get the lyrics.



Plex

Price: Free **Developer:** Plex

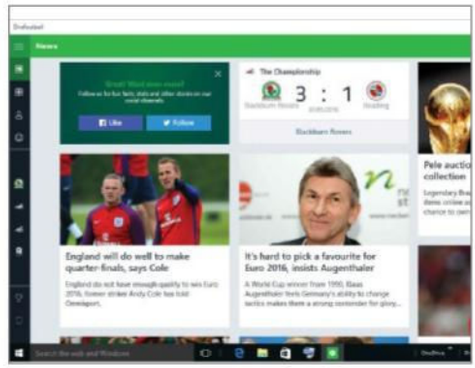
This app is universally available across pretty much any device, and for good reason. It neatly organises all of your personal media and allows you to access it through one sleek interface. With Plex you can easily stream your videos, music, photos and home movies to your Windows device from other home computers (even Macs), set up playing queues and more. It's on the pricey side, but worth it.

Sport

Keep in touch with your favourite event or team

The crack of the cricket bat, the roar of the rugby crowd, the heckling of the football referee… Sport – you can't beat it. No matter which sports or team you follow, there is bound to be an app that covers it. What role can your Windows 10 device play in a professional sports setting? The possibilities are limitless. Whether you're tracking the statistics on your favourite players or lining up the bet that will make your fortune, download a few of the best sports apps onto your Windows 10 PC, laptop or tablet and you're sure to have an edge on the competition. The apps themselves range from batting-average calculators to statistics databases and up-to-the-minute news trackers. Sports apps can definitely add a new dimension to a favourite pastime or introduce you to the triumphs and sorrows of a new sport entirely.

"Download a few of the best sports apps and you're sure to always have an edge on the competition"



Onefootball

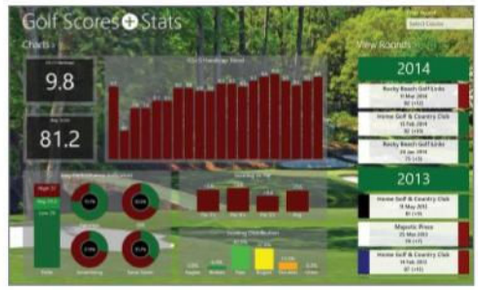
Price: Free **Developer:** motain GmbH

If you're into your soccer then this simple app delivers all of the latest news from planet football. Covering all of the major leagues (over 1,000 in all) and cup competitions, this app provides live scores and text commentaries, breaking news, videos, league tables, squad lists and detailed player information. It's a great way to keep abreast of what's happening and really comes into its own on transfer deadline day.

ESPN Cricinfo

Price: Free **Developer:** ESPN Ltd

This app features coverage of cricket from around the world with a varied staff that reflects that news. It includes ball-by-ball scoring from a range of matches plus news, breaking news, features and additional editorial. There are a range of match reports and in-depth analyses of games such as wagon wheel, scoring charts, manhattans, etc. Also included are profiles of all current and former cricketers.



Golf Scores + Stats

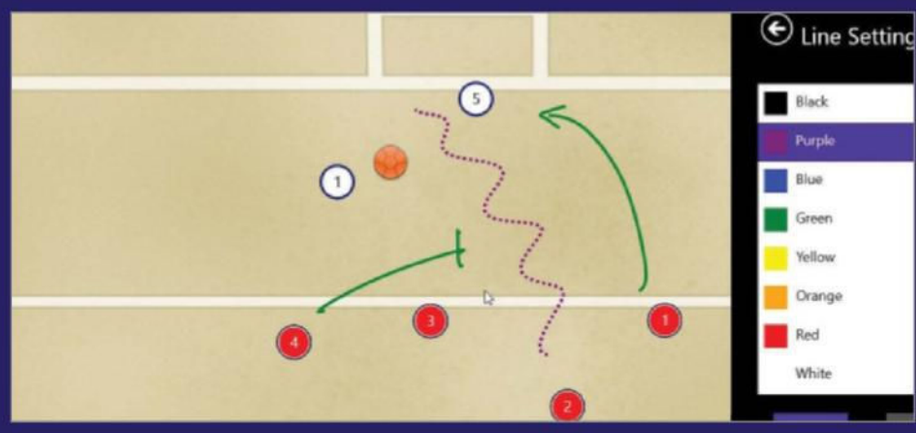
Price: Free **Developer:** Apptonium

This simple app lets you keep track of your golf scores and other key statistics to help you analyse and improve your game. An unofficial handicap is calculated after your first round and progress is easily observed over time. Through this app you can also track putts, fairways hit, greens in regulation and sand saves. A must for golfers who like track and improve their game.

NFL on Windows

Price: Free **Developer:** Microsoft Studios

If you're into American football then this app is the ultimate companion. Take your support for your team to a whole new level by analysing the biggest plays on a virtual field, seeing who the top playmakers are and tracking the fastest players with real-time distance and speed stats as the plays unfold. It's all fabulously presented in a neat interface and you can also enable notifications to keep you fully in the picture as to your team's performance.



CoachPro

Price: £3.89/$4.99 **Developer:** JPlusCorporation

If you coach sport then this app turns your Windows device into a virtual clipboard onto which you can draw diagrams to illustrate a particular play or tactic to your team. You can also animate your plays so that your players can see the full outcome of the sequence. A wide range sports are supported and the app provides seamless switching between court and pitch templates onto which you can plan your notes and tactics.

Books & Reference

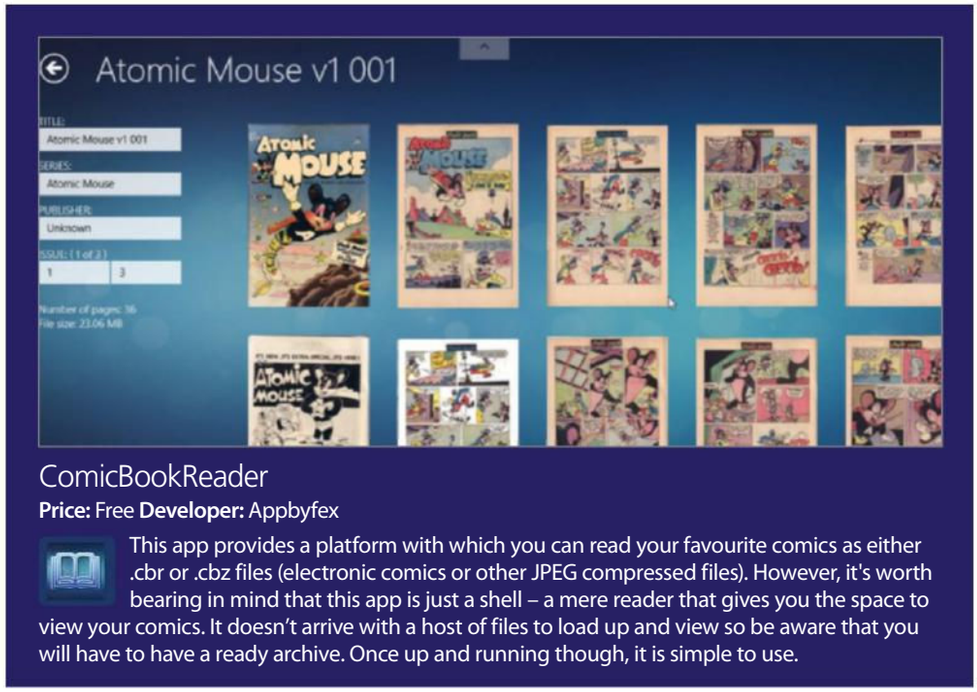
Wealth of knowledge at your fingertips

The benefit of blending Windows 10 with the vast resources of the internet is that if you want to read a book or research information within a reference section, then you are more than likely to find what you are looking for. Books can range from the literary classics such as the likes of Jane Austen and Charles Dickens to more modern fare. There are also both paid-for and free titles – these are either out of copyright or are tomes that are privately pressed and have been issued freely to gain publicity. Research can be done at sites that provide a wide, catch-all service bringing you information from all areas of interest. More specialist research areas can provide information from science to history and from astronomy to gastronomy. Whatever your needs, the internet, controlled by the easy-to-use Windows 10 interface, will see you right.

