



**CONTROL YOUR PHONE & TABLET WITH YOUR VOICE**

Send emails, open apps and more **p38**

Computer

**active**

Quic, turn to page 49

**CREATE  
YOUR  
OWN...**

Learn something new in every issue

ISSUE 544 | 4 - 15 JANUARY 2019

**DON'T GET**

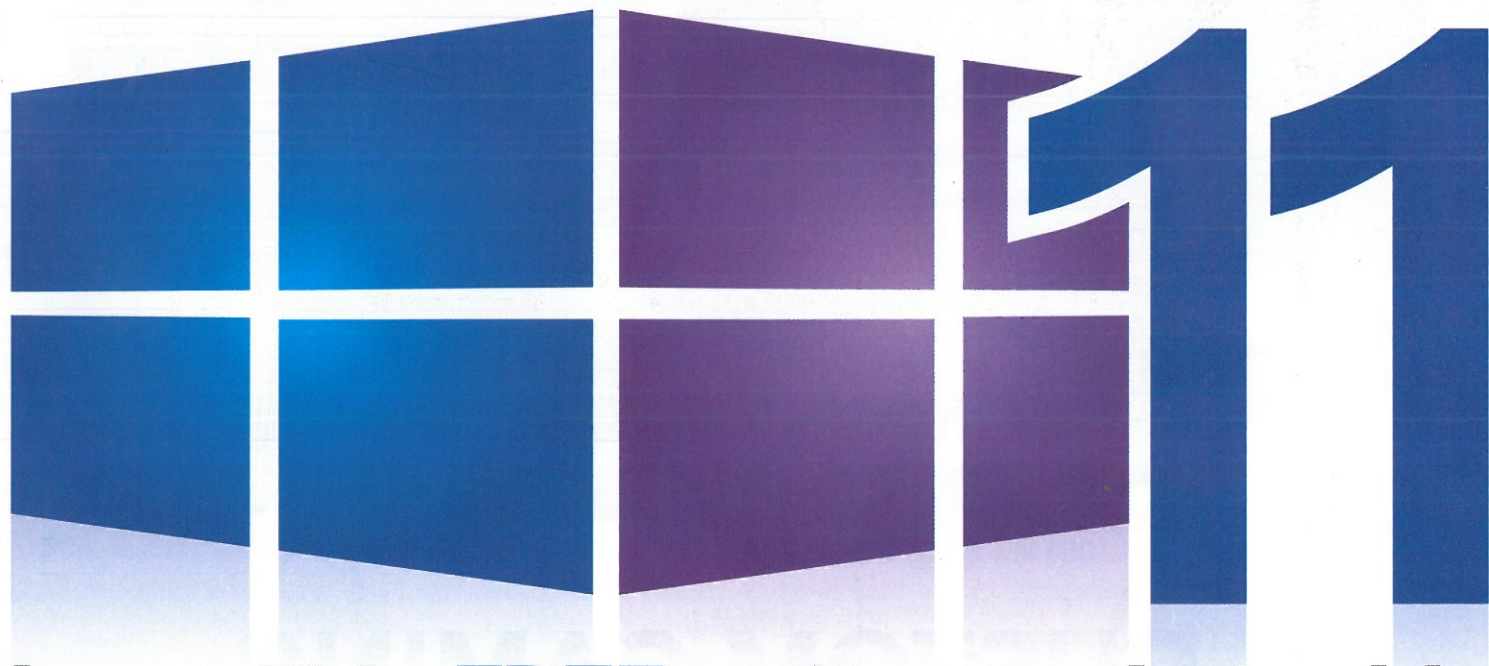
**HACKED**

in **2019**

Block the **new threats**  
you don't yet know  
how to spot **p62**



# Windows



Incredible **FREE** software that adds  
tools Microsoft never will **p50**

£2.20



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9 771461 621967



Word



Excel



PowerPoint

**ADD BROWSER-LIKE TABS  
TO YOUR OFFICE TOOLS** **p40**



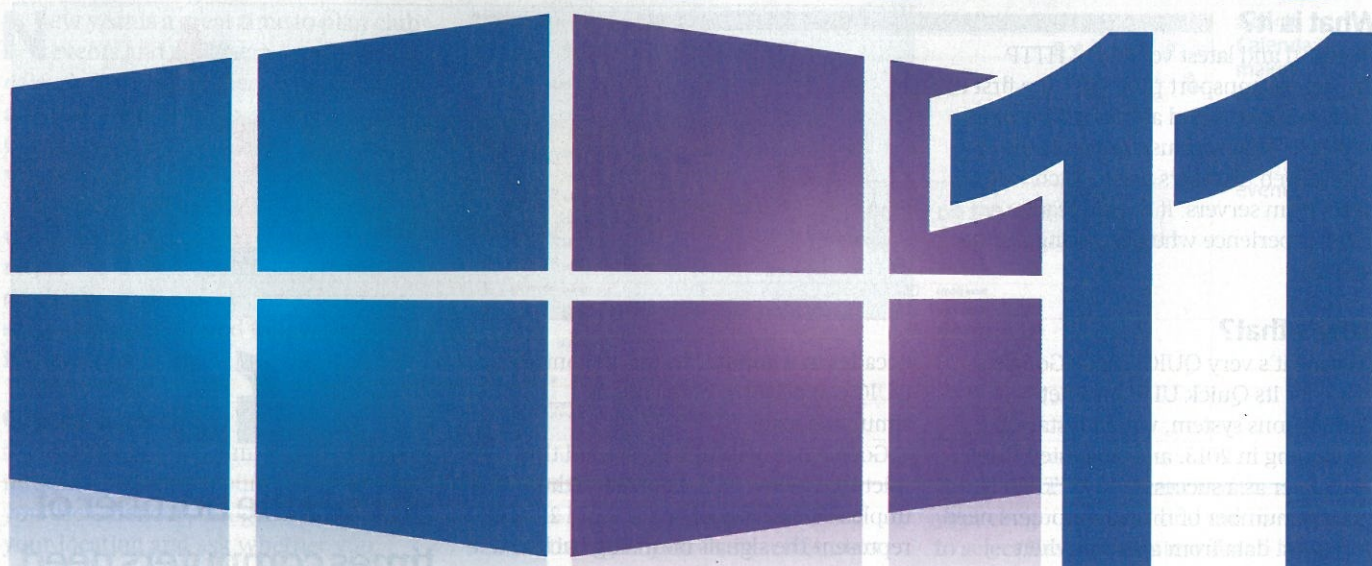
**BLOCK ALL  
NUISANCE CALLS**

Set up alternative numbers  
just for cold calls **page 35**



CREATE  
YOUR  
OWN...

# Windows



Microsoft says Windows 10 will be the final version of the operating system, topped up by twice-yearly updates. That means it's down to you to provide the widespread improvements it needs. Will Stapley reveals the best software for adding tools that Microsoft won't

**T**he fluctuating popularity of Windows since the turn of the 21st century reveals a worrying trend for Microsoft. Windows XP (launched in 2001) was exceptionally well received, while Vista (2007) was panned for being a resource hog. Windows 7 (2009) then arrived and is still widely considered to be Microsoft's finest

operating system, but the radical design change of Windows 8 (2012) was the stuff of nightmares. So while Windows 10 (2015) has restored some faith, all signs are that the next major release will be disappointing.

Perhaps that's why shortly before the launch of Windows 10, Microsoft said there won't be a Windows 11. Back then, Jerry Nixon, a Microsoft development executive, said "Windows 10 is the last version of Windows". Microsoft confirmed this a few days later, saying: "Windows will be delivered as a service bringing new innovations and updates in an ongoing manner". While this ensures a constant stream of updates (along with a few bugs), it also means the big changes previously seen with a new Windows release are a thing of the past.

