100% INDEPENDENT

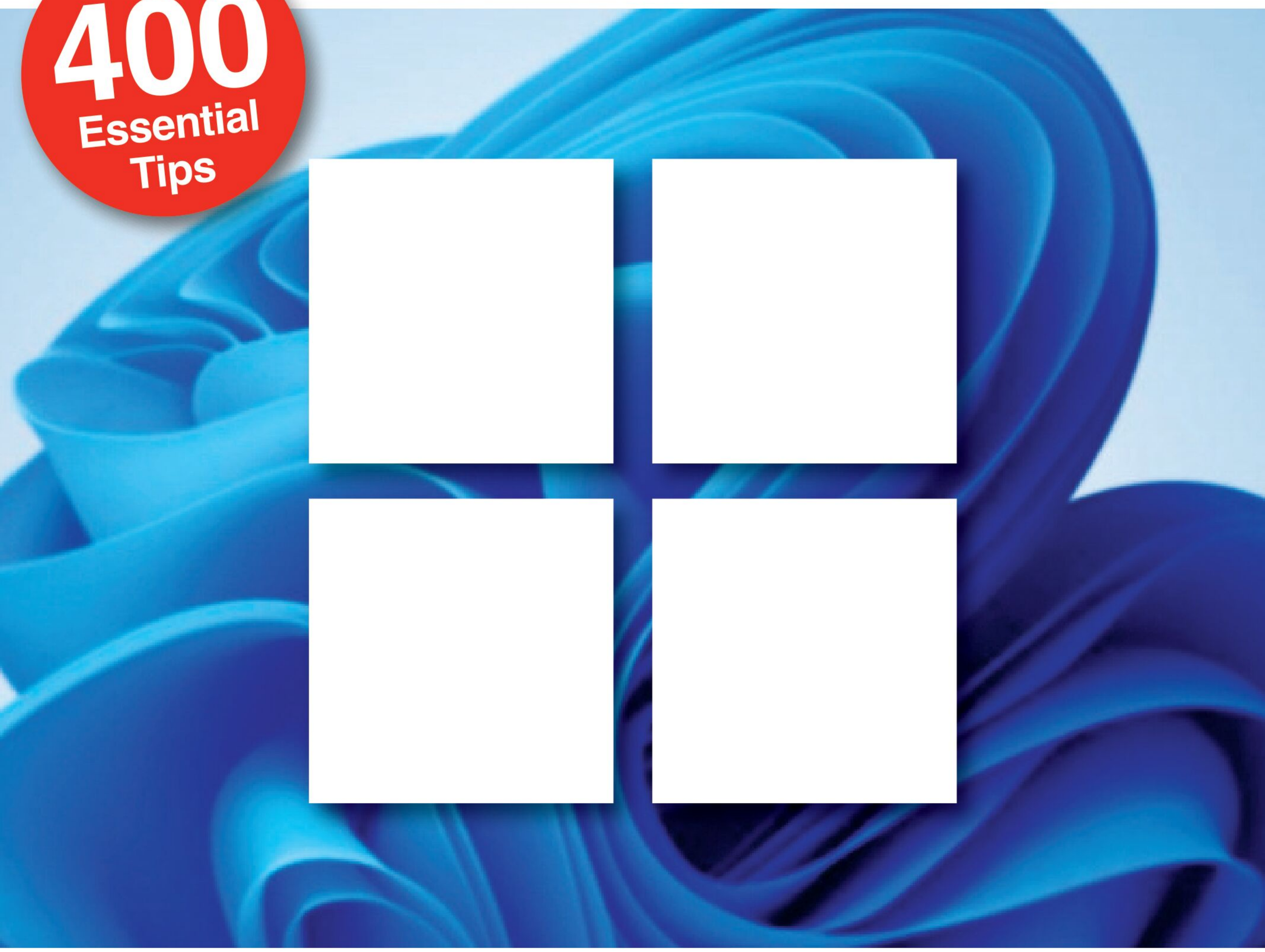
NEW

Windows 11

The Essentials

Your essential guide to Microsoft's new Windows 11 operating system

OVER 400 Essential Tips



Discover new uses and functionality with step-by-step guides

Essential tutorials and insider tips for the Windows 11 update

All your questions about Windows 11 are answered inside

Windows 11

The Essentials

Microsoft's Windows 10 operating system has a staggering 76% market share of desktop and laptop computers worldwide! With an installed Windows 10 user base of over one billion! Making Windows 10 the world's favourite and most used OS! Thus Microsoft's announcement of a new upgrade, Windows 11 sent shockwaves around the planet! The next evolution of the world's most popular OS has arrived and it's amazing! Bringing with it a wealth of changes, new functionality and applications. Of course as a side effect of change comes confusion, frustration and crashing user confidence. Albeit these users issues to you are, thankfully, only momentarily as our team of experts are here to help! With Windows 11 - The Essentials, BDM's independent user manual as your guide, you, the reader will discover the basics of the operating system. They will learn how the many changes have effected their use and how to adapt to these changes. Our goal and yours are the same, that ultimately you will master Windows 11 by becoming a confident, well informed and 100% prepared Windows 11 adopter and user.

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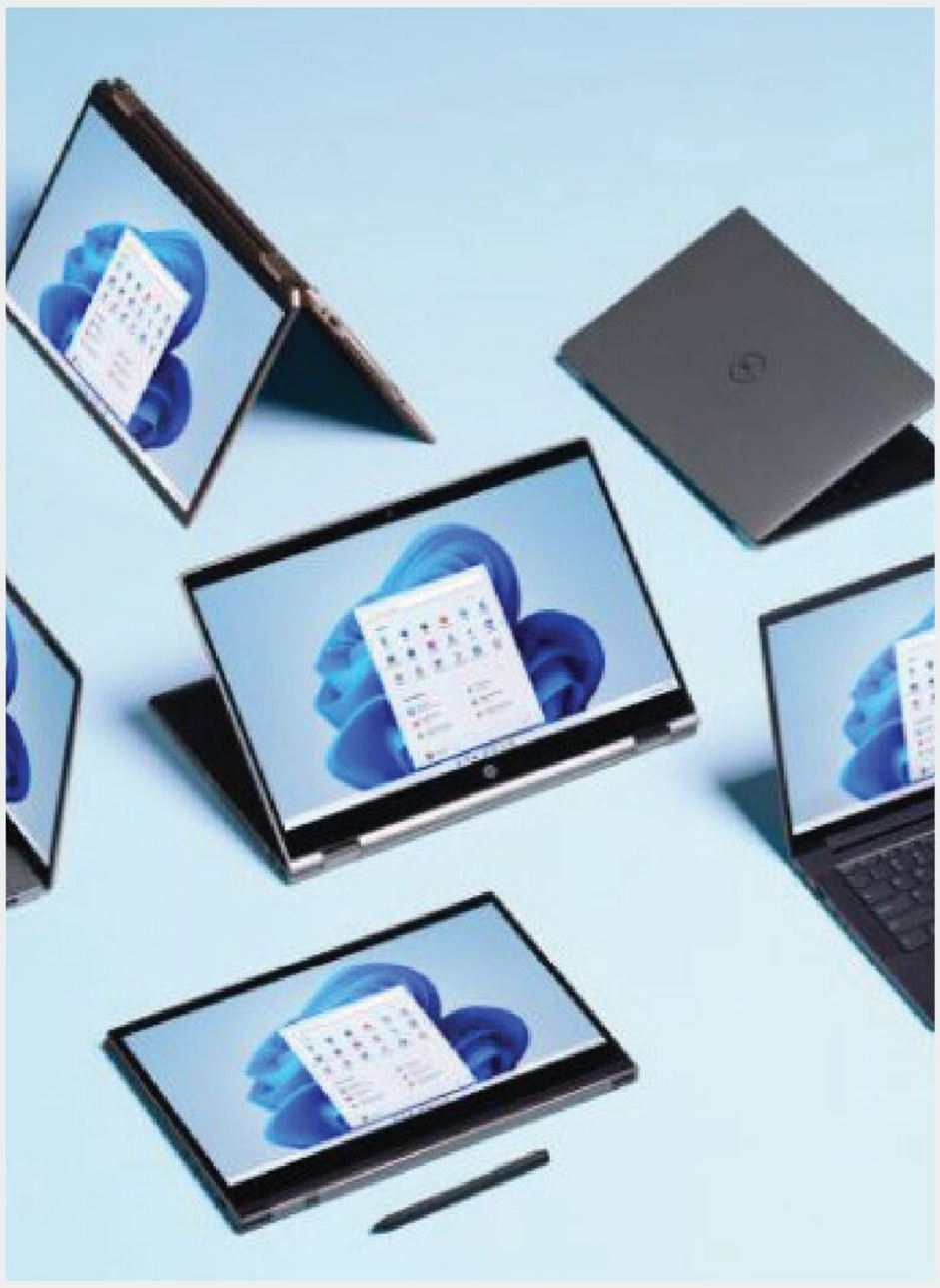

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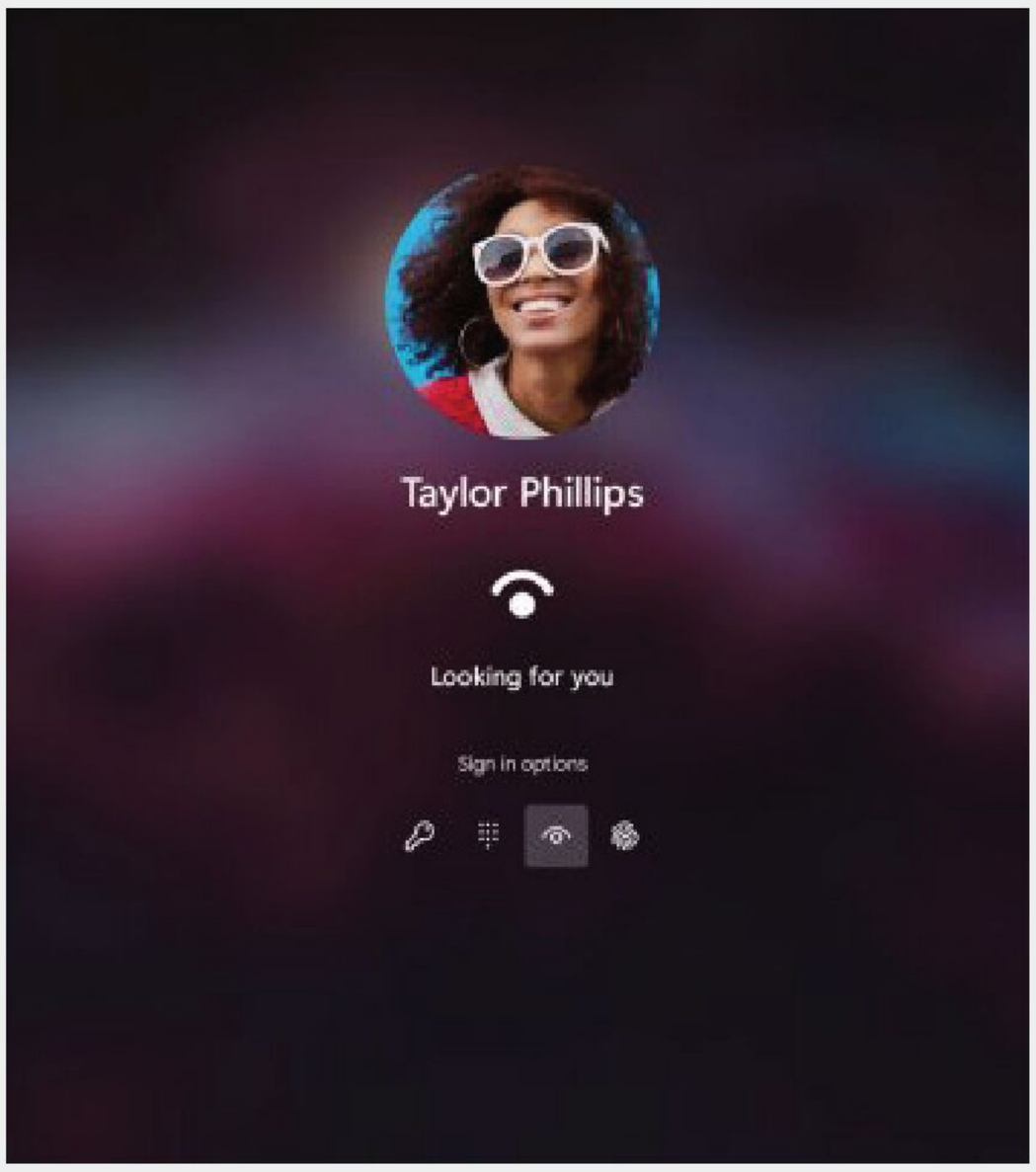