Wikipedia

Price: Free **Developer:** Wikimedia Foundation

A free encyclopaedia, this service includes a whopping 20 million articles that are ready to examine in a similarly whopping 280 languages. This is a staggering achievement in itself. Using open source, the app features full sharing capabilities and search options while you can also pin your article to read later on. The app includes features, pictures and articles with an interesting 'On this day' facility and a useful 'recent changes' section to help with your research.



ComicBookReader

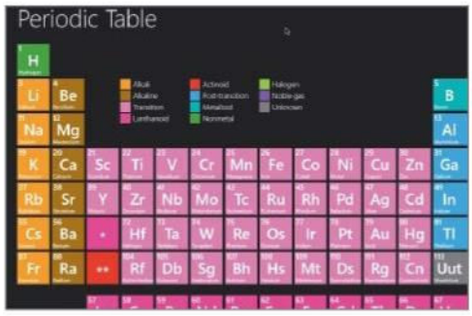
Price: Free **Developer:** Appbyfex

This app provides a platform with which you can read your favourite comics as either .cbr or .cbz files (electronic comics or other JPEG compressed files). However, it's worth bearing in mind that this app is just a shell – a mere reader that gives you the space to view your comics. It doesn't arrive with a host of files to load up and view so be aware that you will have to have a ready archive. Once up and running though, it is simple to use.

Kindle

Price: Free **Developer:** AMZN Mobile LLC

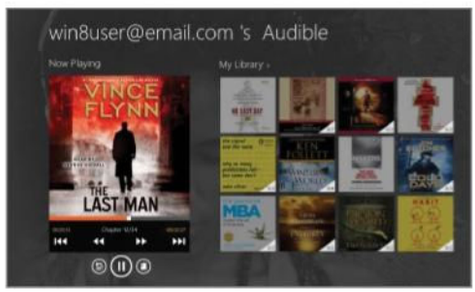
The Kindle app allows you to purchase books with a couple of mouse clicks on the Amazon website, and then send them to your Windows 10 Kindle app. There are currently around one million Kindle books to choose from including many free titles. You can also sync your Kindle purchases across other platforms, from Windows 10 to Android, for example.



Periodic Table

Price: Free **Developer:** Revolution Software

This app presents detailed chemical and physical information for all of the chemical elements and provides a customisable view, images and links and even allows you to pin elements to your Start screen for easy access. So whether you have a professional use for the periodic table or you are just a quizzer looking to expand your knowledge, this app has all of the symbols and atomic numbers you need.



Audiobooks from Audible

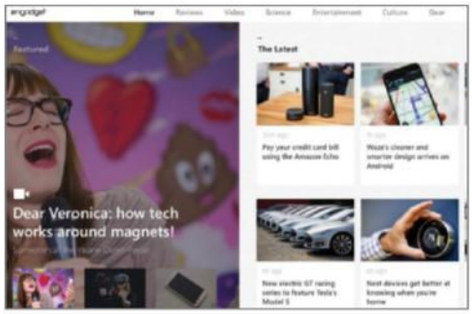
Price: Free **Developer:** Audible, Inc

If you enjoy reading but seldom find the time, then you can consider an audiobook. Through the Audible app you can listen to books on the go and immerse yourself in gripping stories anywhere. What's more, the app provides a gateway to over 100,000 audio books – from best-sellers to classics and everything in between – so you're never stuck for a good read.

News & Weather

Always stay dry, warm and informed

Combine the best in fast computing technology with an internet connection via a sprightly broadband link and you have a wealth of information at your fingertips. There are two distinct categories of information, however, that depend on speed to remain relevant: news and weather. Maintaining the latter can mean that you can successfully plan your day. Friends and family may or may not have to make journeys to meet up depending on weather-based information, while the threat of extreme weather conditions has made such reports less a figure of amusement and fun and more of a serious matter. Similarly, keeping in touch with the news via computer and the internet means that you can follow breaking stories on a minute-by-minute basis, monitoring a changing situation which, again, might have repercussions for you and those closest to you.



Engadget

Price: Free **Developer:** AOL

The popular, USA-based technology and consumer electronics blog comes to Windows 10. You can find news on the latest smartphones, HDTVs, gaming updates plus computers and much more. When you've downloaded the app, you can view and listen to media via text, videos and podcasts. Grouped into a number of tiles, you just click on a tile to be taken to a new screen to read the story.

CNN

Price: Free **Developer:** CNN Interactive Group, Inc

This application allows you to read news features and top stories with a live tile option that features the latest news along with breaking news. This includes everything from world events to sport. The design is functional rather than technically astounding but it places the top stories within easy reach. You can also change the font size to personalise the reading experience.

Sky News

Price: Free **Developer:** British Sky Broadcasting

This app is a flashy and eye-catching as you would expect from Sky. It delivers all of the latest breaking news and top stories together with live Sky News TV so that you can stream moving images as well as read the headlines. Packed with videos and pictures, as well as constantly-updated news content, this is a convenient app for staying up-to-date with all the latest news, weather and entertainment news.

The Weather Channel

Price: Free **Developer:** The Weather Channel

This is a great app for up-to-the-minute weather reports for your local area. It includes hourly updates, a ten-day forecast, details of the sun rise and set times, maps to illustrate temperature and wind speed and even a selection of videos. Everything is impeccably presented, making this the perfect app for at-a-glance updates to more specific facets of our weather. There is certainly plenty here to keep you enthralled beyond mere weather reports.

WeatherBug

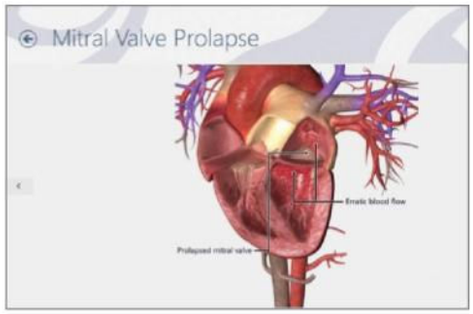
Price: Free **Developer:** WeatherBug!

With access to the largest global network of real-time weather sensors to get the most accurate info available, WeatherBug is ideal for getting detailed reports and forecasts. You can also save locations that you regularly frequent to find out what the conditions currently are and weather news can also be found on a live tile on the Start screen. You can even set up alerts to notify you if the weather is going to take a turn for the worst.

Health & Fitness

Use your PC to stay in top condition

Need a nutritionist to answer questions at the supermarket? Perhaps a personal trainer for running a first-time 5K? Often, we need an added push to go the extra mile with exercise. For some, that extra push comes in the form of an overzealous spin instructor or passionate personal trainer. If your Windows 10 device isn't already your best workout buddy, it could be. Tracking your progress on an app makes it easier to eat right, sleep well and push a workout harder. The availability of health apps is climbing fast and the industry expects the number of health and fitness apps to quadruple between 2010 to 2016. For those who like exercising solo or individuals who prefer being outside the gym – whether you're a runner or need help tracking your food intake or sleep – we've rounded up the best apps that offer a good general introduction to health and fitness.



Heart Decide

Price: Free **Developer:** Orca Health

This app is a multisensory learning tool designed to help healthcare specialists teach their patients more effectively. It features interactive 3D animations that let you explore the anatomy in an intensive and fascinating way by spinning and zooming in on a model of a beating heart. The app also features videos on Angioplasty and Stent Placement, among many other heart-related topics.

First Aid Guide

Price: Free **Developer:** Younix

Accidents and mishaps occur all the time and you never know when the chance to save someone's life may presents itself. This app helps you understand the basics of first aid and what to do in an emergency, all presented through a simple and accessible interface. It also provides the causes and treatments for a wide range of ailments to help you be prepared in the event of a crisis.