While this ensures you don't have to learn how to use a significantly different operating system every few years, you could also be waiting a long time for Microsoft to introduce features you always wanted or that address annoying limitations. In other words, it's up to you to create your *own* Windows 11.

In this feature, we'll show you the best non-Microsoft software for creating your new version of Windows. You'll find recommendations to improve file management, upgrade core system tools and enhance your desktop. We'll also explain how to get planned new features of Windows *today*. Almost all are free and, where appropriate, we've listed alternatives that are also worth considering. So take a look through our suggestions and start creating your own Windows 11.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Search faster and deeper on your PC
- Tidy up your right-click menu options
- Group a range of programs in a single window
- Switch between running programs more easily



## FILE MANAGEMENT

### FIND YOUR FILES FASTER



#### RECOMMENDED TOOL Everything

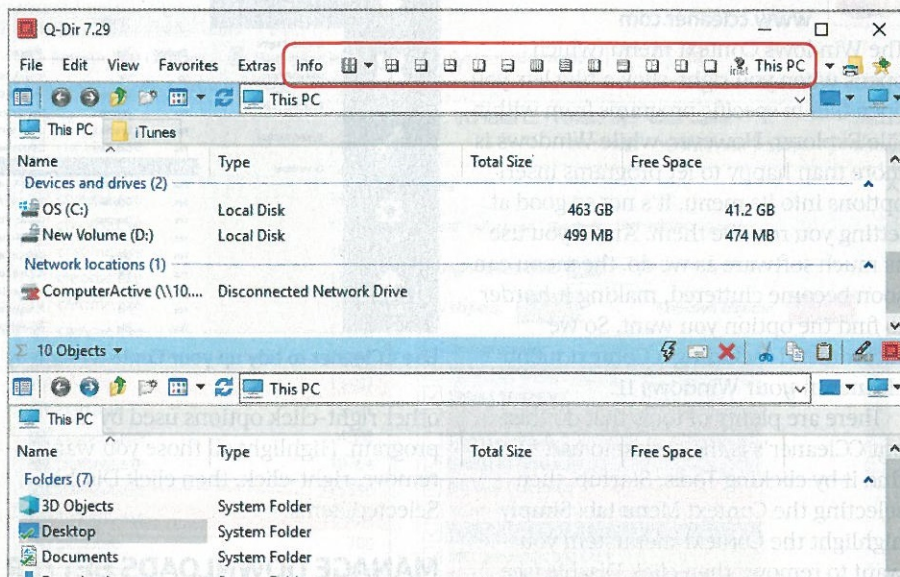
[www.voidtools.com/downloads](http://www.voidtools.com/downloads)

We're spoilt when it comes to searching online. Google (and other search engines) use advanced algorithms to provide accurate results from often less-than-accurate search phrases - all in a fraction of a second. In contrast, searching in Windows can be slow, unreliable and frustrating, even if you type the precise name of the program or file you're looking for.

Microsoft is planning an overhaul of its search tool in Windows later this year, but why wait when you can simply download the lightning-fast Everything instead? On our PC, it indexed *all* our files in seconds. And it's even quicker at running searches - start typing your term and the results appear instantaneously. You can even refine your search results by selecting the file type from the Search menu.

