

Windows

The Official Magazine

Get more out of life

November 2012 | Issue 1



TRAVEL 2.0

➤ Pack the essential tech for a unique adventure



6 WORLD EXCLUSIVES



33 PAGES OF NEW GEAR

➤ New Windows 8 kit from Samsung, Asus, Sony & more

SAMSUNG ATIV SMART FIRST LOOK

A superb laptop and tablet combo!

WINDOWS 8 IS HERE!

➤ Enjoy revolutionary new devices and explore the brand new app store



PERFECT WINES

➤ Become an overnight wine expert with top apps and sites

AMAZING MUSIC & MOVIES

Rent or buy from your Windows device

DR DRE VERSUS 50 CENT

We test the best celebrity headphones

TOP FITNESS GEAR

Apps and gadgets for a healthy lifestyle



November 2012 Issue 1

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Dell recommends Windows.

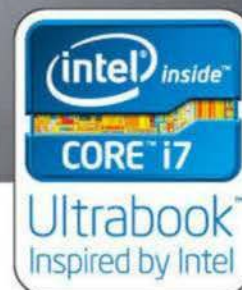


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Welcome



EDITOR'S PICK
My favourite features from the issue

NEW SONY
This sliding tablet is super cool **p20**



Welcome to the brand new Windows: The Official Magazine, a brand new title that celebrates the fantastic breadth of Windows technology and reveals new ways you can use it to get more from your real-life passions and interests.

The release of Windows 8 will change the way we think about our devices forever. It blurs the lines between PC and mobile and ensures a seamless experience for the first time. What's more, it's changed the devices themselves, and this inaugural issue is packed with genuinely unique tablets, laptops and hybrids, which are unlike anything we've seen before.

Windows Magazine isn't just about the best devices, it's about using them to get more from your passions. Whether it's photography, music, movies or shopping, we will show you how to enjoy them even more, with select apps from the all-new Windows Store and the superb innovations on offer. It's an exciting journey and we're glad to have you along for the ride.

Adam Ifans
Editor-in-Chief

TRAVEL TECH
Amazing tech for your holiday **p6**



BECOME A WINE EXPERT
Impress your friends with new knowledge **p74**



The only official Windows magazine

 Windows: The Official Magazine is the only Windows title to be officially endorsed by Microsoft. This means we get the inside track on the latest apps from the Windows Store, and access to the newest kit, making our magazine the only place to buy the right device and then get the most from it. Windows is about getting more from your everyday life, and this is the magazine to help you do it.

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Perfect gear for every need



Life
ACHIEVE MORE

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How all the new features will improve your life

ENJOY YOUR PHOTOS

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All the new features at a glance

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The best Windows gear revealed



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Overcome any PC problem with Windows 8's new features



Showcase
LIVE DESIRE ENJOY



TECH LIFE

Perfect tech for globetrotting

Discover the ultimate Windows devices, gadgets and apps to take on your travels, home or abroad

You may be trekking through rainforests, exploring ancient civilisations or just off to Blackpool for a week. Wherever you're headed, you'll be lost without the right kit. You'll need proper connectivity, amazing computing power and something that isn't going to let you down at the crucial moment. You'll also need your kit to be lightweight. We think we've found three devices that each tick all of those boxes. 

BEST FOR BACKING UP

Acer Iconia W510
£499

OUR CHOICE FOR TRAVEL



BEST FOR GETTING AROUND

Nokia Lumia 920
£ Contract



BEST FOR PORTABLE POWER

Samsung Series 9
£1,199





SAMSUNG SERIES 9 ULTRABOOK £1,199

This laptop is an ideal travel PC. It's unbelievably slim, will slip in most bags, yet it's packed with features and runs Windows 8. www.samsung.com

Samsung Series 9 900X3B

It's not unreasonable to suggest that the Ultrabook has been the most significant computing development for world travellers. Five years ago, if you tried to drag a laptop around in your carry-on bag, you'd end up with a hefty osteopath bill. Yes, netbooks did a good job of reducing bag weight, but with a significant power and resolution sacrifice. Ultrabooks are revolutionary. They're powerful, sturdy, slim and light. And Samsung's Series 9, which features a 13.3-inch screen and weighs less than 3lb, is a perfect pick for travel.

Before we examine its many superlative qualities, consider that the Series 9 isn't cheap. Hunt around and if you're very lucky you should be able to pick one up for around £1,000, which is no small amount, especially if you're planning an expensive trip. However, when it comes to buying a perfect



Tech can help you find hidden gems



travel companion, the Series 9 has plenty to offer in return.

Inside, there's everything you need for full-strength computing on the road. There's a lot of memory at 4GB, a low-voltage processor that means you'll get extra battery life, a huge solid state hard disk – which means it'll boot fast and is robust to knocks – and even a set of USB 3.0 ports for lightening fast interaction with external drives.

An integrated high-definition webcam means free video calling from hotel rooms is perfectly possible and there's a memory card reader within, so it's perfect for scrolling through the photos of the day. While the resolution of the screen isn't quite as mindblowing as some of its competitors, it's perfectly decent. The Intel graphics engine isn't exactly superb, so you probably won't be

playing too many high-end games, but it does at least have a display with SuperBright technology and an effective anti-reflective coating. You can use it in the sun with confidence.

Acer Iconia W510

We're entering a new era of Windows devices and it's one where tablets rule the roost. Windows tablets not only rival the other tablets on the market, but blow the competition out of the water in terms of power, portability and connectivity.

The Acer Iconia W510 is a super-svelte tablet that measures just 8.8mm thick and weighs a mere 600g. That's 50g lighter than the iPad 3. What's more, unlike the iPad it's running an Intel processor, meaning it will run the latest Windows 8 apps as well as older applications like Photoshop without any hassle. Elsewhere there's 4GB of



**ACER
ICONIA W510**
£499

This Intel powered tablet with HDMI, USB and 32GB of storage is the perfect companion for your travels, especially as it weighs just 600g!
www.acer.com



Travel

£FREE
Hi-res photography of popular worldwide destinations mixes with all the local knowledge you'll need to get along.

GREAT TRAVEL APPS
Don't leave home without these apps

Maps
£FREE
There's location awareness, traffic details and integrated directions so you can always find your way to your destination.



Skyscanner
£FREE
Find the cheapest flights in seconds. Input your location and destination and filter by carrier, duration or time.

RAM and 32GB of memory, which is expandable with a MicroSD card, giving the W510 nearly 100GB of storage. But aside from these power boasts, what makes the Iconia such a great travel companion? Windows tablets offer much better connectivity than their rivals, so let's imagine a couple of scenarios.

After a day out taking pictures at the latest sights, you can back up your photos to the Iconia W510 using the USB and card slot. You won't find these on many rival tablets and means that you can store them safely, and even edit, share and enjoy them on a proper screen. Then, when you're back in your hotel and fancy watching a movie, the HDMI cable can be connected to a TV or display for family enjoyment, or if you're sitting back and watching a TV in bed, you can take advantage of the Dolby-powered built-in speakers.

Battery life, based on these specs, should be absolutely phenomenal, so the Iconia W510 won't let you down. What's more, the sub-£500 price for the 32GB model makes it one of the smartest buys on the market, especially compared to some RT tablets.

Nokia Lumia 920

When you're in a strange city, be it backpacking around Bangkok or enduring a business trip to Slough, traversing foreign surroundings can be challenging. In this digital age our smartphones have become personal assistants, helping shepherd us to our destinations with built-in maps to find essential sustenance in the form of good coffee and ATMs. In this age, we simply couldn't survive without them.

The Nokia Lumia 920 is the greatest assistant you could hope for, offering the lonesome traveller



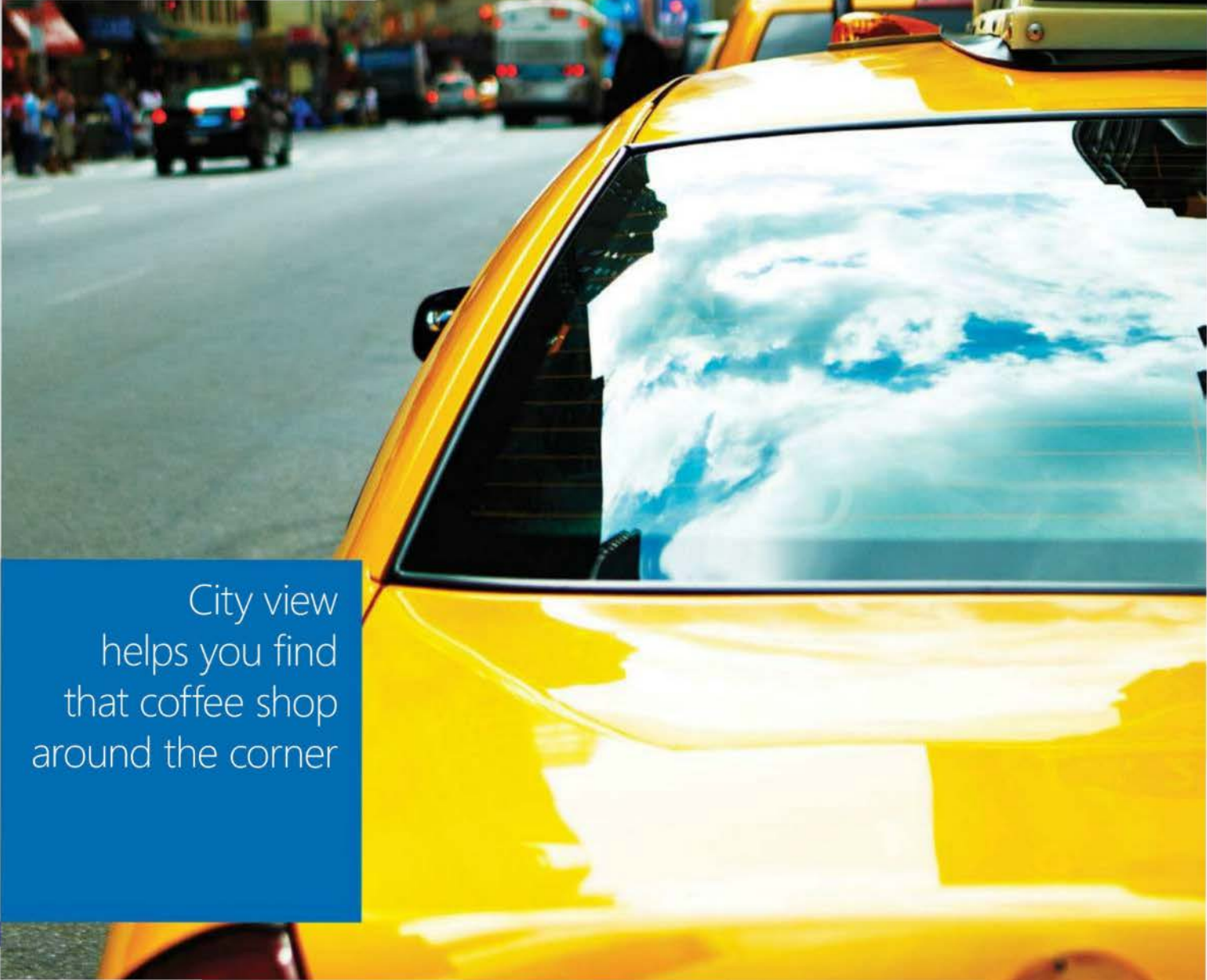
Windows tablets offer much better connectivity than their rivals



New smartphones can take great quality snaps



Blog about your travels and share on social media



City view helps you find that coffee shop around the corner

**NOKIA
LUMIA 920
£ CONTRACT**

Advanced mapping and augmented reality city views make this one of the best smartphones on the market. www.nokia.com



more helpful tips than a personal guided tour. It starts by packing excellent mapping and Nokia Maps is one of the best digital services around, offering turn-by-turn directions and truly gargantuan local business listings. The Lumia 920 takes this a step further with Nokia City View. This uses augmented reality to scan what's around you, displaying the plethora of city secrets onto your phone's display, on top of a live image from the built-in camera. City View helps you find anything from that coffee shop around the corner for a well-earned rest, to the closest ATM.

It's not just the software that helps you navigate strange lands safely. The Lumia 920 is packed with hardware that makes your travels even more memorable. The PureView technology in the 8-megapixel camera is designed to reduce shake and blur in your photos, so you can snap your friends and family in front of landmarks, and when you upload them to Facebook, they'll be clearer than other smartphones. The Carl Zeiss lens also helps get great results, meaning you can leave your compact camera at the hotel and free yourself from unnecessary luggage.

The final triumph is the AMOLED display, which helps your screen to stay visible in direct sunlight. Brits will be surprised to learn that in some countries, the sun can be so bright that it makes reading text on your smartphone impossible. That's not a problem with the Lumia 920, and the screen punches out with such vibrancy that it's always legible. ■

TRY IT WITH THESE

Travel in style with these superb gadget companions



**Powerbag
£85-£150**

With a built-in battery and compatibility with tons of different cables, you can simultaneously recharge up to four devices wherever you are, zipped away and hidden from view. You'll need to order from the US, but we reckon the Powerbag is a must-have for serious travel. www.amazon.com



**Olympus SZ-14
£152**

720p HD video, 14MP, a 24x optical zoom, a wacky 3D panorama mode, and a whole host more for just £150. This really could be the perfect travel camera. It's not super robust, but the metal front makes it tough and good looking, and it's only 216g with a battery and memory card inside. www.currys.co.uk



**Sennheiser
MM550 X Travel
£328**

Yes, the price is eye-watering, but that's typical for good headphones now. And look: these fold. They cancel noise. They use the fancy-pants aptX Bluetooth codec. They've even got TalkThrough, so you can keep the noise cancelling on and still talk to people. www.amazon.co.uk

BUCKET LIST

Run a marathon

Tech to help you reach your goals



A marathon takes serious preparation. Thankfully there's plenty of tech to help you prepare for the 26.2 miles. A GPS watch will help keep your training on track, but there are free apps that let you do the same thing with your Windows smartphone. You can also use wireless headphones to make sure you don't get all tied up. Elsewhere, modern bathroom scales can track fat loss and send the data straight to your PC. ■

Tanita BC1000 Body Composition Scale £162
Measure body fat and hydration, and send data to your PC.
www.tanita.eu



KIT TO GET YOU FIT

Get a helping hand with this superb helping of tech



Garmin Forerunner 610 £310
Measure distance, pace, heart rate and more, then upload it all wirelessly.
www.garmin.com



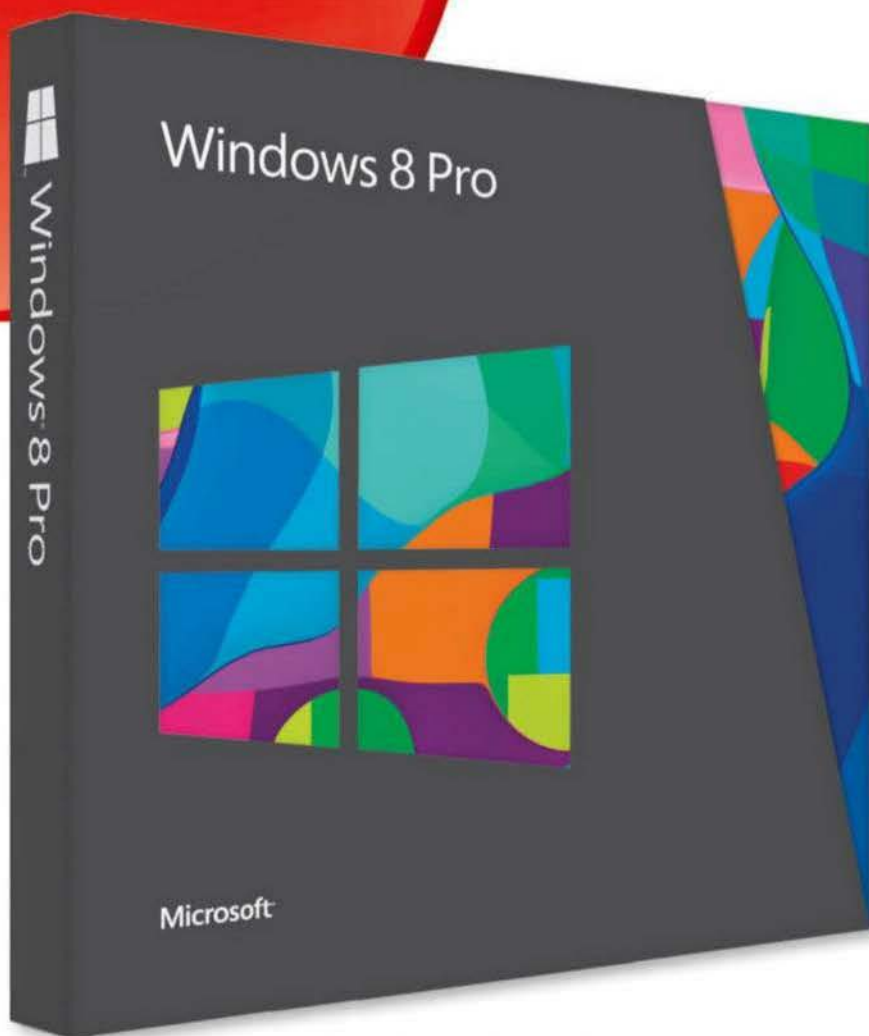
Plantronics BackBeat 903+ £57
These Bluetooth headphones let you enjoy music without a tangle of cables.
www.plantronics.com

BEST APP FOR FITNESS
Meet your goals with this superb app

MapMyRUN £FREE
Log your runs, discover new routes and send automatic updates to Twitter and Facebook.
www.mapmyrun.com



£49.97



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Meet the new Windows.

Windows 8 is all about a faster and more personal experience the way you want it across your PCs and tablets. You can stay connected, be entertained, and be introduced to amazing new apps.

 Windows 8

tesco.com

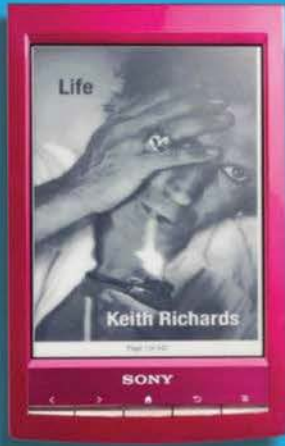
TESCO | *Every little helps*

Subject to availability. Selected UK stores. Offer valid from October 26 2012 until January 31 2013 and is limited to five upgrade licences per customer. To install Windows 8 Pro, customers must be running Windows XP SP3, Windows Vista, or Windows 7.

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7



8



BE THE BEST

Education essentials

Maximise your potential this academic year with our round up of tech and gadgets

HP Wireless Essentials Kit

1 This Kit includes a travel-friendly padded sleeve to protect your treasured laptop as you go, plus a three-button wireless mouse.

£35 www.misco.co.uk

Sony Reader PRS-T1

2 Do you have a huge reading list of set texts for your course? With this, you might not need to lug them all around with you.

£139 www.play.co.uk

Kodak Office Hero 6.1

3 This all-in-one printer combines some excellent features. Alongside the usual print, scan, photocopy and fax options.

£115 www.amazon.co.uk

Livescribe Echo Smartpen

4 The Echo Smartpen transforms the art of note-taking by recording everything you write – and everything you hear.

£115 www.amazon.co.uk

Philips PicoPix

5 Including a swish PowerPoint slideshow in a course presentation could provide a big boost to those crucial grades.

£164 www.amazon.co.uk

iStorage diskAshur 256-bit USB 3.0 250GB

6 If you carry a lot of important work around, this external hard drive gives you an extra layer of security, should you ever need it.

£154 www.amazon.co.uk

Lexar JumpDrive Triton USB 3.0 32GB

7 If you're going to be carrying a lot of work around with you, then you're going to want a USB stick that does all the carrying for you.

£39 www.dabs.com

j5 Create Ultra Station JUD500

8 Turn your laptop into a fully featured desktop PC with this device by expanding the laptop's connectivity, with two USB 3.0 ports.

£117 www.amazon.co.uk

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GAME VICTORIOUS



X51

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ALIENWARE | **GAME VICTORIOUS**

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TECH STYLE

Glorious technicolour

Bored of bland smartphones?
You'll love these new Nokias



Nokia Lumia

The arrival of Windows Phone 8, the latest version of Microsoft's mobile OS, has prompted a new range of Nokia smartphones and they look seriously slick. The Lumia 920 is the biggest of the new lineup, with a 4.5-inch super AMOLED screen, wireless charging and PureView camera tech for sharper snaps. The Lumia 820, at 4.3 inches, is smaller yet still packs an 8MP camera. Both come in a range of vibrant colours with matching accessories and headphones. **£TBC** www.nokia.com

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www.devolo.co.uk

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The Network Innovation

TECH STYLE

Dual-screen madness

One screen good, two screens
better with the Asus Taichi



Asus Taichi

Few Windows 8 laptops are more innovative than this hybrid from Asus. The Taichi looks like a normal laptop, except for the second 1080p screen built into the lid, which enables it to also be used as a tablet. It's extremely light, weighing just 1.3kg, and you can have it work in a number of modes. Mirror mode shows what's on the main screen on the secondary display, while dual-mode enables you to use both screens independently, even at the same time.

ETBC www.asus.com

RATED

Sony's super slim sliding tablet

Sony VAIO Duo 11 doubles as a compact laptop for portable computing

T

he release of Windows 8 has heralded a host of new style devices, which are a breath of fresh air in a sea of similar-looking

Android tablets. We're now seeing innovative devices to suit every need, and this strange looking Sony offers more than meets the eye.

The price tag of £999 will astound many people browsing the stores this autumn, and with most tablets entering at a relatively modest £400, the Sony device is a serious outlay. However, this is no ordinary tablet. The Sony VAIO Duo 11 is aimed at those who want an entertainment and business tablet, which packs Ultrabook power and usability.

Two ways to work

When in tablet mode the Sony Duo 11 is an 11.6-inch touchscreen device with a full-HD 1080p IPS panel. However, unlike normal tablets, the screen slides back on a hinge to reveal a full QWERTY keyboard. Unlike other hybrids, such as the Samsung ATIVsmart PC (previewed on page 35), which detach, the Sony Vaio Duo 11

stays connected by its large hinge. It's a slightly dated design, and one that's rarely seen, which makes it an interesting choice for Sony's flagship Windows 8 product. It makes for a more cramped keyboard and a bulkier tablet, but it does mean substantial gains in terms of performance.

Under the hood is an Intel Core i5 processor of the same low power variety found in Ultrabooks. That means you have the power of a leading laptop in the body of a tablet. This means that advanced photo and





**SONY VAIO
DUO 11**
£999

This sliding tablet features a 3rd Generation Intel Core i7 processor, which means it's as powerful as most Ultrabooks, but in the form of a demure 11-inch tablet.
www.sony.com

video editing are more than within its capabilities, and you can multitask apps to your heart's content. Windows 8 positively sings, and you can swiftly navigate around the operating system using swipe gestures that never leave you waiting.

Is bigger better?

Unfortunately, all that power comes at a hefty price point, and the Sony's pay off is an equally noticeable bulk and weight. The super-svelte iPad or Samsung ATIVsmart RT it is not, and the whole body weighs a significant 1.3kg, the same as a modern ultraportable laptop.