Sleep Bug

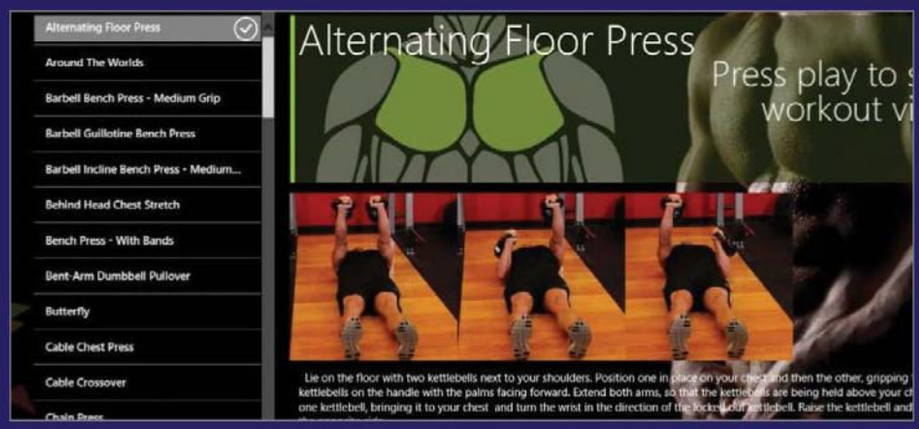
Price: Free **Developer:** Panzertax

Sleep Bug is an ambient sound mixer that produces a variety of scenes and music with random sound effects. The built-in sound generator creates a realistic listening experience to help calm a busy mind and is perfect for adults, children and babies who are having trouble sleeping. You can also use it in the office to mask out distracting noises and improve your concentration at work.

Active Fitness

Price: Free **Developer:** Summit Data Corp

This fitness, health and activities tracking app doubles as a social network. The real beauty is that you can import and export data to other fitness apps such as Strava and RunKeeper. Through a simple and accessible interface you can easily develop your own personal training plans, share your activities with your friends and track your progress on the online leaderboards. The ideal way to keep fit.



Gym Guide

Price: Free **Developer:** gregorysl

This guide to exercise presents you with an introductory menu that spans the range of the body muscle, dividing them into tiled areas. When you click on a tile, a new screen appears listing the exercises for that body area. Click on a particular exercise and a pictorial guide will appear along with textual instructions on how to complete the activity. There are 804 activities on offer.

Food & Dining

Feast your eyes on mouth-watering apps

Are you the type to spice up your gastronomical experience by trying out new food recipes every now and then? Do you enjoy a little bit of adventure, trying new tastes, new techniques and venturing forth into an unknown world of cultural delicacies? There are food magazines all over newsagents with a gamut of food channels splintering all over your TV. The internet is similarly awash with foodie ideas and suggestions bursting with recommendations, but you can also check for recipes right from the comfort of your Windows 10 device. Take a look at the Windows Store and you'll find lots of downloads that can help you out with your food adventure, whether you like to cook things on your own or try new restaurants. We have listed a selection of apps that you can try out to help you broaden your eating horizons.

HP Recipe Box

Price: Free **Developer:** Hewlett-Packard Company

This app eradicates the hassle of finding all of your stored recipes in times of need. When you find a recipe that you would like to store for later, you simply extract it to your own personal recipe box and then find it easily through categorisation. This app also enables you to create a shopping list directly from your recipes and have it available on your mobile device just as you're heading out to the shops. A sure-fire way to making cooking more convenient.

BBC Good Food

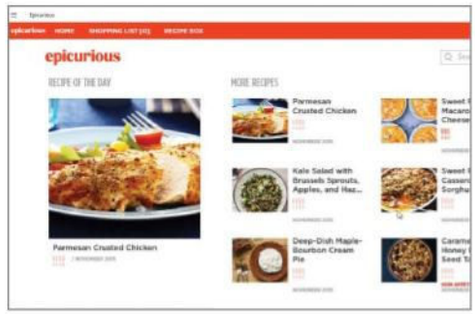
Price: Free **Developer:** BBC Worldwide Ltd

Featuring a large selection of delicious recipes (you get around 20 free but many more are available as in-app purchases), this app includes a well-designed, very colourful interface that inspires you to get in the kitchen and rustle up a healthy meal for your family. Each recipe includes nutritional information, all are very easy to follow and they're also available offline. A health-conscious app to help make you a more accomplished cook.

Recipe, Menu & Cooking Planner

Price: Free **Developer:** Pepperplate

This is a real admin tool for cooks as it allows you to manage your recipes, create menus, cook with multiple timers, view recipes, edit and prepare them while browsing the web and sharing recipes with friends via email, Twitter and Facebook. You can also import recipes into the app and add to your shopping list on the website, which automatically syncs.



Great British Chefs

Price: Free **Developer:** Great British Chefs

This app brings together over 300 recipes from some of Britain's best culinary masters. With photography so stunning it'll make your mouth water, plus expert hints, tips and demonstrative videos, Great British Chefs has all the key ingredients to help transform you into a skilful cook. You can mark your favourite recipes for easy referral and share your best dishes.

Epicurious

Price: Free **Developer:** Conde Nast

This app delivers over 30,000 delicious and professionally created recipes from renowned chefs and highly-rated cookbooks. You can save and share your favourite recipes, create shopping lists and then email them to yourself to refer to while out shopping. You can also see what the thriving Epicurious community thinks of each recipe with reviews and ratings.

Lifestyle

Live your life to the fullest with Windows 10

The lifestyle genre of any app collection is a bit of a strange one. It tends to feature all of those tiny little useful apps we use every day, which are hard to categorise but can sometimes be attributed to more leisure-like activities. This category often features apps that focus on how we live and why. So you will often find unique but also crossover subjects in this category. Explore apps for sports activities, healthy and balanced dieting, managing household duties, fashion and style, and also apps for favourite hobbies such as gardening, cooking and similar areas. Apps relating to these subjects can be quite wide-ranging, from those that seek information in order to do the activity and those that help you to manage information while you are within that activity. All of the apps tend to be stress-relieving and enlightening.

> "This category often features apps which focus on how we live and why"

TED

Price: Free **Developer:** TED Conferences LLC

An intriguing app containing talks and performances from TED (Technology, Entertainment and Design) conferences in HD-quality video. TED is a global set of conferences owned by the private non-profit Sapling Foundation, formed to disseminate 'ideas worth spreading'. The talks feature everything from breathing metal to a bat's genome and the app has noticeably improved in its content quality.

CPlus for Craigslist

Price: Free **Developer:** YanFlex

This app is a Craigslist browser that uses GPS data to find interesting things around you. The results are presented as grids, photos, maps and a host of other details, and you can save your searches and add postings to your favourites. The beauty of this app is that it combines the functions of multiple apps into one, freeing up your time and delivering all of the information that you need in one massive info-splurge.

Burning Fireplace

Price: Free **Developer:** Inphonite, LLC

As the winter nights draw in, nothing beats the hypnotic glow of a log fire – unless of course you don't have one, in which case this is the perfect alternative. This app essentially turns your PC screen into a smouldering, crackling fireplace that you can sit in front of and plan your memoirs. It features authentic sound effects and a baffling Pause/Resume function.

Rightmove Property Search

Price: Free **Developer:** Rightmove Group Ltd

Whether you're looking to buy a new home or simply rent one in your local area, the Rightmove app is a great place to find out what's around. You can check out the pictures or floor plan of potential new abodes and even discover what amenities are positioned nearby. Even if you aren't fussed about moving, this is still a great app to dip into for your fix of property porn as you can check out some of the finest buildings to one day aspire towards owning.

Wowcher

Price: Free **Developer:** Wowcher

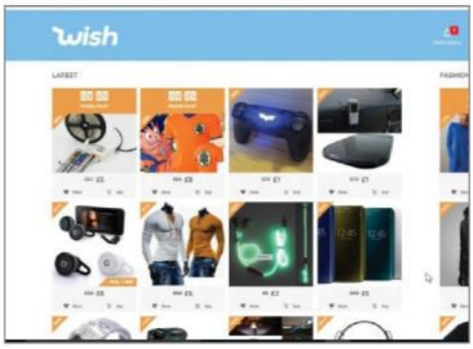
This service sniffs out all of the best deals in your local area and allows you to redeem meals, spa treatments, gadgets and much more at cheaper prices. You start off by joining the mailing list by inputting your email address and location and then you'll be informed as to when new offers are available for the categories you have highlighted as being of interest. Thanks to this app you can pick up some real bargains.