For more detailed searches, choose Advanced Search, which lets you track down specific phrases in file names, exclude certain words, match lower- and upper-case letters (see screenshot below), and more. You can also search the contents of files (such as a word or phrase within a Word document) by ticking the 'A word or phrase in this file' box. However, because file contents aren't indexed, this takes longer than searching for file names.

For more control over your searches, Everything lets you use a wide selection of criteria (such as restricting the search to compressed or hidden files) - see the full list at [www.snipca.com/30030](http://www.snipca.com/30030).



If Q-Dir's four windows are too much for you, try switching to a two-window display



#### ALTERNATIVE Lookeen Free

<https://free.lookeen.com>

Lookeen Free has better advanced tools. Unlike Everything, it lets you index the contents of files, so is faster when searching for words or phrases in documents. On the downside, simple file-name searches aren't as fast. Additionally, some features, such as searching within Outlook emails, require an upgrade to the Standard Edition, which is expensive at £50.

### REPLACE FILE EXPLORER



#### RECOMMENDED TOOL Q-Dir

[www.snipca.com/30031](http://www.snipca.com/30031)

Windows' File Explorer tool hasn't

changed much over the years. Microsoft has been trialling a version that works on touchscreens (see box on page 52), but there's no sign of the standard tool being revamped anytime soon.

You can replace it with expensive paid-for options, but we suggest you try the brilliant and free Q-Dir. You might feel like you're seeing quadruple when you first run it, but by providing multiple panes in a single window it makes moving files between folders quick and easy. If you find four panes a little overwhelming, you can reduce this number by clicking the layout buttons along the top of the screen (see screenshot above).

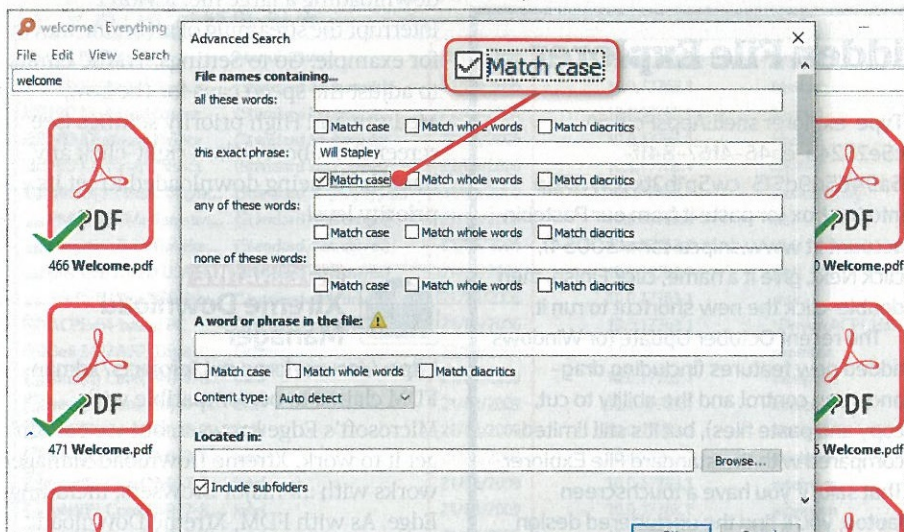
Q-Dir has another advantage over File Explorer - tabs. Hold down Ctrl while opening a folder and it'll appear in its own tab, letting you quickly switch between locations. Each window has its own set of tabs, giving you even more control.



#### ALTERNATIVE QuickLook

[www.snipca.com/30032](http://www.snipca.com/30032)

If you plan to stick with Windows' File Explorer, you can at the very least give it something of a boost with QuickLook. This small tool lets you quickly preview files by pressing the Space key. It can preview everything from PDFs and documents to videos, images and even the contents of ZIP files. QuickLook only works in File Explorer, though, so you can't use it along with tools such as Q-Dir.



Everything's advanced search lets you narrow results by, for example, matching the letter case (upper or lower) with your search term



## TIDY YOUR RIGHT-CLICK MENU



**RECOMMENDED TOOL**  
**CCleaner**  
[www.ccleaner.com](http://www.ccleaner.com)

The Windows Context menu (which opens when you right-click a file) lets you open files in specific programs from within File Explorer. However, while Windows is more than happy to let programs insert options into its menu, it's not so good at letting you remove them. And if you use as much software as we do, the menu can soon become cluttered, making it harder to find the option you want. So we recommend including a Context menu cleaner in your Windows 11.

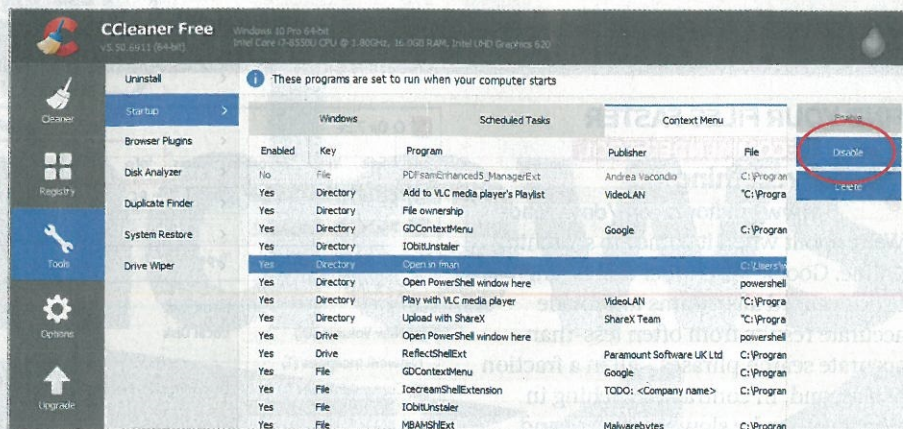
There are plenty of tools that do this, but CCleaner's is the easiest to use. You'll find it by clicking Tools, Startup, then selecting the Context Menu tab. Simply highlight the Context menu item you want to remove, then click Disable (see screenshot above right). Alternatively, if you're sure you'll never want a particular option, click Delete.