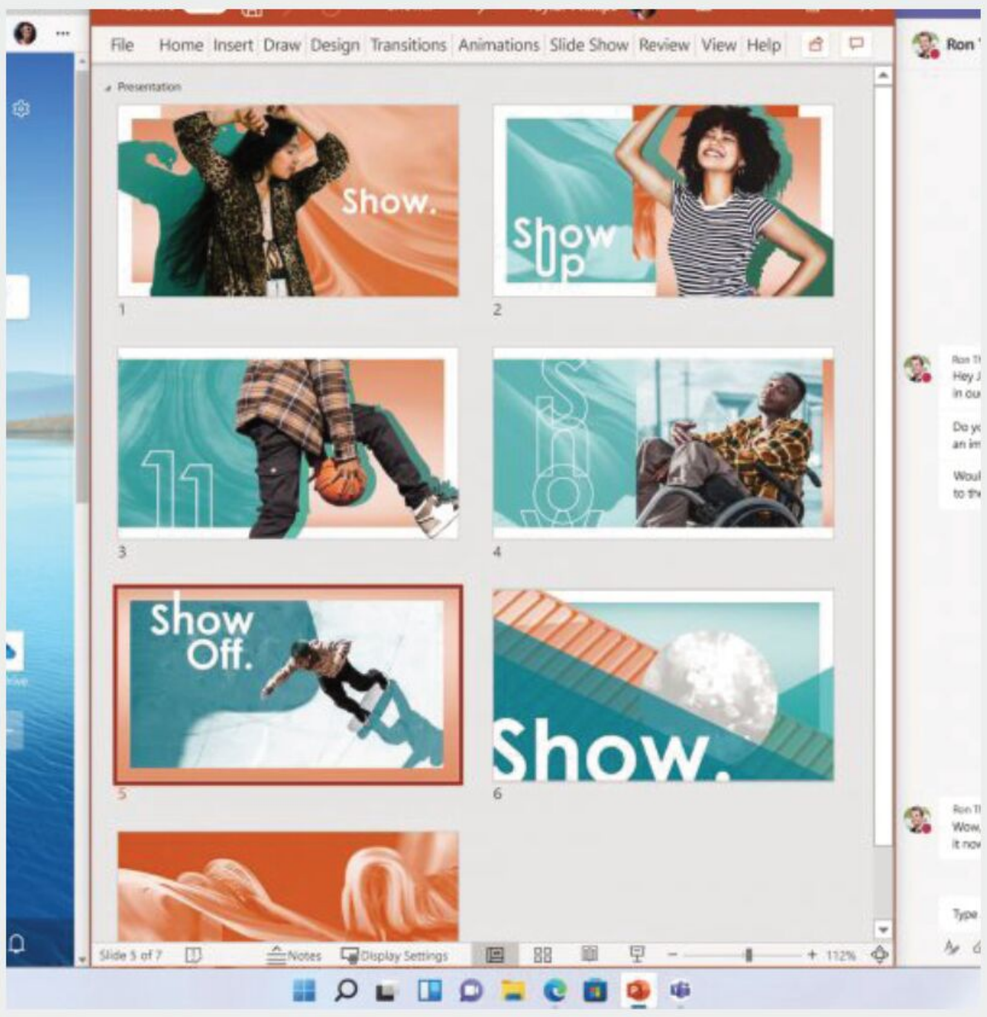

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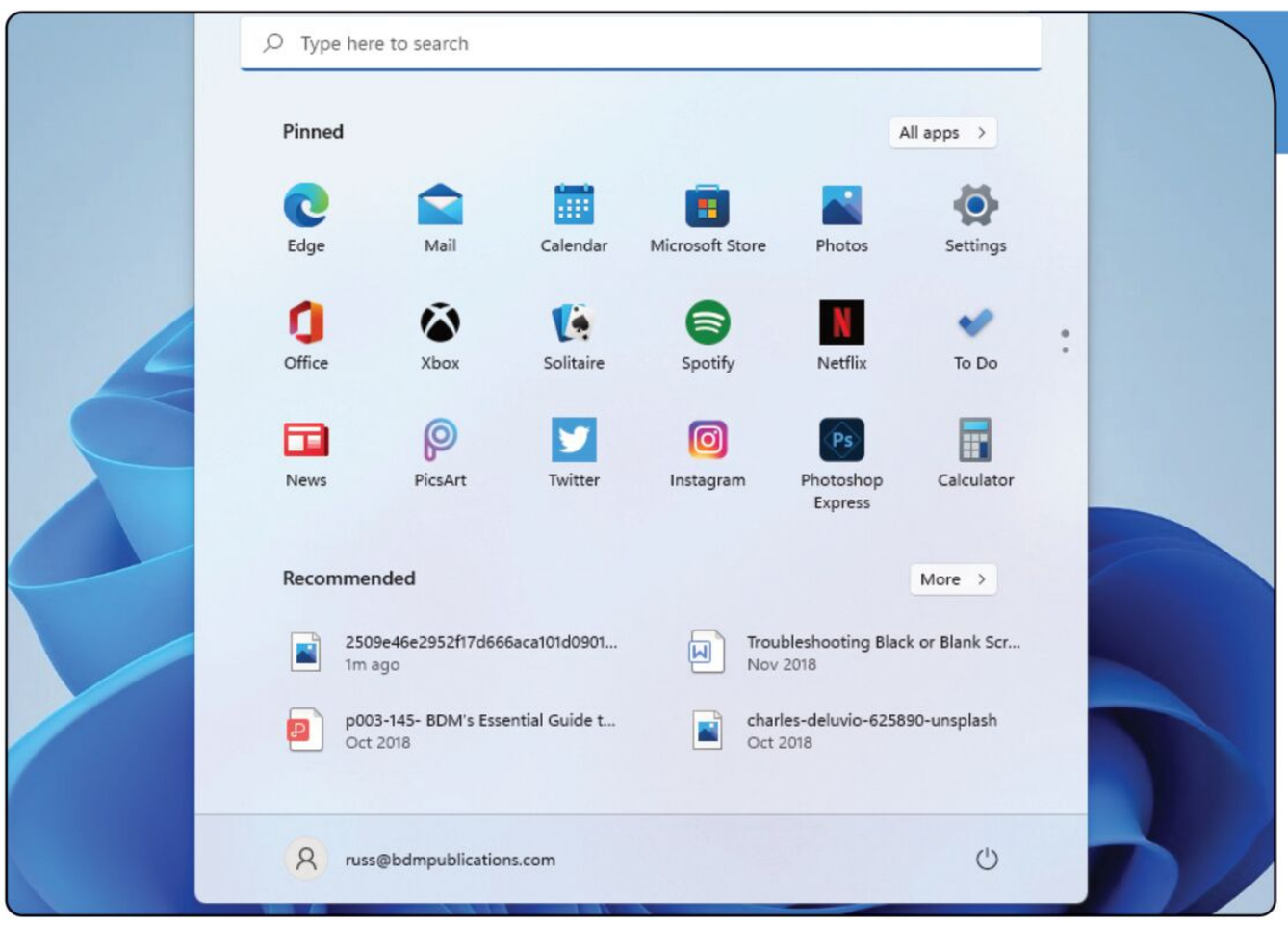
How to Use the Start Menu

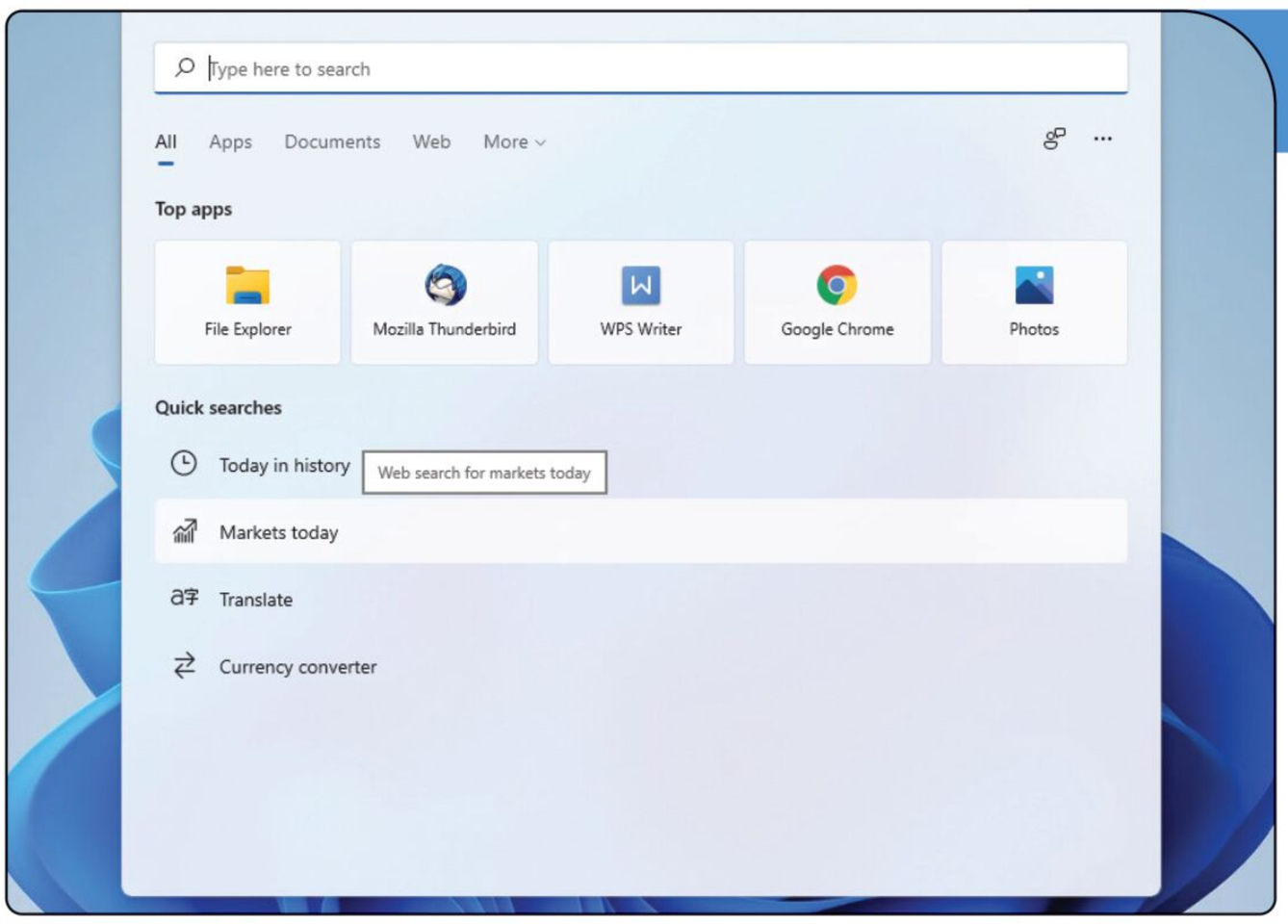
The Start menu has been given a big makeover for Windows 11, simplified in some ways and expanded in others. It may look very different to the Windows 10 Start menu, but it is still the main way to access your installed apps, software and games.

Get to Grips with Start



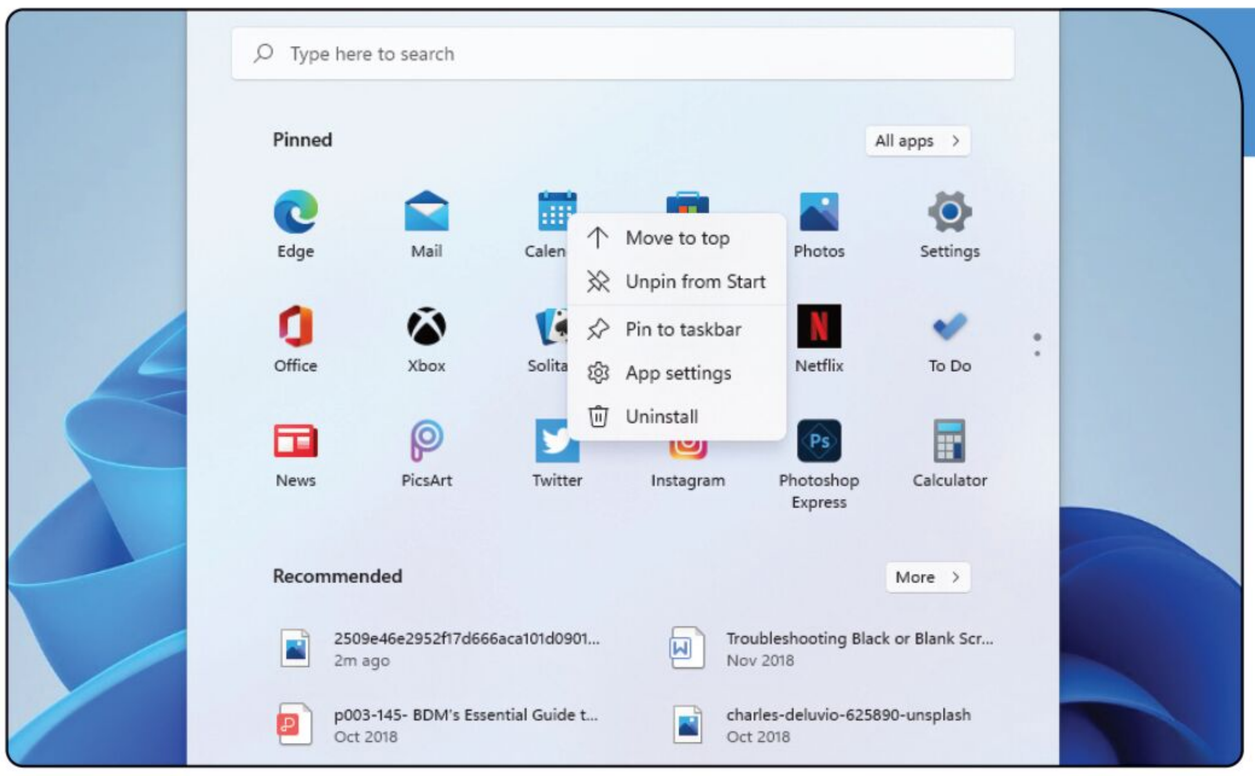
Step 1

The completely redesigned Start menu is opened by clicking on the Windows icon in the taskbar, or by pressing the Windows Key on your keyboard. It opens above the taskbar icons, floating in the middle of the screen. It will appear over the top of any open windows.



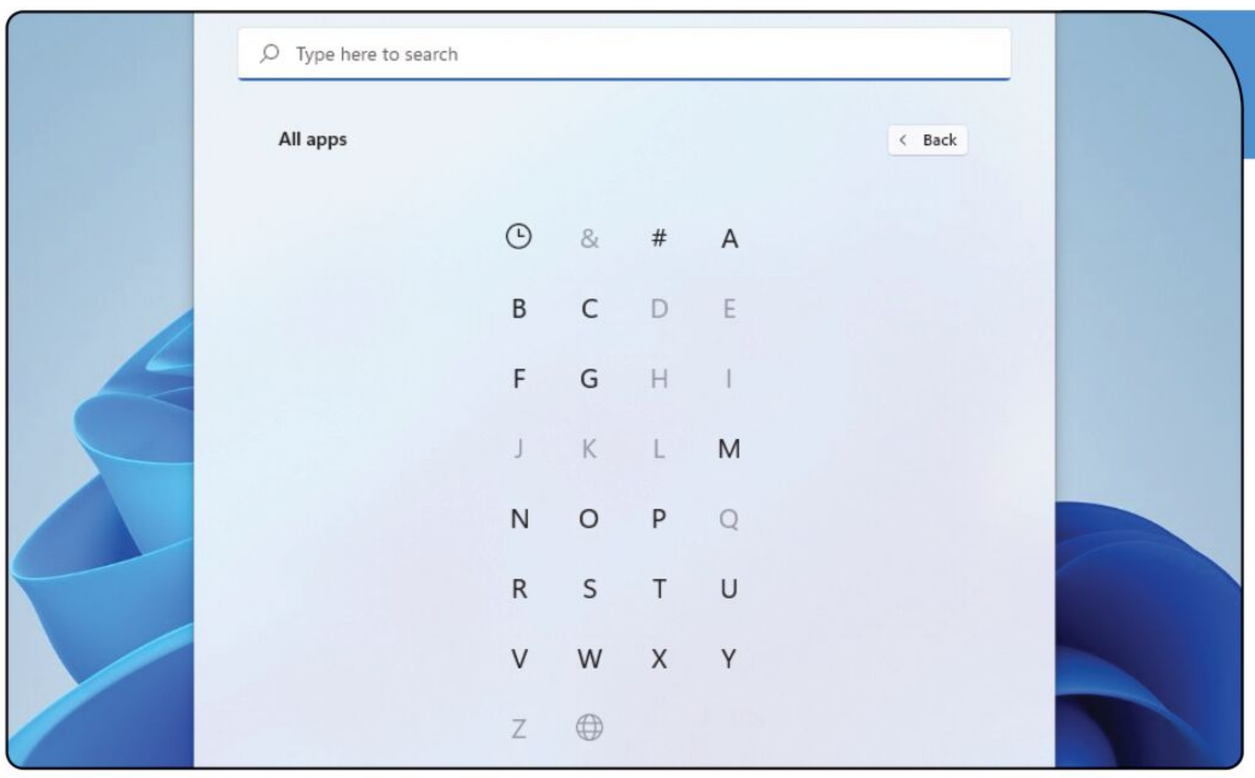
Step 2

The Start menu is arranged in four main sections: Search, Pinned Apps, Recent or Recommended Files and Account/Power. Clicking in the Search field will switch to the dedicated Search panel, rather than letting you type your search term directly into the Start menu.



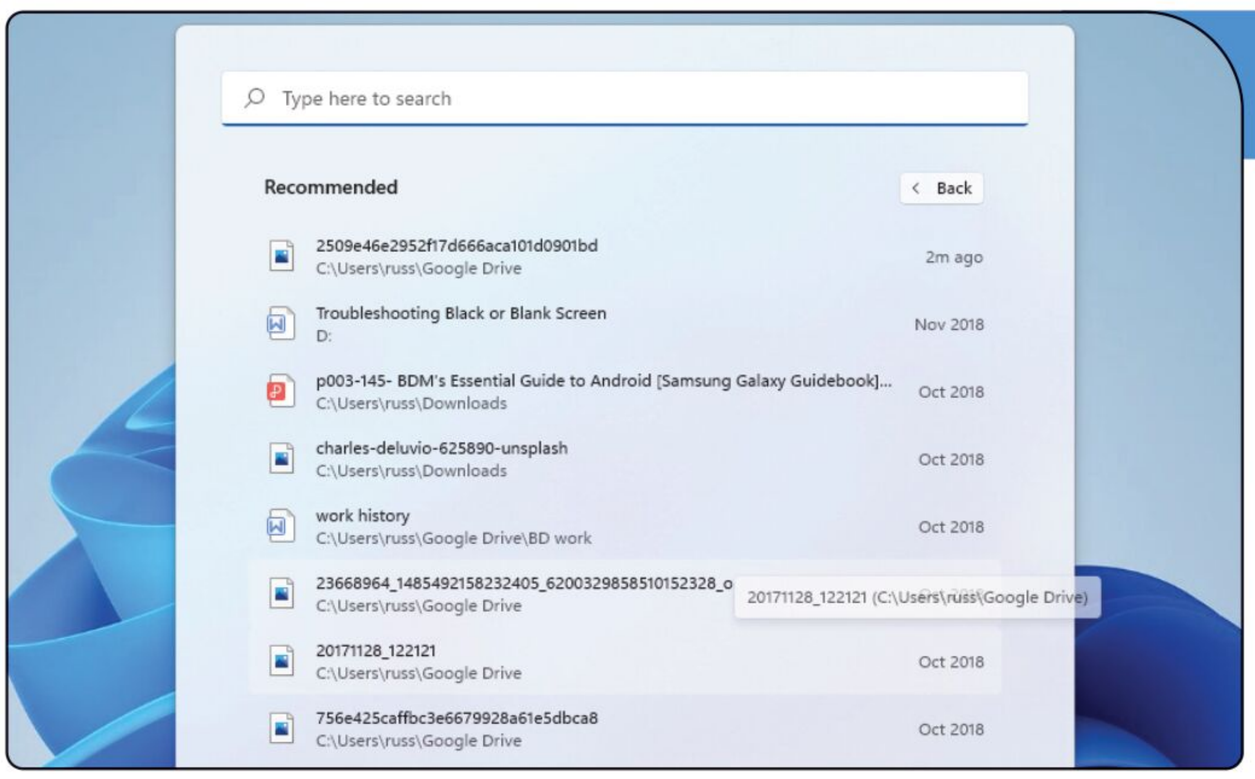
Step 3

If the app you want to open is shown, click the icon to open it. If not, you can click the "All Apps" button to open the full, scrollable list of apps. You can change the apps that appear here by right-clicking on the icon and choosing "Unpin/Pin to Start" from the action menu.