To make it easier to hold and use away from a flat surface Sony has tapered the edges, which does make a difference, although the edges are sharp, and we still feel this is destined to be used at a desk or on the sofa.

Of course, the added bulk makes way for added storage space, and while a £400 tablet may come with 16GB of built-in storage, and in the case of the iPad no room for expansion, the Sony is a completely different beast. There's a 120GB SSD drive as standard as well as an SD card slot, which can offer up to 64GB more.

On top of this you'll find two USB.30 slots, which can be used for portable hard drives that could offer 10 times the capacity, and at lightning-quick transfer speeds, too.

While on the subject of connectivity, there's also an Ethernet, HDMI and VGA port too, which gives it the edge over many ultraportable laptops, such as the Samsung Series 9 and the MacBook Air.

The extra power doesn't do the battery life any favours, and the Duo 11 gave out after 150 minutes (2½ hours) of HD video playback. That's less than most laptops and quite a long way behind mainstream tablets, which is a black mark against the Sony's portable credentials.

While it may lack the portability and sleekness of its rivals, it's not just power that makes the Sony a great proposition for those that need portable power. Unlike many



The Sony packs in a full HD, 1080p panel, which looks simply glorious



QWERTY KEYBOARD
Unlike most tablets the Duo 11 features a full QWERTY keyboard that's revealed by lifting the screen up. The keyboard is generously sized, although not as comfortable as a full-form laptop.

Well connected
Unlike other tablets, there are two USB 3.0 ports, an HDMI and even an Ethernet port at the back. Even new laptops can't match it.

Windows 8
The Sony Duo runs a full version of Windows 8, which means it will run any application, such as Photoshop Essentials or Microsoft Word.

No mouse
There's no trackpad as the Duo fully embraces touch technology. There is a track point nipple, but it's nearly impossible to use.



laptops the Sony Vaio Duo 11 packs in a full HD 1080p panel, which looks simply glorious. Not only is Windows 8's new interface sumptuously represented, but also apps, games and movies too.

Stutter-free screenings

The screen is an IPS panel with a touch coating that allows for generous viewing angles, should you have people congregating round your screen. The only downside was that it's extremely reflective and like all tablets, a magnet for fingerprints. This combination meant we were regularly reaching for a cleaning cloth in order to see the videos we were watching.

As you might expect from all of the power on-board, HD video played seamlessly without stuttering. Unlike the iPad and Android tablets, using Windows means it plays nicely with every kind of file format, meaning you can watch movies in any manner you please, and you also get a valuable extra inch of real estate to play with.

If you are sitting back to enjoy a movie, however, you'll need to invest in a decent pair of headphones. The built-in speakers are woeful, with the sound barely audible above the tinny din rather than filling the room with sound.

VERDICT

One of the most powerful tablets you'll find, the Sony is not a toy



Like many Windows tablets the Sony ships with its own stylus, which can be used to enter text freehand and be more creative with apps. In time we expect there to be more apps that support pen interaction, and we tried it extensively with OneNote MX on the Windows Store. The pen worked a charm, with a reassuring weight and two function buttons which enabled us to cut out elements and paste them into our notes. If you're serious about pen technology then the Samsung ATIVsmart PC with its excellent S-Pen technology is a better choice overall, but the Sony is a close and more powerful second place.

The Sony VAIO Duo 11 is a fine example of the radical and new types of hardware that are being designed with Windows 8. If you're looking for a single device that's as portable as a tablet and as powerful as a PC, you should look no further. ■

TRY IT WITH THESE

Great accessories to get more from the Duo

Bose IE2

£87
Don't stick to the built-in speakers, get these headphones for serious sound quality.

www.comet.co.uk



Microsoft Wedge Mouse

£49
If you still love your trusty old mouse try this portable USB one from Microsoft.

www.amazon.co.uk



Targus Pulse Sleeve

£15
Protect your tablet from knocks and bumps this solidly built sleeve.

www.johnlewis.com



**LENOVO
IDEACENTRE
A720**
£1,400

A powerful and stylish 27-inch all-in-one PC with multitouch for Windows 8, an integrated Freeview tuner and a Blu-ray drive.
www.johnlewis.com

RATED

This all-in-one touch PC is the thinnest ever

The Lenovo IdeaCentre A720 is great for families, movie fans and creatives alike

S

ould evidence still be needed to show the PC has moved beyond the traditional grey or black box, this is it. The stylish Lenovo

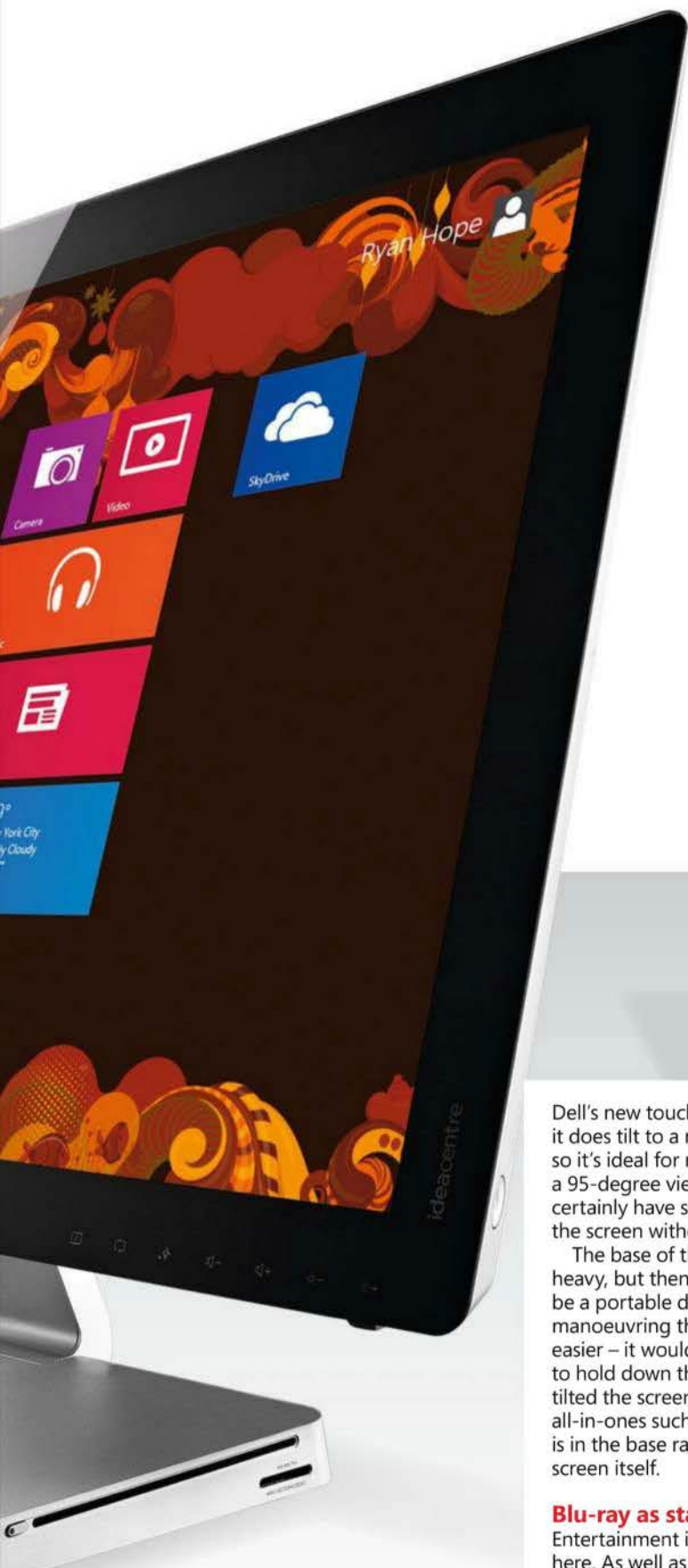
IdeaCentre A720 is the thinnest all-in-one touchscreen PC and it's ready for Windows 8.

It's no matter of style over substance either. With Intel's top-end Core i7 processor inside, it'll have more than enough poke to carry out everything from office work to video calling, movie watching, gaming and much, much more. However, you do pay for this performance with the A720's £1,400 hefty price tag.

But, while many PCs still use cheaper materials, this feels like it's straight from the school of high-design. The whole base and monitor casing is made from aluminium, with a glass panel. Various controls such as volume and brightness are dotted around the screen on the edge of the glass – they're touch-sensitive rather than having buttons underneath.

Disappointingly, the screen doesn't tilt back enough to go flat – unlike on several other all-in-one PCs such as





Dell's new touch-enabled XPS 27 – but it does tilt to a nice 45-degree angle, so it's ideal for many home uses. It has a 95-degree viewing angle, so you can certainly have several people around the screen without issue.

The base of the computer is rather heavy, but then this isn't designed to be a portable device and it makes manoeuvring the screen a whole lot easier – it would be poor if you needed to hold down the base every time you tilted the screen. Unlike some other all-in-ones such as Apple's iMac, the PC is in the base rather than behind the screen itself.

Blu-ray as standard

Entertainment is the name of the game here. As well as a Blu-ray/DVD combo drive, the addition of two HDMI ports – both in and out – is welcome, so you can use the IdeaCentre as a display to connect up to a games console or a device such as Apple TV. There's also an integrated Freeview TV tuner, so you can plug in a TV antenna feed, while there's wired or wireless internet connectivity and a memory card slot for transferring your digital photos into Windows 8. The sound from the A720 is beefy and doesn't disappoint thanks

to the integrated Dolby Home Theatre-powered speakers.

In terms of storage, you get a huge 1TB drive – more than enough for all the family's photos, games and other media. There are plenty of options for connecting up external devices, including Bluetooth and four USB ports, two of which are of the newer and faster USB 3.0 type. This is great, except the included keyboard and mouse need one for a receiver, while the included media remote control receiver also needs another. It would have been a lot better to have all these things built-in. The remote control is a nice addition and, while the buttons are a little plasticky, it's quite good for flicking through music or other media.

The screen has a Full HD resolution, so you can play back Blu-ray discs at the resolution that was intended, as well as take advantage of the great graphics in the very latest



You can use the IdeaCentre as a display to connect up to a console

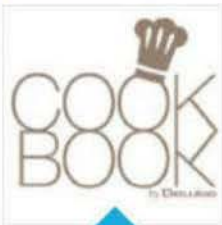


TRY IT WITH THESE APPS
Great for use on a touchscreen

Fresh Paint
A great demo of Windows 8's touch capabilities – you can paint using various brushes and combine colours, just as you would with real paint.



Cocktail Flow
Browse through various drinks with your finger and, when you've found the one you want, discover how to make it.



CookBook
Flick through recipes by category and save favourite dishes for making later. User ratings help you get a feel for what each is really like to make.

Amazing graphics
There's an Nvidia GeForce GT 630M graphics card for enhanced gaming and Blu-ray playback on the 1080p display.

games. The display features something that Lenovo calls a Dynamic Brightness System – essentially providing protection for your eyes by automatically adjusting screen brightness based on the ambient light conditions. An alert will also tell you if you're too close to the screen – something that can be a problem with large touchscreens.

Sadly, the premium feel doesn't quite extend to the keyboard and mouse. The keyboard is reasonable enough and is more comfortable to type on than its Apple equivalent, but the mouse is plasticky and not at all what you'd expect from a device of this undoubted quality. The good news is that, with Windows 8, the touch keyboard and other controls mean that for most tasks you won't need separate input devices and we think you'll find yourself using the mouse less and less due to the inviting interface.

As a home entertainment PC it's a real winner – especially if you want to combine your TV and PC into a single device. As a home touch PC for Windows 8 it's also exemplary and its competence with movies and media will be hard to surpass, if you can afford the high asking price. ■

VERDICT

A home entertainment powerhouse, but at a hefty price



Integrated Freeview tuner
You can use your PC as a TV with the integrated Freeview tuner, while there's Dolby Home Theatre V4 for superb sound.

So much space
With the A720's 1TB drive you can store all your media files such as photos, videos and music and still have plenty of room for more.



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† Monitoring Report of the European
Recovered Paper Council, (ERPC), 2010

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surprise you





RATED

The tablet for both work and play

The Asus Vivo Tab RT is a do-it-all 10.6-inch Windows tablet

Built from the ground up for Windows RT, Asus's new 8.3mm thick tablet is a do-everything device for work, travel and play. It's the Windows equivalent of Asus's Android tablet cousins, the Eee Pad Transformer series and like those tablets it uses the same ARM-based processors you'll find inside your smartphone.

It joins a line-up of several new Windows RT tablets, including the Samsung ATIV Tab, Dell XPS 10 and Microsoft's own Surface tablet. Like Surface, the Vivo Tab is also available as a more expensive and more powerful Windows 8 tablet running on an Intel processor.

While Asus would no doubt prefer that business users spent the extra money on the Asus Vivo Tab, as it sees the Vivo Tab RT as more home and entertainment-orientated – there's no reason why you can't also use this tablet for work email, word processing, presentations and spreadsheets.

If you're not familiar with Windows RT, it's a new version of the Windows family, along with Windows 8, that runs on ARM-based devices. This means

you can't install old desktop apps, but you do get Microsoft Office 2013 apps supplied – Word, Excel and PowerPoint – and you can install more new apps from the Windows Store.

Graphics power is at the heart of the Vivo Tab RT; the ARM-based processor it uses is manufactured by graphics experts Nvidia, and it's the same power we've seen in other tablets over the last year, including the Asus Transformer Prime and HTC One X.

The Vivo Tab RT is a 10.6-inch tablet, making it slightly bigger than the 9.7-inch iPad. The bigger screen is a

**ASUS VIVO
TAB RT**
£549

A Windows tablet for the masses, the 10.6-inch Vivo Tab RT is also powerful, with its Nvidia Tegra 3 processor and Microsoft Office 2013 apps.
<http://uk.asus.com>



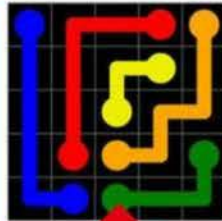


TRY IT WITH THESE APPS
Our pick from Windows Store

Kindle
You can now read all your favourite Kindle books on your Windows 8 tablet. And better still, it'll remember where you left off



Fruit Ninja
Take advantage of the Asus Vivo Tab RT's responsive touchscreen and splatter fruit like a true ninja with this fun-filled game



XBOX LIVE

Flow
A simple yet very addictive puzzle game. Connect matching colours with pipes to create a flow. Pair all colours, to solve each puzzle

boon for watching video, but it's mainly there because the Vivo Tab RT can be used in a laptop-style clamshell setup with a keyboard dock.

Viva la dock

The keyboard dock includes a USB port as well as an extra battery (you'll get nine hours of use out of the tablet itself). But if you want to connect a USB device directly to the Tab RT rather than via the dock, you'll need to use a proprietary adaptor that slots into one of the tablet's – again – proprietary ports. This is a shame, but we assume this is down to its slim profile.

So what's the screen like? It boasts a 1,366 x 768 Super IPS+ display and, while it's very bright and Windows looks pin-sharp, there's sadly no full HD display. We're hoping there's an understandable and price-orientated reason why it's not better.

Video calling, recording and photography are all well catered for. There's an 8MP auto-focus rear camera with LED flash plus a 2MP snapper on the front, which means Skype calls will be clear and crisp and you'll be able to record full HD video without hassle.

In use, Windows RT is responsive and quick and flicking through apps using the Windows gestures works very well.

In terms of internal memory, there's 2GB of RAM included in addition to a 32GB flash storage drive. The latter also contributes to the impressive speed of the tablet.

The thing we like the most about this device is the design; Asus is no stranger to producing great quality devices and it's produced another cracker here. The aluminium chassis is great to look at, while the front is a smart glossy black, covered in Corning Fit Glass. There's the now-standard Start button in the centre of the bezel and the excellent design aesthetic even extends to the ultra-compact power adaptor.

The Asus Vivo Tab RT offers a super Windows 8 experience in a lightweight package. However, it hasn't matched its main rivals for price. That's a real shame and may put some buyer's off, but overall, the benefits of the Asus Vivo Tab RT do justify the substantial extra outlay. ■

VERDICT

A super Windows experience but simply costs too much





RATED

Bendy laptop becomes big-screen tablet

The Lenovo IdeaPad Yoga mixes the usability of a laptop with tablet swagger

**LENOVO
IDEAPAD YOGA**
£999

The bendy IdeaPad Yoga can be used as a laptop and a giant 13-inch tablet. It's ideal for watching movies but, unlike other tablets, it's great for getting everyday stuff done. www.lenovo.com

Y

oga by name and by nature, the Lenovo IdeaPad Yoga is a revolutionary touchscreen laptop that doubles as a

13-inch tablet, offering users the choice of the two styles of use. The Yoga moniker comes from the lid's ability to bend backwards on itself, so that the traditional laptop design transforms to become a tablet, which makes it better suited to watching videos or using apps, while losing none of the standard laptop usability.

Under the hood is a generous configuration that offers plenty of power. There's a low-voltage third-generation Intel Core i7 processor clocked at 1.8GHz with 4GB of RAM, which will crunch through nearly any task. High-end HD video rendering is best suited to beefier machines, rather than a laptop that's designed for portability, but playback, picture editing and casual gaming is all well within its limitations.

The Lenovo IdeaPad Yoga comes in two colours, an attractive orange or a muted and slightly corporate-looking grey. We much prefer the former, which will turn heads for its stylish

design as well as its contortionist tendencies. The inside, however, is plain black, with a spacious keyboard, but it sorely misses backlighting for use in dim conditions.

Touchscreen technology

As the Yoga doubles as a tablet, the 13-inch touchscreen is especially important. Unfortunately, unlike other hybrids such as the Samsung ATIVsmart PC and the Asus Taichi, the screen isn't full 1080p HD and Lenovo has plumped for a less high resolution 1,600 x 900 display. In the grand



scheme of laptops that's still extremely high, but Windows 8 heralds a new generation of quality and we feel slightly let down. That's not to say that the screen quality is poor, however. The IPS panel isn't as horribly reflective as many of its competitors, colours are deep and vibrant and movies look fantastic on it.

Elsewhere, the Lenovo IdeaPad Yoga enjoys a 128GB SSD drive, which has plenty of room for your files, two USB ports, HDMI, and an SD card port. That's standard for many ultraportable laptops, but obvious omissions are an Ethernet socket and an optical drive.

Lack of comfort

As a laptop the Yoga performs well. Windows 8 is a joy to use with the touchscreen display – we actually turned off the trackpad and moved to using our fingers, which was genuinely liberating – but nowhere near as pleasurable as it is to flip the screen back and browse the web and iPlayer videos in tablet mode. At 1.4kg it's too heavy to walk about with and holding the flattened chassis was heavy. However, when sitting back on the sofa or on a long train journey, the ability to bend back the Yoga and stand it up on its haunches meant we could enjoy it

all the more. There are a few bugbears with the Yoga, which make it short of perfect. There's a little flex in the plastic base of the keyboard, so the keys bounce slightly when typing.

What's more, when used in tablet mode, the keys sit exactly where your hands grip. The keyboard is disabled, thankfully, but you have no choice but to grasp it, mashing the keys as your fingers search for grip, which is annoying and feels disconcerting. As a result, we rarely held the Yoga as a flat tablet device.

While it's not the perfect laptop, the range of movement and use offered by the Lenovo IdeaPad Yoga won us over. The more we embraced its range of movements the more the real-life benefits of a touchscreen display became apparent. If you're looking for a great Windows 8 laptop that offers something extra, the Yoga is well worth the cash. ■

VERDICT

A great laptop that charmed us with its range of movements

★★★★☆



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www.comet.co.uk

RATED

Is this the ultimate laptop?



Asus throws everything behind the Zenbook Prime UX31A

T

he market for thinner, faster and higher resolution Ultrabooks has caught fire and Asus is at the front of the crowd, vying for the

Ultrabook crown. Its latest effort, the Zenbook Prime UX31A follows the UX31E and arrives with a leather and fabric carry case, which hints at its premium credentials.

The UX31A is a slick machine; all brushed aluminium curves that are the slickest that we've seen. It's like a Taiwanese Bentley and just as glam.

In terms of style, you may feel the metal and glass combination may have overdone the premium look but it's one of the most eye-catching Ultrabooks currently on the market.

Once open, the screen instantly impresses despite the chunky bezel. The 1080p IPS display is simply superb, easily beating rival Ultrabooks. A quick spin of the opening episode of Steven Spielberg's *The River* in 1080p looks sharp and sound delivers plenty of bass punch.

The 128GB solid-state drive won't hold vast amounts of high-def content, but it is fast enough to cope with games and large files, and at 1.9GHz,

this Zenbook moves at speed, though there's just 4GB of RAM – surprisingly little for the price tag.

Price rivals

The main problem the 13-inch UX31A has is that there are similarly sized Ultrabooks available at the same price or even at a few hundred pounds less.

The UX31A is no slouch in the performance stakes though and can handle games with great resolution and speed but there is a pay-off. That gorgeous trackpad simply isn't as responsive as those found on an HP machine. In connectivity terms, you'll find the UX31A has all you could want while keeping ports to a minimum – two USB and an SD card input are the essentials. We've listed the pitfalls and price concerns but, really, if you're seeking a portable PC, the Zenbook Prime UX31A still should be at the top of your shortlist. ■

VERDICT

A brilliant Ultrabook for those seeking extra quality

★★★★☆

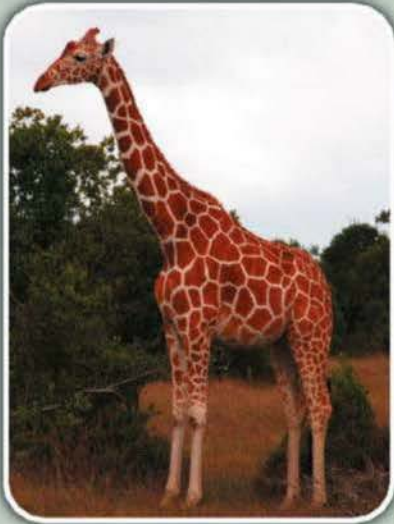


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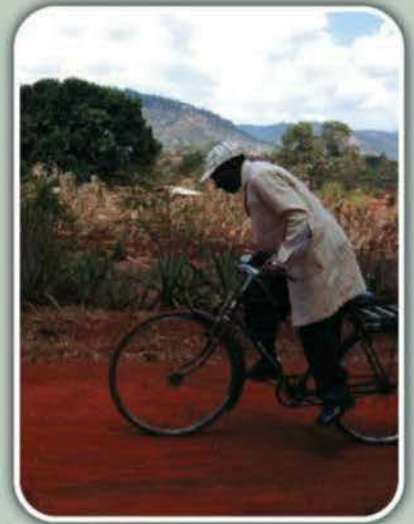
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SAMSUNG ATIVSMART TAB £TBC

The Samsung ATIVsmart Tab runs Windows RT, which helps prolong battery life and keep its size and weight to a minimum.
www.samsung.com

PREVIEW

A slim and stylish hybrid tablet

The Samsung ATIVsmart Tab is a lightweight tablet which is great for work and play



amsung has emerged as a huge player in the mobile market in the last year, so it's no surprise that the Korean company is

one of the first to release an Windows RT tablet. We got an advanced exclusive preview of the Samsung ATIVsmart Tab before our full review next month.