**ALTERNATIVE**  
**ShellMenuView**  
[www.snipca.com/30033](http://www.snipca.com/30033)

CCleaner's Context menu tool is easy to use, but if you want more control (for example, the ability to enable or disable Content menu entries by file type), try ShellMenuView. As with many of NirSoft's tools, it has plenty of advanced options, but the basic tasks are easy. That said, we recommend backing up the Windows registry before making any changes.

To remove an item from your Context menu, search for it (by pressing Ctrl+F), then sort the list by clicking the Description column, which shows all



Use CCleaner to tidy up your Context menu by disabling items you no longer need

other right-click options used by that program. Highlight all those you want to remove, right-click, then click Disable Selected Items.

## MANAGE DOWNLOADS BETTER



**RECOMMENDED TOOL**  
**Free Download Manager**  
[www.snipca.com/30034](http://www.snipca.com/30034)

Take a look at your Downloads folder (press Windows+E, then select Downloads in the 'Quick access' list on the left). It will probably be crammed with files downloaded from the web - programs, images, videos and more. By using a download manager, you can organise your downloads more effectively, exercise more control over them, preview files as they download, and more.

Free Download Manager (FDM) works with Chrome, Internet Explorer (IE) and Firefox. Go to Settings, Browser Integration and tick the browsers you use. Chrome and Firefox require an extension (follow the links in Settings to install these), whereas IE works without one.

Traffic Limits			
	Low	Medium	High
Download speed	256 KB/s	2048 KB/s	Unlimited
Upload speed	32 KB/s	2048 KB/s	Unlimited
Maximum number of connections	128 KB/s	50	200
Maximum number of simultaneous downloads	512 KB/s	1024 KB/s	12
Advanced	1536 KB/s	2048 KB/s	4096 KB/s
Notifications	Unlimited		

Set Low, Medium and High speeds to prevent your downloads interrupting other online activities

To help you organise your downloads, FDM can save certain file types in specific folders. You can also preview video and audio files as they're downloading, saving you from downloading a film, only to realise it's the wrong one when the download finally finishes.

FDM claims to speed up your downloads, but we didn't see much difference (it was only slightly quicker at downloading the 269MB LibreOffice suite at 1 minute 35 seconds, compared to 1min 38sec before we installed FDM).

More useful is its ability to restrict download speeds - so when you're downloading a large file, it won't interrupt the streaming of an online movie, for example. Go to Settings, Traffic Limits to adjust the speed caps for the Low, Medium and High priority settings (see screenshot above), then right-click any item that's being downloaded to set its priority level.



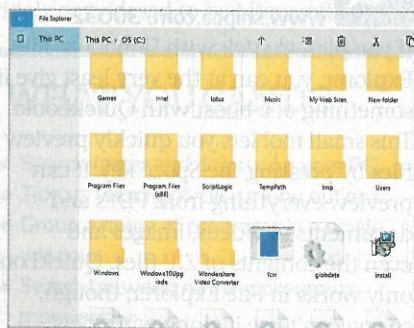
**ALTERNATIVE**  
**Xtreme Download Manager**

<https://sourceforge.net/projects/xdman>

FDM claims to be compatible with Microsoft's Edge browser, but we couldn't get it to work. Xtreme Download Manager works with all major browsers, including Edge. As with FDM, Xtreme Download Manager includes tools to speed up, preview and organise your downloads.

## Access Windows 10's hidden File Explorer

Windows 10 has a hidden File Explorer that's designed for touchscreen laptops. To enable it, right-click an empty area on your desktop, select New then Shortcut.



Type `explorer shell:AppsFolder\c5e2524a-ea46-4f67-841f-6a9465d9d515_cw5n1h2txyewy!App` into the box (or paste it from our Pastebin account at [www.snipca.com/30054](http://www.snipca.com/30054)), click Next, give it a name, click Finish, then double-click the new shortcut to run it.

The recent October Update for Windows added new features (including drag-and-drop control and the ability to cut, copy and paste files), but it's still limited compared with the standard File Explorer. That said, if you have a touchscreen laptop, you'll find the uncluttered design and larger buttons easier to use.



## CORE WINDOWS TOOLS

### GET A BETTER VIEW OF YOUR HARDWARE



#### RECOMMENDED TOOL DevManView (free)

[www.snipca.com/30036](http://www.snipca.com/30036)

A Windows veteran, Device Manager provides an overview of all hardware connected to your computer. However, it hasn't had a proper update in years, which is probably why it's so fiddly to use, with its tree structure hiding devices in category lists, meaning users have to open each category just to see what lies within.

DevManView is a free alternative from NirSoft that gives you a far clearer picture of your PC's components. Ditching the tree structure, it lists all devices in a flat table, which means you can see *everything* without having to open and close individual categories.

Additionally, you can sort the table by, for example, Manufacturer (making it easier to find specific devices) and Driver Date (handy for quickly identifying any devices that are using an older driver - see screenshot below).