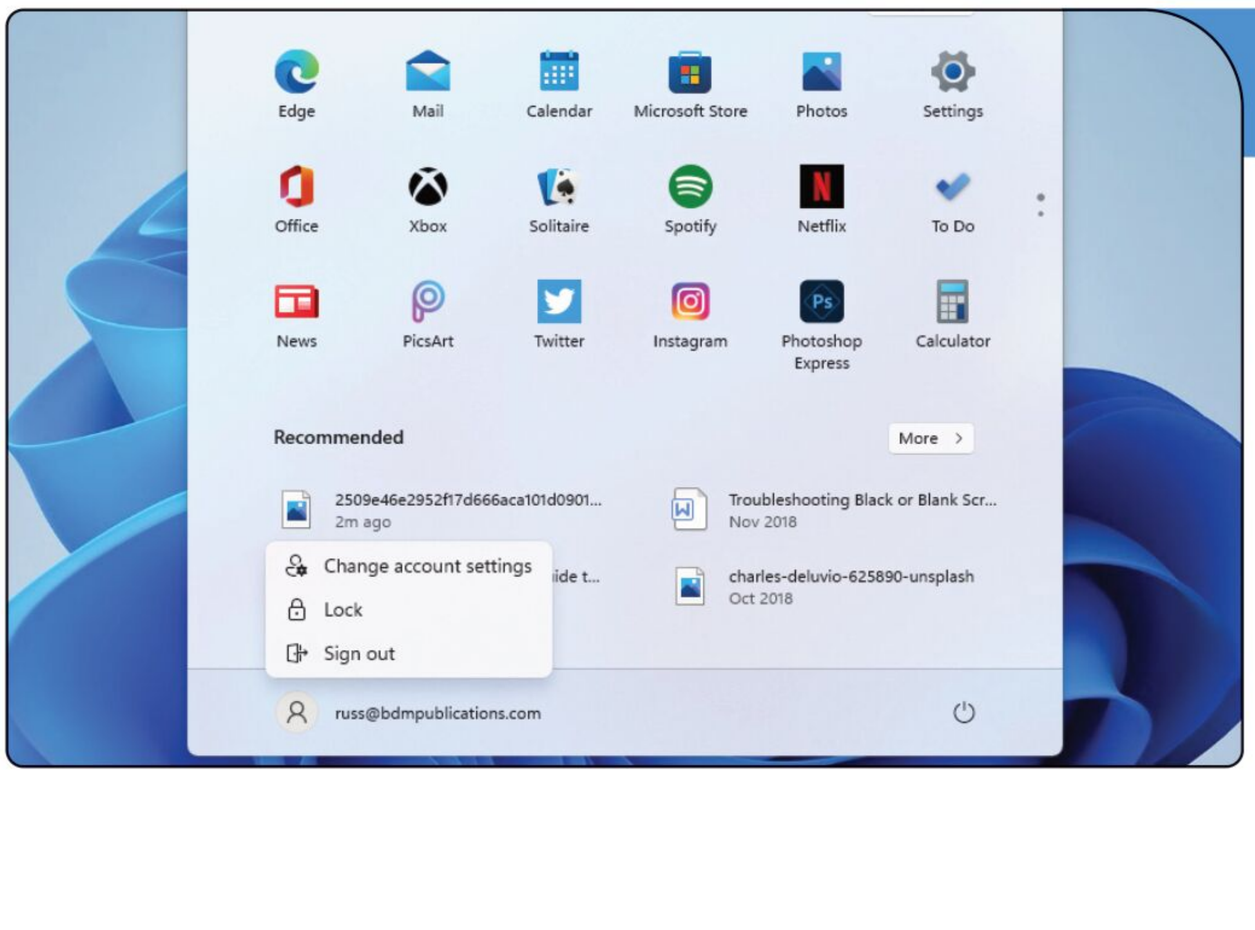
Step 4

In the app menu, apps are sorted alphabetically, except for a Most Used section at the top. If you click the title of that section (or any other section heading), a letter grid will appear, allowing you to quickly skip to a specific section of the apps list.



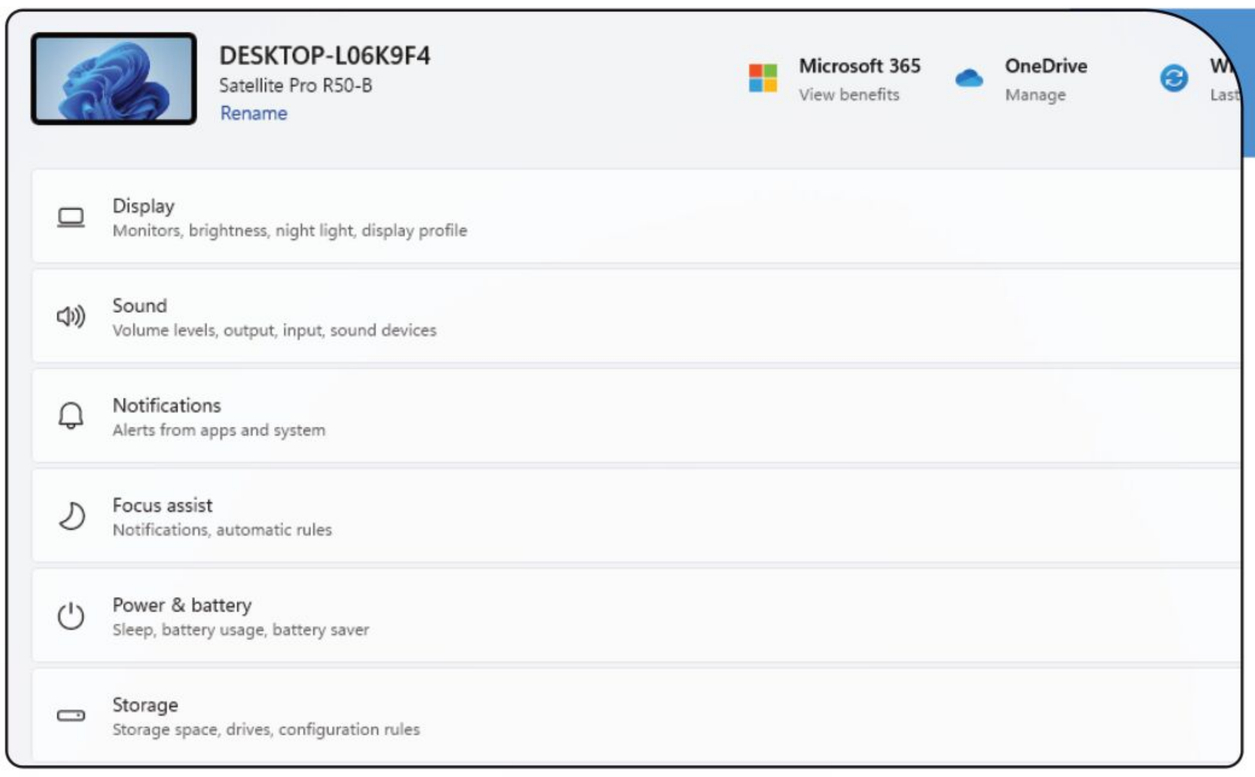
Step 5

The Recommended section shows files that have been recently opened, or that have been opened frequently. Click on any icon to open the file in whatever app/program it is associated with. Click the "More" button to the right to open a larger list of files.



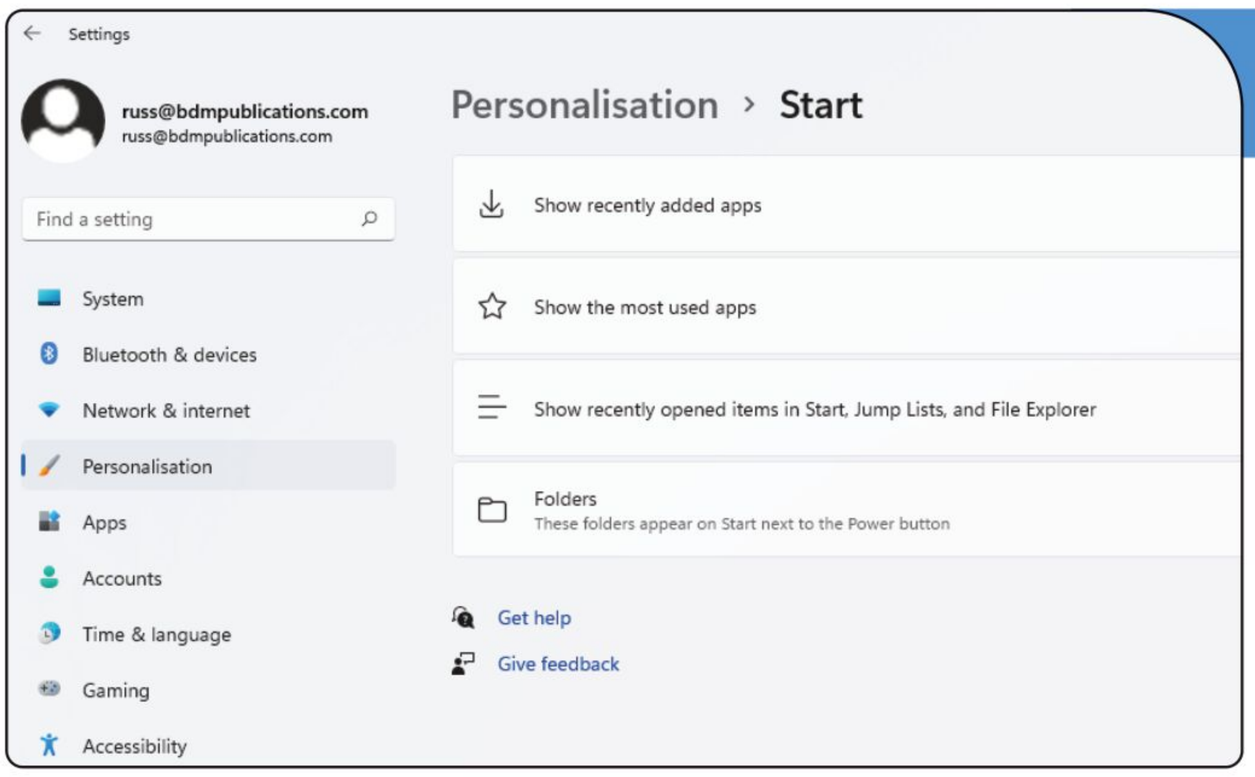
Step 6

The bottom section contains a link to the Microsoft Account menu. Click this to change account settings, lock your computer or sign out of the current account. At the other end of the section is the power button. Click this and choose from the available power options.



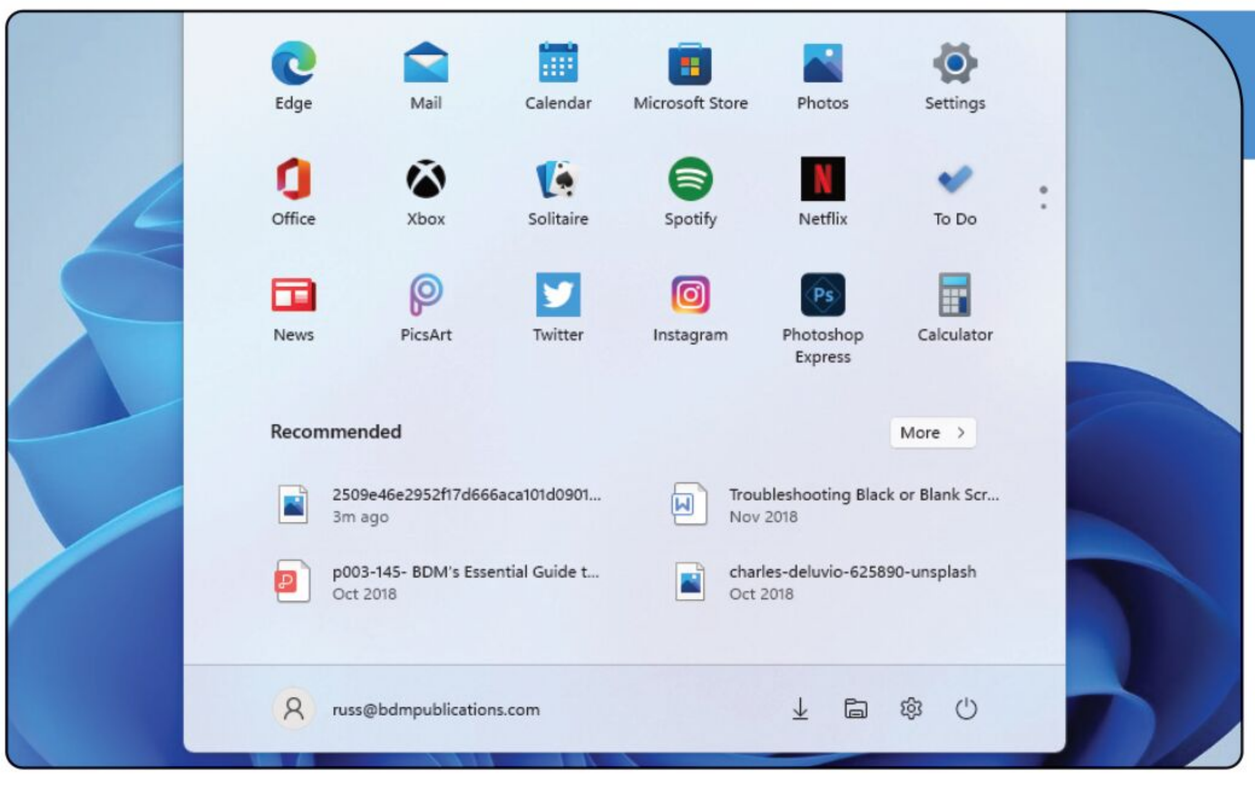
Step 7

It is also possible to display your most used apps and a selection of folders in the Start menu. To enable these features, open the main settings menu (you should see the icon for this in the pinned apps) and click on the Personalisation section. Then choose the Start option.



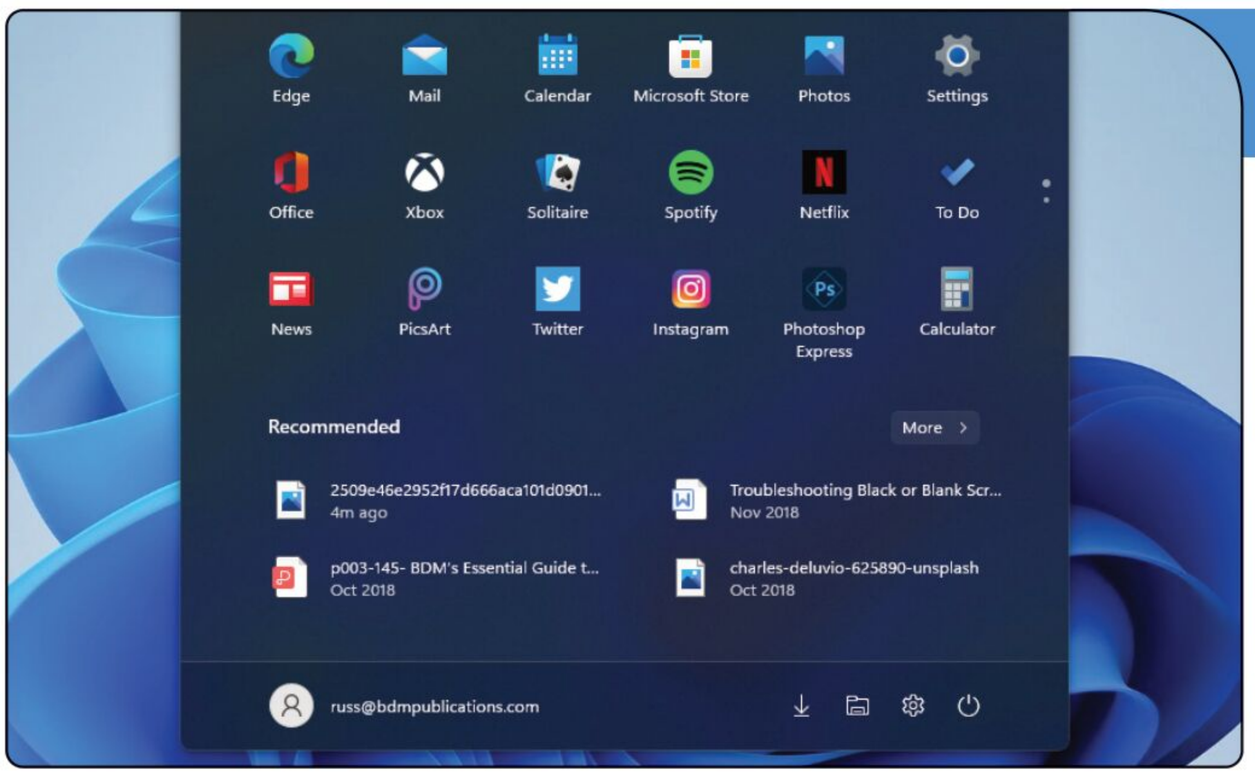
Step 8

Use the sliders to enable or disable Start menu features you want or no longer want. To add folders to the Start menu, click the folders option in the Start settings and then use the slider switches to add any of the preset folders you want or need quick access to.