Shopping

There are plenty of shop windows on Windows 10

Technology has fundamentally changed society in many different ways. One of those has to be found within the shopping category. Shopping on a computer has been accused of destroying the High Street (although the major supermarkets have to take most of the blame) but it also has given an immense of degree of choice to people in small towns and rural areas. Before, hard-to-find and niche goods could only be sourced after a pre-planned and very expensive trip to larger cities. Now, with online shopping, all that is required is a quick peruse on the web to source even the rarest of items. This sort of shopping doesn't stop within the boundaries of this country either. Europe and the USA are popular shopping destinations. Couple that with largely efficient delivery services and you have a major computing success story.

"With online shopping, a quick peruse on the web can source even the rarest of items"



Wish – Shopping Made Fun

Price: Free **Developer:** ContextLogic Inc

Wish is an online shopping mall where you can search for products across a wide range of categories and then get them delivered to your door for a fraction of the cost that you'd pay on the high street. Just create a free account and then you can enjoy stress-free shopping from the comfort of your own couch. You can search for items by keyword, get notifications on price drops and instantly see how much money you are saving.

GAME Reward

Price: Free **Developer:** GAME Retail Limited

If you regularly visit the GAME store for your videogame needs then this app is well worth a look. You can track new releases, make purchases, trade in your old games (using an argmented reality scanner) and see how much credit you have to spend on your loyalty card. It's a well produced, vibrate app that is buzzing with activity.

eBay

Price: Free **Developer:** eBay, Inc

eBay is generally regarded as the mecca of the online shopping experience. A digital form of the traditional market in which goods are bought and sold, where auctions are held and the variety of goods on offer is seemingly endless. The Windows 10 version uses a large window style that looks good on a big monitor. Each window can be scrolled to the side to access more information.

Amazon

Price: Free **Developer:** Amazon.com

Devoted to the popular retail site, Amazon allows you to search for items on the main site as well as compare prices and read reviews but, most importantly, to buy products. Access to any of the world's Amazon sites is possible along with access to current wish lists, cart and payment options. You can also view popular products and recommendations. The app uses a sideways-scrolling interface.

Orchid

Price: Free **Developer:** Orchid Studio

Orchid is an Amazon price-tracking app that provides price drop alerts and price history charts for products sold on Amazon. This means that if you are in the market for a particular item but aren't necessarily in a rush to buy it, you can track it in this app and get alerted when the price drops. This ensures you get the best possible deals on items over time.

Travel

Roam far and wide with Travel apps

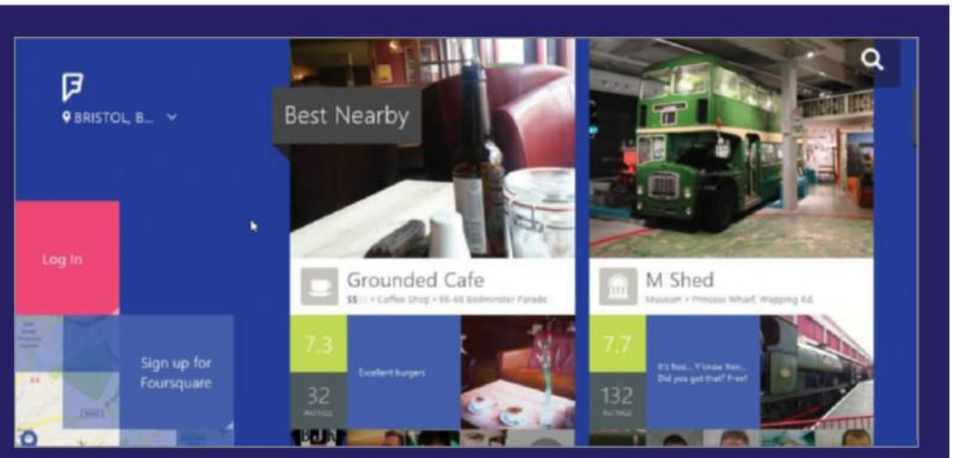
All great travel apps have one thing in common: they all solve a problem you didn't realise you had. That said, with app stores bursting at the virtual seams with software claiming to make your life easier, being simply useful is no longer enough for app developers aspiring to greatness. Whether they're cutting down journey times on your plane, train or car ride, or pointing you in the tight direction for authentic local nosh in Morocco, New York or somewhere in Italy, there's something for you. Each and every one of our travel apps has earned its place in this list by virtue of being innovative, quirky or just darned useful. So have a browse, take your pick and get globe-trotting. With a few of these on your PC, you may never look at the world in the same way again.

"Each and every one of our travel apps has earned its place in this list by virtue of being innovative, quirky or just darned useful"

Skyscanner

Price: Free **Developer:** Skyscanner

Thinking of jetting off for a few days to warmer climes? If you're travelling on a budget or just looking for the best deal on low-cost flights, this app is for you. This independent app scans millions of routes on over 1,000 airlines, and aims to save you both time and cash by finding the best deal among the many that are present on any given day. It then connects you with the right travel agent or airline. The app can handle up to 20 languages, too.



FourSquare

Price: Free **Developer:** Foursquare Labs

This popular service exists to find places of interest nearby. By creating a free account you can see the hottest places near to your current position and, by looking up friends and family members, hook up with other people if they happen to be in your vicinity. It's a good way to discover what's out there, especially if you are using it on a mobile device while visiting new places, and will help ensure that you never miss a local hot spot.

XE Currency

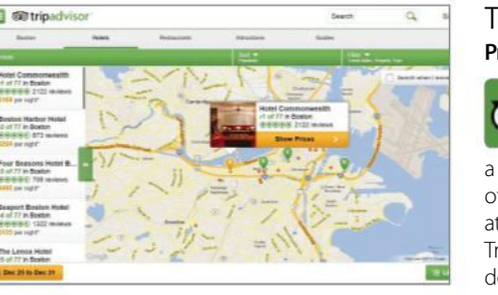
Price: Free **Developer:** XE.com

A very useful currency conversion app that is extremely easy to use and has been doing the rounds on a variety of platforms including iOS and Android successfully for some time now. The app features live currency rates so that you are always up-to-date. Rates are refreshed every minute. The app includes all the world currencies and precious metals listed in alphabetical order.

National Rail Enquiries

Price: Free **Developer:** Train Information Services Ltd

If you regularly use the train, this app can save you countless hours stood at wet stations listening to the repetitive drawl of the tannoy announcer proclaiming yet another delay. Through this app you can plan a journey, track trains and get the real-time departures and arrivals board for any station, which should give you plenty of insight into when you need to start running for your train.



TripAdvisor

Price: Free **Developer:** TripAdvisor LLC

Thanks to a wealth of features and a huge online community, this app will help you plan your perfect holiday. With a huge database of reviews, photos and maps, it offers a reliable picture of hotels, destinations and attractions. Easy to use and highly recommended, TripAdvisor will help you plan your itinerary so you don't miss out on anything.

Finance

Keep a close eye on your precious pennies

A wealth of financial apps on the market give you plenty of options to learn how to be more responsible with your personal finances. Are you trying to handle your own income and expenses, manage an entire household or run a small business? Whatever it is you're doing or want to do, there's a program that can help get your finances in order. Thanks to these apps, managing money and potential savings is easier than ever. Which app should you use to ensure you'll always be within your spending limit, always have that holiday fund and always be on top of your finances? Although there are plenty of options, we've narrowed the list down to the top five apps to help keep you focused on your hard-earned cash without giving yourself too much of a headache. But there are plenty more apps on offer.

"Managing an entire household or running a business? There's a program to get your finances in order"

StockMap

Price: £1.49/$1.99 **Developer:** Yojowa, LLC

This app helps you track your portfolio of stocks and shares. Apart from essential information displayed on the Live Tile within the app, it covers stocks, mutual funds and indices, currency rates, currency conversion, news headlines, both daily and long term tracking and also comparative charting. It also uses a heat map where the colour of each block varies in intensity of green or red.