Right-click any device to disable (or enable) it or open its associated entry in the registry. You can also highlight multiple devices, letting you disable them in one go. Alternatively, if you want to record details of specific devices, highlight them and press Ctrl+S to save their properties to a text file. And if you spot a device that you're not sure about, right-click it and select Google Search.

Device Name	Manufacturer	Driver Date	Driver Version	Service
HID Keyboard Device	(Standard keyboards)	21/06/2006	10.0.17763.1	kbdhid
HID Keyboard Device	(Standard keyboards)	21/06/2006	10.0.17763.1	kbdhid
HID Keyboard Device	(Standard keyboards)	21/06/2006	10.0.17763.1	kbdhid
HID Keyboard Device	(Standard keyboards)	21/06/2006	10.0.17763.1	kbdhid
Microsoft Basic Displa...	(Standard display types)	21/06/2006	10.0.17763.1	BasicDisplay
PM981 NVMe Samsun...	(Standard disk drives)	21/06/2006	10.0.17763.1	disk
Kingston DataTraveler...	(Standard disk drives)	21/06/2006	10.0.17763.1	disk
pnny USB 2.0 FD USB D...	(Standard disk drives)	21/06/2006	10.0.17763.1	disk
SanDisk Ultra USB Dev...	(Standard disk drives)	21/06/2006	10.0.17763.1	disk
ACPI x64-based PC	(Standard computers)	21/06/2006	10.0.17763.1	\Driver\ACPI_HAL
Dell 2407WFP (Digital)	Dell Inc.	22/08/2006	1.0.0.0	monitor
Intel(R) Core(TM) i7-8...	Intel	21/04/2009	10.0.17763.1	intelpm
Intel(R) Core(TM) i7-8...	Intel	21/04/2009	10.0.17763.1	intelpm
Intel(R) Core(TM) i7-8...	Intel	21/04/2009	10.0.17763.1	intelpm
Intel(R) Core(TM) i7-8...	Intel	21/04/2009	10.0.17763.1	intelpm
Intel(R) Core(TM) i7-8...	Intel	21/04/2009	10.0.17763.1	intelpm
Intel(R) Core(TM) i7-8...	Intel	21/04/2009	10.0.17763.1	intelpm
Intel(R) Core(TM) i7-8...	Intel	21/04/2009	10.0.17763.1	intelpm

Sort DevManView by Driver Date to see which devices are running old drivers

Process Hacker colour-codes tasks, letting you see which have admin privileges (orange)

### MANAGE TASKS BETTER



#### RECOMMENDED TOOL Process Hacker

[www.snipca.com/30037](http://www.snipca.com/30037)

If your computer is dragging its feet, what's your first response? We'd normally launch Windows Task Manager (by pressing Ctrl+Shift+Escape) and check which programs are hogging its resources. Task Manager, however, remains very basic so if you want more comprehensive features we recommend

Process Hacker.

Its overall design is similar to Task Manager's, but you'll see that processes are colour coded according to the category they belong to. For example, any in orange are running with administrator privileges, meaning they can change system settings. You can find out what each colour indicates by clicking Options, then the Highlighting tab (see screenshot above).

Process Hacker also offers a detailed performance graph, accessed by clicking the 'System information' button at the top. This shows current usage levels for your CPU (processor), Memory, I/O (network) and GPU (graphics processor). Hover your cursor over any point in the graph to see which processes are eating up most resources at that moment in time.



#### ALTERNATIVE Task Manager Deluxe

[www.snipca.com/30038](http://www.snipca.com/30038)

Featured in Issue 543's Best Free Software (page 18), Task Manager Deluxe (TMX) is similar to Process Hacker, but adds the option to check all running processes against VirusTotal's databases, which list any that are potentially dangerous. On the downside, the wealth of information it provides makes for a cluttered design, and it doesn't feature the handy colour coding of Process Hacker.



## TEACH YOUR MOUSE NEW TRICKS



### RECOMMENDED TOOL

#### X-Mouse Button Control

[www.snipca.com/30039](http://www.snipca.com/30039)

Have you got a mouse with a scroll wheel that also functions as a button, but get annoyed Windows doesn't let you assign a specific command to it? Then you should make X-Mouse Button Control part of your Windows 11 upgrade. Unlike the mouse controls in the Windows 10 Settings app (which only let you switch left and right buttons, and control scrolling), X-Mouse lets you tweak *all* your mouse settings.

Our favourite tweak is to set the middle mouse button to switch between tasks. Because we now use Alt-Tab Terminator instead of the standard Windows task switcher (see page 57), it displays this whenever we press the scroll wheel.

To do the same, open X-Mouse Button Control, click the box next to Middle Button and select Simulated Keys, then type `{LWIN}{TAB}` into the 'Enter the custom keys' box (see screenshot above right), and click OK. You can assign just about any command to each mouse button - a full list is displayed in the bottom half of the window.

You can also save profiles, letting you quickly switch mouse controls depending on what you're doing on your PC.