Like the Asus Vivo Tab RT (page 30) the Samsung ATIVsmart Tab runs on a different type of technology that allows for longer battery life and portability, which is a first for Windows devices. The low-power technology means that the 10-inch ATIVsmart Tab is extremely lightweight, weighing in at around 600g. That puts it on par with the iPad in terms of size and weight, except it comes with a detachable keyboard, meaning it can double as a Windows laptop for work and email, as well as a media device for apps, games and video.

The build quality isn't quite as solid as Apple's ubiquitous tablet, especially with a plasticky back, but it sheds valuable grams and has much improved connectivity. There's a full USB port, so that removable storage,

such as USB sticks and hard drives can be attached: HDMI for attaching to HDTVs and monitors, and MicroSD, which can double the built-in storage.

On par power

Elsewhere, there's a dual-core Snapdragon S4 1.5GHz processor, 2GB of RAM and a 32GB SSD drive. In terms of power, that puts this on par with any Android tablet, and with the diversity of the Windows platform, makes it an exciting prospect, even if the screen has a low resolution of just 1,366 x 768 and the drop in quality shows.

Windows RT can't run classic Windows apps, unless compatible versions are released via the Windows Store. However, Microsoft is pre-loading all RT devices with a touch-friendly version of Microsoft Office 2013, which makes the ATIVsmart Tab great for work and play.

Samsung's early RT tablet is exactly the kind of device we were hoping Windows 8 would introduce. The lightweight form factor and long battery life make it an attractive proposition and we're looking forward to reviewing it next month. ■



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High-flying celebrity headphones

Everyone from 50 Cent to Quincy Jones wants to lend their name to a pair of cans. We round up five of the best

Headphones have got seriously cool in the last year, and if your cans aren't celebrity-endorsed then you've badly undermined your cool credentials. There are scores of headphones from big-name brands such as AKG or Skull Candy backed by some of the biggest rappers, singers and music producers in the world, but with varying degrees of success. We got our groove on with the biggest names in music.

Skullcandy Mix Master Mike

1 These headphones sport the name of Beastie Boys DJ Mix Master Mike and feature DJ-style rotating earcups. They're comfy and have a mute button on the right earcup, as well as an input on each side so you can hook up to either one or attach a second pair of headphones. The sound quality is good, but suffers as you crank up the volume.

£260 www.johnlewis.com





SMS Audio Street by 50 cent

2 The only wired cans in 50 Cent's Street range, the SMS Audios feature earcups that, while squidgy and comfy, are huge and fairly heavy. The large and bendy headband makes them feel rather loose and sound is leaked before it even reaches your ears. What does get through sounds good, but the low-end isn't as beefed up as the Beats.

£200 www.play.com

House of Marley Destiny TTR

3 These distinctive headphones are the flagship model from House of Marley, which prides itself on using sustainable materials. The TTRs are built from recyclable aluminium and stainless steel, but it makes them heavy. The audio performance is strong and the on-board noise-cancelling tech proves its worth. The cable is covered in woven fabric, so it stays tangle-free.

£175 www.hmv.com

AKG Quincy Jones Signature Line Q460

4 Bearing the name of legendary producer Quincy Jones, these on-ear headphones are much smaller and lighter than any of the others here. They look plasticky, but padding on the earcups and the underside of the thin headband makes them comfy to wear. Audio performance is excellent thanks to the closed-back design, which means little sound is lost.

£130 www.johnlewis.com

Beats by Dre Studio

5 The king of celeb headphones has to be the Beats range from Dr Dre. The Studio cans feature noise isolation and are powered by a pair of AAA batteries. Available in a kaleidoscope of colours, the Beats will certainly get you noticed, although the shiny finish is a fingerprint magnet and the cable is annoyingly prone to tangles. The bass performance is second to none – fantastic for dance tracks or booming movie soundtracks.

£280 www.hmv.com



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Windows 8. Every genre is catered for, whatever mood you're in. You don't have to walk to the shop, wait for it to be delivered, or even sit twiddling your thumbs while it downloads as you can stream many of the films straight to your device.



3 STEPS TO MOVIE HEAVEN

Here's how to begin enjoying the best films immediately

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The Xbox Video app takes centre stage as the movie store in Windows 8. You'll find it on the Start screen.

2 Pick a film
Open the Video app from the Start screen. Click 'Movies store' for the entire collection. You can browse by genre, studio or popularity.

3 Buy, rent, download or stream
When you click on a film you'll be given an overview of the film, and the option to buy or rent it.

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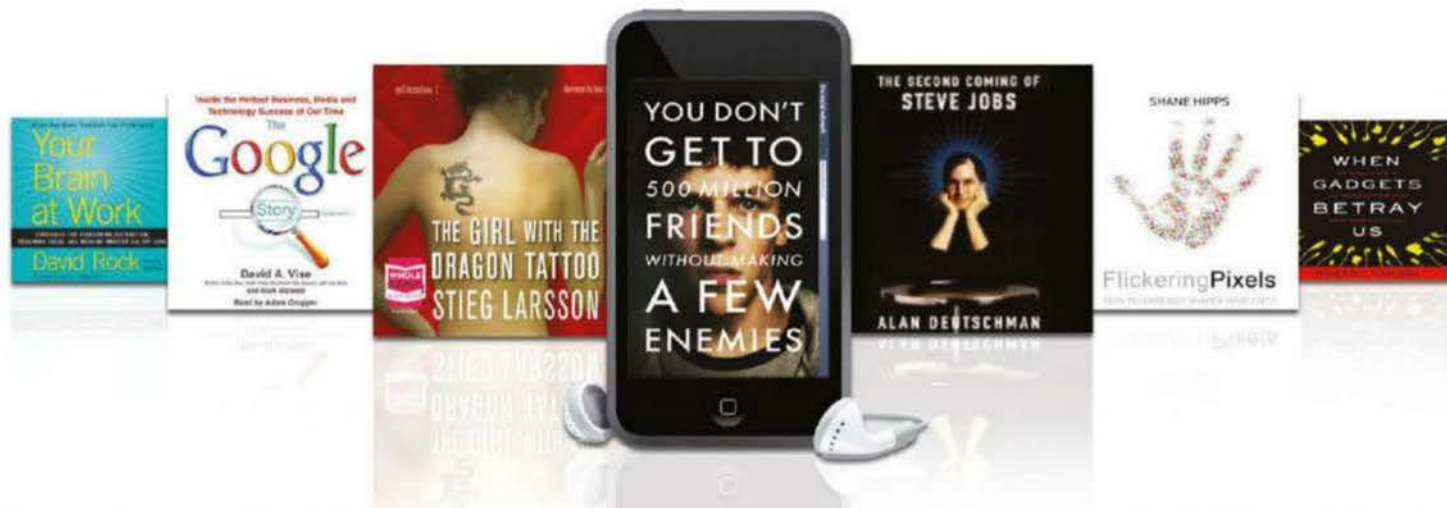
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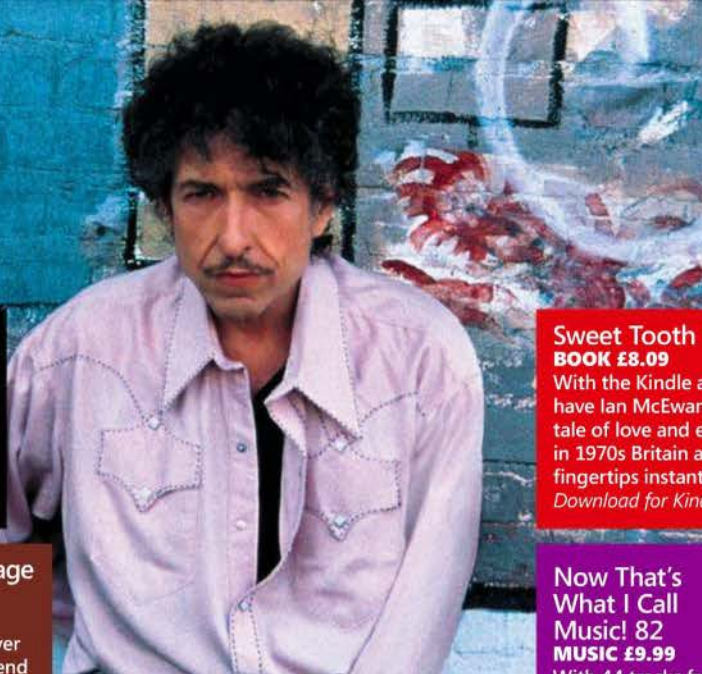


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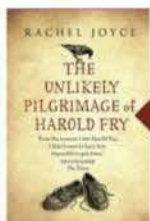
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NOVEMBER ENTERTAINMENT HIGHLIGHTS



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The Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry

BOOK £6.74
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The Descendants

FILM £4.95
George Clooney plays Matt King in this critically acclaimed comedy drama. A distant father of two children, he must face his responsibilities when his wife is involved in a tragic accident.
Rent from the Xbox Video store now



Chronicle

FILM £4.95
Three high-school friends make an amazing discovery and develop superpowers, but things take a darker turn when their pranks get out of control.
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Dylan's back!

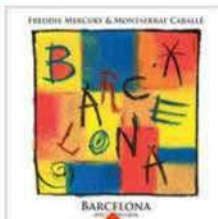
MUSIC Bob Dylan: Tempest £7.99

His Royal Bobness has returned with his 35th studio album, and although much has been made of both his age (71) and the name of his new release – referencing Shakespeare's final work – it doesn't sound as if Dylan is winding down anytime soon.

As with his latter-day records, the songs here veer from the catchily jaunty (lead single *Duquesne Whistle*) to the dirty blues (*Early Roman Kings* and *Narrow Way*). The standout track, *Tempest*, is a 14-minute epic, retelling the final hours aboard the Titanic. It doesn't take itself too seriously though, with references to Leonardo DiCaprio. The fantastic 7digital service lets you listen to snippets of the album before buying.
Download from 7digital now

Now That's What I Call Music! 82

MUSIC £9.99
With 44 tracks from the biggest names in pop music including Rihanna and Paloma Faith, this is your instant party playlist.
Download from the Xbox Music store now



Freddie Mercury: Barcelona SE

MUSIC £7.99
This special edition album celebrates the 25th anniversary of the title track, which you might remember as the theme song of the 1992 Olympic Games.
Download from the Xbox Music store now



Branching Out

BOOK £FREE
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Download for Kindle app now



The chilling prequel to John Carpenter's cult classic

HALLOWEEN SPECIAL!

Scary stuff!

FILM The Thing £14.99

From the producers of Dawn of the Dead comes the chilling prequel to John Carpenter's cult classic horror film. Palaeontologist Kate Lloyd (Mary Elizabeth Winstead) travels to an isolated outpost in Antarctica for the expedition of a lifetime, and joins an international team that unearths a remarkable discovery. However, the team's elation quickly turns to fear as they realise their experiment has freed a mysterious being from its frozen prison. Paranoia spreads like an epidemic as a creature that can mimic anything it touches pits human against human as it tries to survive and flourish in this spine-tingling thriller. The Thing maintains all the suspense of the 1982 classic, and doesn't hold back with the gruesome special effects. The perfect movie for a scary night in this Halloween available on your Windows 8 device.

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Bash Unit Converter

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Never miss a train again

National Rail Enquiries £FREE

Take the stress out of travelling by rail with the fantastic National Rail Enquiries app. From finding out when the next train home is, to booking tickets and getting the best fares, this app can save you a serious amount of time – and money. By enabling location services, you don't even need to type in the name of the station you're heading to – it'll instantly find your closest one, along with relevant train information. If you're going to travel by rail, make sure you do it in style with this app. Remember to pin it to your Start screen too for live updates!

Quick Note

£FREE
Scribble with a stylus or type with a keyboard – it doesn't matter. This is a quick and easy Post-it emulator.



Wikipedia

£FREE
Settle any argument in seconds with this brilliant interface to the world's leading online encyclopedia. This Windows app puts Wikipedia's entire archive at your fingertips, making it easier to work or just geek out.



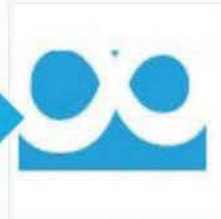
7Days

£FREE
Save time trying to remember what you're supposed to be doing, and create a superb online memoir with this clever visual diary app. You can even record past events for future posterity, with photos to boot.



Mind8

£FREE
This neat mind mapping tool is great for tackling projects. It takes seconds to do and will save you hours.



TOO MUCH TIME?

Play your trump card

Solitaire Collection £FREE

The biggest time-waster in Windows history is coming back in Windows 8 with a fresh new twist. There's a range of customisable themes – like the rustic Western theme pictured to the left – and tons of card-slinging varieties (from standard Klondyke to FreeCell, Spider, Pyramid and TriPeaks). You're also able to engage in competitive play with your friends online, or play daily challenges to keep you hooked. If you've got the taste for old school Windows games, make sure you hunt through the Store to check out the new generation of Minesweeper, too. Be warned, though: you'll never get any work done again. Even with the host of high-definition games now available on PC, it just goes to show the old ones are still the best.

Engage in competitive play with your friends online



GAME OF THE MONTH CRITTER CRUNCH



Have you got a hankering for an addictive puzzle? If so then *Critter Crunch* is for you. Mixing frantic arcade action and vibrant visuals, this is a game that's proving hard to put down. You play as Biggs, a strange yet lovable Creature who uses his tongue to grab Critters from the vines above him and feed them to each other, until they burst and drop precious gems. If this all sounds a little crazy – and we admit we've played very few games that have you feeding your son for extra points by vomiting rainbows of sick into his giant mouth – that's because it is. It's also a lot of fun.

Creature features

Traditionally, we've found that puzzle games can look a bit drab and basic, but *Critter Crunch* suffers no such fate



with some beautiful and quirky hand-animated graphics that look gorgeous in high definition.

Whilst the game starts off with some simple gameplay and puzzles, the difficulty rises steadily to keep you hooked, while power-ups and special Critters keep the game evolving, forcing you to adapt your play style.

An ever-descending line of enemies – in this case the Critters – is a familiar staple of arcade puzzle-games like this and the goal of each level is to fill

Biggs's hunger meter with jewels before they reach the bottom.

Devilishly fun

As with the best arcade puzzle games, over time the initially simple mechanics of collecting, matching and then exploding Critters reveals itself to have more depth, and getting the right strategy is essential for clearing the levels. The sound effects, graphics and music all work well to make getting the highest score an addictive and



0



HOW TO GET A GREAT SCORE

Our tips for Critter Crunch



rewarding experience. *Critter Crunch* also offers a huge amount of value for its low asking price of just £4.99 from the Steam Store (steampowered.com), with tonnes of levels, challenge modes and co-op and versus online modes.

The co-op mode requires you and another player to empty a giant grid, which is enjoyable if a little chaotic when your partner isn't standing next to you and able to tell you their tactics.

Out of the two online modes, versus is certainly more memorable. This time each player gets their own grid, displayed side-by-side, and access to a plethora of superb power-ups. Eat an anvil, for instance, and a giant one will fall on your opponent's head, while another power-up turns your enemy's screen into a wibbly, psychedelic dream with suitably trippy music.

Along with the basic mode there are Challenges to solve, which can be quite tough if you've not managed to tame the main game. These mostly involve performing a specific objective and can be devilish, such as clearing 30 critters in two moves.

Critter Crunch is a fantastically addictive puzzle game for a great price. If you're looking for a game you can pick up and play, which is also challenging, then download it today. ■

Create a Food Chain

A column where the Critters line up in size order can set off a Food Chain that produces a special coin for bonus points.



Create a Chain

Look out for Critters of the same size and colour sitting next to each other. Pop one to create a Chain. The bigger the Chain, the bigger the bonus.



Baby Barf!

My Little Pony fans look away now. When you Chain eight or more Critters together, you must feed Biggs' son by barfing in his mouth.



Power-ups

Use special Critters wisely. The Bomber Critter, for instance, lets you feed it to any two Critters and it'll explode, popping all Critters around it.

A fantastically addictive puzzle game for a great price



Your players can pull off all kinds of cunning skill moves

SPORTS FAN'S DREAM

Back of the net

FIFA 13 £30

Like clockwork, the major sports release this year has ticked around – the latest instalment in the venerable *FIFA* franchise. It's the most detailed, intricate footballing simulation out there. EA's stick-flicking control scheme means your players can pull off all kinds of cunning skill moves and *FIFA 13* adds extra tricks such as a new low chip and a finesse pass to join the finesse shot introduced last year. There's also better artificial intelligence, an improved first-touch feature – which calculates a player's ability to receive a pass based on his skill, his position and the speed of the ball – an expanded career mode and some brilliant physical interaction between the players. Your opponents will feel every robust challenge and you'll feel every net-busting goal. www.amazon.co.uk



Cristiano Ronaldo's Freestyle

£9
Football game? You'd think so, but no. This is a strange but brilliant rhythm game, where you do skills and keepie-uppies by tapping to the beat. www.blahdvd.com

F1 2012 £25
Take to the track behind the wheel of the most ludicrous, ridiculously fast vehicles ever. *F1 2012* features all the tactics, tantrums and tyre changing of the real thing. Oh, and be prepared to crash. www.play.com



Full Ace Tennis £15

This is a serious tennis simulator. Serious. That means there's no arcade mode, no assisted positioning to help you out and everything from ball trajectory to friction taken into account. www.thehut.com

WSF Squash 2012 £30
Squash games aren't something you see every day, but this one looks rather nifty. It promises all the shots of the real game and realistic representations of the world's top stars. www.wsf squash.com



PAGN 0:05 Found words

2	2	1	2
N	N	E	S
2	4	3	3
A	G	C	L
4	2	2	2
P	N	A	N
2	2	2	2
I	I	T	I

WORDAMENT ENGLISH EDITION

- 9 pane
- 16 panes
- 9 game
- 26 pannies
- 16 pannes
- 8 pan
- 6 nan
- 8 pia
- 8 pit
- 8 tip
- 8 tag
- 8 aces
- 6 ace
- 16 laces
- 9 lace
- 12 clag
- 10 clan
- 7 lat
- 10 tang
- 10 ting
- 9 lag
- 18 cages
- 10 cage
- 19 pages
- 11 page
- 9 ages
- 7 age
- 8 nag
- 8 nap
- 10 gap
- 10 pint
- 8 pin
- 6 tin
- 6 nit
- 7 cat
- 7 can

FANCY A BRAINTEASER?

What's the word?

Wordament £FREE

One look at Microsoft Studios's *Wordament* and you know the deal – swipe letters horizontally, vertically and diagonally in sequence to spell words and score points. Yes, with a 4 x 4 grid of letters, it does bear more than a passing resemblance to *Boggle*, however, its online component brings the game to life. Worldwide games are running all day every day, and you're able to pit your wits against real opponents. [Download from Windows Store](#)

WINDOWS STORE GAMES

Our pick of the latest titles



Air Soccer Fever £FREE

Subbuteo was fun, but it was stop/start. This takes the game to a new level, with real-time finger-flicking soccer.



Doodle God £FREE

This puzzle game puts you in the robes of a creationist god to recreate the world as we know it. Mix elements and items to activate further evolution, making your way from bacteria to weaponry and beyond.

ARMED! £FREE

Part real-time strategy, part tabletop war game, *ARMED!* has already been a big hit on Windows Phone.



Flow £FREE

Connect coloured dots on a grid without overlapping the connections. It starts easy, but the difficulty ramps up.



Bubble Star £FREE

Clearly – ahem – ‘inspired’ by classic ball-popping games of the past, this is a puzzle standard. Point your bubble cannon at like-coloured clusters, fire one off and score big points for matching colours.



Reversi Twist £FREE

It's *Reversi*, with a twist. What's the twist? A choice between 8 x 8 and 10 x 10 boards. Okay, it's not that big a difference, but the graphics and sound of this classic recreation make it well worth a try.



Physamajig Spritehand £FREE

Create your own physics-based games, or play one of the huge selection of included levels.

PHYSAMAJIG

HOT GAME

Storm chaser

Violet Storm £2.79

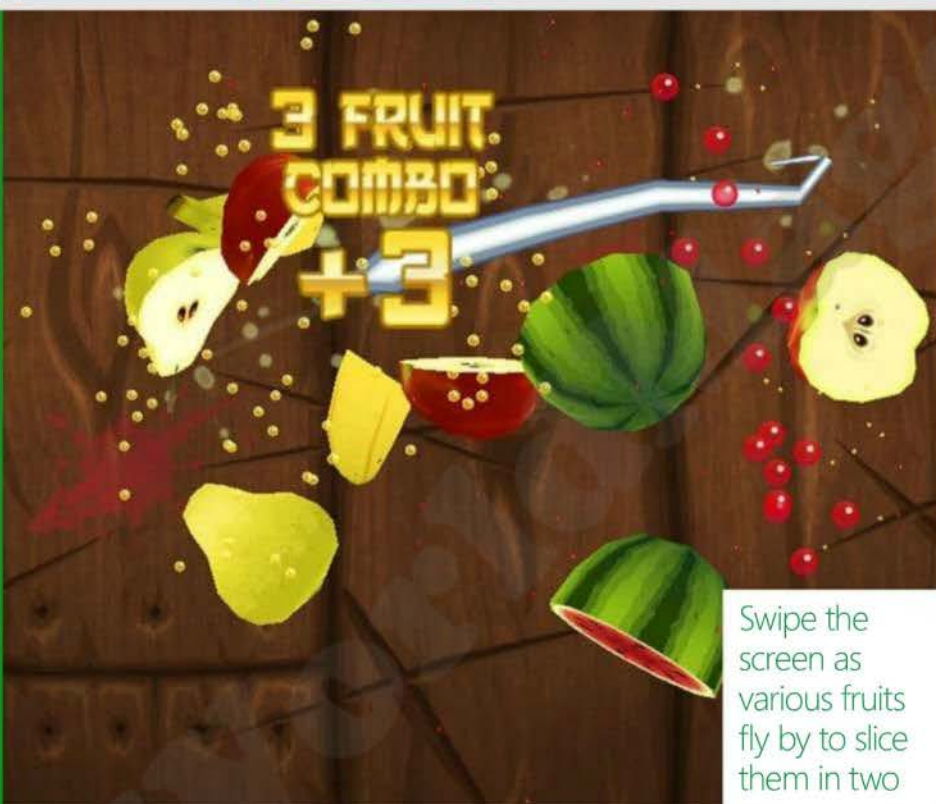
You don't always need a story to have fun. You don't need protagonists or peril or redemption. Sometimes a big spaceship, an unlimited supply of laser bullets and eye-popping graphics are enough. *Violet Storm* obliges with a wireframe grid of two-dimensional warfare, putting fun and form on the same pedestal. It would be clichéd to describe it as *Asteroids* with a facelift, but it would also be true, as long as the arcade machine was transplanted from the 1980s into the middle of a pumping disco and had a much more accessible control scheme than Atari's classic. It looks great and plays even better, ensuring hours of fun.