Smart Money

Price: Free **Developer:** SmartApp Solutions

This personal finance app allows you to track your expenses and transactions, check your balances and see your spending by category, account or payee. It also allows you to set up bill reminders, which are displayed in the app tile on your Windows 10 Start screen. You can add multiple accounts with different currencies and it is well designed to be very user-friendly.

Spending Tracker

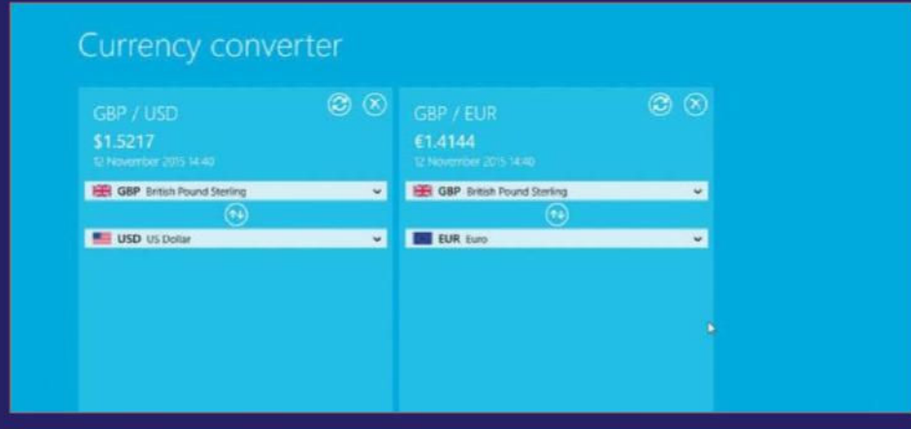
Price: Free **Developer:** MH Riley Ltd

With an intuitive interface, this app lets you quickly log your incomings and outgoings, then track them over time. It provides all the tools you need to stay on top of your finances. Extra features, such as Dropbox backups and the option to export transactions, require an upgrade to the paid-for Pro version, which you can do in-app.

Money Watcher

Price: Free **Developer:** Ecsolvo Technologies

This free app provides a simple means of managing your various expenses and incomes. Whatever you spend can be easily categorised to help track them further down the line and all of your incomings and outgoings can be effortlessly exported to other apps. Although there are hundreds of similar apps available, the sleek interface and the convenient cross-platform compatibility of this app make it worthy of recommendation.



Currency Converter +

Price: Free **Developer:** Bessonov Kirill

Like all the best apps available, this is a very simple program that works without any fuss. It allows you to convert one currency to another. Before you undertake the conversion, you select the 'before' and 'after' currencies and then type in the figure that you want to convert. As you input the number, the answer is written, it's that fast! You are also given an up-to-date exchange rate so you know what you're getting for your money.

Productivity

Grab an app and get down to business

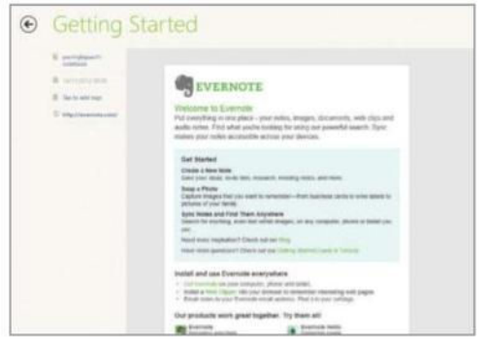
It is the productivity element of software where the PC has been rightly lauded. If you want to be productive in any serious endeavour then the PC has always, from the dawn of computing, been the platform that has been the 'go-to' system. All of the top quality, most well-known and fully featured packages have all appeared on the PC, at one time or another, in some guise. Of course, Microsoft's own Office suite of programs have been the stars of the show for some time now but there are plenty of other apps on the market that are just as accomplished an offering, in some cases, unique features and for free. These programs range from word processors, databases and presentation software to complex lifestyle planning, translation and mailing software. If you need to get things done, then Windows 10 is in the perfect position to serve you well.

"If you need to get things done, Windows 10 is in the perfect position to serve you well"

mSecure

Price: Free **Developer:** mSeven Software LLC

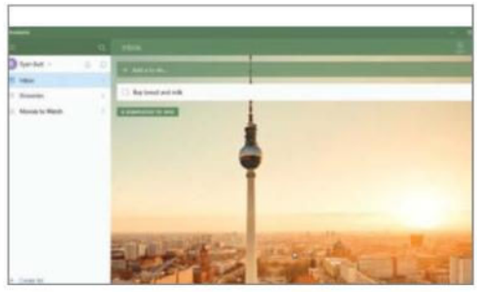
This app provides free 256-bit encryption for all of your personal information and files, as well as a handy auto-lock function to stop prying eyes being privvy to sensitive data. The app is quick and easy to use and provides peace of mind that your computer will be well secured should you need to step way. You can even mask sensitive fields in order to protect data from onlookers.



Evernote

Price: Free **Developer:** Evernote

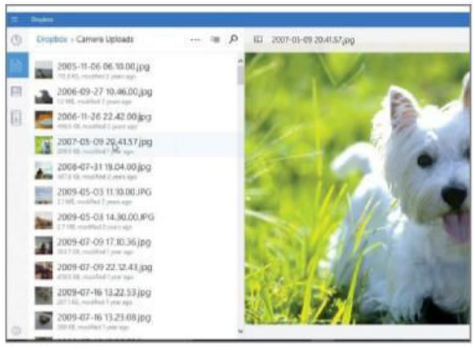
If you ever find yourself urgently needing to remember something, Evernote is an incredibly useful app to have around. It can span a wide range of devices and adds auto-synchronisation into the bargain, so you will never be without your reminder. An ideal app for research, to take notes with during a meeting or while attending a lecture, Evernote is a superior way to stay organised.



Wunderlist

Price: Free **Developer:** 6 Wunderkinder GmbH

Through this app you can capture all of your great ideas, list the important tasks that you need to complete and the places you need to be. You can share your lists with other people and the app also supports Cortana, so you can add things to your Wunderlist regardless of which app you happen to be using on your Windows 10 PC at the time.



Dropbox

Price: Free **Developer:** Dropbox, Inc

Dropbox is one of the world's most popular cloud storage services and this app lets you access an existing account or create a new one. You are provided with 2GB of storage space for free and can upload anything, including photos, documents and videos. As you can get Dropbox apps for every mobile device and computer you can access your files from anywhere, even through a simple web browser, making it a great alternative to flash drives.

Art Text

Price: £7.69/$9.99 **Developer:** BELIGHT SOFTWARE USA, LLC

An ideal program to use for creating logos, icons for apps and web images, this app takes text input and changes it in a variety of ways, via a number of customisable templates. You have the ability to change the shape of text as well as provide the text with a textured finish from metal to glass. Plus there are options to fill letters with different colours and add in special effects such as shadows and gradients.

Tools

Grease the PC wheels with these ideal utilities

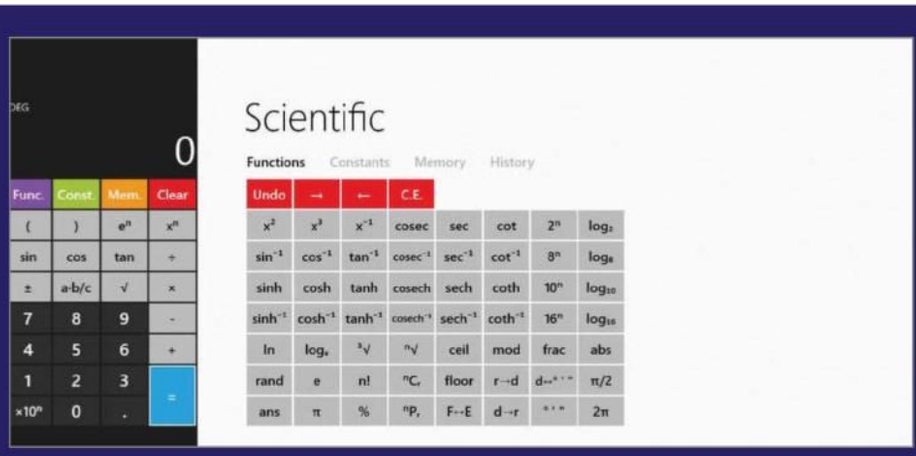
The star programs of the PC world grab all of the headlines. That is true. Microsoft Office is one of the heavyweights of the computing universe, while eBay is a shopping capital and the BBC's iPlayer is a media hub packed with entertaining fare. None of these major apps would get very far, however, without those tools that ease the pain of day-to-day computer use. Their task might only be small and, quite possibly, rather one-dimensional, but many of these tools do their own niche job well. So well that many of us simply wouldn't use a computer without them. This section gives you a brief idea about what kind of tools are available for use, and you'll be pleased to learn that many of them are free too. Take a look. Even if you haven't used them before, you might discover that they act as a solution to a problem you never knew that you had.