Step 9

Open the Start menu again to see the newly added (or removed features). You may not initially notice any difference to the apps list if you have not yet used any apps repeatedly. The folders you added can be found next to the power button in the bottom section.



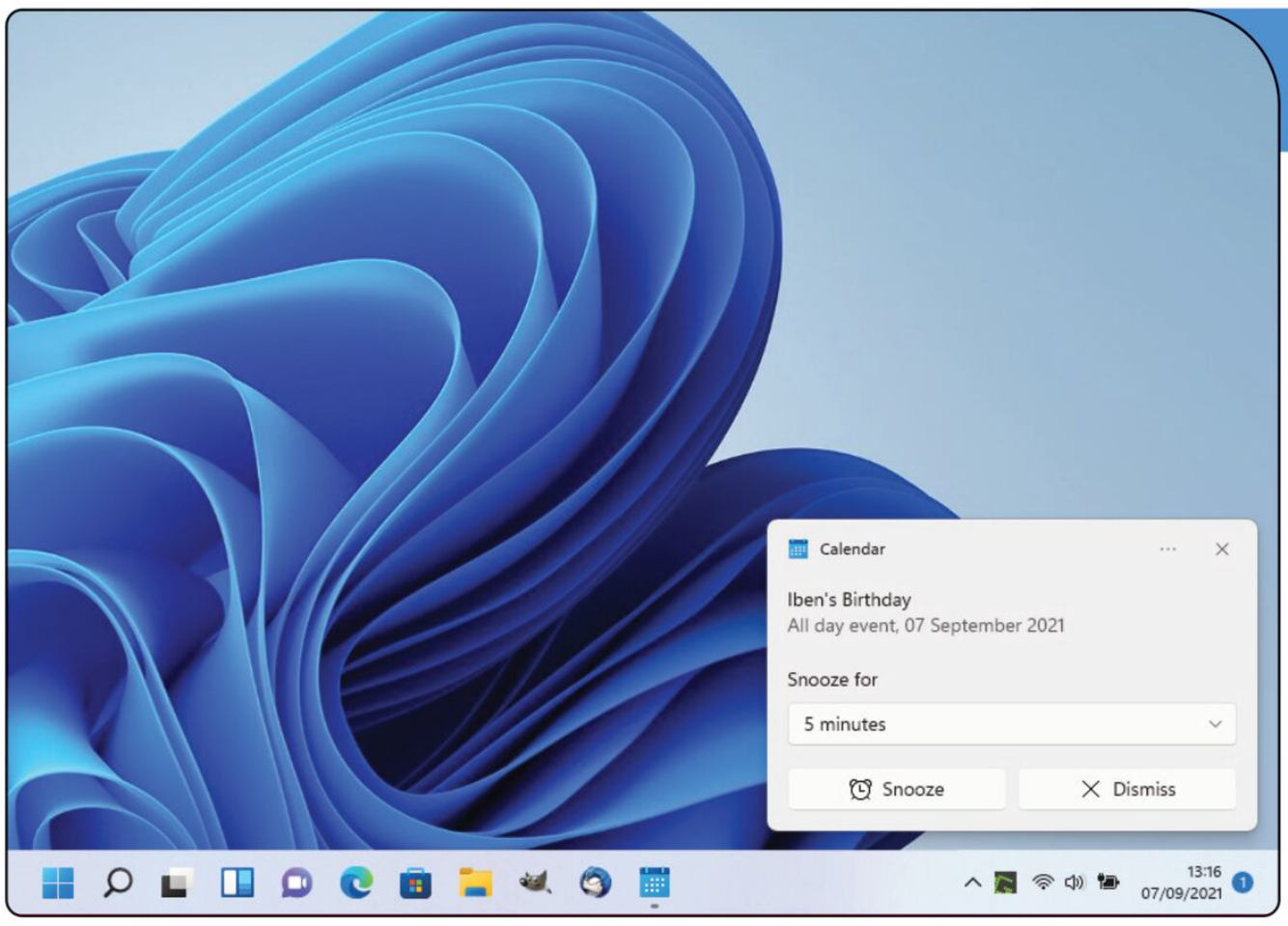
Step 10

It is not possible to resize the Start menu, nor is it possible to change the style of it. You can change the overall colour mode (light, dark or custom), which will change the colour of the Start menu along with other main elements of the interface such as the taskbar.

Notifications & Quick Settings

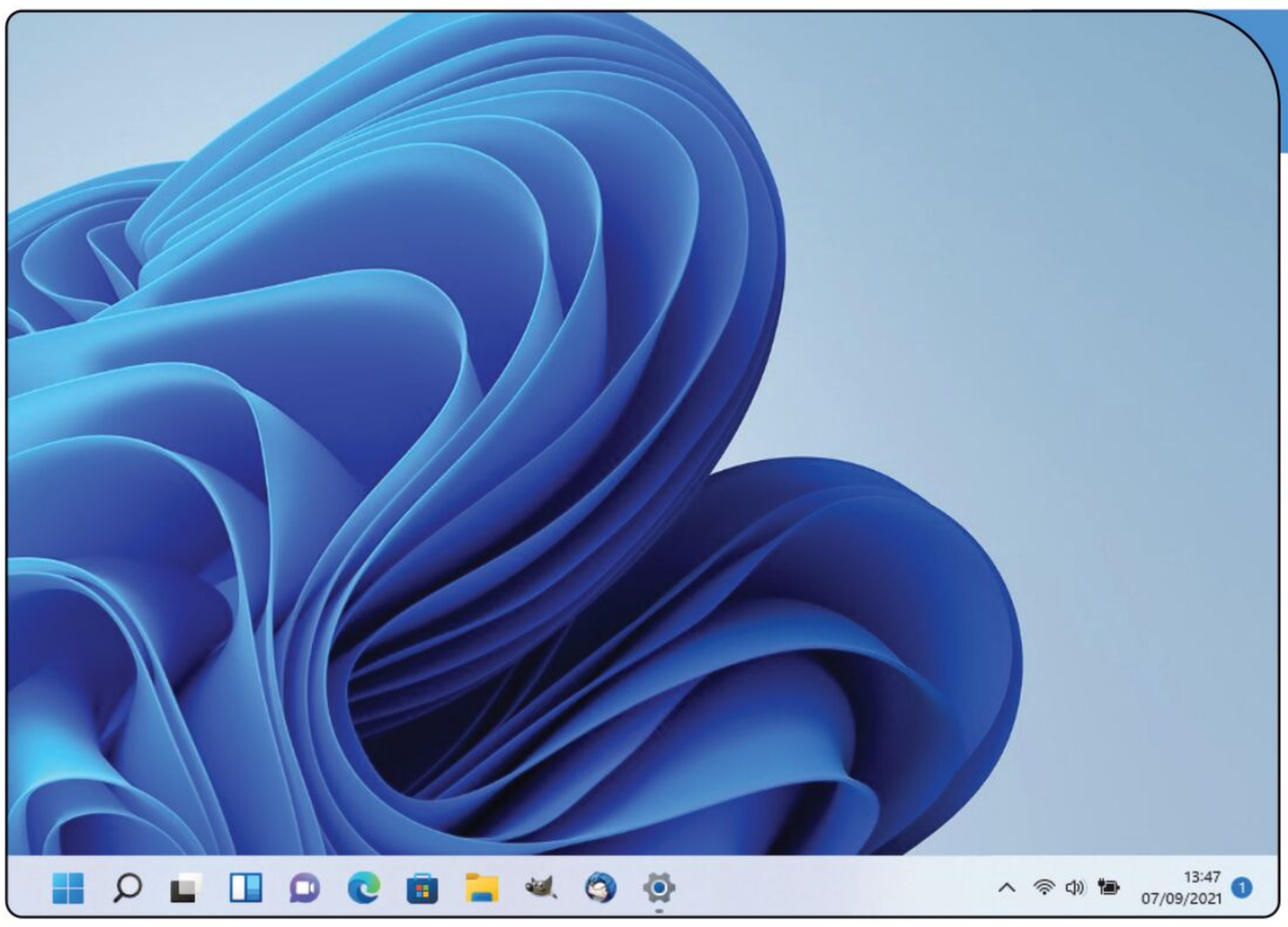
There have always been pop-up messages in Windows but now there is a centralised way in which these are viewed and interacted with. In Windows 11, this is called the Notification Center, it is designed to work more like the notifications panel on a smartphone or tablet.

Exploring the Notification Center



Step 1

New notifications and alerts will pop up at the bottom-right corner of the screen (by default, but you can change the notification settings), disappearing after a few seconds. After the initial pop-up has disappeared, you can view all current notifications by clicking on the time/date in the taskbar.

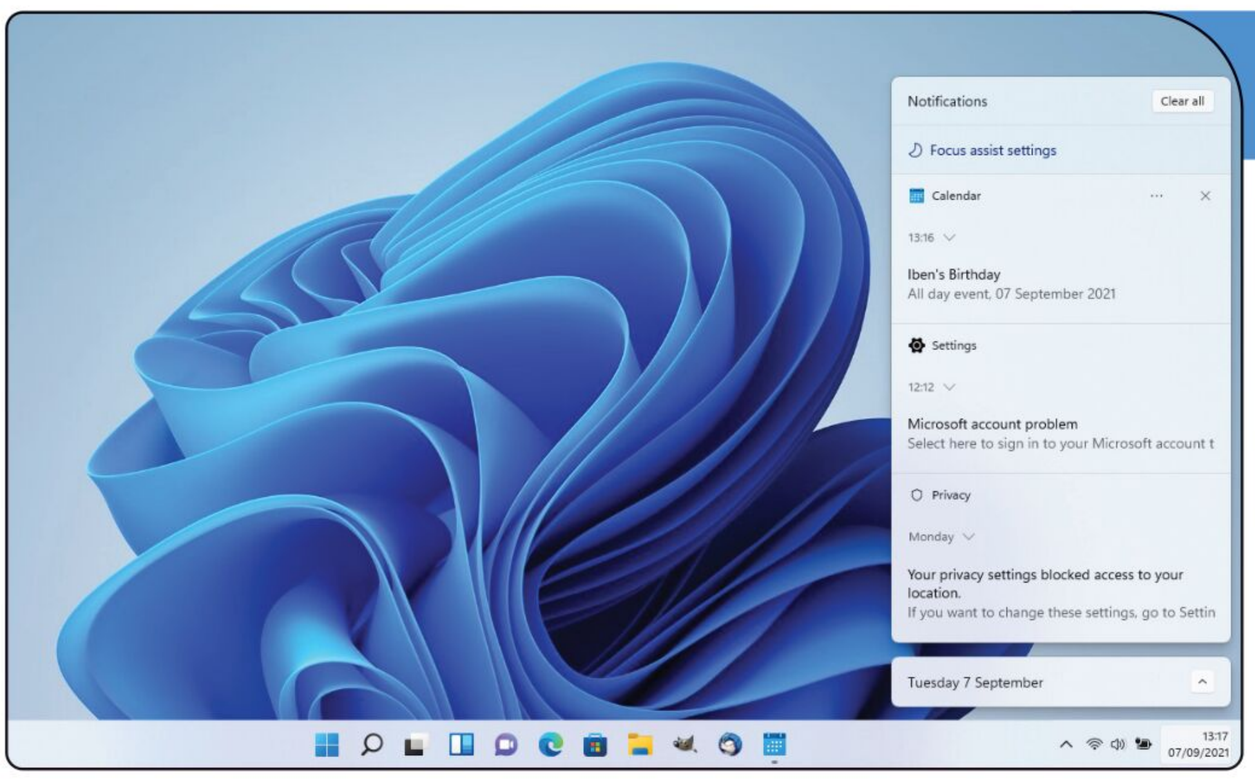


Step 2

You can see if there are new notifications waiting to be viewed by the badge that will appear on the corner of the time/date in the taskbar. You can turn off these badges in the settings, but they are a useful and unobtrusive way to see, at a glance, if you have something requiring your attention.

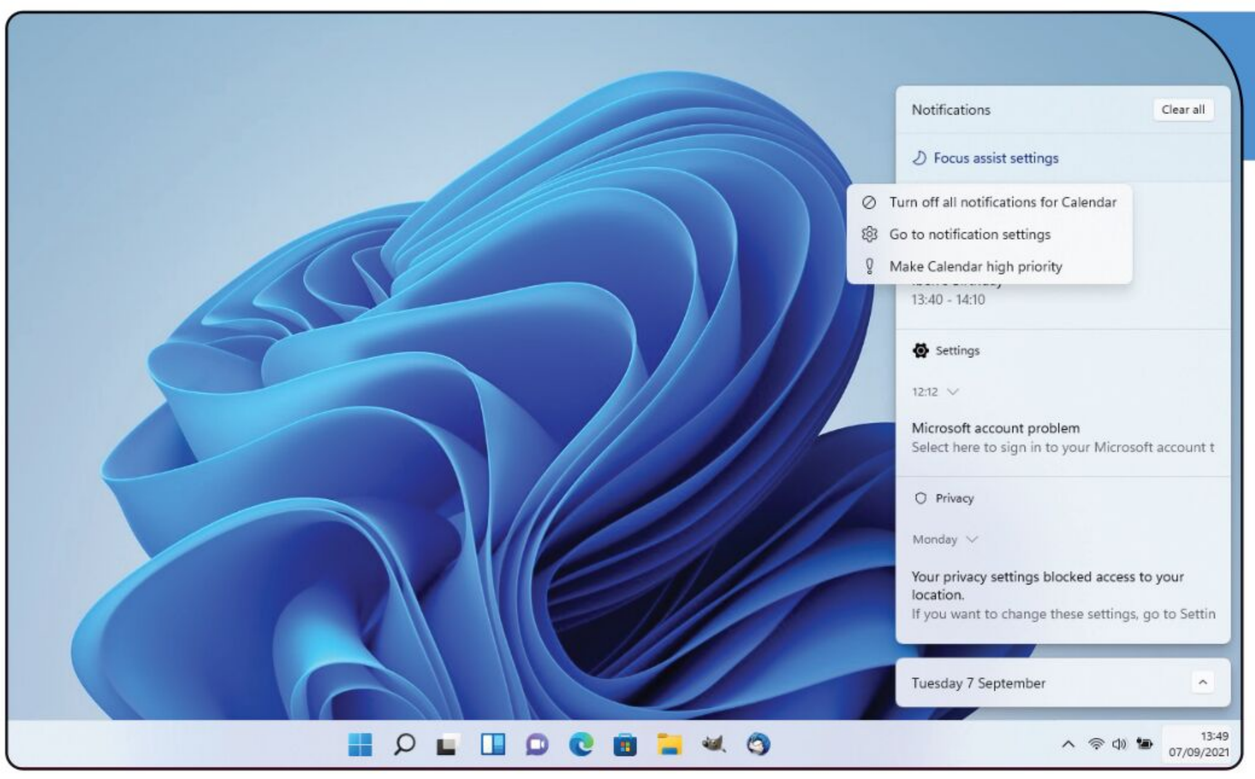
Step 3

Unlike Windows 10, the Notification Center (which was called the Action Center previously) only contains notifications and alerts, not quick settings. It does include the calendar now, which is expanded by clicking the arrow next to the date at the bottom of the notification panel.