FREE GAME OF THE MONTH

Slice and dice

Fruit Ninja £FREE

Search the internet for five minutes and the chances are high that you'll come across two things – videos of people's cats doing silly things and videos of people demonstrating the keenness of their ninja swords by obliterating melons. *Fruit Ninja* is the virtual version of the latter hobby. Swipe the screen as various fruits fly by to cleave them in two. You can use additional fingers to make multiple slices simultaneously and if you time your slashes to hit several fruits at once you'll be awarded a combo bonus. String the combos together and you'll soon be hitting mega scores. There's really not much more to it than that. It's frenetic stuff, guaranteed to leave you with greasy fingerprint smears all over your tablet's touchscreen and yet still yearn for more. If you have kids, get them this – they'll absolutely love it, but you may have trouble reclaiming your tablet.



Swipe the screen as various fruits fly by to slice them in two

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OPINION

Mystery of the ringing Labrador

Illustration by www.monkeychops.com

Gary Marshall's mission is to be on time, and a lost phone can't stop him

Whether it's a grizzled cop and his rookie partner or a couple in a long-term relationship, whenever you put two people together they tend to settle into clearly defined roles. The older cop may do all the driving and the educating while the rookie buys the doughnuts, or the husband may sit in the car, looking at his watch and tutting while the wife fuffs around inside the house.

I hate being late, but I always am. My, "We must leave at half-past at the

very latest," goes through some sort of translator that turns it into, "Let's make half-past something to aspire to, but hey, if we don't make it, it's no biggie!" When it's time for us to leave *right now*, I'm standing at the front door and my wife has 20 more outfits to audition.

I thought I'd escaped it today, but as we reach the car my wife tells me she's forgotten her phone.

This is serious. My wife's phone is more like a life support system. It's her connection to the rest of the world, an oracle, an entertainer and an always-on information delivery system for the weather forecast and the news. She'd no sooner go outside without it than she'd take a walk without bringing her legs.

"I'll just be a minute," she lies. One minute becomes two minutes, two become five, and five become ten. By the time the car clock clicks quarter-past, I've ran out of tuts and I'm

running out of patience. I go inside to find a house full of barking dogs, opened drawers, upturned cushions and very bad words.

"I can't find it!"

"Did you try ringing it?"

"Of course I did. It's on silent."

While my wife takes her search upstairs to add stamps, stomps and more swears to the soundtrack, I'm the eye of the storm, the calm at the centre, the man with a plan.

I mooch over to the laptop and open Find My Phone, an oft-forgotten feature that lets you track a missing handset and command it to make a noise that you can follow.

But the phone's on silent? Piffle. I have powerful magic on my side and with a single click this meaningless obstacle is overcome, and in a couple of seconds a blissful beacon of sound floats through the house.

I follow the sound to the dog crate, to find it coming from underneath a confused-looking Labrador.

Reunited at last, my wife, her phone and I head for the car. We're late, but then we always are. ■

Gary Marshall is a tech writer for Windows: The Official Magazine. On Twitter he goes by @garymarshall.

MY MONTH IN TECH



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A pro photographer shows you how to get more from your snaps **p66**

Become a wine expert

Apps and websites to help you pick the perfect bottle this weekend **p74**



Life

ACHIEVE MORE

TRY THIS!

Get live traffic info **p62**





Words
Henry Winchester

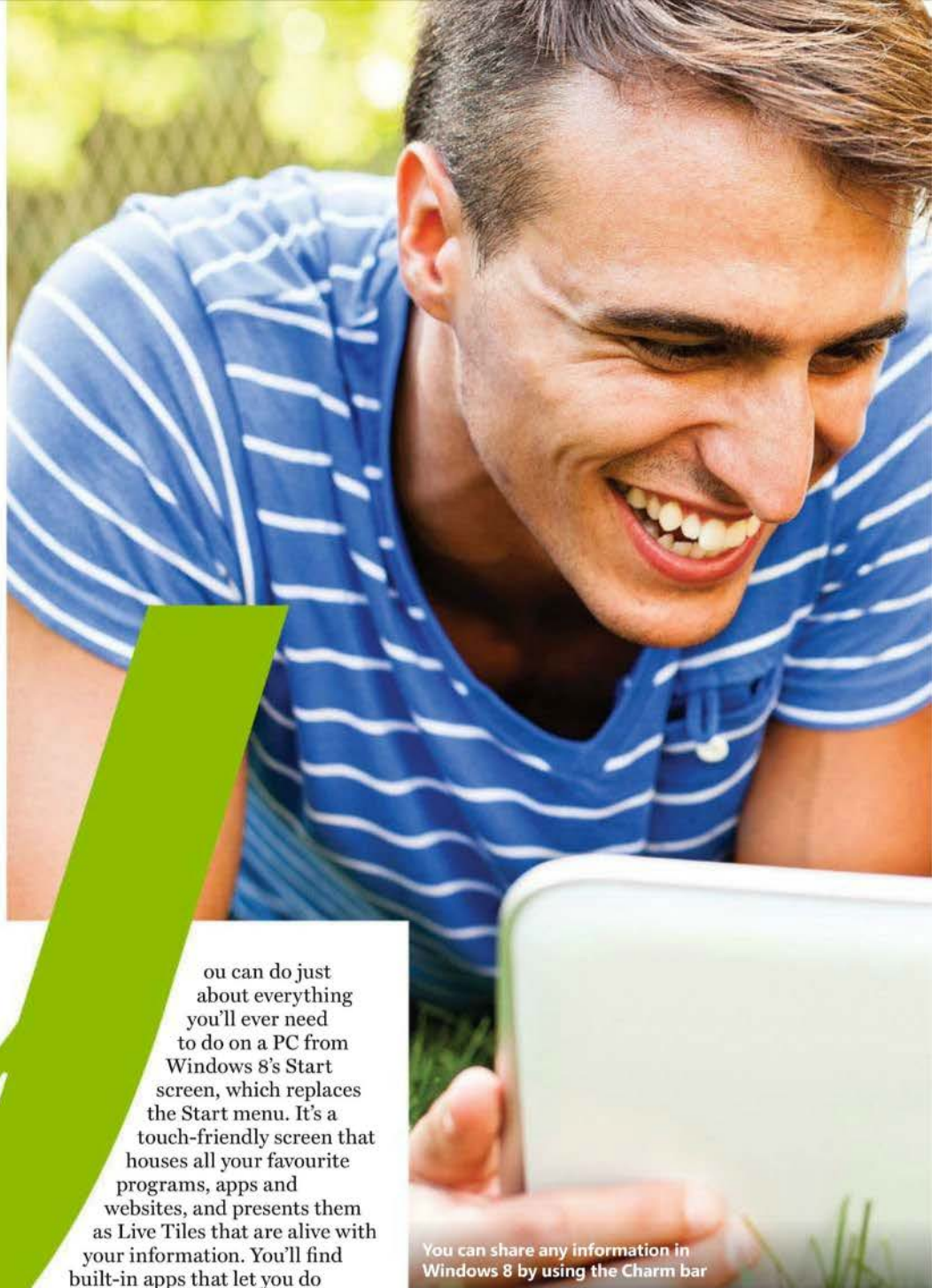
Improve your life with Windows 8

*Discover a new world of
entertainment and apps*

The launch of Windows 8 has ensured the way we use PCs will never be the same again, and if you've just bought a laptop, tablet or all-in-one, you have the most advanced tool at your fingertips for getting more from life. We show you what's changed.



Worldwide



You can share any information in Windows 8 by using the Charm bar

You can do just about everything you'll ever need to do on a PC from Windows 8's Start screen, which replaces the Start menu. It's a touch-friendly screen that houses all your favourite programs, apps and websites, and presents them as Live Tiles that are alive with your information. You'll find built-in apps that let you do everything from watch a film to plan a holiday. In this guide we'll take you through all of Windows 8's funky and innovative new features.

Entertainment on demand

The way we consume movies, TV and music has changed, and our PCs and tablets are now chiefly entertainment devices, like our TVs and radios once were. Rather than passively watching television channels and putting up with whatever happens to be on, we interact with our media, selecting TV programmes on demand, choosing videos to watch on YouTube, and updating Facebook and Twitter – often all at the same time.

Windows 8 offers entertainment for the whole family, putting more on-demand media at your fingertips than any satellite or cable service. Want to watch a movie? You can rent one online whenever you want. Feel like listening to some music? Fire up the Music app and stick on some tunes. You can even play some great games,

and it's all easily accessible from Windows 8's Start screen.

DVD and Blu-rays rentals are hugely popular, but can sometimes be impractical. Anyone who's hooked on a TV series will know that 'just one more episode' feeling, but if you have to wait for the discs to be delivered or the rental shop to open, you can soon become frustrated. Renting and buying TV shows and films online has taken off in a big way, and Windows 8 provides the ideal platform for getting your hands on the latest releases.

The Xbox Video store is built into Windows 8 and includes the ability to rent or buy films from a huge selection of titles. Once you've rented a movie, you're given a generous 14 days to begin watching it and a further 24 hours to finish it. Of course, you can always buy the film or TV series, download it, and watch it again as many times as you want, as if it were part of your DVD collection. There's also an option to send it to

Windows is for sharing

Sharing is a big focus in Windows 8, and it's really easy. If you're on a conventional mouse-and-keyboard PC you can move the cursor to the lower right-hand corner of the screen to bring up a menu, then tap 'Share'. On touchscreen devices the same menu can be revealed by swiping from the right towards the centre.

From here you get the opportunity to share information from the app in a number of ways. Email, Facebook and SkyDrive are all ways you can share, and the People app puts all your contacts in one place. It's never been faster or easier to stay in touch.



You have the most advanced tool for getting more from life

your Xbox 360 – if you have one – using the Xbox Companion app.

If you're having some friends over for a meal and need a soundtrack, or just want to kick back and listen to some music, Windows 8 can help. Like the Videos app, the Music app will scan your computer for music files and let you play them back at the click of a mouse. It also includes its own music store – called Xbox Music – so you can pick up some new tunes and refresh your collection.

You can preview short clips of tracks before you buy, but perhaps the most impressive feature here is the Xbox Music Pass, which lets you

listen to unlimited music for a set period of time. This is great if you're throwing a party and want to let your guests pick their favourite songs, or if you just want to check out some new bands and artists.

For a more interactive experience, or if you simply need to keep the kids entertained for a while, you can pick up some great games via the Xbox Games tile. Here you'll find a wide range of titles, from addictive Windows classics such as *Minesweeper* and *Solitaire*, all the way up to big-budget shooters. Despite the name, you don't need an Xbox console to play the games.

Any PC games you've already bought that support Games for Windows Live will show up here, including awesome titles like *Batman: Arkham City* and *Bulletstorm*. Things get even better if you own an Xbox 360, as you're able to browse and buy games on the marketplace for your console. You

can also edit your Xbox Live avatar, update your profile and interact with friends on the service.

For a more sedate experience, there's a host of casual games to play. These tend to be less flashy, but offer rewarding gameplay and clever puzzles instead. *Wordament*, for instance, pits your spelling knowledge against a group of online players as you battle to find the most words in a jumble of 16 letters.

Even these casual games support Xbox-style achievements, which makes the experience all the more involving. These rewards are allocated as you do certain things



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Turn your living room into a digital paradise

SmartGlass is an app for Windows 8 PCs, laptops and tablets, the Xbox 360 and smartphones. These devices all feed information to one another, so you can pause a programme you're watching on your PC and resume it from exactly the same place on your Xbox. Where it gets really clever is in its ability to deliver relevant information in real time. Watch *Game of Thrones* on your Xbox 360 and you'll be able to see maps and character biographies on your phone. It's the new way to enjoy TV and you'll love it.



There are no limits to the ways you can be entertained in Windows 8

– for instance, find 100 words in *Wordament* and you'll receive a little kudos for your quick thinking. It's another element that makes Windows 8 a fun and enjoyable part of a media-centric home.

It's a social Windows

Internet communications have changed everything. Emails have almost totally usurped letters (or 'snail mail') in both business and personal communications, and we can video-call far-flung friends and relatives as if they were in the next room. On top of this, social networking services like Facebook and Twitter let us catch up with friends, celebrities and the news.

Windows 8 is built around these core pillars of online interaction and makes it really easy to connect with the people you care about. All your favourite methods of communication and social networks – Messenger, Facebook, Twitter and email – are pulled together in a number of handy in-built applications. As a result, you only ever have to look in one place for all your updates.

Even Windows 8's login is based on your Microsoft account, which is usually an @hotmail.com or

Windows 8 makes it easy to connect with the people you care about

@hotmail.co.uk email address. Once you've logged in using this, you can begin herding all your other online accounts – including Google, Facebook and Twitter – into your Microsoft identity. An added bonus is that, in future, you can log in to your Microsoft account from any computer

and catch up with what's going on in your connected networks.

Messenger, Microsoft's own hugely popular instant communications service, is built into Windows 8 and is accessible from the People app. Here your contacts span horizontally across the page and clicking one lets you chat with them online and see their latest status updates. If you're used to Windows Live Messenger it's a bit of a shift, but all the traditional functions are available, along with newly designed smileys.

Of course, these days people also connect through a range of other social networks, the biggest being Facebook, which now has 1bn users worldwide. Luckily, Facebook chat is fully integrated into Windows 8 so you chat seamlessly with your friends and family.

The People app includes a What's New tab, which provides you with a



KICK BACK AND RELAX

Great apps for entertainment

SmartGlass

This could be the ultimate in cross-platform sharing. Get SmartGlass from the Windows store and try linking it to your Xbox. Amazing stuff.

Xbox Video

Fancy a movie or TV series? Rent one from the Xbox Video store and you can play it on your Windows device or Xbox 360.

Xbox Games

There's every kind of pick-me-up here, from standard Windows freebies like *Minesweeper* to high-intensity shoot-'em-ups.



Life

The world at your fingertips

In addition to the news and weather apps, Windows 8 includes its own handy travel guide that highlights places around the world with beautiful photos, helpful maps and detailed information. The Travel app means you can click on a location and have the history of the area, a map and details of the local currency and current temperature presented to you. You can also see the nearest airport and find flights, as well as view immersive panoramic photos taken at landmarks. You can decide what you eat and do based on the guides, which are packed with local knowledge.

Windows 8 brings people together
with built-in social networking



Windows Store

The Windows Store is probably Windows 8's most significant addition. It's full of apps that tick just about every box. From *Angry Birds* to *Sky News*, you'll find it.

Why not try hunting through the Top Free lists attached to each category from the front page? These tell you the most downloaded apps in each category, so you can see what's popular. There's always something fresh and exciting in the New Releases section and, with most apps only a couple of clicks away, there's no reason not to try something new.

continuously updated stream of information from Twitter and Facebook. Any images included in tweets are shown in posts, and you can reply to and retweet messages straight away. It makes the important business of managing follows, likes and favourites so much easier.

Even if you're not a Twitter or Facebook user, you can still make good use of Windows 8's shiny new communications features. The email app makes sending and receiving those vital messages a joy, and you can switch between email services from Hotmail, Gmail and your internet service

provider with ease. As with the social networking services, having all these tools in one place makes things far easier and more convenient.

Digital photos have taken over from physical prints and we now show off our favourite holiday and family snaps on screens rather than in photo albums. The fact that you can send photos around the world without having to spend a fortune on postage is a godsend, and online services such as SkyDrive and Flickr mean you can back up all your precious memories in one convenient place.

Windows 8 includes a Photos app, which handily puts all your snaps in a single stream, automatically grabbing pics from sources such as Flickr, SkyDrive and Facebook. From here you can browse your photos and set one as your desktop background in a couple of clicks. You can share and print photos stored on your PC, too.

If you want to share a particular photo with a far-flung relative on their birthday, for example, Windows 8's Calendar app comes in handy. It trawls through Facebook to find people's birthdays and handily

displays them in one place. Adding events is simple, too – just click on a desired date and add a description, frequency and reminders. You can also invite people to events, which is great if you're planning a party.

It works in real time

As well as making you a master of media and a sovereign of social networks, Windows 8 can serve as a fantastic source of information, gathering news on a local, national and global scale. These are inherently useful features and ones that make Windows 8's interface even more useful and brilliant.

The best apps are often the simplest, and the built-in Weather tool is powerful but user-friendly. Windows 8 will automatically





YOUR FIRST APPS
Start screen explored

Mail
Messages with style
Mail is one of the best email apps ever created and shows you new messages when pinned to the Start screen.



Sport
Stay in the know
Pick out your favourite teams and sports to follow in this photo-heavy app, with all the latest headlines.

Maps
Explore great family days out
Bing's brilliant Maps service is constantly improving and the quality of mapping in this app is now second to none. The detail is incredible, as is the information that's pulled in from the internet. The Maps app brings a mixture of extremely detailed maps, up-to-the-second traffic information, driving directions and even aerial photos. If you're planning a trip or family day out don't leave home without it.

Finance
Get rich quick
There's no greater at-a-glance guide than Windows 8's Finance app. News and stocks are listed on its main screen.



News
Finger on the pulse
You can choose your news sources and then have the News app deliver the latest events from your favourite sites.

detect your location and give you a detailed forecast for the next five or 10 days. Clicking the down arrow at the bottom gives you more detailed information, including weather predictions from services such as Weather Underground and Foreca, so you can get a better idea of what the future will hold in terms of precipitation and humidity.

Scroll to the right and the weather app gets really clever. An hourly forecast lets you know whether it's safe to hang your washing out at the moment, and maps give regional and local animated previews of the movement of clouds and estimated temperatures. You can even see historical weather for your area.

Use it for having fun

If the Weather app is predicting sunshine, you might decide to get out and explore your local area, and this is where the Maps app excels. Like the Weather app, it automatically picks up your location and pinpoints it on a map, and you can switch between a traditional Ordnance Survey-style map view and a satellite photo.

Right-clicking the map and then choosing 'Traffic' displays traffic jams and hold-ups in the area, so you can plan your escape to the country – or

the city – and avoid the queues. Furthermore, the app can give you directions from one place to another. Detailed information on junctions and roundabouts is displayed across the top of the screen, and clicking each one zooms in to the relevant part of the map for a close-up view. The directions can also be shared via email – perfect for giving directions to visiting friends.

Windows 8's News app is similarly location-aware and it saves you having to browse separate news websites to catch up on the day's headlines. A top story is displayed first, with categories such as Politics and Health nestled towards the right. The first paragraph of each story is displayed and clicking on one of these will take you to the relevant website. You can also add specific sources. At the time of writing there are over 40 sources, including all the major UK newspapers.

There are also specific apps for Finance and Sport. Finance gives a nice graphical overview of the FTSE 100 market and specific companies can be added to a Watchlist so you can see your investments soar – or tumble. In addition, you can see the current exchange rates, and catch up on the latest business news. The Sport app works similarly, displaying the latest news from the worlds of football, rugby and cricket, among others. One particularly nice feature is the ability to add your favourite team so you can see upcoming matches, recent results and related new stories. If you're fanatical about footie or crackers for cricket, it's an essential app.

All these improvements in Windows 8 combine to make using your devices a more intuitive experience, and now you're ready to really use it to its full potential. ■

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Financial Times
£FREE
The *Financial Times* was one of the first UK newspapers to have a Windows 8 app, and it's absolutely fantastic. The specially designed interface bridges the gap between newspaper and website, turning it into something much more. You can browse and read all the latest headlines, and with a quick swipe at the top of the screen you can jump between categories. Videos can be played straight from the page, showing the potential for newspapers on Windows 8 devices. The *FT* might not be your usual choice, but its Windows 8 app is an exciting glimpse into the future of newspapers.

Sky News
£FREE
The Sky News app brings breaking news to your Windows 8 device. News stories are once again divided into categories, and breaking news is highlighted in yellow. While the bulk of the news is text-based, embedded video helps to bring more background details and analysis to the stories. You can also watch live streaming video from the Sky News channel straight from the app, as well as videos for the weather and a three-minute catch-up video that brings you the latest headlines. Overall this is an excellent app, which gives you the latest news from a well trusted source.



WORLD NEWS
Syria's former prime minister says regime is crumbling

Sources
ITV
C-SPAN
KROQ
HLN

0:00:13 0:01:35

Top News Headlines: Syrian Regime 'Falling Apart Morally'
Other headlines: U.S. presidential campaigns stump nationwide; California's DMV computers down statewide; Chad Johnson 9-1-1 tapes released.

Newsy

FREE

While many news apps focus on the written word, Newsy focuses on video to bring you the latest current affairs. However, it's not just a news-focused YouTube. Each video has a filmed introduction by one of Newsy's reporters, which, along with onscreen graphics, gives Newsy a professional news channel feel. Newsy reports are gathered in a number of categories although, being a US-based service, there's a focus on news from that side of the Atlantic. If you want news bulletins at your fingertips, with analysis and coverage from a number of sources, then Newsy is a vital app.

10:30 AM

I'M JULIAN!

ASSANGE EXTRADITION ROW

Bing Daily

FREE

The Bing Daily is Microsoft's own news app. Offering excellent breadth and depth of coverage, it brings together news from the best sources across the web into one easy-to-navigate and attractive app. As we've come to expect from Bing, images take centre stage, with some of the best news-related photography we've seen. Different categories, from politics to entertainment, can be scrolled through. Clicking a headline takes you to either the news source's website, or to the specially designed reader that lays out the article in a clear, newspaper-like way.

StumbleUpon

FREE

StumbleUpon is an excellent alternative way of getting news from around the internet. When signing up to the app you can select a number of interests from a range of categories. You will then get headlines and interesting articles from all over the internet that are tailored to your interests. As you read articles you can give them a thumbs up or a thumbs down, helping StumbleUpon build a better picture of what interests you. The more you use StumbleUpon, the better it will get at providing news stories for you – an excellent way to keep up with news the more mainstream services might ignore.

StumbleUpon HOME

Recommended for You

Funny Siri Commercial Parody Fight Between Husband And

LET'S SAY YOU'RE THE FIRST HUMAN EVER TO MAKE ALIEN CONTACT IN ALL OF HUMAN HISTORY

<https://www.stumbleupon.com/st>

Gamasutra - Features - The Fundamental Pillars of a

11 Awesomely In Answers from Kid

Songs to lie on your bed and stare at the ceiling to

Songs to lie on your bed and stare at the ceiling to

iTools - use the best tools

unhearit get that damn song out of your head

Unhear it - get that damn song out of your head!

Banksy projects Sar Moon

Banksy projects S face onto the Mo



“Bringing my photos to life starts with a PC, and anyone can do it”



Pro photographer *Amy Davies* tells us how she edits, shares and enjoys her snaps

Amy Davies spends the majority of her working life writing about or using cameras. She has seen her work exhibited, won a

blogging award and has been nominated for a CIPR award for her work for the Tenovus cancer charity.

As a photographer and journalist, she spends about half of her time creating images. But it doesn't end with the click of the shutter. Nowadays, she uses the digital darkroom – her PC – to get the most out of each and every image. Then, more often than not, these images are shared via social networks (such as Twitter and Flickr), or on one of her photography blogs. She reveals how anyone can use technology to get more from photography. ➔

IN THE KIT BAG
The tech behind Amy's photos

AMY'S PHONE
Nokia Lumia 800
£160
The great camera works well for social snaps, when my SLR isn't at hand.



AMY'S PC
Dell XPS 13
£1,299
Slim and powerful, the glorious screen makes editing my shots a pleasure.