## PROTECT YOUR PRIVACY

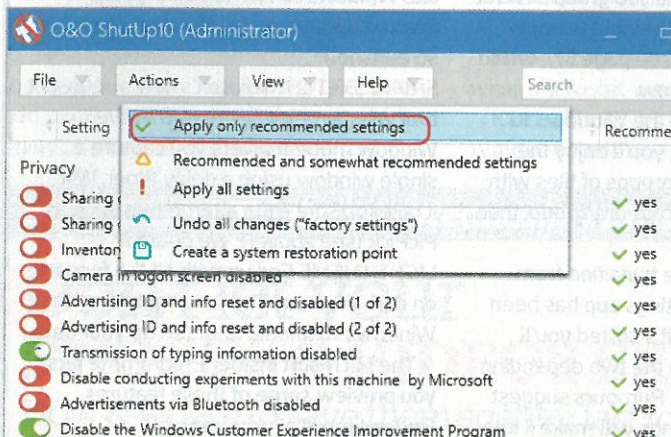


### RECOMMENDED TOOL

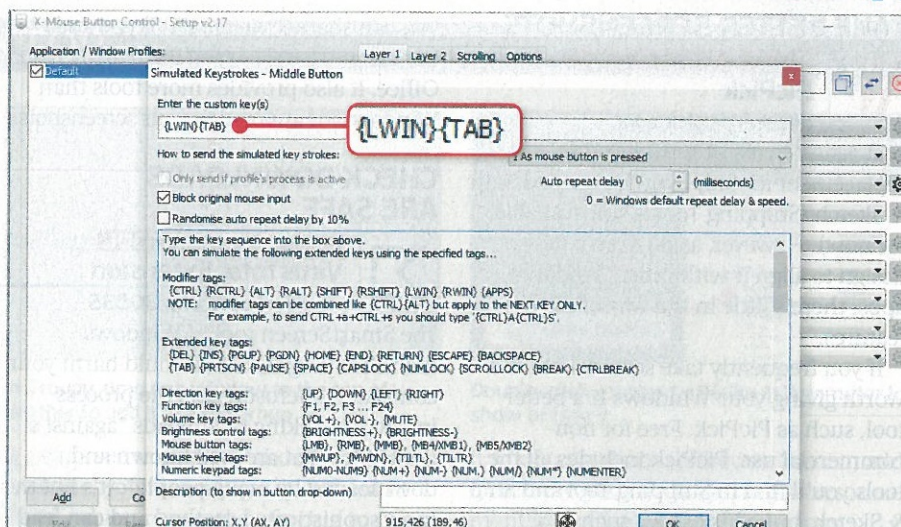
#### O&O ShutUp10

[www.snipca.com/30040](http://www.snipca.com/30040)

Windows 10 includes more privacy controls than any previous version, but that's because - by default - it shares a lot of your personal data. You can work your way through the privacy controls in the Settings app (open Settings, then



Enhance your Windows privacy with a single click by choosing 'Apply only recommended settings' in O&O ShutUp10



### Assign specific tasks to your mouse buttons with X-Mouse Button Control

Privacy), but it can be incredibly time consuming.

If privacy is important to you, adding ShutUp10 to Windows is a must. This small program lists all the ways which Windows can compromise your privacy, then lets you put a stop to it. Changing some settings can affect the security of Windows (such as the options to disable updates), but these are clearly marked with a red exclamation mark.

To apply all recommended settings (marked with a green tick) in one go, click Actions, then select 'Apply only recommended settings' (see screenshot below left).

## MAKE MORE OF YOUR CLIPBOARD



### RECOMMENDED TOOL

#### Ditto

[www.snipca.com/30041](http://www.snipca.com/30041)

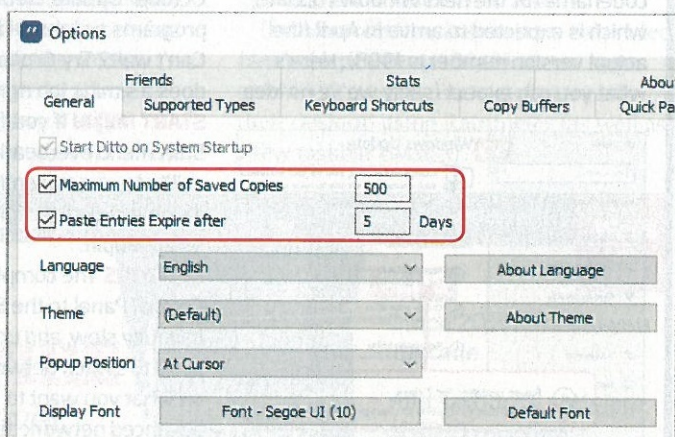
How often do you use the cut, copy and paste tools in Windows? Probably every day. So it's surprising Microsoft has taken so long to improve this core component. It was only in last year's October Update

that it received a new Clipboard History option (Windows+V) - though you need to first enable this in Settings, System, Clipboard.

There is, however, a better alternative: Ditto. Similar to Clipboard History, Ditto stores everything you cut and copy, but it also lets you search your clipboard entries, which makes finding specific clips a breeze. The default keyboard shortcut to open your Ditto clipboard is Ctrl+`, but you can change this in the program's settings.

To do this, click the Ditto icon in your system tray on the taskbar (white quote marks on a purple background), go to the Options tab, then enter any key combination in the Activate Ditto box.

Ditto also gives you control over how many items are saved. By default, it stores the previous 500 clips, but you can change this by clicking the General tab in Settings, then changing the number in the 'Maximum Number of Saved Copies' box. Below this, you can choose to have items deleted after a specific number of days (see screenshot below).



Set a limit on the number of clipboard items Ditto stores, and when they should be deleted



## TAKE BETTER SCREENSHOTS



**RECOMMENDED TOOL**

**PicPick**

<https://picpick.app>

Last year, Microsoft introduced a replacement for Snipping Tool, called Snip & Sketch (Snipping Tool is still available, for now). However, aside from a new design to align it with other Windows apps, there's little in the way of new features.