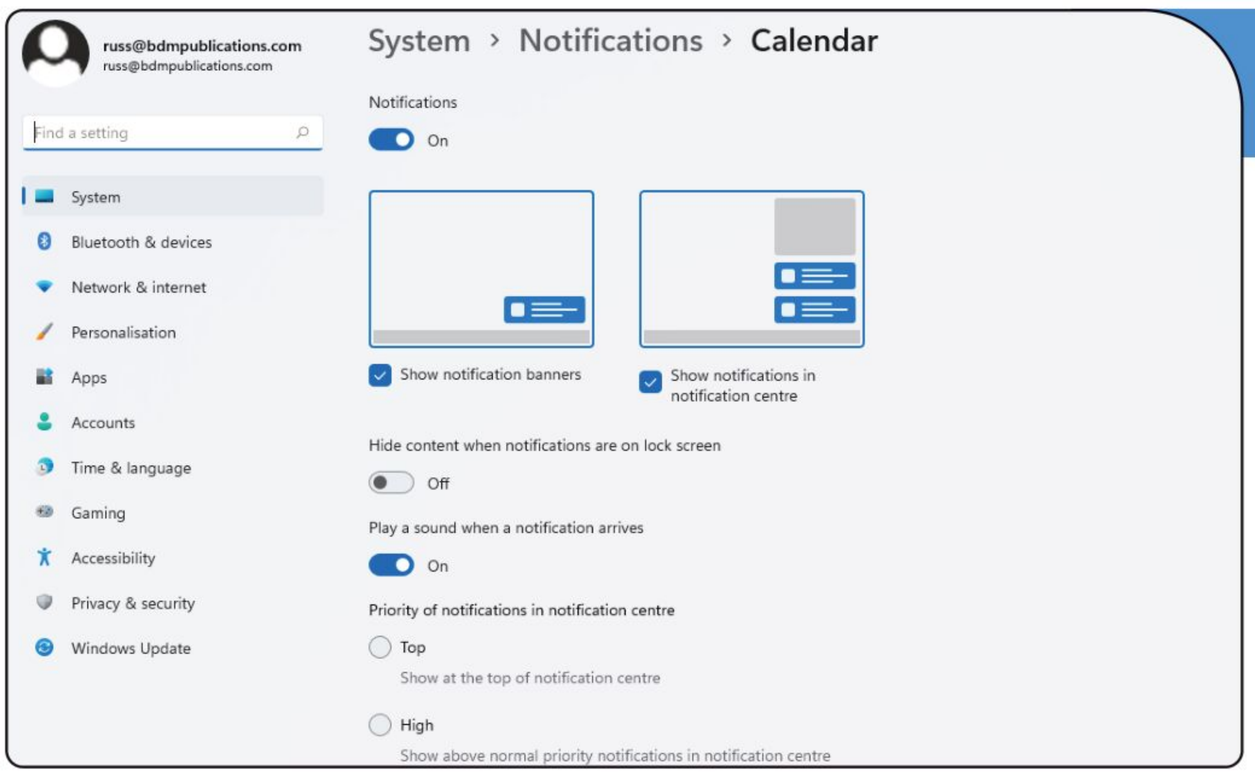
Step 4

Above the calendar section is your notification panel. Notifications can be from the system (Windows updates for example), from your calendar, from apps and even from settings that need to be managed. Notifications are sorted into sections within the notifications panel; based on their type.



Step 5

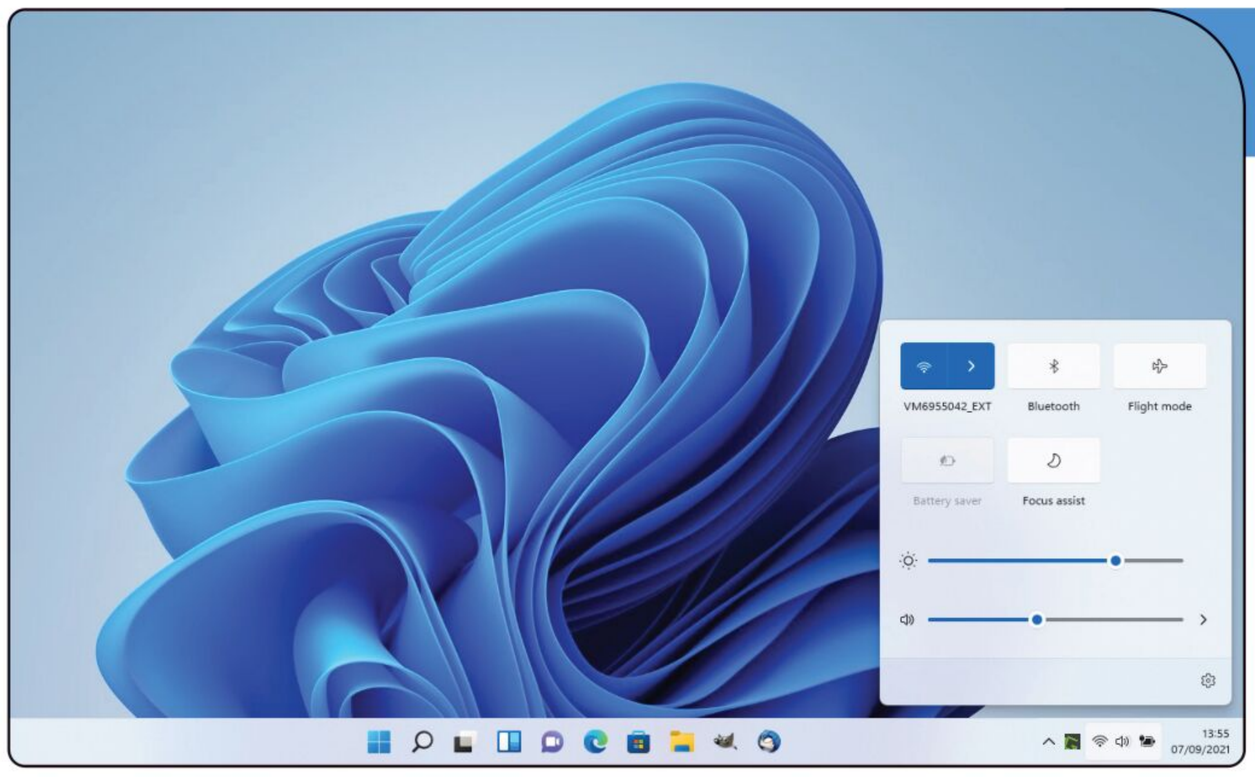
At the top of the Notifications panel is a button to clear all notifications. You can clear notifications individually by hovering the pointer over them and clicking the X. You can also click the menu button on each notification to see some notification settings, such as setting similar messages as a priority.



Step 6

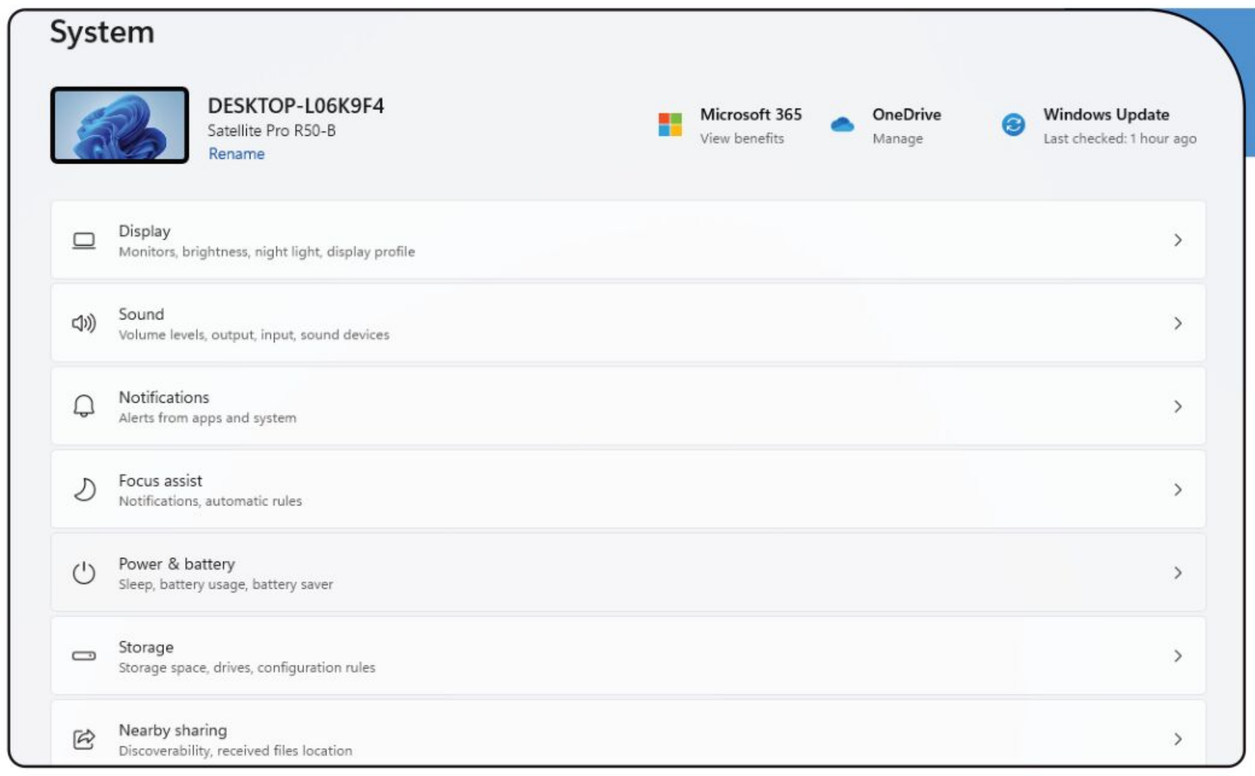
To manage your notification display settings, go to Settings > System > Notifications. Here you can choose the apps/features which can send you notifications, using the slider switches. Click the name of the app to see further settings, such as whether a sound is played, and the priority level.

Quick Settings Panel



Step 1

To access the quick settings panel in Windows 11, press Windows Key + a. The panel will appear in the same position on screen as the Notification Center. By default the panel contains buttons to quickly enable/disable Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, Flight Mode, Battery Saver (if using a laptop) and Focus Assist.

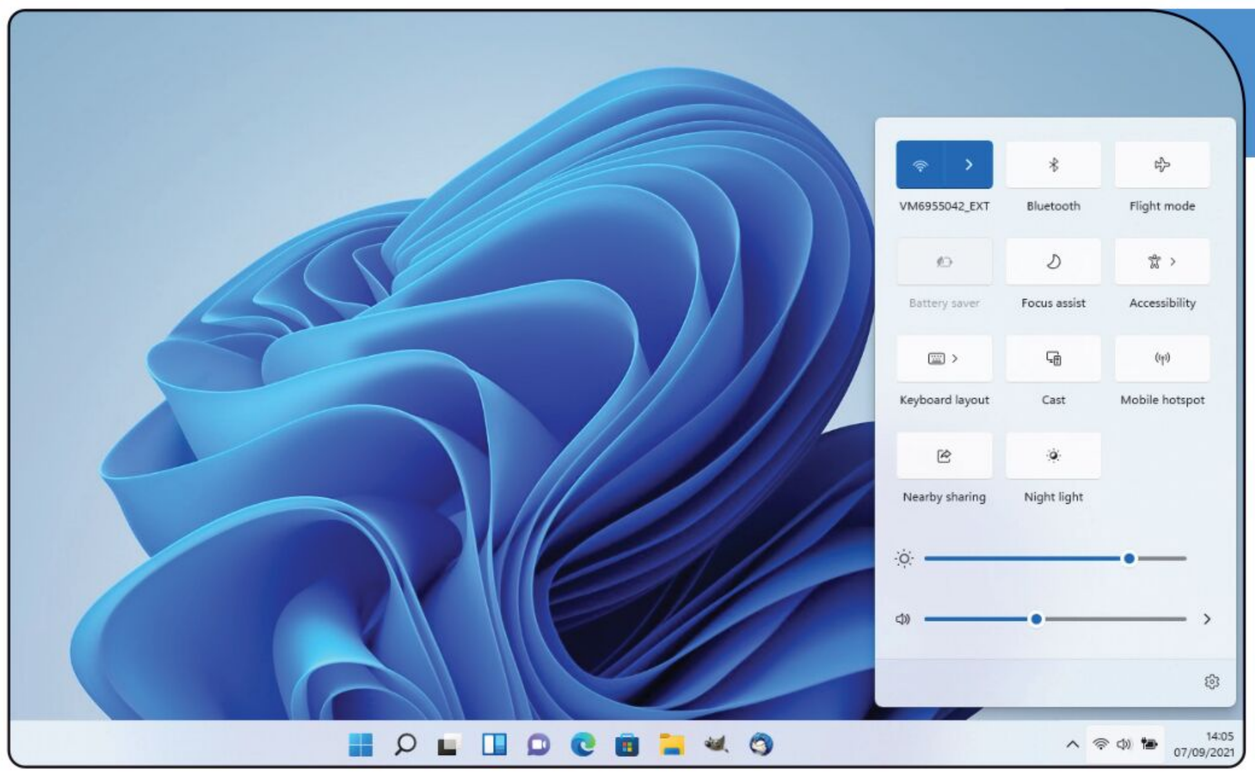


Step 2

There are also sliders to control screen brightness and system volume. The exact settings that appear in the quick settings panel will vary, depending on if you are using a desktop or a laptop computer. At the bottom of the panel is a button to open the main Windows 11 settings app.

Step 3

Right-click anywhere on the Quick Settings panel to see a link to "Edit quick settings". Click this and the buttons will be greyed out, and unpin icons will appear on each. Click these to remove a button from the panel. You can also click the + button at the bottom to add other quick settings buttons.



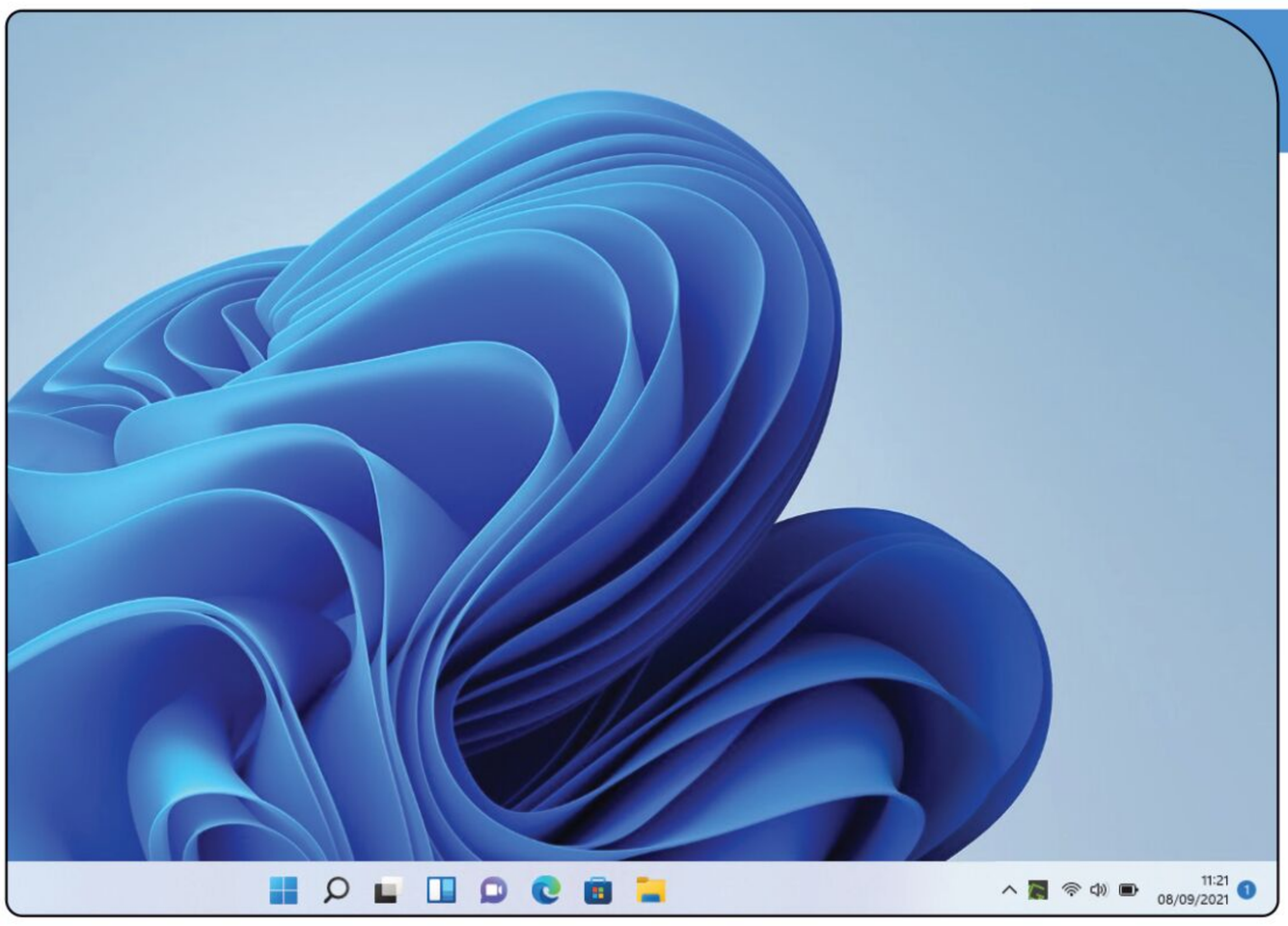
Step 4

Some of the quick settings buttons will have an arrow on the button. Clicking these buttons will open a new panel, with further options for that particular feature. For example, the Wi-Fi button will open a list of available networks, and Keyboard Layout will open a list of the different layouts available.