AMY'S CAMERA
Canon EOS 600D
£539
This is a great starter DSLR that love to take out and about.





Use your PC to get
the most out of each
and every image



Photoshop Elements 11
Whether you want to make quick crops or adjust brightness, it's a great tool for elevating your snaps above the ordinary.

Olympus PEN E-P3
Oozing retro cool, this touchscreen, ultra-fast compact camera can deliver fantastic shots and isn't too heavy.

GO FROM NOVICE TO PRO
Top tech for great snaps

pse

WD My Passport 500GB Portable Hard Drive
An extra hard drive is essential. You can carry this around with you – it's handy when on the move.



"You don't need an expensive camera to get great results"

As a professional I often shoot with a £5,000 professional DSLR, which enables me to get fantastic results but that's not always practical. I live and breathe photography, which means you'll often see me using a compact, like the Olympus Pen E-P3 (above), while I'm on holiday abroad or out walking.

I enjoy using different cameras for different things, and I've had a lot of fun experimenting with different pieces of kit. Anyone who wants to get into photography should start by buying an entry level DSLR, and fortunately there's never been a better time to pick one up. The Canon EOS 600D is a great starting point, for instance, and enables you to get great results and really enjoy your hobby.

"The best camera is the one you always have with you"

Aside from the obvious things such as a tripod and remote release, the one 'accessory' I use most often is my smartphone. They say the best camera is the one that you have with you always and there's no easier way to capture the moment and share it instantly than with my funky cyan-blue Nokia Lumia 800.

I use apps such as Flickr to instantly share my images and I can even make quick edits using apps like Photoshop Express. There are also useful tools that make my 'proper' photography easier, such as the DSLR Toolbox app, which helps with camera settings.

Smartphones are some of the most popular cameras being used to upload to Flickr, so you don't have to fork out thousands to start having fun.

"Bringing my photos to life starts with my PC and anyone can do it"

A lot of people have the misconception that a photograph's creation starts and ends with releasing the shutter. In fact, a lot more time, proportionally, is spent sitting in front of the computer. As I shoot in RAW format, images need to be converted to JPEG if I want to print or share them online. This is either done via a camera manufacturer's own supplied software, or through Adobe Camera RAW Digital files. Most photos, especially those from a DSLR, tend to need at least some tweaking, so in that respect it would be hard to finish off a picture without my PC.

"Editing a photograph makes it special, but you don't need expensive software"

When I'm really excited about a photo I've taken I just can't wait to get it home and add the finishing touch. I tend to use Adobe Photoshop Elements to make changes, which is a simpler version of full Photoshop CS, and not stupidly expensive. It allows me to do pretty much everything I need to transform a RAW file into something a little more special.

With Elements, I can adjust levels, contrast, brightness and so on - as well as remove the odd blemish, of course. You don't have to have memories of a special day ruined by that cold sore or

spot. There are also free photo editing tools on the Windows Store, such as FotoEditor that can be used to crop and straighten images, as well as resize photos for sharing on the web.

"Once I have my photos ready, I go online to share them with my PC"

Once the image has been through raw processing and tweaked to my satisfaction, it's time to start the sharing process. First of all, I will make a web-friendly version, which will be no wider than 1,000 pixels, and only 72 dots per inch (dpi). This helps to keep load times to a minimum and also means it's less likely to get stolen at this lower resolution. Then I'll either upload to Facebook, Twitter or Flickr (or all three), or create a blog post if I have a set of images that belong together. I use Wordpress for my blog, but there are plenty of other options, such as Blogger or Tumblr.

"Take time to sit back and enjoy"

Windows 8 is brilliant for enjoying your photos once they're edited and shared, which is something that many photographers forget to do. I like to take a break from the constant shooting to enjoy my favourites, which are often just family snaps which have been cropped and edited. In Windows 8 try the Photo Monkey app, which lets you add cool filters to your shots which will really impress your friends and family. If you're uploading to Flickr then use the Flickr Viewer app to manage and view your shots from your Windows 8 device. ■



Adding a black and white filter to a high contrast shot tends to add a timeless quality

GREAT PHOTO APPS
Get more from your phone snaps



Pictures Lab
For fun and simple photo-editing and fun and quirky filter effects, you can't go far wrong with Pictures Lab.

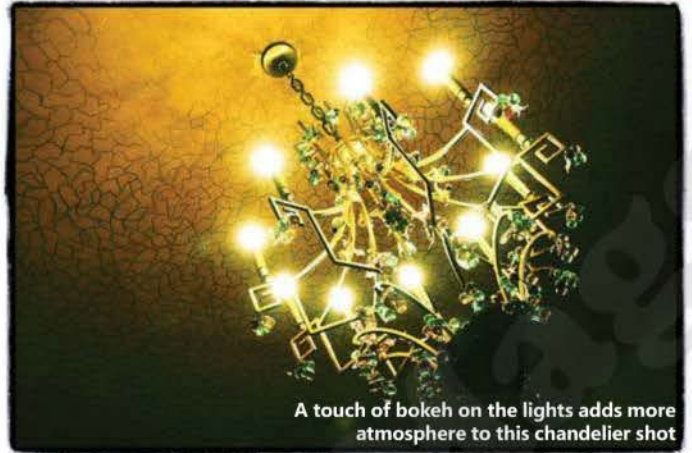
Flickr
You can upload snaps anywhere making this super quick to share on the go with my Nokia Lumia.



DSLR Toolbox
A handy depth of field calculator, which determines which aperture setting is needed to get parts of the image in focus.



The DSLR Toolbox will help you get the right depth of field



A touch of bokeh on the lights adds more atmosphere to this chandelier shot



Often your photos are the ones that I stumble upon by accident when walking



KILLER APP

Bing Weather

Windows 8's amazing looking built-in weather app is going down a storm



Looking to the skies is a national pastime. And hey, nothing's stopping you from sticking your head out of the door and craning it upwards. But what does it really tell you, and can you predict what's coming? Nothing, and no, in that order, so turn to Bing Weather. The app gets its highly-localised information from trusted sources. There's Accuweather, a service that is, unsurprisingly, focused on providing

Location aware

1 Bing Weather should be able to pick out your location even if you don't have a GPS device – it'll look at your internet address and approximate from there. Right-click or swipe down and use the Places menu to add more locales.

How hot?

2 The temperature is, by default, displayed in centigrade, but you can change this to Fahrenheit through the swipe-down menu. You'll see an approximation of what the temperature actually feels like underneath.

The forecast

3 Although Bing Weather will give you a brief look at the current climate on its live tile, head to the app proper for a detailed preview of the next few days. Be sure to click the arrow at the top right to view data for further in the future.

Compare, contrast

4 Usually you'll see data pulled from Accuweather on Bing Weather's main page, but it's simple enough to list information from Foreca or our favourite service, Weather Underground. Just tap the arrow, bottom right.



5

6

3

4

CHECK THIS OUT
Don't miss this hidden feature

World map
Swipe down or right-click, and choose the 'World Weather' icon to see weather worldwide. Click an area to take a closer look.

On the hour

5 Just to the right of the main screen you'll see a breakdown of the upcoming weather, divided up into three hourly slots. Swipe it to see a forecast for the weather further in the future – it covers the next couple of days.

Amazing looks

6 Bing Weather is absolutely gorgeous, with a hand-picked image reflecting the current weather in your location. It's not just the picture, though: the whole app recolours itself to match the mood.





Life



accurate weather data. Foreca is another option – we have to presume that’s short for ‘forecast’ – and crowd-sourced site Weather Underground completes the trio. The latter is tremendous; it’s not affiliated with any of the major meteorological organisations in the world, instead drawing its data from over 20,000 personal weather stations across the globe. It’s the people’s weather forecaster – a neat idea, and one that really seems to work well.

Visiting all of these sites to get an average picture of the weather would be time consuming and, with Bing Weather around, completely pointless. You can pull in forecasts from all three, and compare and contrast.

Predict it yourself

Forecasts are one thing, but history is another. If you’re looking to properly scope out the potential for rain on a certain date, you’ll want to delve back into historical records to see what’s happened in the past. Once again, Bing Maps provides.

Scroll all the way to the right of the app and you’ll be able to explore the extremes of your current location; discover the record highs and lows, the average amount of rainfall, and

Bing Weather offers a host of animated maps

even the history of snow in the area. Admittedly this isn’t going to be super-useful without a bit more detail, but it’s interesting to compare your current weather maladies – it’s either too wet, too cold or too hot, after all – with those from the past.

Back to tradition

Of course, we’re used to getting our weather from a besuited presenter in front of a nattily animated map. We can’t necessarily help with the former unless you’re willing to put your back to the screen and point out areas of high pressure, but Bing Weather does offer a host of animated maps.

You’ll find them mid way along the main screen, just after the hourly forecast. They’re playable as videos, and you can also tap the bar to pick a time that interests you. Bear in mind that the satellite view only covers the past; it’s not predictive like the others. ■

TRY IT WITH THESE
Check out some alternative weather apps for a full forecast



Weatherbug

Free
Although this doesn’t offer the same level of detail as the official Microsoft app, it does have some cool extra features. Want to know if there is rain, extreme cold, snow or fog on the horizon? Ask Weatherbug to alert you. And don’t miss its extended view of the current climate, or its integrated Bing weather maps. They’re really rather good.

The Weather Network

Free
This doesn’t have the glorious graphics of Bing Weather. It doesn’t have the excellent alert system of Weatherbug. It doesn’t even try to find your location, but it does link you to weather-related news, like “Man struck by lightning” or “Farmer feeds cattle candy during drought”. So it’s not all bad.

Windows

The Official Magazine

Get more out of life

Zinio
online
edition

Discover the joy of digital mags
Every issue you'll get the same great content as the paper edition PLUS amazing digital-only interactive features.

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Search "Windows 8" on Zinio.com



Life

A sommelier in your smartphone

1

A sommelier is a wine expert, and with Mobile Sommelier you can have one in your smartphone wherever your travels

take you. This £2.29 Windows Phone app (there's a free trial so you can test it out first) has been created by wine buffs to give you the information you need, wherever you need it. Whether you're a newcomer to the world of wine or a seasoned expert, it'll help you find the right wine to go with your restaurant meal or the feast you intend to cook in the evening. It can also take notes and photos of labels and will track your favourite grapes, wineries and vintages. *Mobile Sommelier (Windows Phone)*



10 WAYS TO...

Become an overnight wine expert

Wine is a wonderful thing, and your PC and phone can help you enjoy it even more



Award-winning wine writing

2

The *Sunday Express* wine columnist Jamie Goode has won multiple awards for his writing on wine, and his personal website is a great resource for anyone with even a passing interest in the subject. Here you'll find out how your favourite wine is made, how to choose a good budget bottle, how you can learn to taste wine and, most importantly of all, why wine is better drunk than stored. It's a brilliant site with an equally good and regularly updated blog, where Goode shares his top wine tips. It's an enormous resource, and it's completely free. www.wineanorak.com



What to buy in Waitrose

3

For most of us, the supermarket is where we buy some, most or even all of our wine, so wouldn't it be great if someone could tell us which of the dozens of bottles on the shelves are worth having, and whether that supposedly half-price bargain is the deal of the century or just paint stripper with a nice label? If that sounds familiar, say hello to Supermarketwine.com, which enables you to filter your selection by supermarket, and see which bottles have been recommended by top wine critics. There are comments from other users, and its suggestions include inexpensive but delicious own-brand wines. www.supermarketwine.com

Invaluable annual wine guide

4

Hugh Johnson OBE is a writer, broadcaster and wine lover. He's also the world's top wine writer, and his annual *Pocket*

Wine Book is the best-selling guide on the market. It features more than 6,000 wines and regions, expert advice from around the world, and a section showing you alternatives to some of the wines you already drink. It's an invaluable tool for novices and experts, and is available in both Adobe Digital Editions format and as a Kindle book that works in the Kindle app.

Hugh Johnson's Pocket Wine Book 2013 (Amazon, Waterstones)

It features more than 6,000 wines and regions



Wine lists for Windows 8

5

My Wine Lists is an app that works together with WineTable.com to create a virtual wine cellar on your computer. You can create lists of any wines you like – including ones you've tasted and loved, ones you'd really like to try, and ones your favourite critics have recommended – and access professional wine tasters' choices to inspire you. The website's handy social features enable users to rate and review over 50,000 different bottles. Whether you want to keep track of your own wine adventures or just discover something that will taste good with a stir-fry, there's lots to enjoy here. *My Wine Lists* (Windows 8 Store)

Expert advice, delivered digitally

6

Don't let the faintly patronising title fool you – *Wine for Dummies* is a great buy, especially the all-in-one edition, which gives you five books for the price of one. Authors Ed McCarthy and Mary Ewing-Mulligan know their stuff, and promise to teach you everything you need to know to understand, buy and enjoy wine. The book covers everything from how wine is made to the best way to store it and what to pair it with. Its coverage of the world's wine-producing regions is particularly good. *Wine for Dummies* (Amazon, Waterstones)



Advice from a famous expert

7 Jancis Robinson OBE's site is in two parts: a large free section with articles about wine, recommended buys, tips on wine-related travel and so on, and a paid-for version (£6.99 per month or £69 per year) with tasting notes, a member's forum and access to the *Oxford Companion to Wine*. Robinson herself is one of the wine world's celebrities – a writer and broadcaster who updates her site daily – and her team includes top restaurant critics, wine bloggers and industry insiders.
www.jancisrobinson.com



A virtual walk around a winery

8 Here's an interesting app for wine buffs: the world-renowned Matias Winery has created a Windows Phone app for those of us who can't quite make it to Hungary to be there in person. The app is a gorgeous online brochure for the winery, its philosophy and, of course, its wines. You can choose to organise the bottles by type, region, vintage or category. It would be nice to see some of the bigger names in wine take a similar approach; it's nice to know a bit about the places your favourite wines come from, and the people who make them.
 Matias Winery (Windows 8 Store)



Wine browsing on the move

9 Not to be confused with Mobile Sommelier, Vinum too promises "a sommelier in your pocket". It enables you to browse wine by categories including varietal, appellation, vintage and even vineyard. It also provides extensive information on each wine, offers user reviews and winemakers' notes and includes advice on which bottle to pair with which dish. We particularly like the embedded maps that let you see exactly where your favourites come from. The Vinum app is £1.49, and you can download a free trial to put it through its paces first.
 Vinum (Windows Phone)



The right wine for every meal

10 The Wine Society was established in 1874 to find good quality wines for its members, and it remains a key player in the wine world – but you don't need to buy its wines to benefit from over a century of wisdom.
 The society's Food and Wine Matching page is a simple guide to help you find the right accompaniment for any meal. Be it a juicy steak, a hearty broth or your Christmas turkey, it couldn't be easier: choose a meal from the drop-down menu, click 'Select' and let the Wine Society make some recommendations.
www.thewinesociety.com/Shop/FoodMatching.aspx



THE CHALLENGE

Can you go viral?


Just how easy is it to make your snaps 'go viral' on the internet? We challenge two team members to get famous online

A few years ago, going viral would probably have you locked up in quarantine and sporadically hosed down by people in biohazard suits. These days, though, going viral means becoming an instant internet star, complete with fame and glory (maybe).

Over the years more than a few careers have been launched using social media, whether it's YouTube

stars going global doing silly dances, or people gaining notoriety by venting their feelings on Twitter. However, how easy is it to upload something that will become a smash hit overnight, and how can you engineer maximum exposure?

Windows: The Official Magazine team members Matt Hanson and Nick Odantzis went head-to-head to find out, by each taking and uploading a photo in a bid to get as many people to like, retweet, share and comment on it in 24 hours.

It involves using social networks as self-promotion tools, and harnessing the power of friends, followers and complete strangers to send their snaps to far-flung corners of the globe. The clock's ticking, but can either of them become the next big thing on the internet? 



The 'View Photo' link lets people quickly view the picture – essential for retweets

Start

With 24 hours on the clock, the first challenge was to create an image to share online. Straight away, both competitors came up with different ideas. "Animals doing cute things is always internet gold!" exclaimed Matt.

Nick had more artistic aspirations. "I'm going to photograph some beautiful local scenery. Hopefully people will enjoy it and want to share it with their friends."

02 hours

The competitors then needed to take their photos and upload them as soon as possible.

Nick was quick to grab his DSLR camera and head out to get some shots. "It's a beautiful day out there, so I'm sure I'll be able to get some great images." To stand out on the internet, you need to be unique, so finding the right picture might take longer than Nick was anticipating – and time was ticking.

Matt was looking much closer to home for his inspiration. "I've got a number of pets, so I'm bound to be able to snap them doing something cute around the house!" While Nick was scouring the local area with his DSLR, Matt was busy using his smartphone to capture his image.

"I've finally found a fantastic Gothic church. I just need to set up my camera and get shooting," said Nick.

Meanwhile Matt had already found his shot, taken it and was uploading his picture. "I decided on a picture of my pet terrapin falling asleep on his basking rock. I took the photo and had my phone, a Nokia Lumia 900, set up to automatically post to Facebook." While Nick was walking



back to his house to find the USB cable to transfer and then upload his photos, Matt's shot of his terrapin on Facebook had already received two likes in a matter of minutes.

04 hours

The lunch hour saw an influx of Matt's friends logging on to find his photo, with many of them liking it. By 2:30pm his image had 17 likes and four comments. Inevitably, though, people began closing down their web browsers and returning to work. "It looks like I need to promote this picture elsewhere," he said. "I've set up my Facebook page to automatically post any updates to Twitter by linking my accounts at www.facebook.com/twitter."

05 hours

Meanwhile Nick was lagging behind, having only just uploaded his photograph manually.

Luckily for him, Facebook has a system that makes posts containing uploaded photos stay at the top of people's news feeds for longer, so more people are likely to see it. By

2:30pm, Nick's photo was fast approaching Matt's in the likes stakes with 11 thumbs up. The number of comments quickly overtook Matt's, with most people asking him where the shot was taken.

However, Matt had a sudden realisation. "I've just remembered that Facebook posts a link to the photo on its own website, so Twitter users will have no idea what they're clicking on!"

06 hours

Time was marching on, so Matt had to act fast. Unfortunately for him, all his automatic posting didn't seem like such a good idea.

Nick, on the other hand, had replied to a number of the people who had commented on his photo. This kept the photo towards the top of people's news feeds. His shot had now surpassed Matt's with 26 likes. Matt's photo only had 20.

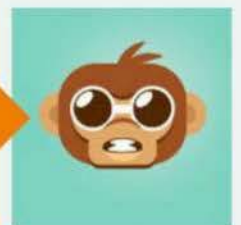
08 hours

With Facebook ticking over nicely, afternoon was fast turning into evening and Nick needed to direct



DO IT WITH THESE
Two free apps to give your shots the edge

Photo Monkey
£FREE
A free app which enables you to make quick edits and add effects to your shots. You can choose from ten funky filters.



FLICKR manager

Flickr Manager
£FREE
Get in control of your Flickr account and use it to showcase and promote your photos in full quality. One for serious snappers.

his attention to other places to share his photo. As a keen photographer, Nick is signed up to Flickr (www.flickr.com). Other users can view, comment and quickly post the image to Facebook or Twitter. On Twitter his post appeared with the 'View photo' link, which lets people quickly view the photo – essential for retweets. Likes and shares on Facebook grew to 30 and 7 respectively, and there were three retweets on Twitter.

09 hours But how was Matt doing? After his Facebook-to-Twitter automatic posting fiasco, it was time to take a more hands-on approach. "I'm going to upload my picture to Twitpic (<http://twitpic.com>).” Once he'd set it up, his followers began to retweet, but was it enough to catch up with Nick? He posted the photo with the hashtag #cutepet in a bid to get more views.

10 hours With night drawing ever closer, the peak time for social media traffic was over. Both competitors needed to work hard to keep retweets flowing, so Matt decided to get a celebrity involved. However, with so many followers, would his request stand out?

Nick had a similar idea. Twitter accounts that post about local news often retweet photos, so Nick

identified a number of local tweeters. These accounts had fewer followers than the celebrities Matt was courting, but they were much more likely to retweet his picture.

12 hours Nick's targeting of local tweeters paid off, boosting him to a total of 42 retweets, along with 34 likes on Facebook.

Meanwhile, Matt's picture was ignored by the famous Twitterers. Retweets by his followers were creeping up though, and he had managed 12 retweets and 26 likes on Facebook. To catch up with Nick, he needed to do something drastic. Suddenly, inspiration struck.

"While my friends and followers are logging off for the night in the UK, elsewhere they'll be waking up! I can get Facebook to automatically post the status at a certain date and time." As for Twitter, he used the Twuffer service (<http://twuffer.com>), which enables you to schedule the release of your tweets. Could this close the gap? Both contestants went to bed, keen to find out how they fared the next day.

22 hours Over the course of the night Nick's photo gained a further eight retweets and two likes on Facebook, bringing his total to 50 retweets and 36 likes. Matt's scheduled overnight posting paid off,

with 14 retweets and an impressive 21 extra likes on Facebook, bringing his total to 26 retweets and 47 likes.

23 hours With the clock counting down, Matt had one last roll of the dice – the local animal charity on Twitter. The account had quite a few followers, but would it ignore the photograph like the celebrities did? The minutes ticked by until, with just under three-quarters-of-an-hour left, the photo was retweeted!

Finish Was that last retweet enough to spark a further flurry? At the 24-hour mark, Nick's photo stood at a respectable 50 retweets and 38 likes. Matt's last minute retweet brought him five additional retweets, leaving him with 32 retweets and 49 likes. A good score, but Nick wins! It goes to show that photos can't be uploaded and left to become a hit. You need to nurture them and give them a personal touch.

Nick's total 88 Matt's total 81



LIFE HACK

Tame your inbox

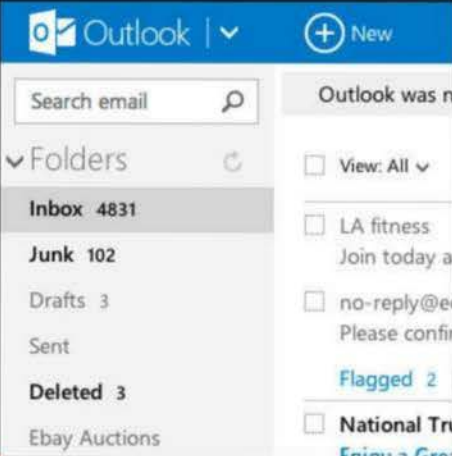
Overcome email overload and manage your online life with these simple ideas



Start filing emails



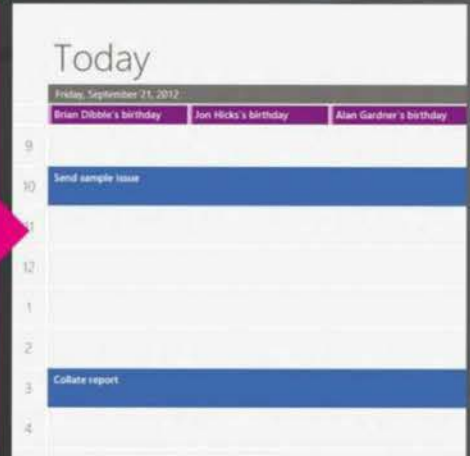
When you receive important letters, do you stack them up in one giant, wobbling pile or file them away properly? If you're in the latter camp you can use email folders to do the same for your email. Most email services such as Outlook.com, the new name for Hotmail, enable you to create folders for your messages. Outlook.com can also file them automatically, using the Sweep tool so you can stay organised without lifting a finger.