If you frequently take screenshots, it's worth giving your Windows 11 a better tool, such as PicPick. Free for non-commercial use, PicPick includes all the tools you'll find in Snipping Tool and Snip & Sketch, but adds extras, such as a Scrolling Window tool that lets you grab an entire web page (see screenshot below). Once you've taken a screenshot,

you can share it via email, Skype and Facebook, as well as send them to Microsoft Office. It also provides more tools than Windows for annotating your screenshots.

## CHECK DOWNLOADS ARE SAFE

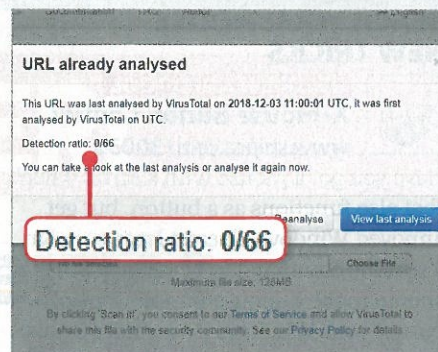


**RECOMMENDED TOOL**

**VirusTotal Extension**

[www.snipca.com/30035](http://www.snipca.com/30035)

The SmartScreen tool in Windows identifies programs that could harm your computer. Microsoft says the process involves checking downloads "against a list of files that are well known and downloaded by many people". It's not the most sophisticated method and can lead to perfectly safe programs being flagged as dangerous (known as false positives), meaning many people end up ignoring



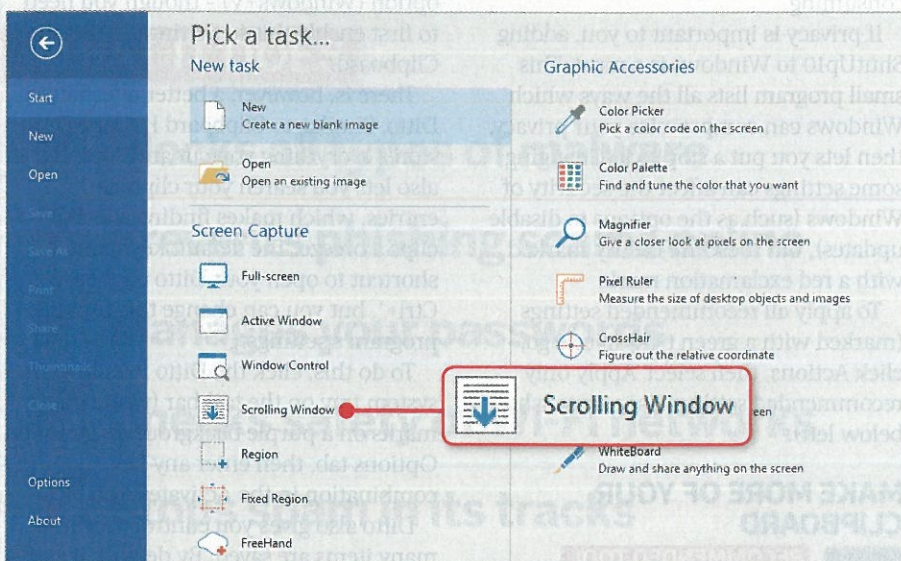
The VirusTotal extension tells you how many antivirus services has flagged a link as dangerous - none of 66 in this example

SmartScreen warnings.

To protect yourself from unsafe downloads, give your Windows 11 an extra layer of security with the VirusTotal browser extension (available for Chrome, Firefox and Internet Explorer). VirusTotal checks programs against the virus databases of 70 antivirus programs, including Kaspersky, McAfee and Symantec.

To check a download, right-click the link, then select 'Check with VirusTotal'. If the link has recently been checked, you'll see a 'URL already analysed box' along with a detection ratio, which indicates how many antivirus programs have flagged it as dangerous (see screenshot above). If the link hasn't been scanned recently, a new scan will run, which usually takes less than a minute.

If you use Edge, or another unsupported browser, you can still run scans on files, but you'll need to paste the download link into the VirusTotal website at [www.virustotal.com](http://www.virustotal.com).



With its Scrolling Window tool, PicPick lets you take a screenshot of a full-length web page

## Watch out! Windows 19H1 is coming...

No, it's not a new strain of bird flu - 19H1 (meaning the first half of 2019) is the codename for the next Windows update, which is expected to arrive in April (the actual version number is 1903). Here's what you can expect (sadly we've no idea

what bugs it might also bring).

**SETS** Initially intended for launch in 2018's October Update, Sets lets you group several programs as tabs within a single window. Can't wait? Try Groupy (see page 57), which does a similar job right now.

**START MENU** If you find the Windows 10 Start menu overbearing, you'll enjoy the ability to remove entire groups of tiles with a single click. Just right-click any group, then select Unpin.

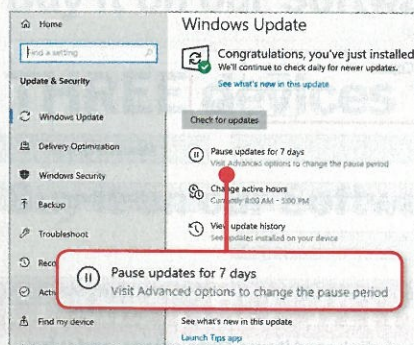
**SETTINGS** The complete transition from Control Panel to the Settings app has been painfully slow, and until it's sorted you'll need to switch between the two depending on what you want to do. Rumours suggest advanced network settings will make it into the Settings app in this update.

**WINDOWS UPDATES** After the October Update fiasco, this forthcoming update lets Windows 10 Home users 'pause' Feature updates by up to 7 days (see screenshot).