How to Use the Taskbar

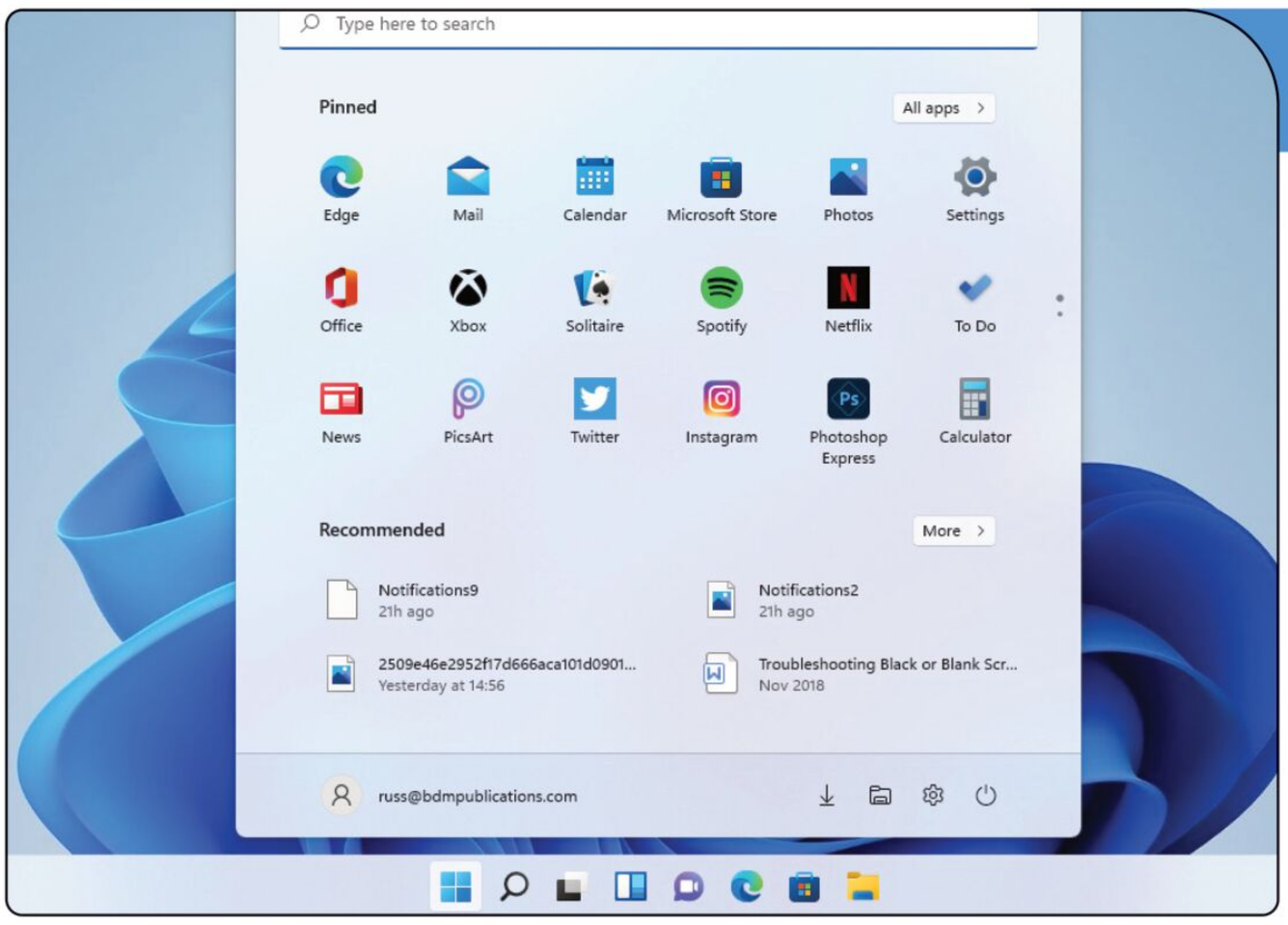
If you're moving from Windows 10 to Windows 11, the taskbar will likely be the first change you notice. The taskbar has always been a useful tool, but in Windows 11 it becomes the focus of the desktop and contains more features and tools.

Mastering the Windows 11 Taskbar



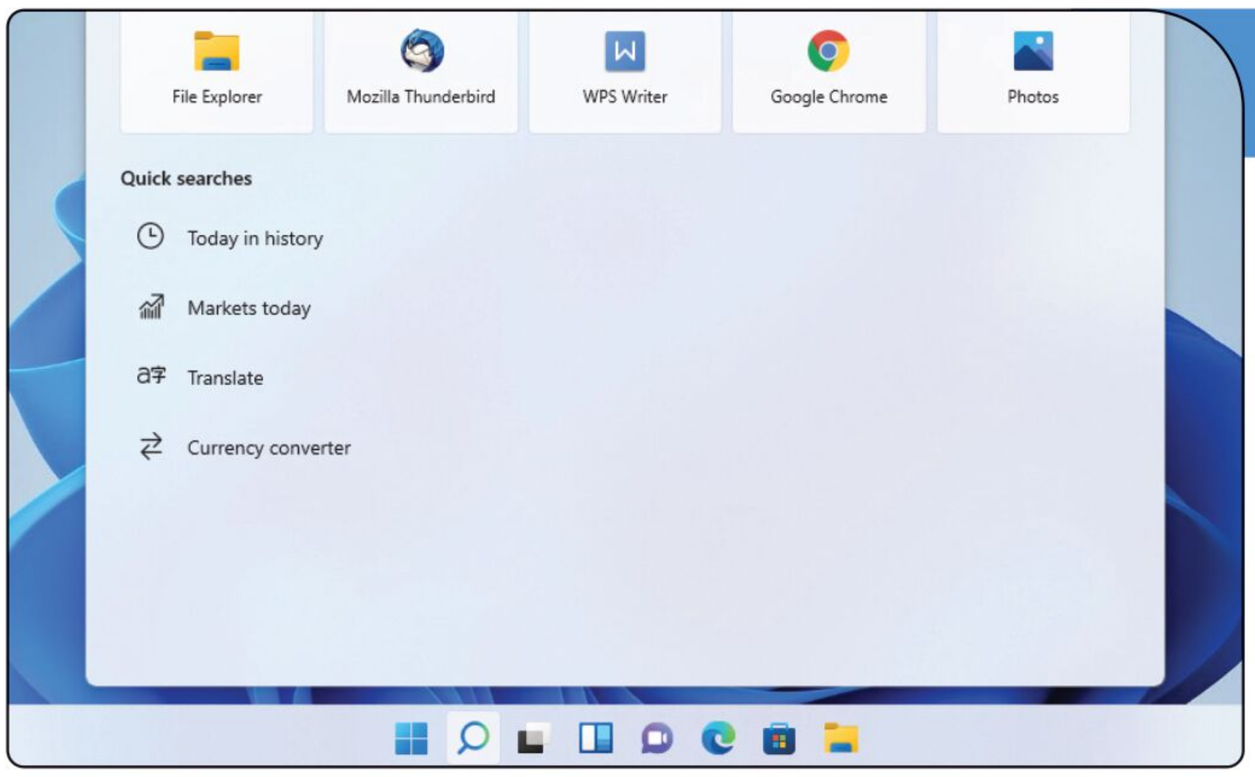
Taskbar Layout

The taskbar runs the full length of the bottom of the screen, and is now divided into two main sections: Start Menu/Pinned App and System Tools. In Windows 11 the taskbar app icons are arranged in the centre of the taskbar (although this can be changed), with system tools on the right.



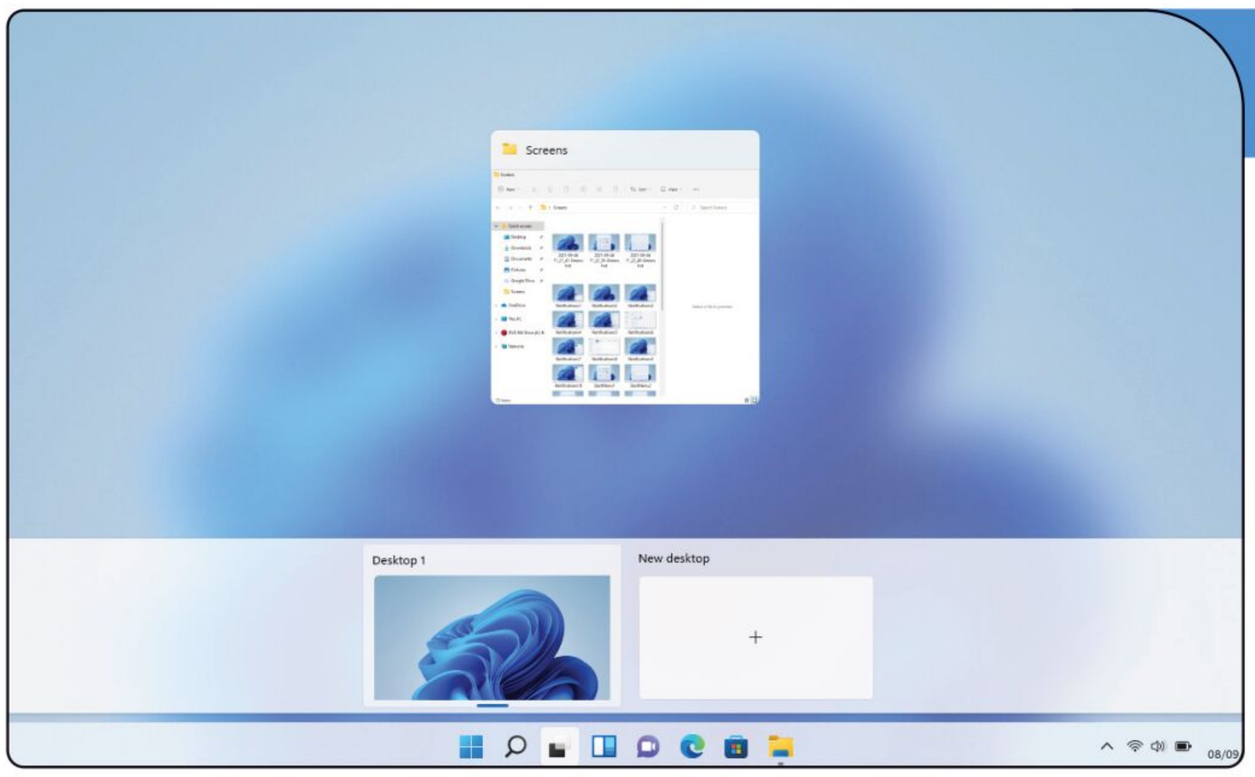
Start Menu

The first icon in the row of taskbar icons is the Start menu button. Clicking this opens the Start menu directly above the icons. You can right-click the Start menu button to see a jump menu of additional links and tools. These include a shortcut to shut down or sign out of your computer.



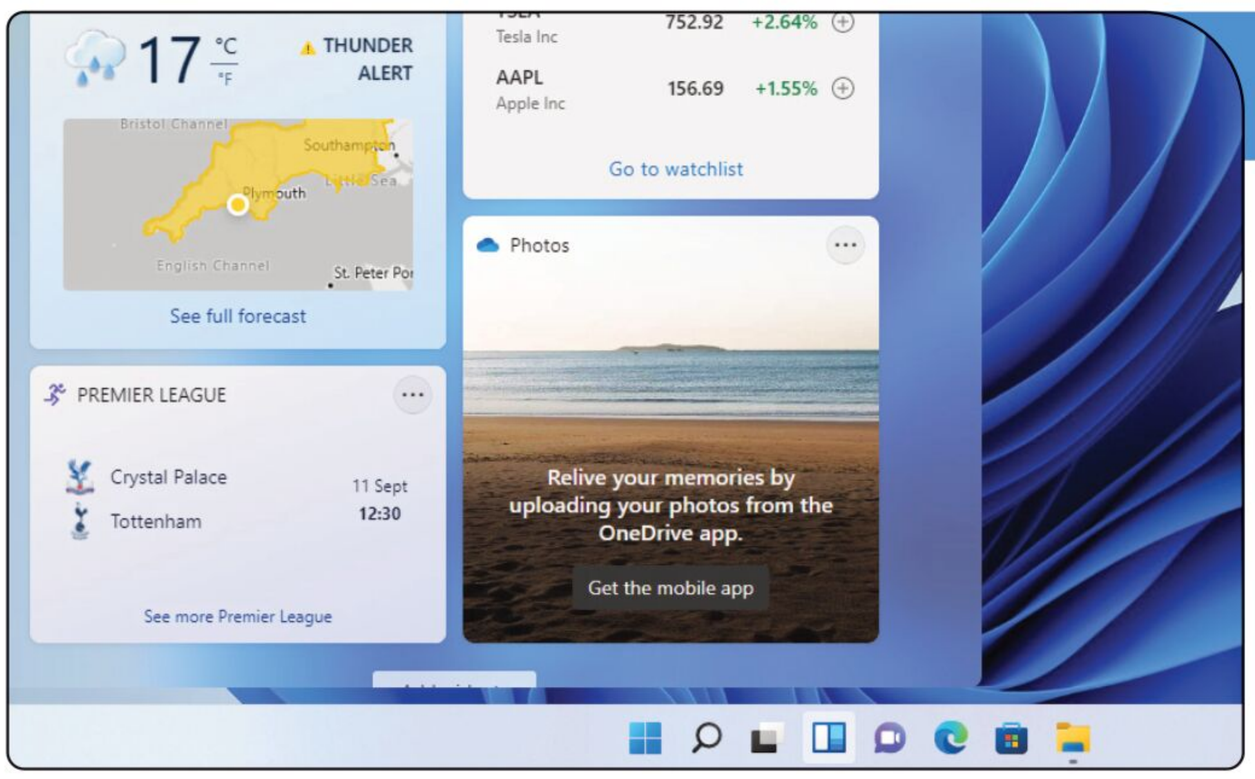
Search Tool

The embedded search field of Windows 10 is gone, replaced by a button (magnifying glass) that opens a new system search panel. This unified search allows you to not only search for things on your computer, but also in OneDrive and for results from websites. As you begin typing, search suggestions appear.