Use your calendar



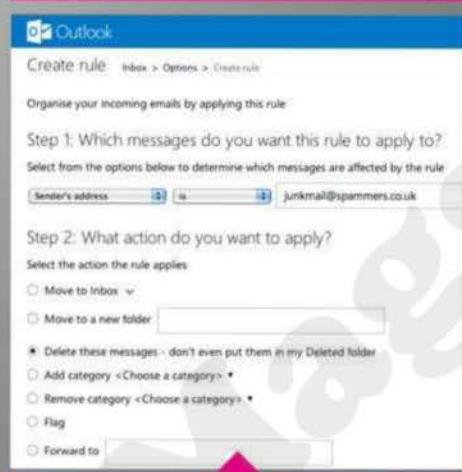
If your inbox is full of emails asking you to do things and be places, it can be hard to manage all these demands, but help is at hand in the form of an online calendar. Most email apps have a companion calendar, so use yours and add those tasks for a later time. What's more, many programs can identify dates in your messages, which will then be presented as a link – click on it to add a note to your calendar automatically.






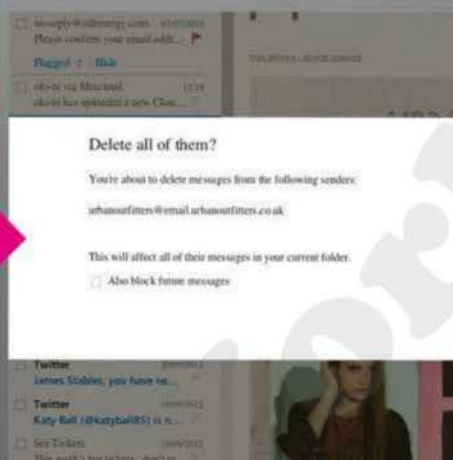
Conquer greymail

 You may not have heard of greymail, but you're already suffering from it. It's the newsletters you've signed up for and never want to read. Outlook.com (the new Hotmail web app) lets you purge all emails from a sender, unsubscribe from unwanted newsletters and even block pesky spammers. It's a great way to tame the wildest of inboxes in a few minutes, and we saw our number of unread messages fall in no time.



Delete everything

 Organisational gurus will tell you that the way to email utopia is to keep your inbox completely empty. If this appeals to you then Outlook.com is your friend. Using the Sweep tool, you can unsubscribe from unwanted circulars, and even schedule huge purges of your inbox, so it's tidy when you return. If you're not a Hotmail or Live user it doesn't matter. Outlook also accepts third party accounts, so anyone can stay organised.



Create some rules

 Managing your inbox and keeping it clean can waste as much time as searching for messages through a spam-laden inbox, but what if you could program a robot to sort your email? In Outlook.com, this mail-sorting helper comes in the form of rules. You can have emails sent to folders as soon as they arrive, or even immediately destroyed. Try sending mobile phone bills to a folder so they are kept safe.



Discover the Windows Store


From Netflix to Wikipedia, Windows 8 brings the apps you love to your PC. We show you how to get involved

Windows software tends to conjure images of long installs, multiple discs and annoying configuration, a world away from the instant mobile 'apps' we're used to on our phones. Well, all that's about to change, as the apps we know and love are thrust to the forefront of Windows 8 and the all-new Windows Store.

The Windows Store is the core of the new Windows experience, bringing together a variety of big-name apps and fun games. It's all accessible from the moment you power up a Windows 8 desktop, laptop or tablet PC, taking pride of place on the Start screen. Its interface makes it easy to browse and find interesting things, whether you're using a touchscreen device, or a mouse and keyboard controlled PC.

When you first open up the Store, you're presented with a selection of the best apps under the title Spotlight. These change frequently, and you can see the best-rated and most-downloaded apps using the tiles to the right. The New Releases section highlights up-and-coming apps that have been added recently.

This is the mere tip of the iceberg, though. Scroll to the right – either by swiping on a touchscreen device or dragging the scrollbar at the bottom with your mouse – and you'll see a huge range of apps, sorted into categories like Games, Social and Entertainment. Each of these categories includes lists of All Star and Top Free apps, which highlight the best of the bunch.

Clicking or tapping on an app gives you more information about what it is, what it does and how to use it. Click on the 'Details' tab for supported 







PC specs. The beauty of the Windows Store is no more worries about compatibility or the quality of your software. All Windows apps are stringently tested and verified, and you can quickly find details on supported languages and the app's permissions. The latter tells you what the app does to your computer, and it's a good idea to double-check these if you haven't used it before.

Take a look at the Reviews section before you install the app. These are written by people who have used the program, and include a star rating. It's a good way to see how well certain apps run, and how useful people have found them. Once you've installed an app, you can add your own review.

Less than a minute

If you're used to installing programs on a Windows PC, you'll find the Windows Store's installation process a joy. Rather than clicking through menus and licence agreements, all you have to do is select 'Install'. The app is downloaded and installed in the background, and a notification pops up when it's all done.

Once the app is installed you'll find it on the Windows 8 Start Screen, and

You'll find the Windows Store's installation process a joy

you can tap or click to launch it. You'll notice that most apps have a similar layout to the Windows Store itself, with menus and options extending to the right of the screen. You can navigate these with a swipe or a scroll. It may take a little getting used to, but it's often worth exploring these menus to get the most from your apps.

The apps themselves vary greatly, but the various categories make it easy to find the one you want. You should head for the Shopping section if you feel like splashing some cash on the

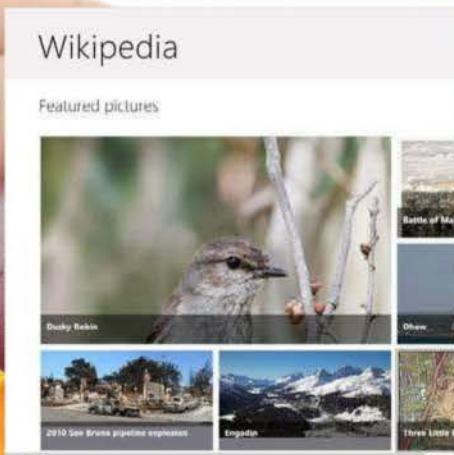
latest designer clothes, or make your way to the games category if you want to relax with a stimulating puzzle.

There are dozens of official apps already waiting for you in the Windows Store. Legendary London nightclub Ministry of Sound has created an app that includes hubs to stream its radio station live, and list upcoming DJ slots at the venue. The app also provides past DJ sets, and lets you buy and download songs you like.

Great for learning

If you fancy a more intellectually stimulating experience, the Wikipedia app is a never-ending source of knowledge. Unlike Wikipedia's wordy website, the app puts stunning images first, which you can click to bring up the relevant article. To the right you'll find the day's featured articles, and the On This Day section presents historical events from the current date.

The Wikipedia app's usefulness doesn't end there. Like most Windows 8 apps, it has a built-in search tool. Just swipe from the right of the screen on a touchscreen device, or move the mouse to the lower-right corner to bring up a handy bar that lets you search the site. Wikipedia articles are



presented in a Windows 8-friendly way too, spanning the page horizontally to fit more information in.

There's a whole host of other great official apps for you to try. Evernote makes it easy to keep lists and doodles, synchronising them with the website and your other Windows 8 devices. The YouTube-esque Dailymotion includes hundreds of videos to stream instantly to your PC, tablet or phone.

Fun and games

New games are added to the Windows Store on a daily basis, and part of Microsoft's criteria for inclusion is that they're family friendly and non-offensive. *Doodle Grub* is a prime example of this, featuring the cute worm in a food-collecting game reminiscent of *Snake* on Nokia phones. It's great fun for kids, and adults will find it surprisingly addictive too.

ARMED! presents a more complicated but equally enjoyable challenge, in which you must erect towers to keep the enemy at bay. There's also a handful of hidden object puzzle games, such as *Dark Arcana* and *Enigmatic*. These games present static scenes in which the player must find and identify artefacts.

Modern computers often include webcams, which let you enjoy fun apps and games that get you out of your seat and moving about. *BallStrike* uses your PC's camera to put you in a virtual world where you move your arms to pop brightly coloured balls. It starts easily enough, but it's not long before you're out of breath and working up a sweat. It even tells you how many calories you've burned in the process.

This is just a tiny selection of what's currently available from the Windows Store, and its fluid nature means that more apps are added on a daily basis. By far the best thing about the Store is the way that Microsoft has opened it up to app developers and with the release of Windows 8 new and innovative apps are being added all the time. Watch this space, and be the first to know what's next on the Windows Store. ■

Sony Vaio Tap 20

£1,500
Sony's new tablet is a whopping 20 inches, the size of a small TV. The screen renders Windows 8 apps wonderfully, though.



BEST DEVICES FOR TRYING NEW APPS

HP Spectre One

£TBC
This doesn't have a touchscreen, but has a wireless trackpad. Its stylish design makes it perfect for the home.

Samsung ATIVsmart PC

£TBC
It may look like a normal laptop but remove the keyboard and it transforms into a tablet.



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Hotlist

RECOMMENDED BUYS

GET THIS!

Our top-rated Windows tablet **p92**

Hot picks

Best all-rounder laptop

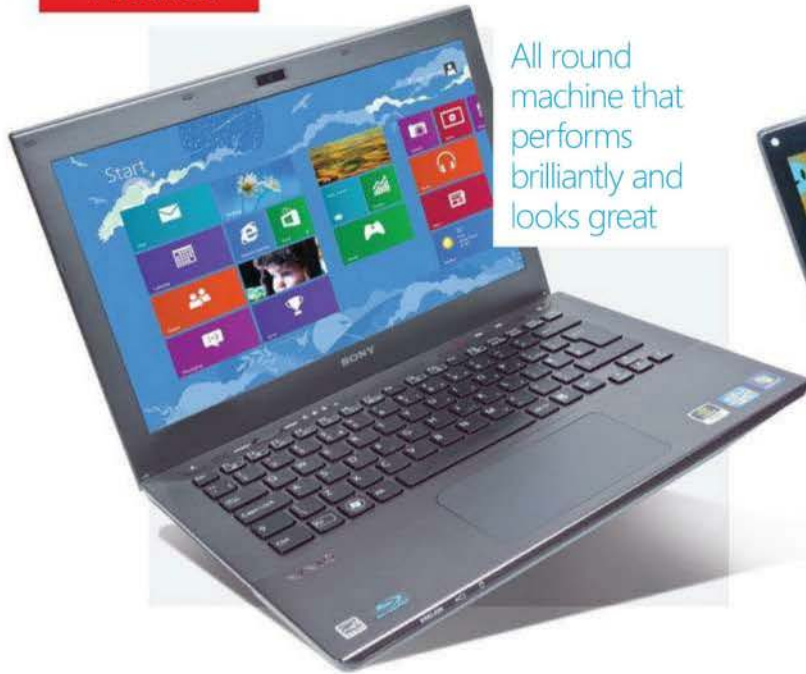
Do anything with this amazing Windows 8 machine **p91**

Top tablets for home

Sit back and enjoy apps and browsing with this top Windows tablet **p92**

Stylish desktop all-in-ones

Work in comfort and style with either of these great all-in-ones **p93**



All round machine that performs brilliantly and looks great



Multimedia powerhouse that's much more than a gaming PC

EVERYDAY COMPUTING

Sony VAIO E Series 15

£599 The promise of Blu-ray action and discrete graphics for under £600 makes this a bargain

Screen
15.5in

This latest Sony VAIO E Series ticks a lot of important boxes as a jack of all trades, sporting dual-core Intel Core i5 power, 8GB of RAM, plenty of storage space and a Blu-ray drive.

Weight
2.7kg

Connectivity is a strong point, with speedy USB 3.0 port sitting alongside a duo of USB 2.0 options and HDMI output. At the price-point that we've selected you get a healthy 500GB of hard drive storage, discrete graphics from AMD and a battery that Sony promises is capable of lasting for up to four hours.

Battery
210 mins

This being Sony you can, of course, configure to your heart's content and even the base model (dual-core Pentium, DVD, 4GB of RAM and integrated graphics) should perform amicably.
www.sony.co.uk

BIG-SCREEN BEAUTY

Toshiba Qosmio X870

£1,470 Monster laptop with impressive gaming credentials and a nifty 3D display to boot

Screen
17.3in

You don't need to be a serious gamer in order to fully appreciate the impressive specification sheet of the latest big-hitting Qosmio. Toshiba has created a monster laptop that fully lives up to the tag of desktop replacement.

Weight
3.4kg

The 17.3-inch, Full HD, 3D display is perfect not only for high-octane gaming, but also for watching Blu-ray movies or editing your high-resolution images. On the media front it also helps that there's a stereo speaker setup from audio expert Harman Kardon on board.

Battery
41 mins

Storing your digital data shouldn't prove tricky either as there's a whopping 1TB of hard drive space on offer, along with a 128GB SSD drive for super-fast boot up times and extra-quick access to those essential files.
www.scan.co.uk

ON A BUDGET?

Screen
15.6in

Packard Bell EasyNote TV £399

The EasyNote TV won't win any prizes for design or technological innovation but we can guarantee it's an ample performer that will allow you to tackle your daily digital tasks with little fuss.

Weight
2.5kg

Battery
162 mins

A 500GB HDD is generously priced and excellent connectivity options make up for outdated processing power.
www.saveonlaptops.co.uk



Screen
17.3in

Samsung Series 5 550P £670

The latest quad-core Intel Core power, a vivid 1080p display, impressive audio, through the JBL stereo speaker and Max Boost subwoofer setup, and Nvidia graphic processing makes this one of the best pound for pound laptops we've seen.

Weight
3kg

Battery
195 mins

It looks pretty swish as well and the isolated keyboard is as good as we've laid our mitts on.
www.amazon.co.uk





As brilliant as mobile computing gets at the moment



It's a machine that packs in a wealth of top-end technology

THIN AND LIGHT

Sony VAIO Duo 11

£999 Unrivalled slimline design and touchscreen display that packs seriously powerful performance

Screen 11.6in touch
Windows 8 gives PC manufacturers a lot more flexibility when it comes to design, thanks to the platform's multiple navigation features, and in no other device is this demonstrated more impressively than the VAIO Duo 11.

Weight 1.3kg
Part tablet, part Ultrabook and part powerful PC, the Duo 11 boasts an intuitive sliding build, dubbed the Surf Slider. This allows the slimline stunner to be operated just like a traditional notebook, as well as easily being used as a touchscreen tablet.

Battery 210 mins
Packing the latest Intel Core processing power, up to 8GB of RAM, a 256GB SSD and a Full HD display panel, the Duo 11 is anything but a novelty and is as jaw-droppingly brilliant as mobile computing gets.
www.sony.co.uk

HAVE IT ALL

Dell XPS 15

£1,779 An incredible setup fit to take on any task – and it looks very cool too

Screen 15.6in
The XPS 15 is a fantastic laptop that will smash through your digital demands with ease. It will make mincemeat of your HD movies, handle casual gaming with aplomb and perform without a stutter on more challenging assignments, such as video or high-quality picture editing.

Weight 2.6kg
It's a machine that packs in a wealth of top-end technology – an Intel Core i7 CPU, an Nvidia GeForce GT 640M GPU and ample storage – inside a body that oozes style. We're not sure what's cooler: the brushed silver exterior or the soft rubberised interior.

Battery 195 mins
At 23.2mm thick and weighing 2.6kg, this laptop's portable enough to carry around and the plethora of port activity won't leave you wanting either.
www.amazon.co.uk

Screen 15.6in

HP Envy 6 £499

It may not be the thinnest or lightest Ultrabook in town but, at 20mm thick and weighing just over 2kg, the Envy 6 is hardly likely to cause your back too much trouble when carrying it about.

And at a price tag around half of the original HP Ultrabook, and packed with 2012's best technology, it's excellent value for money.
www.pcworld.co.uk



Screen 15.6in

Lenovo G570 £499

It may be lacking a third-generation Intel processor but don't let that put you off. For under £500, a dual-core CPU – albeit slightly dated – isn't to be scoffed at.

The healthy RAM, large hard drive and discrete AMD graphics mean you can have a machine that does the lot.
www.amazon.co.uk

Weight 2.5kg

Battery 156 mins





The keyboard dock is top quality and syncing is a breeze too



The ultimate Windows 8 tablet more than lives up to the hype

TABLET FOR HOME

Asus Vivo Tab RT

£549 A lightweight QWERTY-packing slate that has plenty of heritage to lean on

- Screen**
10.1in touch
- Weight**
520g
- Battery**
230 mins

Asus has made some big waves in the hybrid tablet market and so it's not surprising to see the Taiwanese electronics giant embrace the Windows 8 revolution with open arms.

The Vivo Tab RT runs a mobile quad-core processor which means it can't run traditional programs, but it's well suited to the host of new apps. There's also 2GB of RAM, 32GB of storage, an 8-megapixel rear-facing camera and a 10.1-inch, 1,366 x 768 display – all inside a design weighing just over 500g.

You can rest assured that the keyboard dock – that also extends battery life – is top quality, and the addition of NFC connectivity means syncing with other enabled devices should be a breeze as well. www.asus.co.uk

TABLET FOR WORK

Acer Iconia W700

£TBC Packing an Intel Core processor, the W700 is much smarter than your average tablet

- Screen**
11.6in touch
- Weight**
950g
- Battery**
480 mins

The Acer Iconia W700 is unlikely to worry the super-slim slate brigade. Fortunately, the 11.9mm-thick slate is focused on cutting-edge technology. Powered by either an i3 or an i5 third-generation Intel Core processor, Asus's new flagship Windows 8 tablet also boasts three USB 3.0 ports, HDMI connectivity and a Thunderbolt port. Crucially, the Intel Core means it will run the full version of Microsoft Office without difficulty.

The 11.6-inch display is full HD, and audio quality is also superb thanks to the Dolby Home Theatre v4 technology built-in.

The W700 is a true tablet, whose only companion is a charging dock that allows for two different angle setups that enable natural typing or enhanced viewing. www.acer.co.uk

ON A BUDGET?

- Screen**
10.6in
- Weight**
676g
- Battery**
TBC

Microsoft Surface RT £TBC

With a scaled down spec sheet from that of its Pro-punching brethren, the official Microsoft RT slate still has plenty to get excited about including up to 64GB of storage, a 10.6-inch ClearType HD Display and, of course, the fantastic VaporMg case.

Add HDMI, microSD and USB connectivity and you're looking at a heavy-hitting device. www.microsoft.com



- Screen**
11.6in
- Weight**
750g
- Battery**
540 mins

Samsung ATIV Smart PC £TBC

Sitting alongside its Ivy Bridge brother, the Atom-packing ATIV offers the full Windows experience at a much more wallet-friendly price-tag. There's over nine hours of battery life on offer for video playback on the 11.6-inch, 1,366 x 768 display, as well as optional 4G connectivity and a respectable 8-megapixel camera attached to the back. www.samsung.com/uk





Super suave PC that will make your desktop a cooler place

STYLISH DESKTOP

Lenovo Idea Centre A720

£1,399 Lenovo hits the mark for style with this gorgeous all-in-one touchscreen desktop

- Screen**
27in touch
- Weight**
11.6kg
- Battery**
N/A

All-in-one desktop computers have been hitting the market in an array of shapes and sizes in recent years but we don't think we've seen one quite as exciting as the A720. Not only is it super practical thanks to the slim, frameless 27-inch touchscreen, 95° angle tilt, integrated Blu-ray drive and 1TB of hard disk space, it looks awesome too; and will no doubt make over your desktop into a much funkier location than it currently is.

Powered by a quad-core Intel i7 processor, along with up to 8GB of RAM and discrete Nvidia graphics, you'll find that the A720 is equally as effective as a high-performance workstation as it is a family-centred, living room-based media centre. www.johnlewis.com



Super AMOLED display makes the ATIV S stand out

SMARTPHONE

Samsung ATIV S

£TBC Samsung is well and truly back in the Windows Phone game with this dual-core Goliath

- Screen**
4.8in touch
- Weight**
135g
- Battery**
810 mins

It's not just Nokia that's knocking out top-end Windows Phone smartphones; Samsung is back with a bang thanks to this huge-screen handset that doesn't fail to impress. Samsung specialises in big displays and its latest Windows Phone device certainly buys into that ethos with an incredible 4.8-inch, 720p HD, Super AMOLED panel.

Running Windows Phone 8, the ATIV S also offers up to 32GB of storage and is compatible with microSD cards, meaning you'll have plenty of space to store your HD media. Powered by a dual-core 1.5GHz processor and backed up with 1GB of RAM, the latest games hitting the Windows Marketplace will play back with a buttery smoothness. www.samsung.com/uk

- Screen**
23in
 - Weight**
11.7kg
 - Battery**
N/A
- HP Touchsmart 520-1130ea £700**
Benefiting from a whopping price-drop, this HP touchscreen AIO offers an array of features to keep the family entertained including Full HD 1080p video playback, Beats Audio sound, a slot-loading DVD player and a Freeview tuner. With integrated Intel HD graphics, and support for up to 8GB of RAM, it's also a machine that can handle itself with casual gaming. www.hp.com/uk



- Screen**
3.6in
 - Weight**
126g
 - Battery**
233 mins
- Nokia Lumia 710 £180**
While the 710 isn't likely to win any awards for design, performance or outstanding features, it is a solidly built smartphone that's an ideal first step for anybody looking to get on board with the Windows Phone revolution. And, at less than £200, it offers some impressive tech – such as the 5-megapixel camera – at a bargain cost. www.phones4u.co.uk





Clever mid-range printer that is always connected and great for pics



A superb addition to any connected digital home setup

PHOTO PRINTING

Canon Pixma MX895

£139 Speedy all-in-one printing machine with an emphasis on business quality and connectivity

Screen
3in

If you're looking for a contemporary printer that ticks all your boxes, then look no further than this model from Canon. The MX895 will not only print in great quality thanks to its 9,600dpi support and micro ink droplet technology, but also throws in Wi-Fi connectivity, double-sided printing, faxing and high-resolution scanning.

Weight
11.7kg

DPI
9,600

The Wi-Fi feature means that it's also compatible with Apple's AirPrint, Google Cloud Print and Pixma Cloud Link and you can also print images directly from your digital camera using the Pictbridge function.

We found printing quality to be excellent and if you're looking for an all-round home printer that handles photos well, this is an ideal candidate. www.amazon.co.uk

GET BACKED UP

WD My Net N900 Central

£320 A dual-band router with high-definition media streaming and all the backup space you'll need

Size
2TB

To call the N900 an external hard drive would be to do it an injustice. Not only does it pack in a 2TB HDD for storing all your sensitive digital data, it's also a dual-band (2.4GHz and 5GHz) 802.11n router with an antenna that is capable of delivering 450Mbps connections.

Weight
1.4kg

Disc
HDD

This means it's not only a great back-up device but also the perfect companion to your ever-expanding home network. Add to this the fact that you'll have access to all of your locally stored files wherever you are, using WD 2go web access, and you're laughing all the way to the cloud.