> "No major apps would get very far without those tools of day-to-day computer use"

Microsoft Phone Companion

Price: Free **Developer:** Microsoft Corporation

This app helps you get the things that you love about your Windows 10 PC onto your mobile device. For example, if you own an Android device or an iPhone then this app makes it possible to automatically sync content from your PC across. The process is made easy thanks to the way in which the app guides you through it and everything can be kept nicely up to date on your mobile device simply by connecting it to your computer.



Calculator²

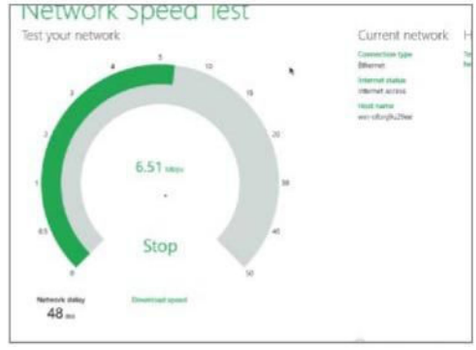
Price: Free **Developer:** Richard Walters

This advanced calculator is packed with features and options. Its basic selling point is that it stands as five calculators in one: Basic, Scientific, Programmer, Currency Converter and Unit Converter. With that lot, you get 125 mathematical functions to use along with statistical functions for memory values. For the currency add-on there are 150 world currencies supported along with 200 units for conversions across 17 categories.

Google

Price: Free **Developer:** Google Inc

The most popular search engine in the world, Google Search allows you to search the entire internet from the app's home screen. Features include a voice search option using a microphone, plus an instant previews mode to browse search results without having to enter the actual website. You can also click on the History icon to access all of your past searches.



Network Speed Test

Price: Free **Developer:** Microsoft Research

Using servers all over the world, Network Speed Test measures your network connection's latency and throughput. Based on the results, the app will then handily inform of you of what you can and can't do on your computer, based on your connection speed – such as stream music or make a video call. It's certainly a useful app to have around if only to satisfy your curiosity that you're getting what you pay for.

Recorder One

Price: Free **Developer:** IPT International Technologies

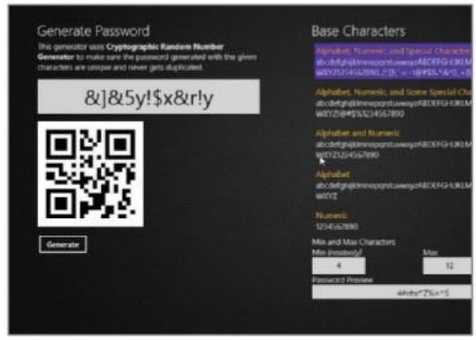
This app serves as a professional voice recorder that is ideal for recording meetings, lectures and personal notes. Once it's set up, just click on the large button to start recording immediately. All your audio notes are listed on the left – click one to play it – and there is no limit on the duration of recordings. New guitar riffs, great ideas, whatever – record them!

Security

Stay safe and sleep easy with security apps

Computer security issues make the news just about everyday, from malicious apps to malware. While Windows is a flexible and easy-to-use operating system available on a wide variety of devices, the threats make it extremely essential for users to install extra security options. Keep in mind that the most basic security precautions, like password-protecting your device and setting it to auto-lock after a period of time don't require a separate app. But don't stop there. From anti-virus apps (crucial at this point) to enhanced password protection, it's worth looking at more advanced options. The vast number of security apps available for the platform makes it impossible to cover them all, but this should give you a good idea of what's available to protect your Windows device and the data that resides within it.

> "The threat landscape has made it essential for users to install extra security"



Super Password Generator

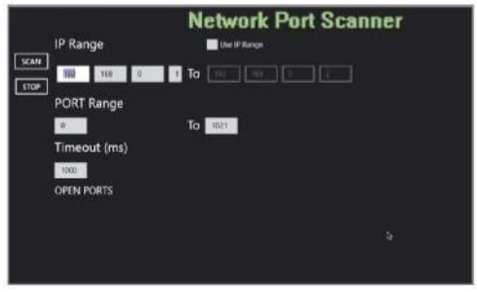
Price: Free **Developer:** PinoyTouchtech

If you want to apply the highest password security to your PC, this app uses a 'Crytographic Random Number Generator' to make sure that the passwords it generates are totally unique and never get duplicated. The app also generates QR codes that you can scan with any device. It's an easy-to-use app that provides sound peace of mind that your important data is secure.

VPN Unlimited

Price: Free **Developer:** Keepsolid Inc

VPN Unlimited provides encrypted, secure and private internet connection across all of your devices. It doesn't restrict the internet connection speed or bandwidth, fully sustaining your online privacy. The service offers a number of security options, such as allowing access to territory-restricted web content, allowing you to surf anonymously and providing extra security when using Wi-Fi hotspots.



Network Port Scanner

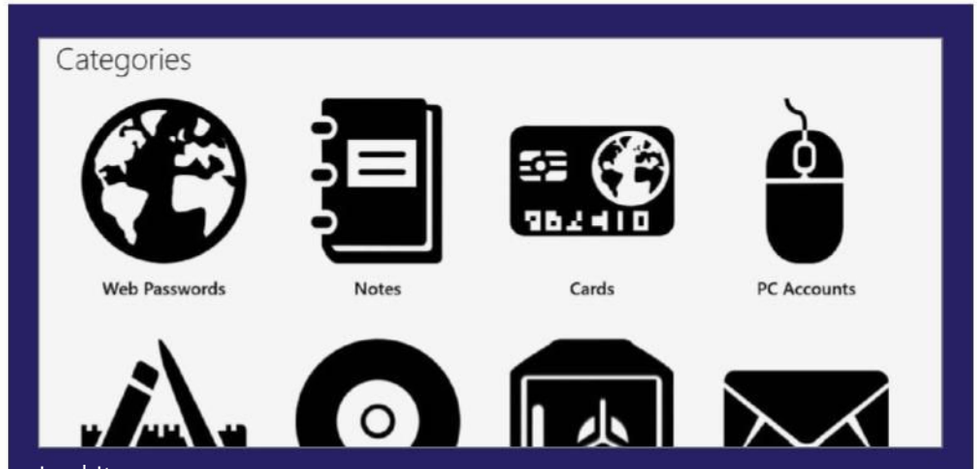
Price: Free **Developer:** Cenix

This is a useful free app for helping you get your PC's network ports in order. The app will scan your computer's ports to test your network security. You can see what ports are open on your network and the IP addresses that they use. You can also set up an IP range and a port range to scan. That's pretty much it, but it performs its tasks admirably well.

LastPass

Price: Free **Developer:** LastPass

This app makes your online activity quick and easy by remembering all of your website passwords and allowing you to log into your sites with a single click. With so many websites requiring passwords to access, this app neatly stores them all, meaning that all you need to do is remember one single 'master' password. Once you enter this, LastPass will fill in all of your logins for you. All of your data is also synced so you can login no matter which device you are using.