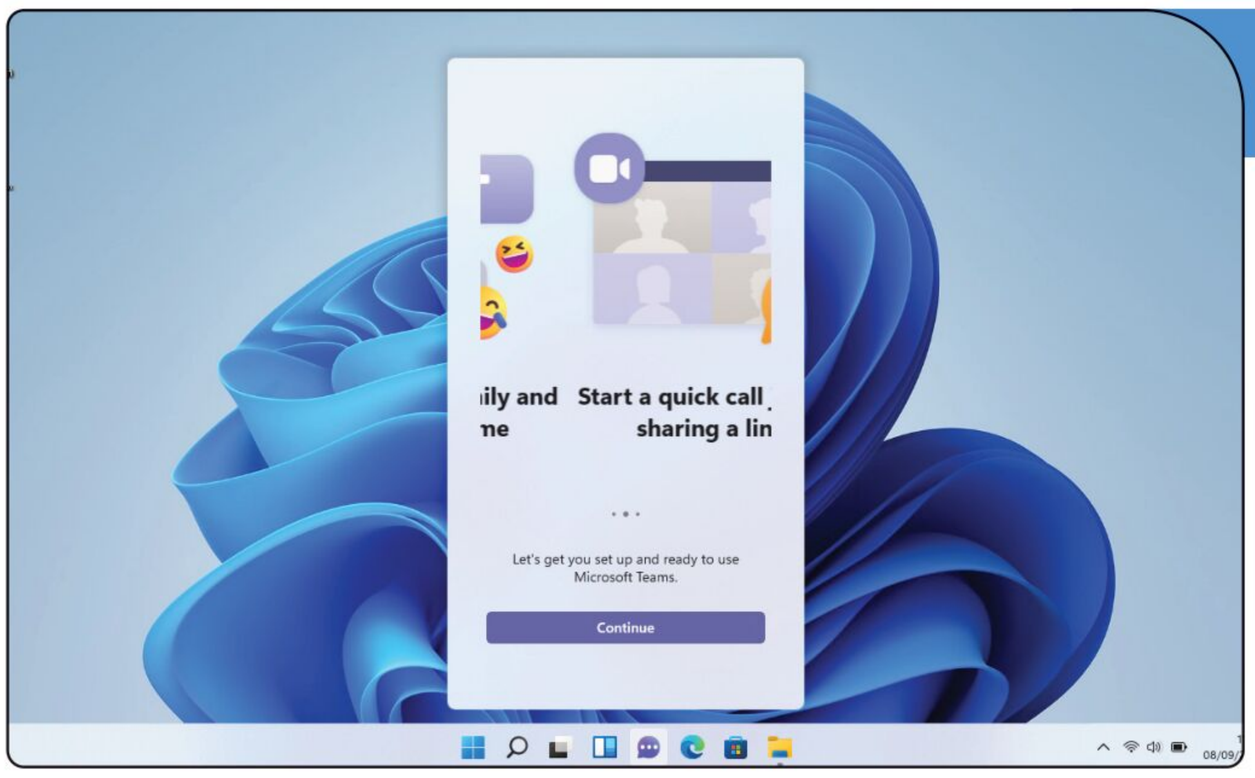
Task View

The third button in the row of taskbar icons opens Task View. Task View is not a new feature to Windows, but it has been slightly changed and streamlined for this version. Task View allows you to quickly see every app and window you have open, switch between them and even create new desktops.



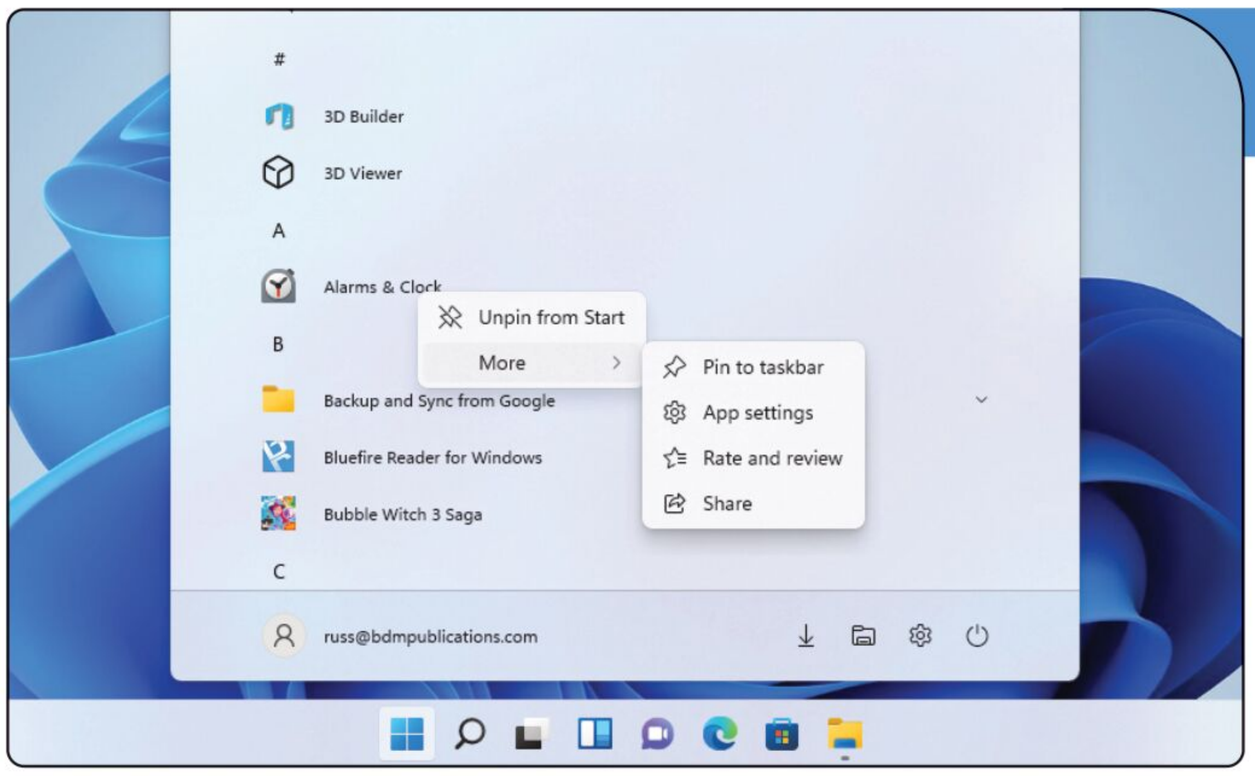
Widgets

The fourth default button opens the Widget panel, on the left side of the screen. The widget panel can be customised to suit your needs with information such as weather, photos, stock prices, sports results and news stories. As Windows 11 develops, it is likely even more functionality will be added.



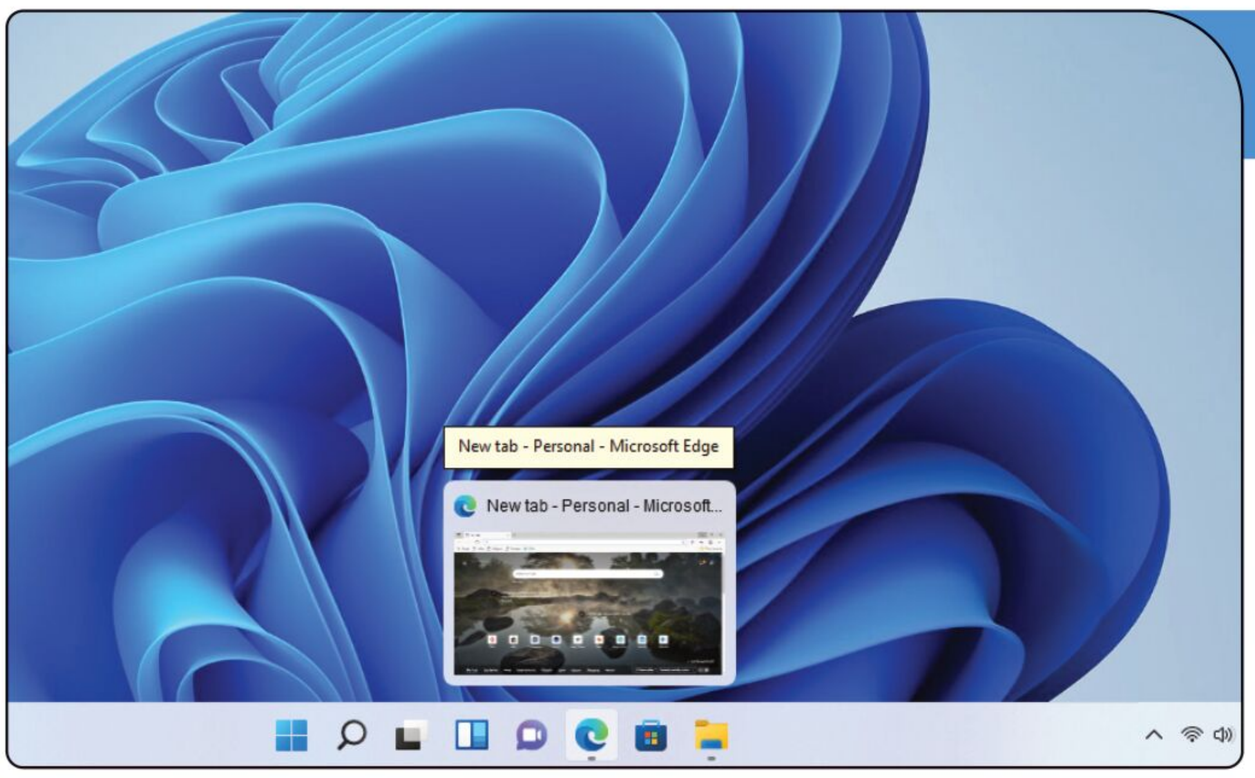
Microsoft Teams

The huge recent rise of remote working and video meetings goes some way to explain why Microsoft have embedded Teams as part of Windows 11. Once you are set up and signed into your Teams account, clicking this button will open the start/join meeting interface.



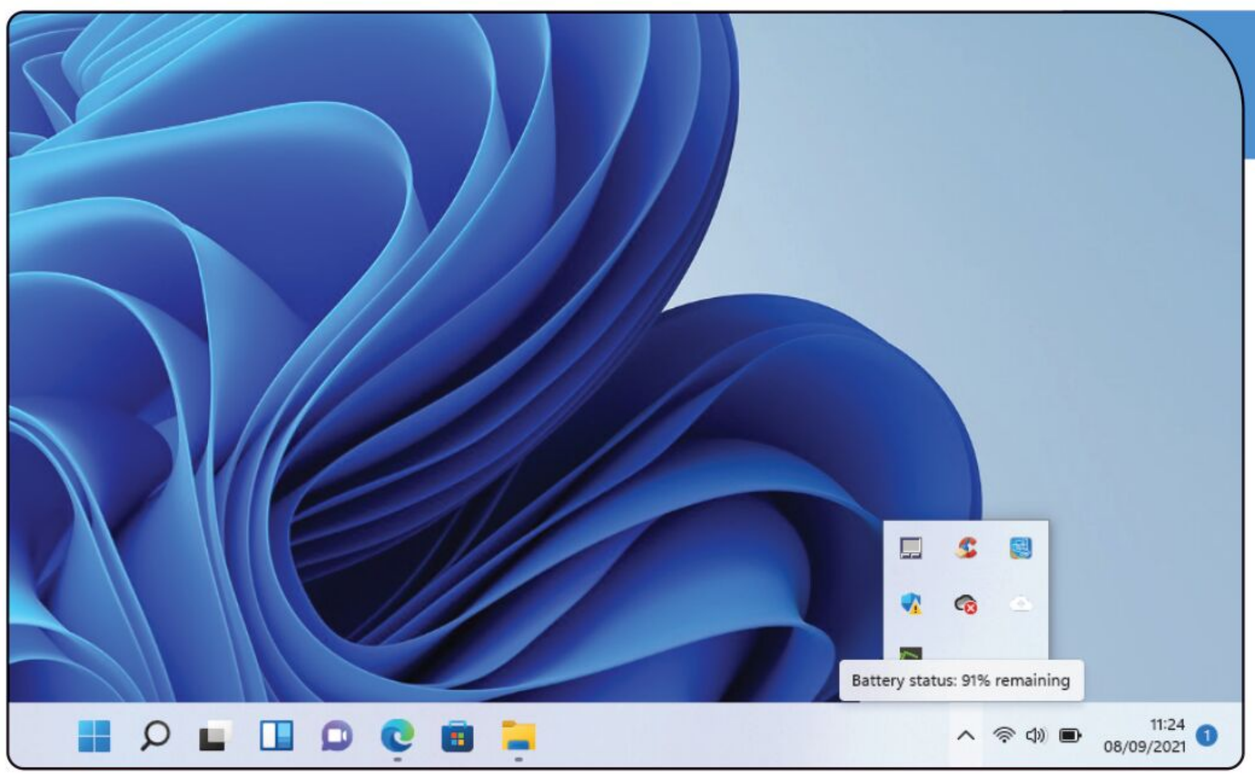
Pinning Apps

A few other apps and other software will be pinned to the taskbar when you first use your Windows 11 PC. You can add several more as and when you choose. To pin compatible apps, right-click on the app icon anywhere you see it (Start menu for example), and then click Pin to Taskbar.



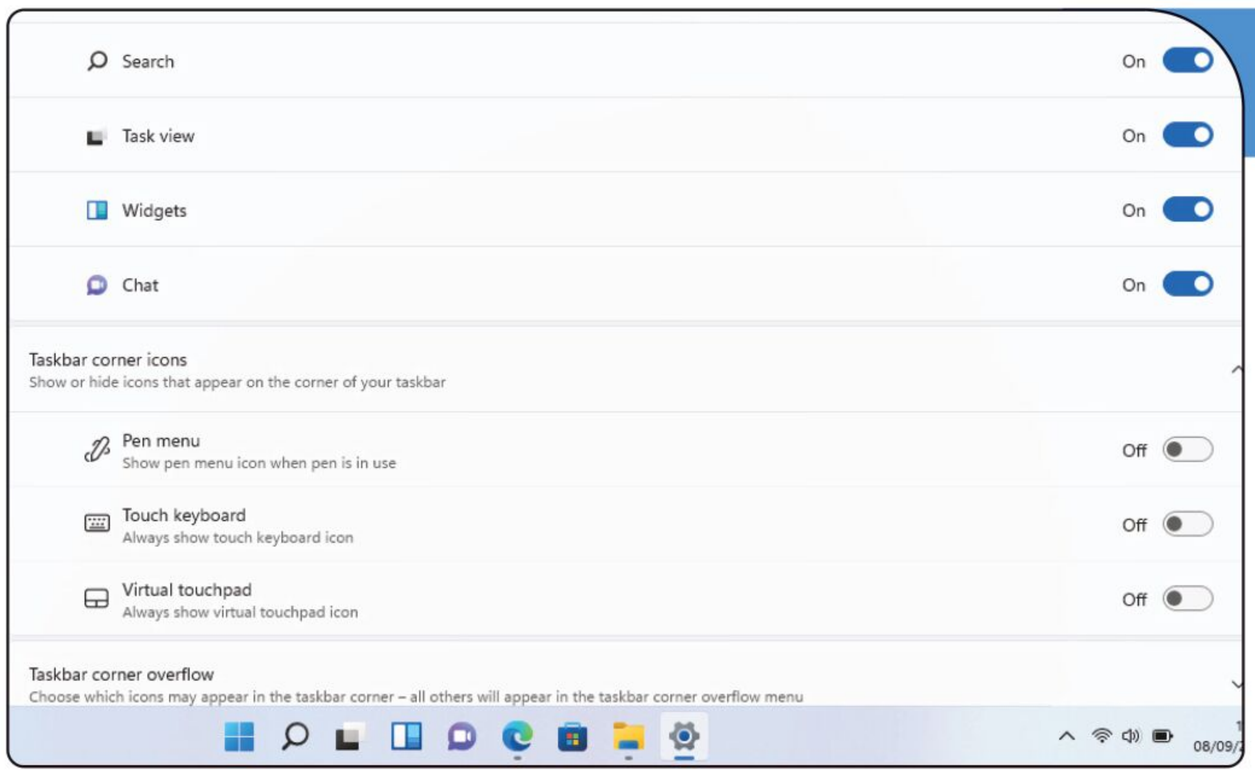
Peek

Hovering over any open app icon in the Taskbar brings up a Peek preview of the window. If a movie is playing, you will see it playing here too. If you mouse over the preview, the actual app or window will pop up on screen. You will also see an X to close the window, without actually selecting it.



System Tools

The right-hand side of the taskbar is reserved for the system tools, the time and date (which opens the Notification Center upon a click) and the Show Desktop button. The system tools will vary depending on your computer, but may include battery status, Wi-Fi status, Sound and OneDrive.