And when you're done backing up your digital life, you can seamlessly stream HD media to your tablet or smartphone via the built-in FasTrack technology. www.amazon.co.uk

ON A BUDGET?

Screen
2.4in

Weight
5.1kg

DPI
9,600

Kodak ESP 3.2 £69

With an emphasis on photos, this Wi-Fi enabled box of tricks certainly comes in at an attractive price-point for anyone looking to make their digital memories physical.

It can print up to A4, at a resolution of 9,600dpi, and apparently offers the lowest average cost per page photo printing in its category. www.currys.co.uk



Size
1TB

Weight
224g

Disc
HDD

Seagate Backup Plus £79

Not only does this 1TB backup option allow you to automatically sync all your digital data using plug and play technology, it's also a social networker's dream because it enables you to back up all the images and videos you've shared on Facebook and Flickr. Publishing your media to your favourite social sites is also a cinch – just one click using the Backup Plus feature. www.dabs.com





A cheap(er) and easy way to board the mirrorless express

SNAP HAPPY

Nikon 1 J2

£499 Mirrorless compact sequel gets improved LCD display and extra photo effects

Screen 3in
Weight 238g

Nikon's mirrorless compact is back for a second bite at the newly emerging market, this time offering a sharper monitor – twice the resolution of its predecessor – some funky effects and scene modes, an updated dial, a textured chassis and, perhaps most importantly, a hefty price-drop.

Pixels 10.1MP

Compatible with the interchangeable 1 NIKKOR lenses, and offering 10.1-megapixels from its CMOS sensor, the J2 is also capable of shooting Full HD 1080p video in a range of modes.

Designed for people that want to spend "more time creating and less time fussing", the J2 offers novices features such as autofocus and a range of one-touch shortcuts. Pros will be at home with the newly tuned dial and its plethora of shooting options. www.jessops.com

Screen 2.7in

Weight 205g

Pixels 14MP

Fujifilm FinePix XP170 £199

Tough, waterproof and small enough to fit into even the tightest of trendy pockets: the XP170 may just be the most perfect fun compact yet. Waterproof to 10m, shockproof to 2m, sealed against dust and sand, and able to function in temperatures as low as -10°C, you'll struggle to find a location this camera isn't comfortable in. www.johnlewis.com



Vibrant visuals



Samsung SyncMaster S24B750V £219

Futuristic and minimalist, this monitor features a 2ms response time and a 5,000,000:1 dynamic contrast ratio. The 24-inch LED backlit beauty is also capable of mirroring certain smartphone displays. www.amazon.co.uk

Weight 6kg

Battery N/A

Party starter



Libratone Live £599

A standalone speaker with satin chrome handle, solid wood, a piano finish and Italian cashmere – need we say more? Substance is more important than style so you'll be pleased to know this also features patented FullRoom acoustic technology. www.amazon.co.uk

Weight 6.5kg

Battery N/A

Travel mate



Concrete Hook Case £149

Cooler than Shaft, this Italian leather laptop case is one of the most stylish we've come across. The frame is lightweight aluminium and there's enough room in the padded-suede interior for a 15-inch laptop. Perfect for a dedicated follower of fashion. www.concretcases.com

Weight 660g

Battery N/A

Music on the go



Audeo PFE 232 £400

Seriously high-end buds that feature two high-precision balanced armature drivers, and customisable filters so sound quality is stunning, no matter the size or shape of your lug-holes. Not cheap – but you'd be investing in a technological masterpiece. www.audeoworld.com

Weight 16g

Battery N/A

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TRY THIS!
Use Windows 8's touch controls **p104**

Hot picks

Welcome to Windows 8
Get to grips with the new Start screen and latest features **p98**

Your first steps
Start your Windows 8 journey with these essential pointers **p100**

Entertainment guide
Everything you need to know about movies, music and games **p106**





WELCOME TO WINDOWS 8

Let us show you around the new-look OS



A fresh new look

The new Windows 8 UI brings a whole new look and feel to Windows, as well as a new Start screen. It's designed to be great for touch as well as mouse and keyboard, and you can arrange the apps in any order you want on the Start screen. Most modern UI-style apps run full screen, but you can also position them at the side of the window.



Get apps on your PC

Apps are key to the Windows 8 experience. There are plenty of built-in Windows 8-style ones, including Mail, Stocks and Sports, and you can choose from thousands more at the Windows Store. Lots of third-party developers have already produced apps for Windows 8, covering everything from recipes to music and video to Twitter.





The Charm bar

One of the new ways to interact with Windows is the Charm bar, which can be accessed from all applications. It's an overlay that appears on screen and shows essential information. You can access the Start screen, search your apps and files, and go to devices (a digital camera, for example) and settings. You can also share to social media or via email.

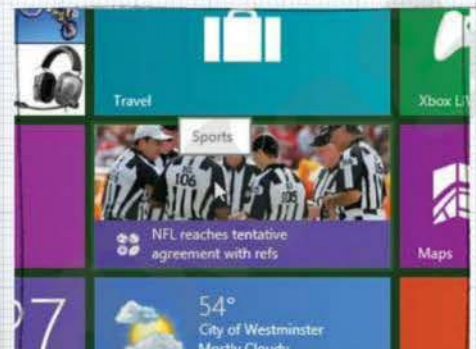
A bit of charm

If you're using a touchscreen for Windows 8, you can swipe from the right to see the Charm bar, a new menu option.



Search and share

All apps in Windows 8 are designed so they can be searched from the Charm bar, which is accessed from the right-hand edge of the Start screen. Searching in this way means that you can find information within apps without opening them first, saving you time and effort. The same is true for sharing. All apps are built enabling information to be emailed, tweeted or posted to Facebook from the Charm bar, so letting your friends know about what you're doing is only a swipe away.



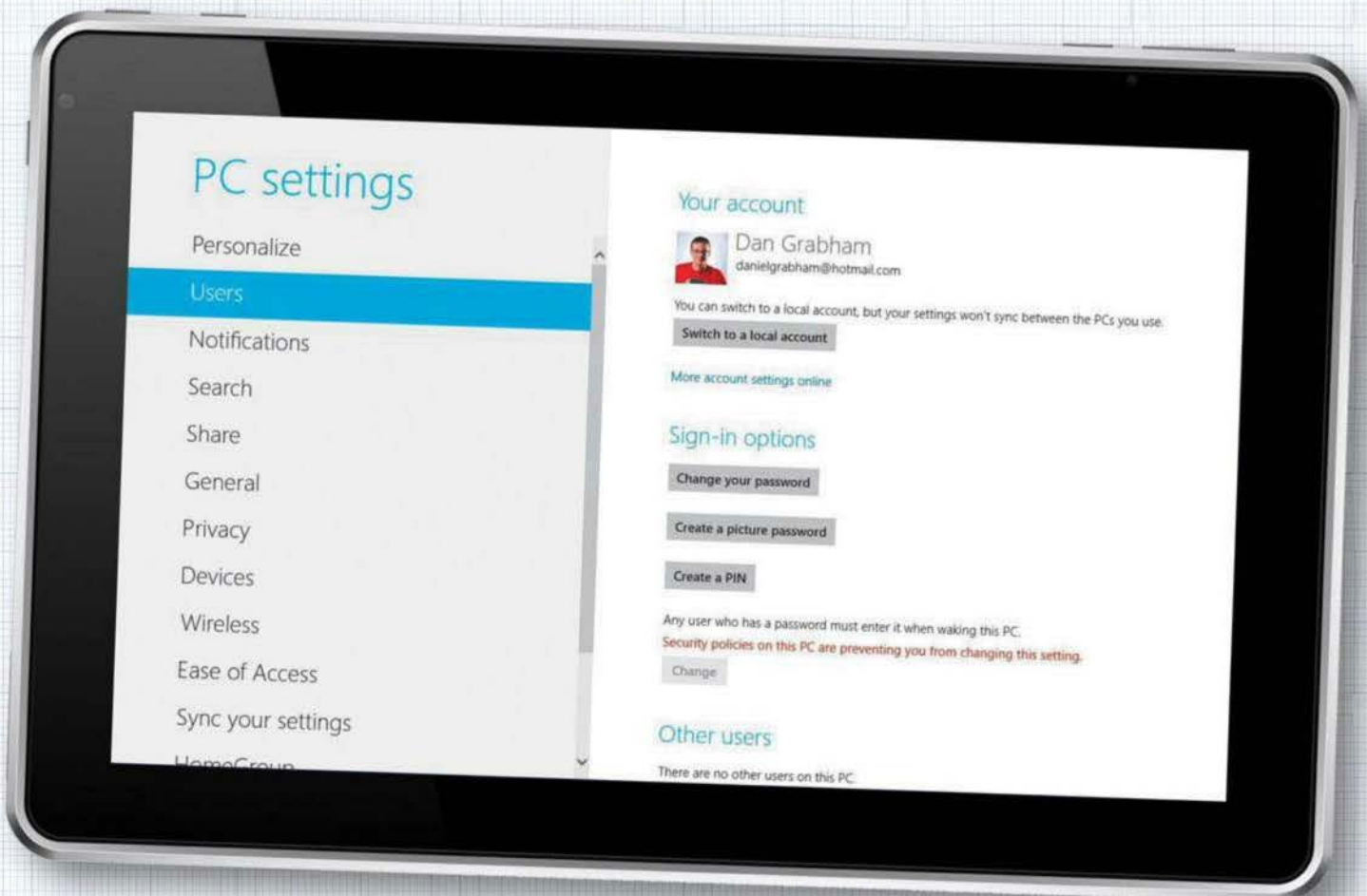
Real-time Live Tiles

Apps in Windows 8 have their own icon, called a tile. Unlike other operating systems, these tiles aren't static pictures and are able to push information such as new emails, news headlines, football scores or even your favourite photos to your Start screen. This means you don't have to open an app to get the information you need.



YOUR FIRST STEPS

Start your Windows 8 journey here



1 Add user accounts It's easy and transferable

Making separate user accounts is a simple process and is perfect for families who share and enjoy multiple devices. You can either add a user account from the Desktop Control Panel (as you would in previous versions of Windows), or choose 'Settings' from the Charm bar, choose 'Change PC settings' and select 'Users'. You can log in with any user account – even while somebody else is logged in. You will need to log in with a Microsoft account, which can be created in a few easy steps. If you previously had a Hotmail or Windows Live account, used Windows Live Messenger or Outlook.com, you can use this without creating a new one and you can take some settings with you, whichever PC you log in to!

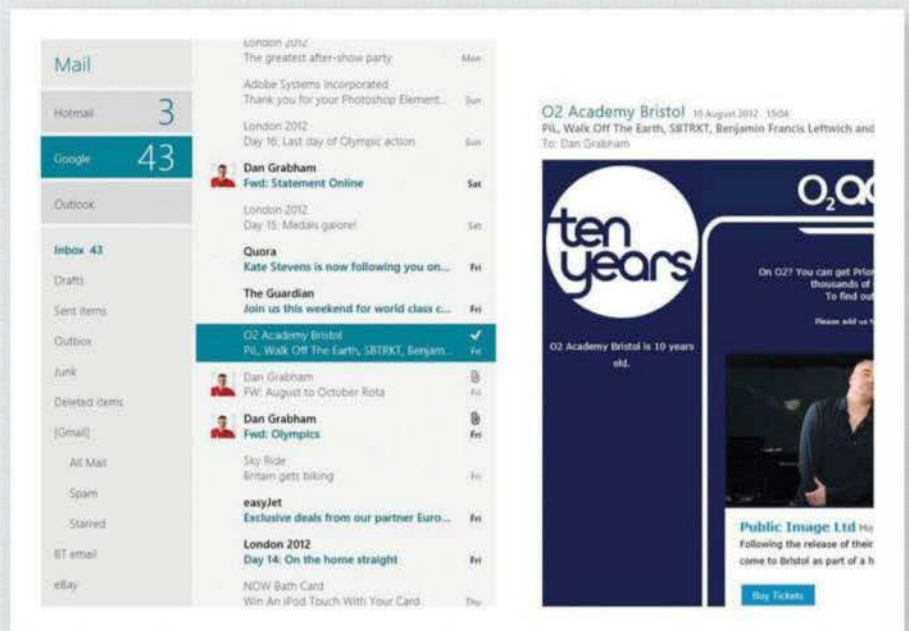
i Sign out

Should you wish to sign out or lock your PC, simply click your Account picture in the top right of the Start screen to do so.

2 Set up your email

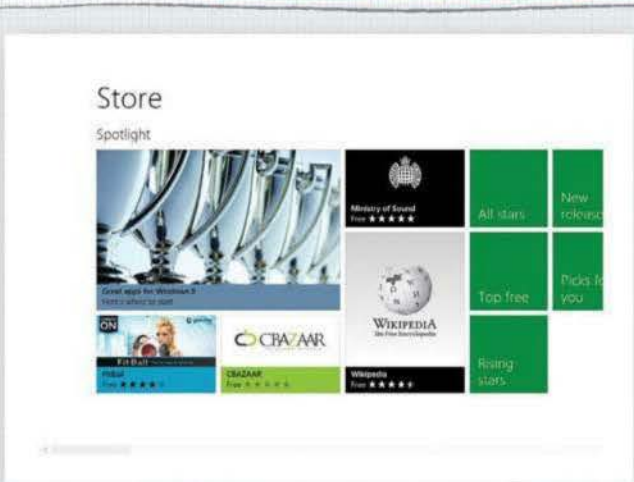
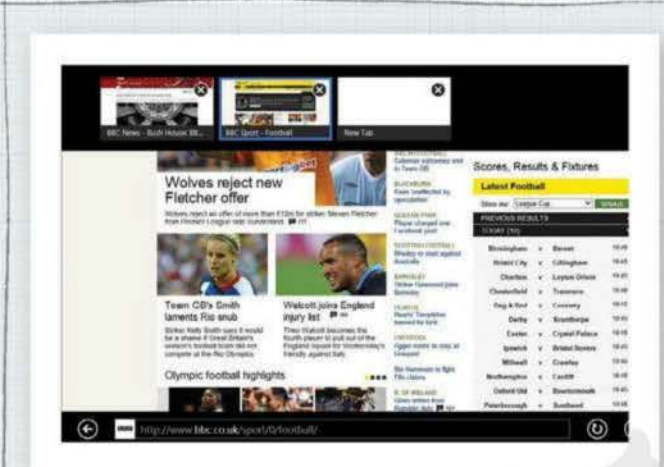
Your inbox upgrade

Windows 8 includes Mail – a simple but effective email client that delivers messages from a variety of sources to a single unified inbox. You can set up your email using various accounts, including Google and Microsoft (Hotmail or Outlook.com). If you have an Exchange account for work you can set that up too, provided your company has enabled external email access. The Mail app strips out all the extraneous email functions that you don't really need, helping you focus on your messages, folders and different accounts. You can read, reply and attach files with minimum fuss. Highlighted emails are displayed in full on the right. Emails from people you follow on social networks will display their Facebook or Twitter avatar – useful for sorting out emails from your friends!



Emails will display your contacts' Facebook or Twitter avatars

i Start typing
Want to find an app to launch in the Start screen? Just start typing its name – all possible matches will soon appear.



3 Add new apps

See what's in Store

Windows 8 brings you a completely new way to install software – the Windows Store. You can search the Store from the Charm bar to find the app you want. It features thousands of tools specially designed for Windows 8, ranging from big names like Sky News, Wikipedia and AccuWeather to small, independently developed but useful apps such as Tweetro for Twitter or Quick Note for, well, taking quick notes. The Spotlight feature shows you the best new Windows 8 apps and there are lists of the top free and top paid-for apps too. All apps carry a user rating and All Star apps are those that people have rated most highly. More apps are appearing all the time, so visit the Windows Store today.

4 A more beautiful web

It's faster too

Windows 8 includes a completely new web browser – Internet Explorer 10. It's been built to be fast and fluid, and works perfectly with Windows 8. There's a desktop version, but the browser works flawlessly within Windows 8 UI as well. It's brilliant for touchscreens, too. Swipe up to view your tabs, or down to view the address bar and Favorites. You can pin favourite websites to your Start screen. As with everything in Windows 8, you can use the Charm bar to search for what you need, change Internet Explorer settings, or share sites with friends – just swipe and tap. Explorer 10 also includes SmartScreen and Tracking Protection for greater control over your personal information.



5 Switch your apps

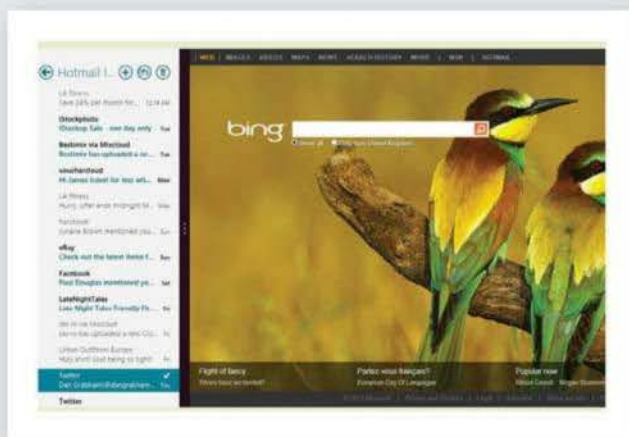
It's quick and easy

Windows 8 makes it simple to switch between apps. While the traditional keyboard shortcuts still work – [Alt] + [Tab] or [Windows] + [Tab] – touchscreens give you a whole new way of moving between programs. Just flick in from the left and you can rapidly move between open applications, or switch to the desktop view. Each app will appear as an image of the screen itself – just stop flicking to settle on the screen you want to see. If you don't have a touchscreen, simply place your pointer in the bottom left to see the Start screen icon and move your mouse straight up. Previews of all the open apps will appear and you can select the one you need. In the Desktop app, switching works just as before and you can move between open Desktop apps using the taskbar.

6 Snap windows and multi-task

Work in two apps at the same time

Unlike the iPad, Windows 8 enables you to snap windows side-by-side, so you can effortlessly work on two things at the same time. Just drag any app from the top and have it snap to the left or the right quarter of the screen, so you can browse the internet while keeping tabs on your inbox, or work on a Microsoft Word document while keeping up with all the latest news. What's more, it doesn't matter if you're using one of the sleek new Modern UI apps from the Start menu, or a classic application from the desktop from a previous version of Windows – Snap just works. It's designed to make working in multiple apps easier than ever.



Personal pin-ups

You can pin your friends and family to the Start screen, which means it's easier to stay in touch with those who matter.



7 Personalise your Live Tiles

Start by adding a colour scheme

The Start menu is made up of square or rectangular icons called tiles. Each one represents a different app on your system, but these aren't just icons – some are Live Tiles. This means the Mail icon can display your latest messages and you can see the next appointment in your Calendar, to name but two examples. You can move these around by clicking and holding on a tile, before dragging them to where you want them. Windows 8 is designed to be a colourful and beautiful experience, and it's easy to make it your own. To give the Start screen a colour scheme of your choosing, go to 'Settings', click or tap 'Personalization' and choose 'Start screen'.



8 Share and share alike

Bring family and friends together

Sharing is a big part of Windows 8 and being able to show your friends, family and colleagues things you've discovered with your PC is integral to your experience. All operating systems will let you browse hotels online, many have apps for finding reviews and deals, but only Windows 8 has a built-in sharing tool to let you send what you've found to your contacts and social networks. You can do this via the Charm bar, which is accessed from the right-hand side of the screen. Hit 'Sharing' and a number of options will appear. It's the same for any app in Windows, so there are no hidden options and no confusion, just a single way to share your finds with those who matter.

Right-click for options

If you're looking for more options from your apps just right-click. A context menu will appear enabling you to tweak settings.

9 Get pinning

Windows 8 is a pinboard for your life

Unlike other operating systems the Start screen isn't just for apps. You can add anything from your favourite websites, contacts from the People app and even books from the Kindle Store to the homepage, so you can have the things you love at your fingertips.

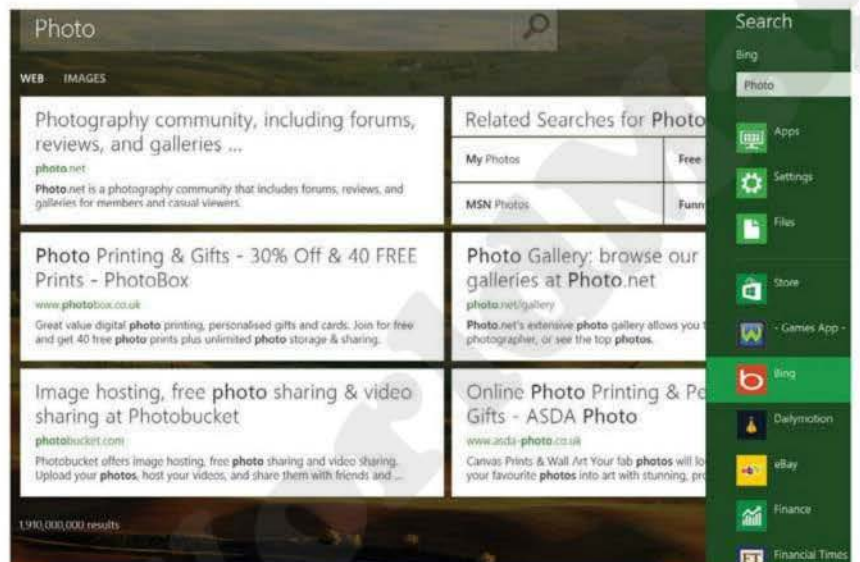


Your Start screen will really come to life with Live Tiles

10 Find anything

Advanced searching

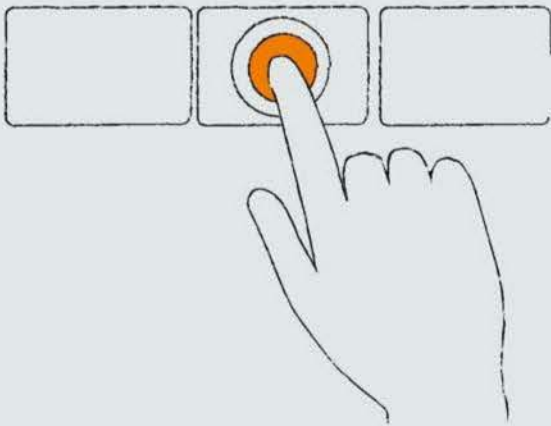
Windows 8 is built to enable you to find what you want from a single location and that's done via the Search charm. The Charm bar is accessed from the right-hand edge (see page 101 for more details) and enables you to search Windows and apps alike. Instead of searching your email, the internet, Facebook and Twitter separately, one search term rules them, all putting information at your fingertips. If you're using a Windows 8 laptop, then searching is even quicker. Just start typing anywhere and the Search Charm will fire into life immediately, letting you find whatever you need. It's a new way of working, but one that makes using your Windows computer so much easier – therefore next time you need to find that email or file, just search instead.