**SNIP & SKETCH** Microsoft's new screenshot tool will gain a badly needed Active Window mode that lets you capture a single window using a delay timer. Will it take top spot from alternatives such as PicPick (see above)? We doubt it.

**LIGHT THEME** Fed up with all the focus on dark themes? The new light theme in Windows 10 should brighten up your day.

- The Microsoft Insider Programme lets you preview some of these features. Find out more at [www.snipca.com/30055](http://www.snipca.com/30055).





## ENHANCE YOUR DESKTOP

### SWITCH TASKS EASIER



**RECOMMENDED TOOL**  
**Alt-Tab Terminator**  
[www.snipca.com/30045](http://www.snipca.com/30045)

Microsoft has steadily improved its task switcher tool (accessed by pressing Alt+Tab), but if you've got lots of programs open it can become cluttered, with the small preview windows doing little to help identify each program.

Far better is Alt-Tab Terminator, which provides the best of both worlds: a simple list of your open programs (along side their icon) down the left, and a large preview window on the right that shows the currently selected program on an otherwise empty desktop. To cycle through the open windows, you hold down Alt and repeatedly press Tab, as with the Windows task switcher.

There aren't many settings to tweak, but we recommend making it full screen – click the menu button (three horizontal lines, top left), click Size, then Full-Screen to activate this. You can also choose to have it take over from the Alt+Tab shortcut or Windows+Tab (or both). And if you're wondering why it's called Alt-Tab Terminator, there's a dedicated Terminate button under each preview window, which instantly kills the selected program.

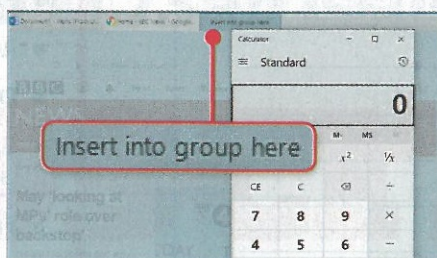
### GROUP PROGRAMS AS TABS



**RECOMMENDED TOOL**  
**Groupy (£4)**  
[www.snipca.com/30046](http://www.snipca.com/30046)

Tabs are so useful in browsers that it's frustrating they've not been better integrated into Windows. Microsoft is working on adding a tabbing tool called Sets (see box on opposite page), but with Groupy you can give your Windows 11 a similar feature today.

You can try Groupy free for 30 days, but after that it costs £4. It's impressively easy to use: simply drag one window to the top of another to combine the two, then add additional windows as required (the 'Insert into group here' message will



In Groupy, drag one window to the top of another to add it to a tab group

appear – see screenshot above). So if, for example, you're writing a document in Word, while frequently referring to a particularly website and using a calculator, you could create a group that contains all three.

Once you've created a group, you can switch between the tabs using the Windows+ shortcut (you can change this shortcut in the settings). You can also save groups, allowing you to quickly open grouped programs. If you have any Microsoft Office programs in your group, they will re-open with the document you had open when you saved the group. This doesn't apply to other programs, however, so any groups containing Chrome, for example, will open a new tab page in the browser.

For a free alternative to Groupy that adds tabs to Office – see our Office tab Workshop on page 40.

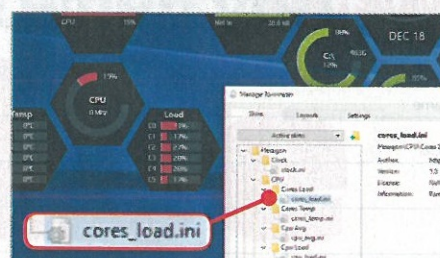
### GIVE YOUR WINDOWS 11 A BRAND NEW LOOK



**RECOMMENDED TOOL**  
**Rainmeter**  
[www.rainmeter.net](http://www.rainmeter.net)

We've looked at various new tools you can include in your Windows 11, but the one thing that will really make a difference is a brand new look. Windows 10 offers all the usual tools for changing your desktop background and applying themes, but you are still restricted to what Microsoft wants you to change.

Rainmeter is the ideal tool to get Windows looking just as you want. And



Double-click a widget's INI file in Rainmeter to show or hide it

it's not only about aesthetics. You can add features to your desktop, such as resource monitors and quick-launch buttons.

The default Rainmeter skin adds three boxes to your desktop, showing the date, system resources and hard-drive space. However, by downloading one of the many free skins you can completely revamp your desktop. Some of the best are available at DeviantArt ([www.deviantart.com/rainmeter/gallery](http://www.deviantart.com/rainmeter/gallery)), such as Hexagon ([www.snipca.com/30047](http://www.snipca.com/30047)). We also like the Honeycomb launcher, which lets you add quick-launch buttons to your desktop for popular programs ([www.snipca.com/30048](http://www.snipca.com/30048)).

To install a skin, download and open it (on DeviantArt the download buttons are on the right), then click Install on the Rainmeter box that appears. Most skins are made up of multiple **widgets**, which you can load/unload individually by double-clicking their **INI** files. For example, to unload the Cores Load widget of the Hexagon skin, open the Cores Load subfolder (located within Hexagon, CPU), then double-click 'cores\_load.ini' (see screenshot above).

Once you've created your Windows 11 desktop, click the Layouts tab, give it a title under Name, then click Save. To switch to a different layout, highlight it in 'Saved layouts', then click Load.

If you need some inspiration, this video ([www.snipca.com/30049](http://www.snipca.com/30049)) shows how one Windows user managed to transform their desktop using Rainmeter (as well as a few taskbar tweaks). **ca**

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