LockIt

Price: Free **Developer:** RNG Labs

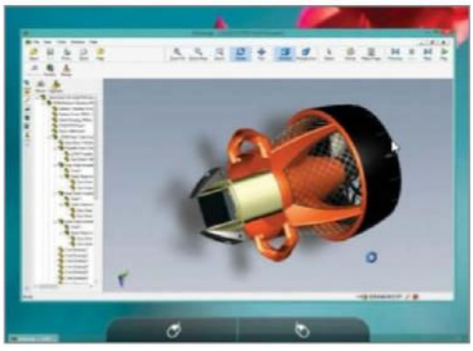
A perfect security app to store all of your passwords, credit card information, bank account data, software keys and more. You can sync this information across all of your Windows 10 devices. A key is generated using the user's master password using PBKDF2 with 10,000 iterations. All data is then encrypted using AES-256. The app also utilises a number of keyboard shortcuts to make operation faster to keep your PC safe and sound.

Business

Enhance your career with Windows 10 apps

The featured apps listed here represent a wide variety of software. What they all have in common are ways to enhance your business. Some of the apps focus on financial aspects, allowing you to easily manage a general ledger, accounts payable and receivables. Other apps focus on productivity. They allow the creation and management of documents that comprise your business data, help you keep sensitive data protected and retained within company walls and aid communication and collaboration among employees, customers and external contacts. As apps become more prevalent and more powerful, entrepreneurs and small business owners are relying on these savvy tools to help their businesses grow and run more smoothly. These top five apps can get you organised, connected and help you succeed.

"Some of the apps focus on financial aspects. Other apps focus more on productivity"



Splashtop Personal

Price: Free **Developer:** Splashtop Inc

This remote desktop app provides high-performance remote access to your PC or Mac from your Windows tablet. It is capable of delivering full audio and HD video streaming and is optimised for whatever connection method (Wi-Fi or 3/4G) you are using. Connecting is easy as long as you have the software installed on both devices and it could be a life saver if you need to access your office PC to retrieve important documents on the move.

I Love Calculator

Price: £0.99/$1.49 **Developer:** BungBungame Inc

If you need to find a simple and easy-to-use calculator, this app will provide one just for you. It goes further than that, though, because it also offers a rather more technical screen that allows you to input professional engineering functions including Trigonometric, Exponential and Logarithmic functions and Pi-functions. It also includes a rather fun selection of skins for the calculator itself.

Easy Invoice Creator

Price: £1.49/$1.99 **Developer:** Brizz

A simple app but one that will save a lot of time for many small businesses. This program does all the work and creates an invoice for you based on a simple template. You add your company details so that they automatically flow into the new invoice. You can then store or print the details. The layout is clean and simple, and it takes very little time to complete a typical invoice.

Box

Price: Free **Developer:** Boy, Inc

Box is a simple and effective cloud computing service that gives you 5GB of free space to store your files. The intuitive interface makes it easy to access and edit your files, share content and stay connected with your work team from anywhere and on any device. It's a good way to share files with co-workers and have them collaborate on them without having to book a meeting room.

Task Manager Free

Price: Free **Developer:** INTERSOG LLC

This is a simple task management app that makes it easy for you to monitor and stay on top of your important to-do lists and appointments. A simple interface makes it easy to track your productivity and will ensure you never miss an important meeting again. Definitely worthy of consideration if you are looking for a new tool for helping you manage your life.

Education

Learn on your PC and have fun along the way

The wave of the future is here, in particular for education and learning. Terms like 21st Century Computing, BYOD (Bring Your Own Device) and Cloud Computing have now become mainstream. The introduction of mobile devices and tablets has brought technology to more students than ever before. A one-to-one computing environment is not only a possibility but also a reality in more schools than people realise. Teachers can use apps for everything from communicating with students to dissecting virtual frogs. Whether you're currently in school or just seeking a little self-improvement, a whole host of Windows apps are just waiting to enhance your knowledge base. We've picked a few of the top applications in a number of categories but they are but a mere taster of what's available within the Windows 10 app store.

> "A whole host of Windows apps are just waiting to enhance your knowledge base"

My Study Life

Price: Free **Developer:** My Study Life

This app provides a comprehensive planner for students, teachers and lecturers to store timetables and mark up assignments and exam revision planners. Through a simple interface you can track tasks, get reminders for when things are due and manage your classes so you can see, at-a-glance, what you've got on any given day. All of your planners are also synced to the cloud so that you can access them from any device. A must for academics.

Mars Rover: Curiosity

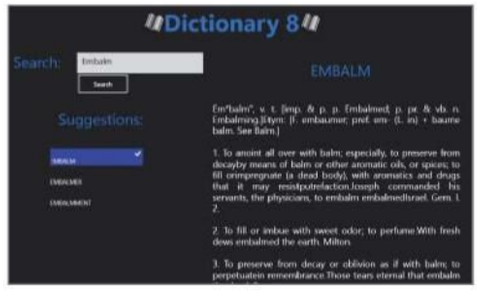
Price: Free **Developer:** Jet Propulsion Laboratory

This app is more of a taster for the main website on the Rover. It provides a mouse-driven guided tour around the labelled, 3D graphic-generated Rover, plus a recorded video of the initial landing of the Rover using the actual video of NASA control and CGI of the Rover itself landing on Mars. Apart from these two features, other links direct you to another app or the information-packed website.

Star Chart

Price: Free **Developer:** Escape Velocity Limited

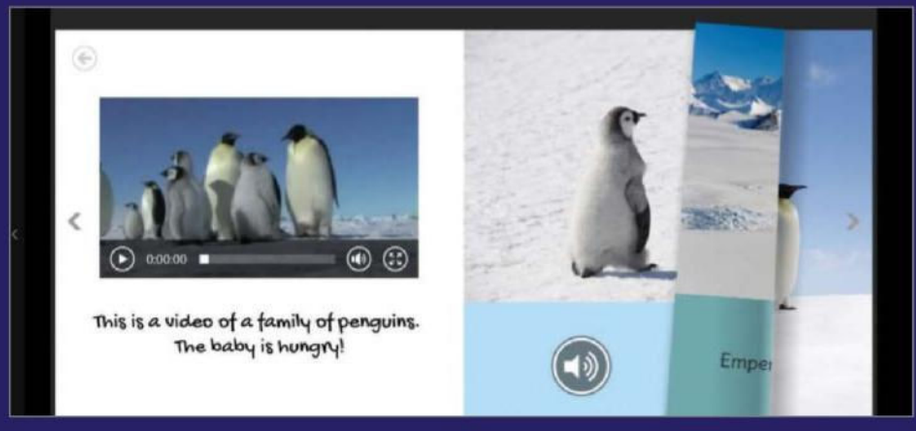
A star gazing and astronomy app. You can explore rendered versions of a variety of planets, moons, rings, stars, constellations and messier objects. You can also move through a timeline to see how the sky has changed by up to 10,000 years. The app shows all the stars of the northern and southern hemispheres up to a magnitude of +10, which amounts to a collection of over 120,000 stars!



Dictionary 8

Price: Free **Developer:** Technocrux

If you do a lot of writing on your computer then there are times when you will undoubtedly be stuck for a particular word or phrase, which is where this simple but effective app comes in. Dictionary 8 contains over two million unabridged definitions, synonyms, example sentences, verbs, adjectives, nouns and prepositions. Very useful to have to hand.



Book Creator

Price: Free **Developer:** Red Jumper Limited

You can let your imagination run riot through this simple and accessible app that lets you create any kind of book – from journals and comics to textbooks and childrens' picture books – straight from your PC. The easy-to-grasp interface makes crating books intuitive and you can even publish them in online stores to sell once you have finished. A great way to get your ideas done, dusted and out there.

Government

Big information on a grand scale

You hear a lot about the appropriate size of government. But one type of smaller government that all sides can agree on is moving helpful applications, or apps, to computing devices, where they can be used by the public for free at any time and almost any location. One thing to note is that most (not all) government apps today are rather primitive compared to private sector offerings. This isn't necessarily a bad thing. If you're trying to find your embassy in a foreign country in a hurry, you probably don't want to have to tackle a level of Angry Birds first. The second thing to note about today's crop of government apps is that almost all of them act as a mobile gateway to information stored in other forms. There are a few exceptions but, for the most part, government apps are little more than simple databases.

Election Essential

Price: Free **Developer:** MoRage

If you like to keep an eye on US government current affairs, this app provides an up-to-date rundown of all of the essential election information about local State Ballots and Federal Candidates. If you want to know who is running for US Senate or House and research voting records then this is an insightful download. You can also source campaign finance information for all candidates, including who they are being financed by and much more.