GESTURES EXPLAINED

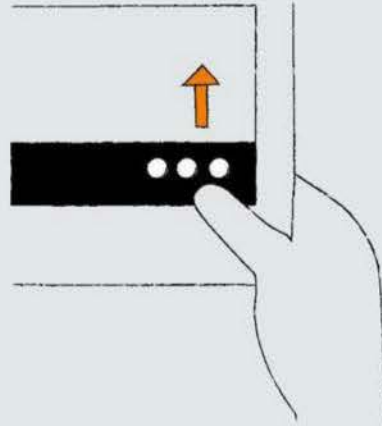
Enjoy getting hands-on with Windows 8

Select or perform an action



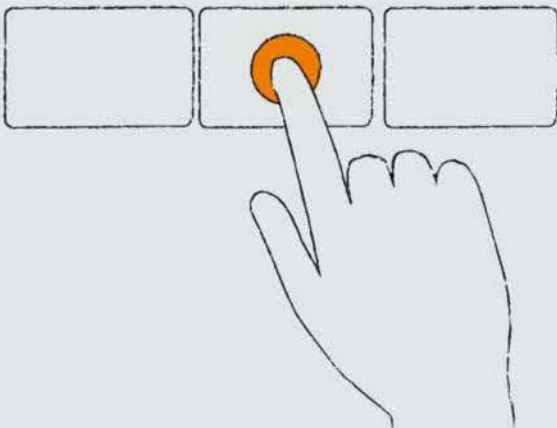
Tapping something causes an action, such as launching an app or following a link. Tap your apps to fire them into life.
Using a mouse? Click an item in the Start screen to perform an action such as opening an app.

App-specific commands



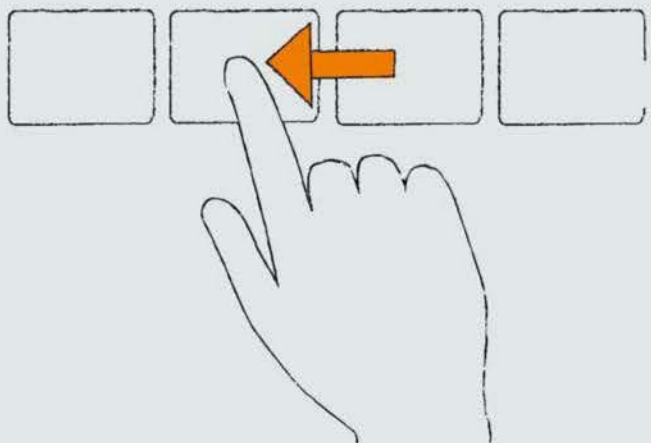
App commands are revealed by swiping from the bottom or top edge of the screen.
Using a mouse? Right-click anywhere to see commands, which will depend on the specific app.

Get more options



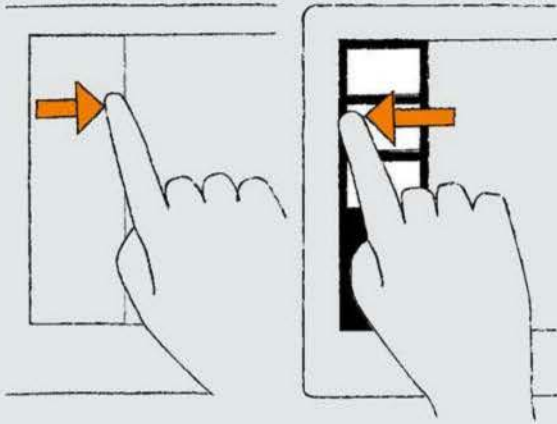
You can see details when you press and hold. In some cases, pressing and holding opens a menu with more options.
Using a mouse? Point to an item and hover the mouse for a couple of seconds to see more options.

Drag and move items



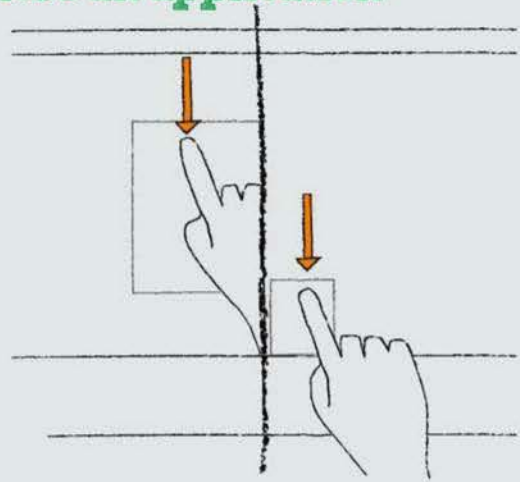
This is mostly used to pan or scroll through lists and pages, but you can use it for other interactions, too.
Using a mouse? Click, hold and drag to pan or scroll and you'll be able to move items, releasing the button to drop it.

Find recently used apps



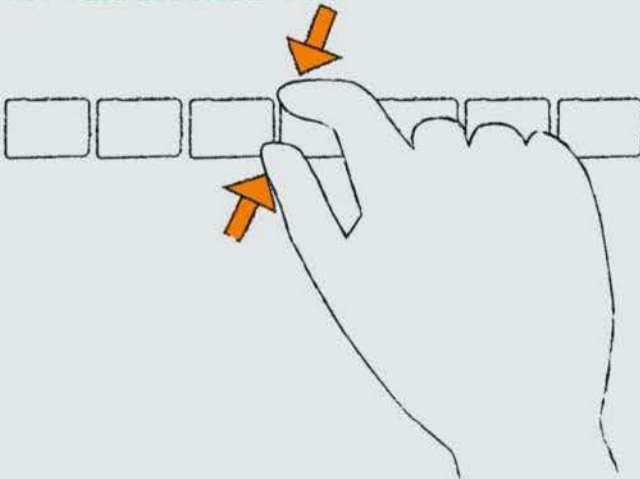
Swiping in and back out on the left brings up the most recently used apps and you can select an app from that list.
Using a mouse? Place the mouse in the top left and slide down the left side of the screen to see recently used apps.

Close an application



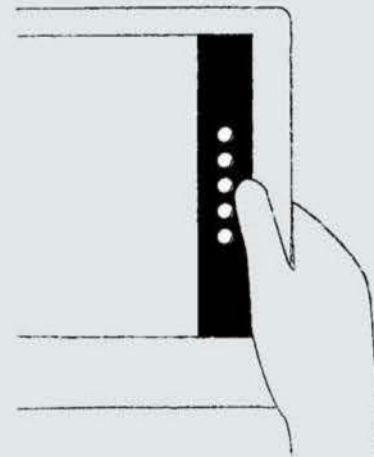
Unused apps don't affect your performance, but if you want to close one anyway, just drag the app to the bottom of the screen.
Using a mouse? Click the top of the app and drag it to the bottom of the screen.

Zoom in and out



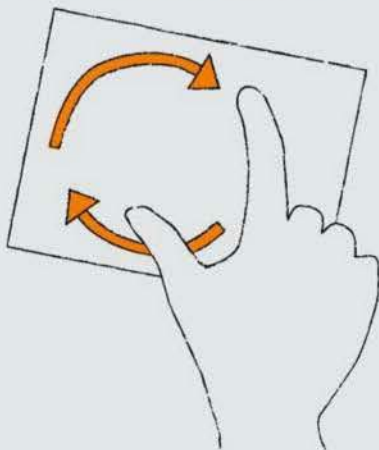
You can start zooming by pinching or stretching two fingers on the screen to enlarge or reduce the size.
Using a mouse? Hold down the [Ctrl] key while using the mouse wheel. Alternatively, click the minus symbol in the bottom right.

Settings commands and search



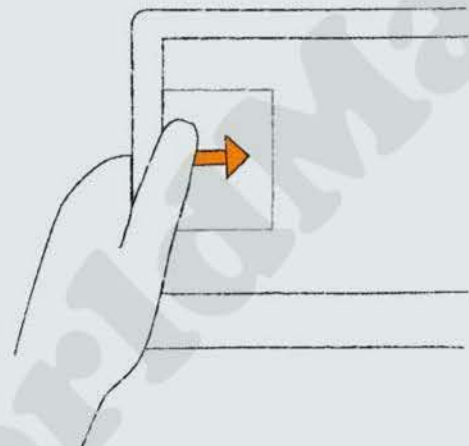
Swipe from the right side to reveal the Charms with system commands such as search, settings and sharing options.
Using a mouse? Place the mouse in the upper or lower right corner of the screen and move your mouse up the right edge.

Turn and pivot items



Hold two or more fingers on an object and rotate. You can turn the whole screen 90 degrees when you rotate your device.
Using a mouse? Support for rotating an object depends on the specific app.

Switch between apps



Swiping from the left reveals thumbnails of your open apps so you can switch to them quickly.
Using a mouse? Place the mouse pointer in the upper-left and click to cycle through apps.



STAY

ENTERTAINED

Movies, music & games at your fingertips

GAMES



Games galore

The new home of gaming in Windows 8 is the Xbox Live Games app, but you can also buy games in the Windows Store. It offers the best of everything, from the latest big-budget releases to simple timewasters, and works whether you're using a touch-based device or a keyboard and mouse.

All about Xbox

The Xbox Windows Games Marketplace and Xbox Games Marketplace are also included in the Xbox Live Games app. This means you can not only buy and download new games to play on your Windows 8 computer from here, you can also get games for your Xbox console.

Gamerscore

The Xbox Live Games app signs into your Xbox Live or Microsoft Account so you can keep track of your Gamerscore from your Windows 8 PC or tablet. What's more, you can boost your Gamerscore by playing on your PC – even with classics such as *Minesweeper* and *Mahjong*.

Use your avatar

As part of the Xbox Live integration, you can access your Xbox profile and Achievements list and can create yourself an avatar if you don't already have one. Game saves will no longer be limited to one device either and you can save games across the platforms via the internet too.

MUSIC



new releases



Import your tunes

Windows 8 can import all the music from your old computer. You're not restricted to music in your music library either – you can open a file from anywhere.

Buy music

The Music app includes a Marketplace where you can browse for and buy new songs. Music is downloaded directly to your library.

Stream it

You can also listen to music via the Xbox Music service, which enables you to access a world of new tunes on your Windows 8 device as well as Xbox and Windows Phone!

Other tools

Of course, the built-in app isn't the only way to access great music via your PC – you can also download and stream music from web-based services, such as Spotify.

VIDEO

movies marketplace



Rent and buy

With the Video app, you can rent or buy films and TV shows. Click or tap an image to see a synopsis, running time and more. Click back to see other options.

Store and view

All your own videos are displayed within the Video app. You can also open a video within the Video app even if it isn't part of your library. Just tap or click and select it.

Play on Xbox

Click the movie you want to watch and you'll see there's the option to 'Play on Xbox'. If you have an Xbox hooked up to your TV, you can send the video directly to it.

Video on other apps

Other video providers such as Dailymotion have already released apps for Windows 8, so you can keep up to date with the latest videos uploaded worldwide.

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SOCCER SKILLS
Shoot football like a pro **p8**

ask for pictures of the random things. So I've never, ever, delete a shot! **p7**
Aerial photographer **p78**

getting birds **p62**

LOOK, NO HANDS!
Which remote control or cable release should you buy for your Nikon? **p104**

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WINDOWS PHONE 8

Enjoy a new mobile experience



A new beginning

Windows Phone 8 has a flexible layout and support for the latest mobile technology. All Windows Phone 7 apps run on Windows Phone 8 handsets, and the new features mean enhanced games, even crisper audio and improved video playback. Windows Phone 8 uses Internet Explorer 10 to allow even faster web browsing, complete with phishing filter and SmartScreen – a service that makes it harder for malicious sites to trick you into giving away personal information.

Better hardware

The new Windows Phone introduces support for dual-core mobile phone processors, as well as an HD-quality screen. You can also hot-swap microSD cards to install apps and media, or save larger files onto. There's support for multitasking so, for example, you can leave turn-by-turn navigation running while you adjust your music. Microsoft's Wallet Hub is another addition. It's a mobile payment app that enables you to use digital coupons, loyalty cards and pay for goods all from a central location.

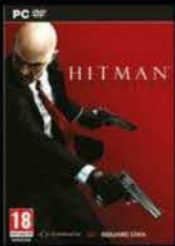
The new Start screen

Windows Phone 8 uses Live Tiles to give you up-to-date information at a glance. You can also resize the tiles and decide how to arrange them on your Start screen. There's a new small tile size and you can fit four of those in the old Windows Phone 7 tile size. The Start screen gives you even more live information because you can fit in so many more Live Tiles. You can prioritise the most important ones by giving them more space and give others just enough room to show their icon.

Your phone as you want

The layout is completely flexible – press and hold a tile to unpin it and drag it to a new position. Press the arrow that appears on the bottom of the tile to cycle through the small, medium and large sizes. You can still have two of the medium tiles side-by-side in Windows 7, but you can have much smaller tiles if you want to, resulting in a far more flexible layout. We reckon you'll want a mix of small and medium tiles, with a couple of the 'double-wide' large tiles for apps that show a lot of information.

VOTING HAS CLOSED but the GAMES KEEP ON COMING!



Hitman: Absolution
or Aliens: Colonial
Marines?



Call Of Duty: Black
Ops 2 or Assassin's
Creed 3?

Which game did you vote
for in the **hmv** One to
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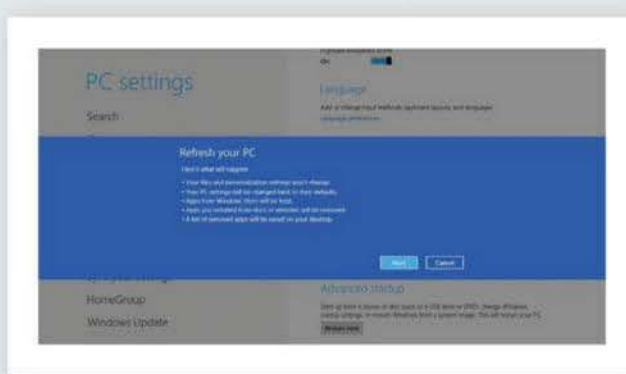
PROBLEM SOLVER

Poor PC performance is a thing of the past



Specific settings

To get to the Settings menu just click your user picture, rather than trawling through the Control Panel.



Refresh your PC

Give your PC a shop-fresh feel

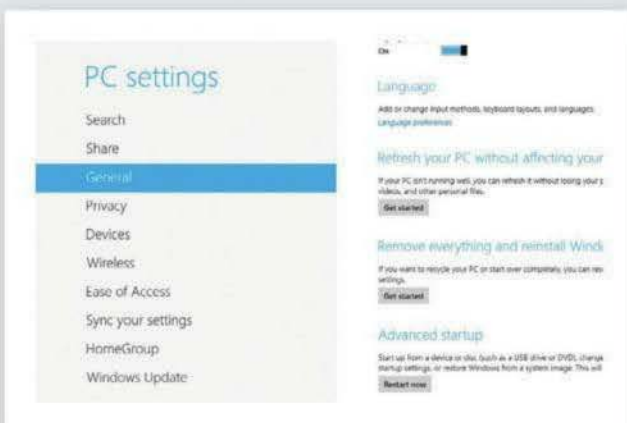
Unlike previous versions of Windows, Windows 8 makes it easy to wipe the slate clean and return your PC to the way it was when it was new (getting rid of all your data). Or, if you don't want to be so drastic, you can refresh your PC and simply restore the operating system to full working order without affecting your files and folders. These options are available within the PC settings app.



HomeGroup

Sharing made easy

Using HomeGroup you can seamlessly connect to other Windows 7 and Windows 8 computers on your network simply by tapping in a password. Choose to share whatever types of files you choose – Documents, Music, Pictures and Videos – as well as give other PCs on your network access to a printer.



Advanced Startup

Start up from a device or disc

Advanced Startup is for when you need to do a more advanced reinstall of Windows. This option will restart your PC so you can perform the installation. You can also change startup settings here.



Boost privacy

Choose your options

Windows 8 features a Privacy area within the PC Settings app. Here you can determine whether Windows 8 apps are allowed to access your location, as well as whether they can access other details such as your name and account picture. It's important that you keep on top of these details.



Auto updates

Check that your PC has all the latest settings by using Windows Update. It should work automatically, but some updates are optional.



8 ESSENTIAL FREE APPS

Pin these must-have apps today

OneNote MX

Take notes anywhere

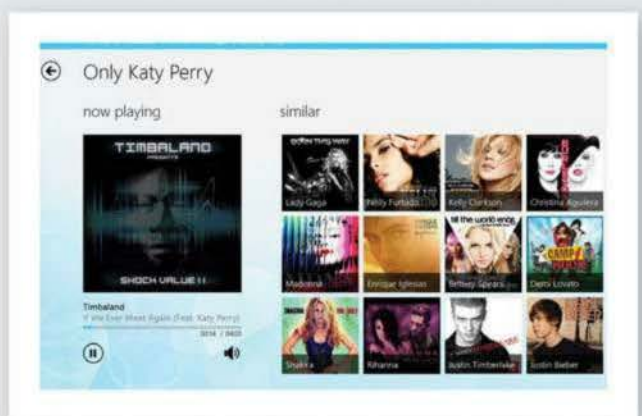
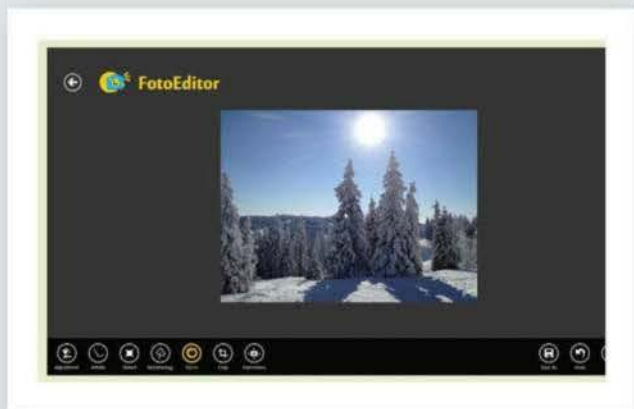
Everyone uses their Windows computer for surfing the internet and more often than not, that involves planning your holidays and travels, finding new recipes and any kind of research. OneNote MX is an app version of the popular office tool, which lets you create huge notebooks full of ideas and findings from the web. You can copy and paste web pages in, type notes and then share them between devices. OneNote MX isn't just limited to Windows PCs. It's available on tablets and smartphones too, so you can have access to that bespoke recipe book, or awesome travel journal wherever you are in the world. What's more, if your Windows tablet is compatible with a pen or stylus, as many are, you can write hand-drawn notes as if it was an old-fashioned pad.



FotoEditor

Edit and share your photos and memories

This nifty free app enables you to make quick edits to your photos so that they look their best when posting to social networking sites. You can add filters and crop out the bits you don't need before saving your image, ready to be shared and enjoyed.



Tuba.FM

Discover music you love in Windows 8

Music and entertainment is a huge part of Windows 8, so this app for discovering new tunes you'll love is essential. Tuba.FM starts you off with an artist you like, then takes you on a journey of discovery through similar artists.



Get pinning

Any app can be pinned to the Start screen so it can be launched fast. Just drag it from the apps list to anywhere on the Start screen.



iCookbook

Mouth-watering photography

This recipe app by Bewise is the best we've yet seen for the Modern-UI style. Along with over 200,000 recipes, we're also impressed by its food photography. In fact, we're a bit too impressed with it, as it keeps making us rather hungry. Time has been taken to make sure it's useful for following recipes and everything is presented in a nice large font.

The top stories greet you as you enter the app



National Rail

Never miss your train home again

This smart app not only lets you find information about your train home, but also enables you to pin your local station to the Windows 8 Start screen. It puts an end to laborious searches on the internet, instead giving you access to the information you need straight from your Windows 8 screen.



Sky News

Stylish picture-led layouts

One of the finest news apps available for the Windows 8 interface, Sky News has gone for a picture-led layout. The top stories greet you as you enter the app and you can scroll right to see available videos and categories. UK News, World News, Business, Politics, Showbiz and Sport are the main ones, though there's another called Strange for those quirky stories you might have missed. Clicking into a story shows you the text in a nice readable font that works well whether you have a touchscreen device or are just reading on a desktop PC. You can tap or click the right or left of the screen to switch between stories, so if you're using a tablet you can use your thumbs to tap through all the stories in the app. It's a really nice implementation for Windows 8.



Kindle

Read the latest titles

You'll already know Amazon's Kindle devices well, but did you know that the books that you've downloaded can be made available to read on other devices? This Windows 8 app will sync your Kindle books and you can start reading again from where you left off and enjoy any custom reading settings you've set up across devices.



Daily Motion

One-stop-shop for amazing entertainment

If you think of YouTube and strip out the annoying homemade videos made by one of the internet's most vile communities, you have Daily Motion. It's a world of great video entertainment and this app deserves to take pride of place on your Start screen.

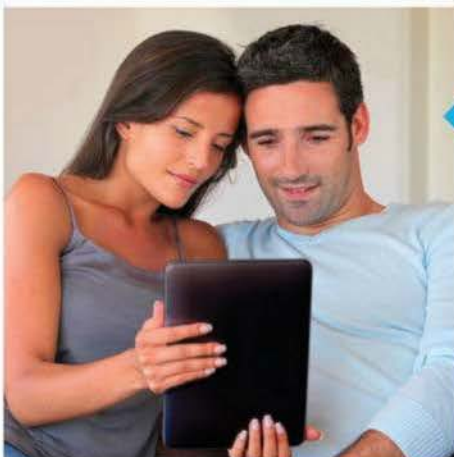


Switch apps fast

Cycle through apps by clicking in the top left or sliding your finger from the left edge on touchscreen devices. [Alt] + [Tab] will also cycle through apps.

Next month

ULTIMATE GUIDE
Get the most from Windows 8



SIT BACK AND ENJOY
Best devices and apps for entertainment

Nineball ★★★★★ Social Free	Parking Mania ★★★★★ Games Free
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Popcorn Time ★★★★★ Entertainment Free	System Essentials ★★★★★ Tools £1.39
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ART/PRODUCTION

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CONTRIBUTORS

Editorial Amy Davies, Dan Grabham, Paul Lamkin, Gary Marshall, Jeff Parsons, Libby Plummer, Henry Winchester
Photography Dave Caudrey, Simon Lees, Philip SOWELS
James Looker, Rob Monk, Gavin Roberts, 360spin.co.uk
Thinkstock.com, iStockphoto.com
Illustration Monkeychops.com, Patrick Welham
Production Rhian Drinkwater, Damian Hall

SENIOR MANAGEMENT

Publisher Ian Robson
Group publishing director Nial Ferguson
Group art director Steve Gotobed
Creative director Bob Abbott
Editorial director Jim Douglas

ADVERTISING

Advertising director james.ranson@futurenet.com
Advertising sales manager ashley.snell@futurenet.com
Senior advertising manager charlie.said@futurenet.com
Senior sales executive michael.carrington@futurenet.com
Senior sales executive sally.mclachlan@futurenet.com
Account manager tamzyn.young@futurenet.com

CIRCULATION AND MARKETING

Marketing manager ben.tatlow@futurenet.com
Trade marketing manager colin.hornby@futurenet.com

PRINT PRODUCTION

Production controller roberta.lealand@futurenet.com
Logistics manager mark.constance@futurenet.com
Ad production coordinator nola.cokely@futurenet.com

INTERNATIONAL LICENSING

Licensing & syndication director regina.erak@futurenet.com

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