The White House

Price: Free **Developer:** BRIDGE-BUILDING MEDIA GROUP

Devoted to the White House, this app provides a contact point with the US Government, allowing you to stay informed with the political movements in Washington. Hence, you can see a video on a bill to support children to stop or prevent them from taking up smoking, features on Middle Class tax cuts and a White House blog feed that can be downloaded in MP3 and MP4.

World Statistics

Price: Free **Developer:** T.O.K.

This app is the digital equivalent of one of those factual books that always used to reside in the toilet – an app packed full of interesting and insightful facts and stats. This app can help teach you anything from how many people are living on the earth, how much longer our planet's fuel reserves are likely to hold out and much more besides. It makes interesting reading.

Top American Speeches

Price: Free **Developer:** DaksaTech

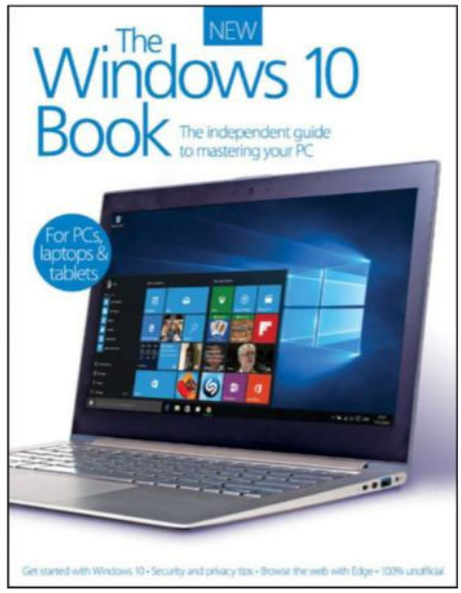
This app lists the top 100 speeches in American history. Organised by the title of the speech, the speaker is shown in photographic form. Click the photo for the entire text. It would have been welcome to have seen some video footage but the text remains often stirring and inspirational. Speakers include FD Roosevelt, JF Kennedy and Martin Luther King.

UK Monarchs

Price: Free **Developer:** Casey_boy

Handy for expanding your quizzing knowledge, this app allows you to view every monarch of the United Kingdom from Queen Anne (1707), through to Queen Elizabeth II of the present day. You can sort by royal household or century and links are also provided for information on the monarchs prior to the formation of the UK. Plenty of info and images are provided.

Special trial offer



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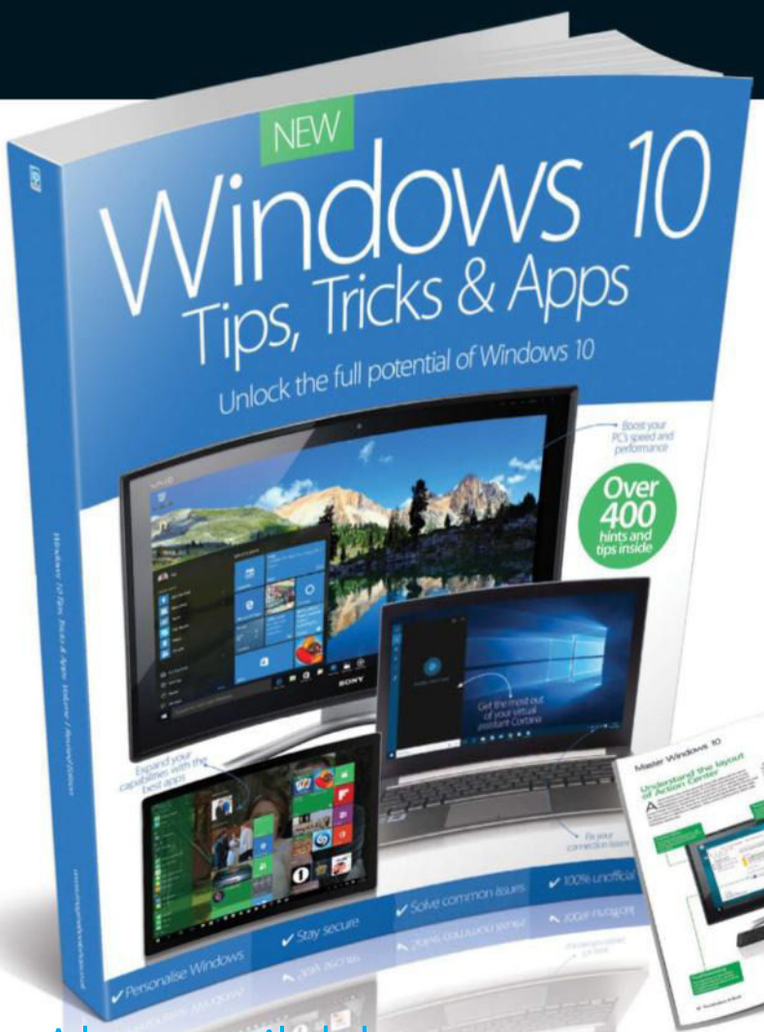
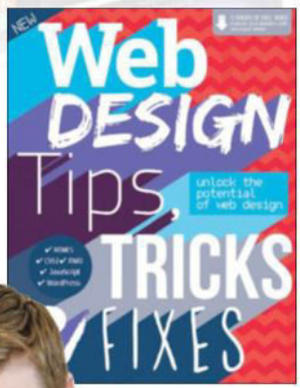
From the makers of The Windows 10 Book

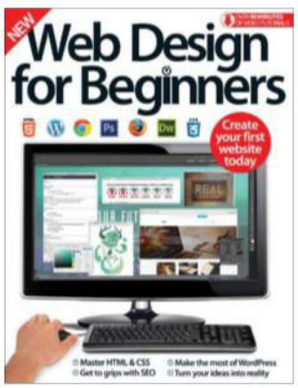


Windows 10
Tips, Tricks & Apps

The Start menu is back! In this guide to Windows 10 we take you through everything you need to know about the new-look Start menu, Microsoft's new web browser Edge and their highly regarded voice assistant Cortana.

Also available...





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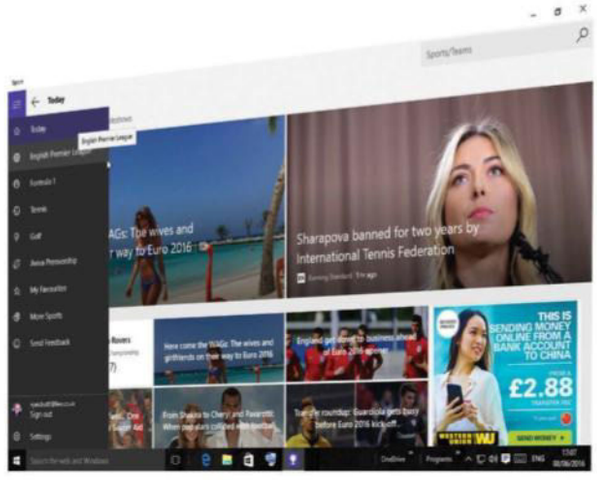

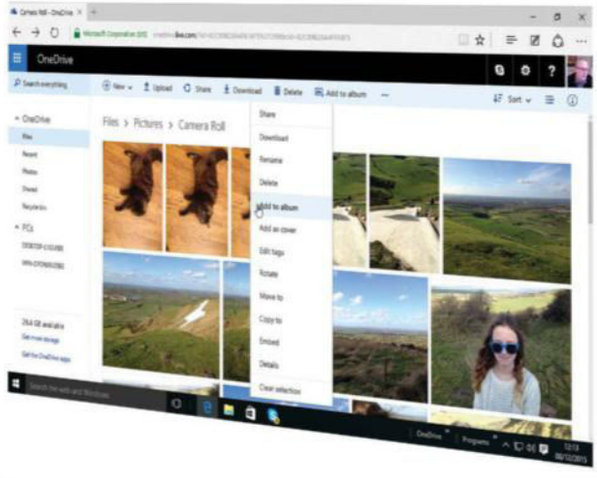

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