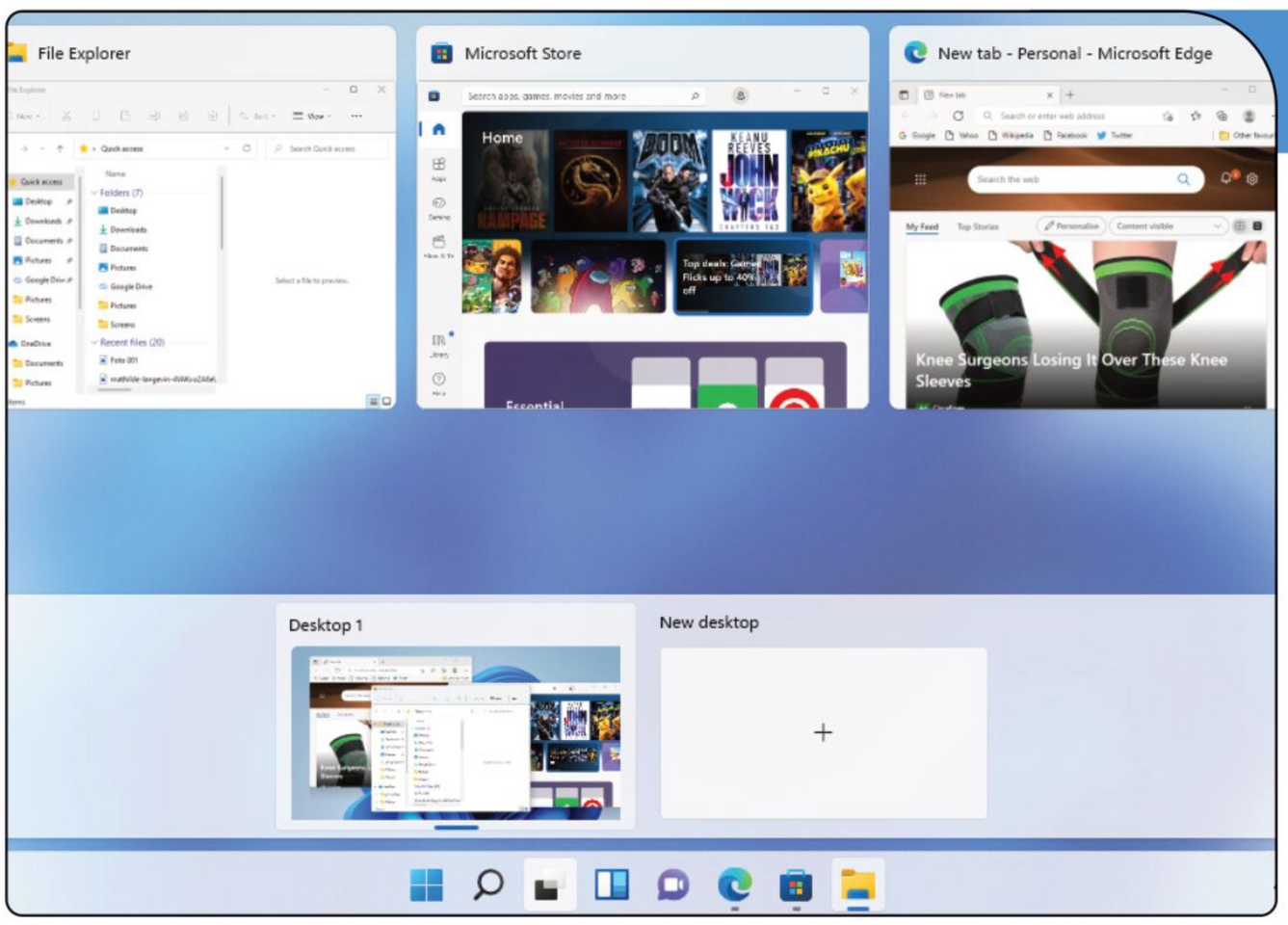
Taskbar Settings

You have quite a lot of free reign when it comes to which apps you have showing in the taskbar. Open Settings > Personalisation > Taskbar. Here you can use the slider switches to enable or disable the default apps that appear. You can also change the alignment of the pinned apps back to the left.

Task View and Desktops

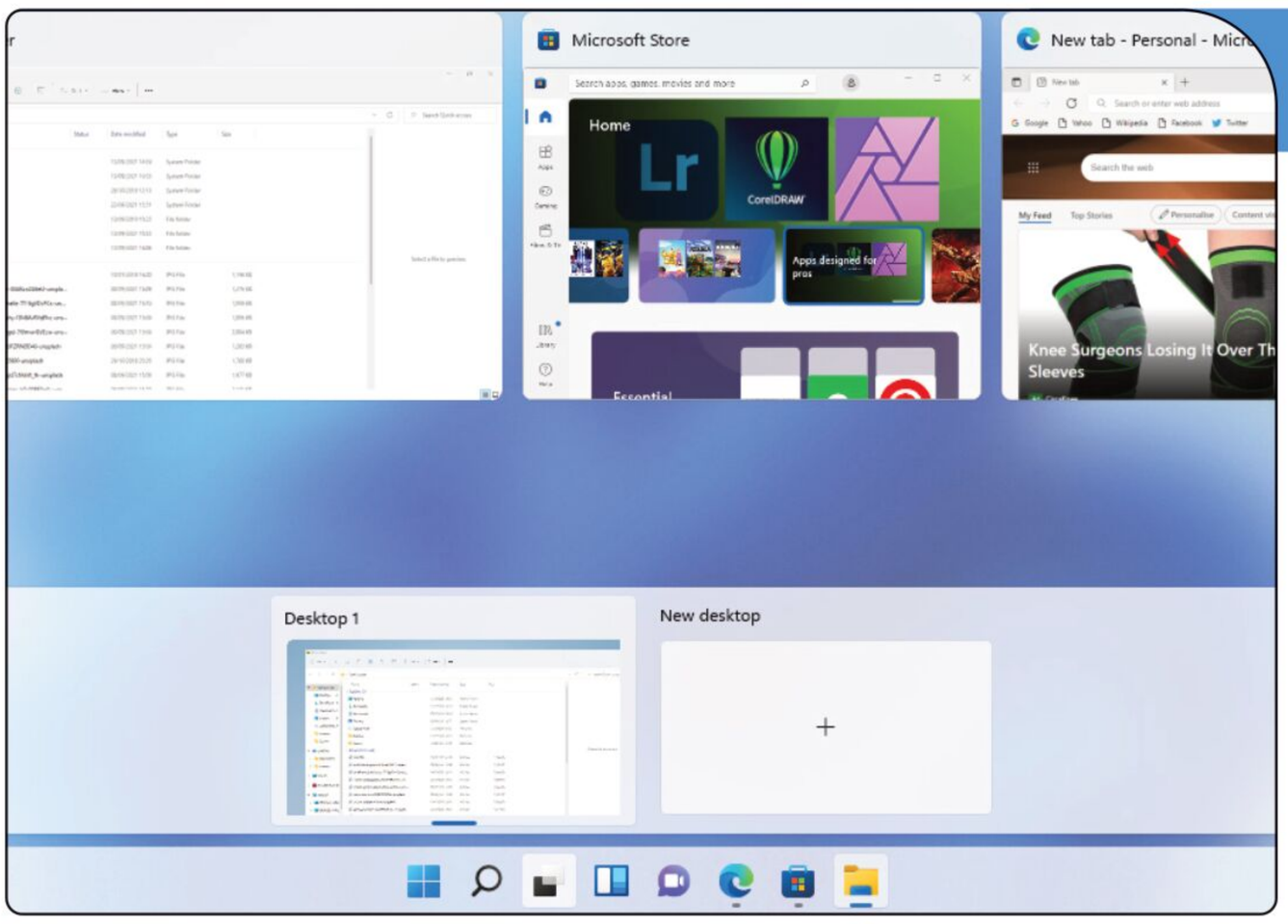
Task View was introduced properly in Windows 10, as a way to make multi-tasking easier and allowing the creation of extra desktop areas. In Windows 11 it's even easier to instantly check and switch to open windows; and to create and manage multiple desktops.

Using Task View



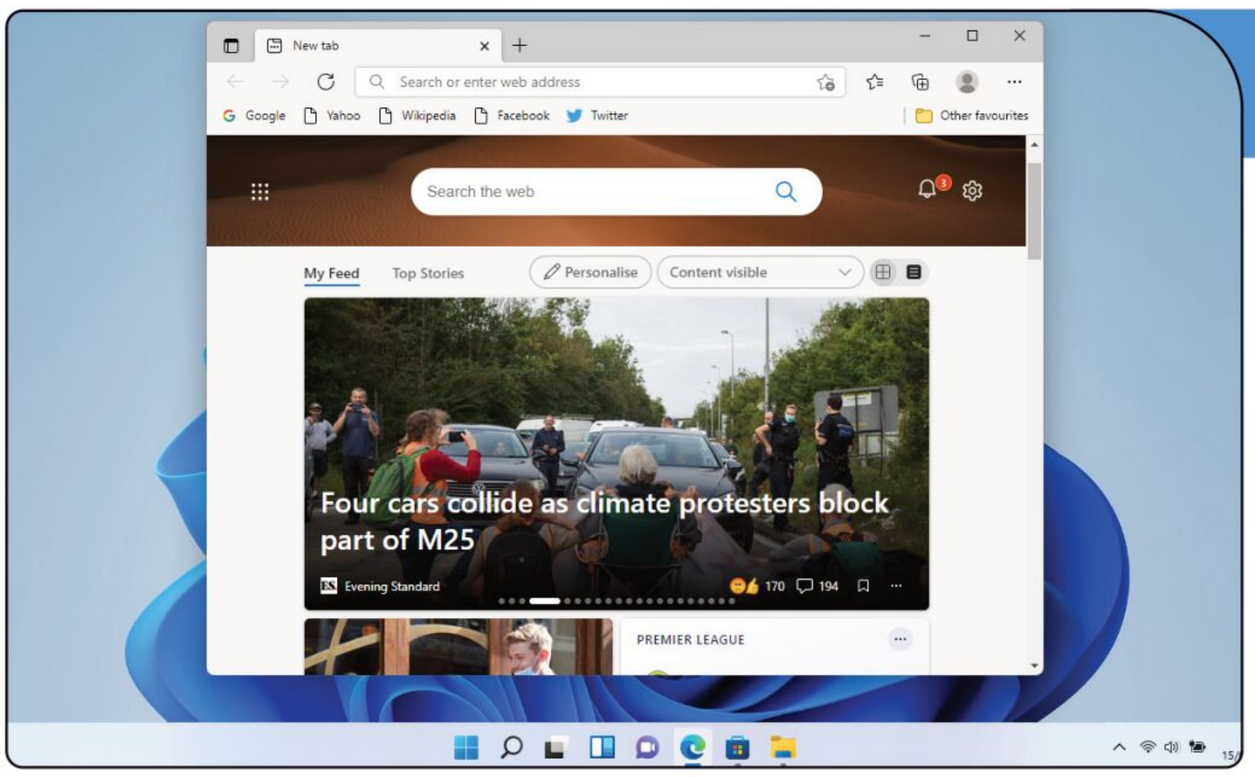
Step 1

Task View is accessed by clicking the third icon in the taskbar; the white square on the black square. The Task View screen is split into two sections: Open tasks and desktops. Any apps or windows you have open, even if they are currently minimised, will be displayed in the open tasks panel.



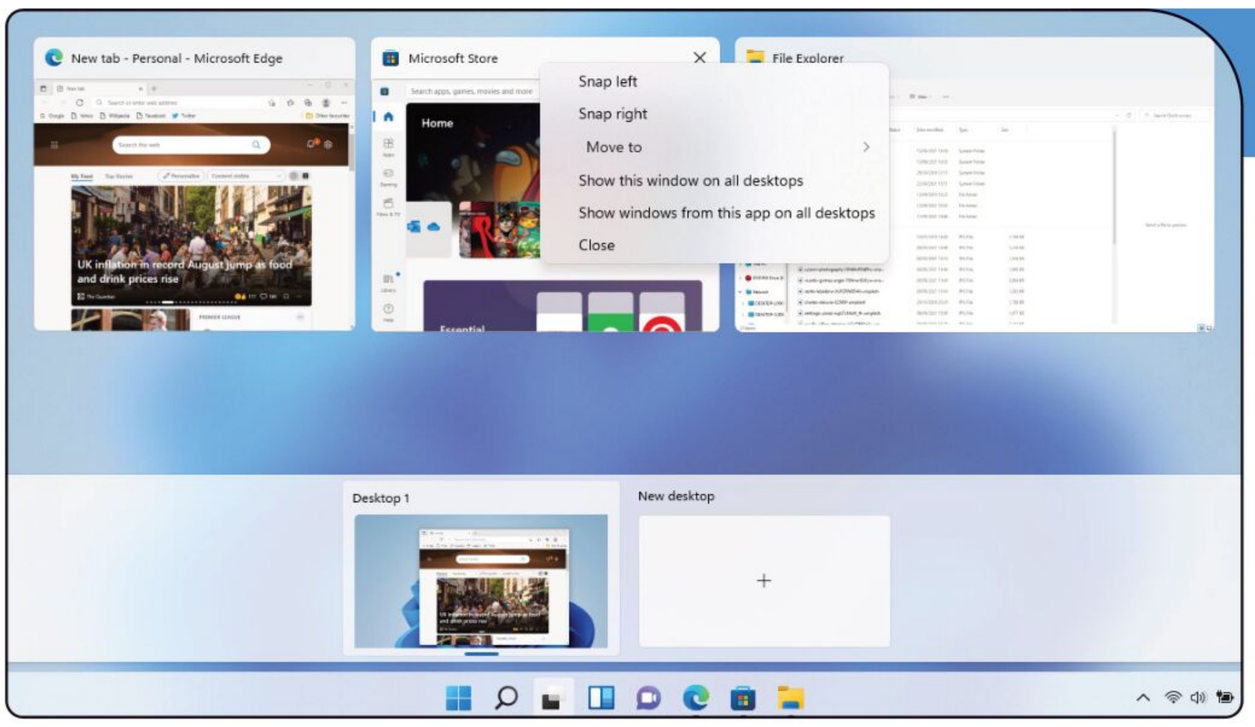
Step 2

The size and shape of the windows shown in Task View depend on the size and shape of the actual window. For example, if you have Microsoft Edge open at full screen, it will be displayed as a wide rectangle in Task View. If you have a lot of windows open, the open tasks panel will be scrollable.



Step 3

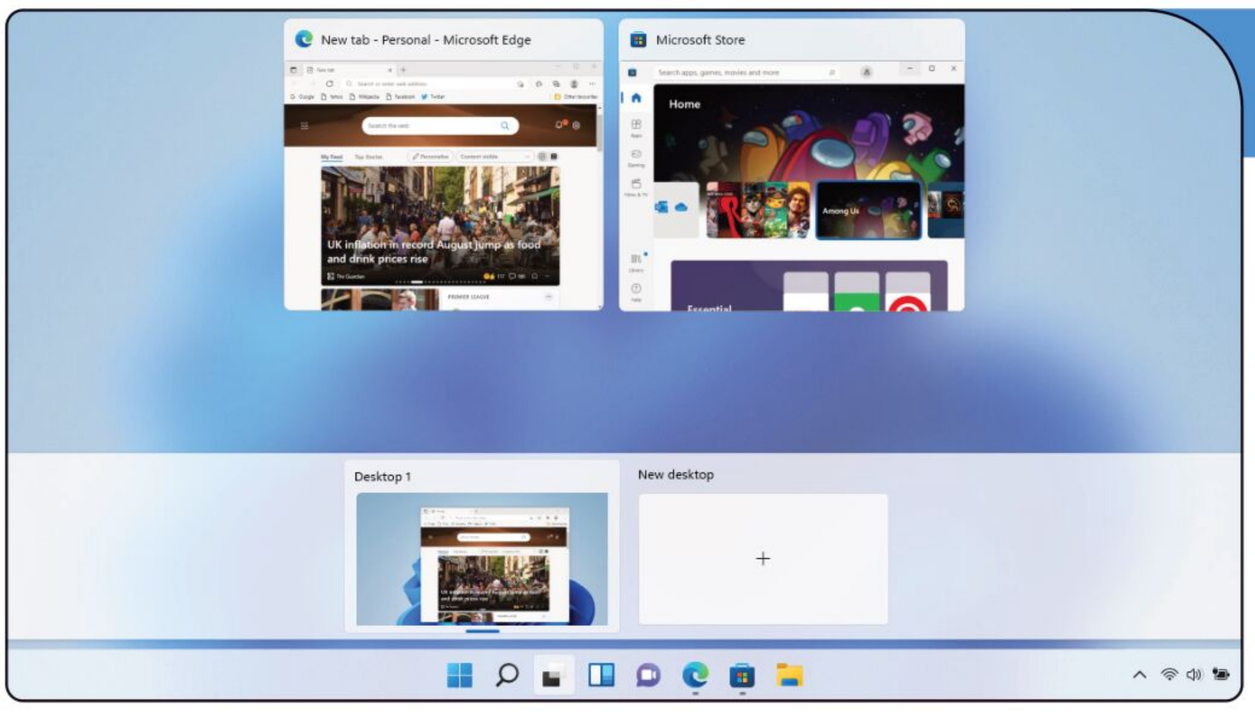
Click on any window or app in Task View to open it at full size on the desktop. It will appear in front of any windows you already had open and visible on the desktop. You can also close windows or apps directly from the Task view. Just hover the mouse over the window and click the X button.



Step 4

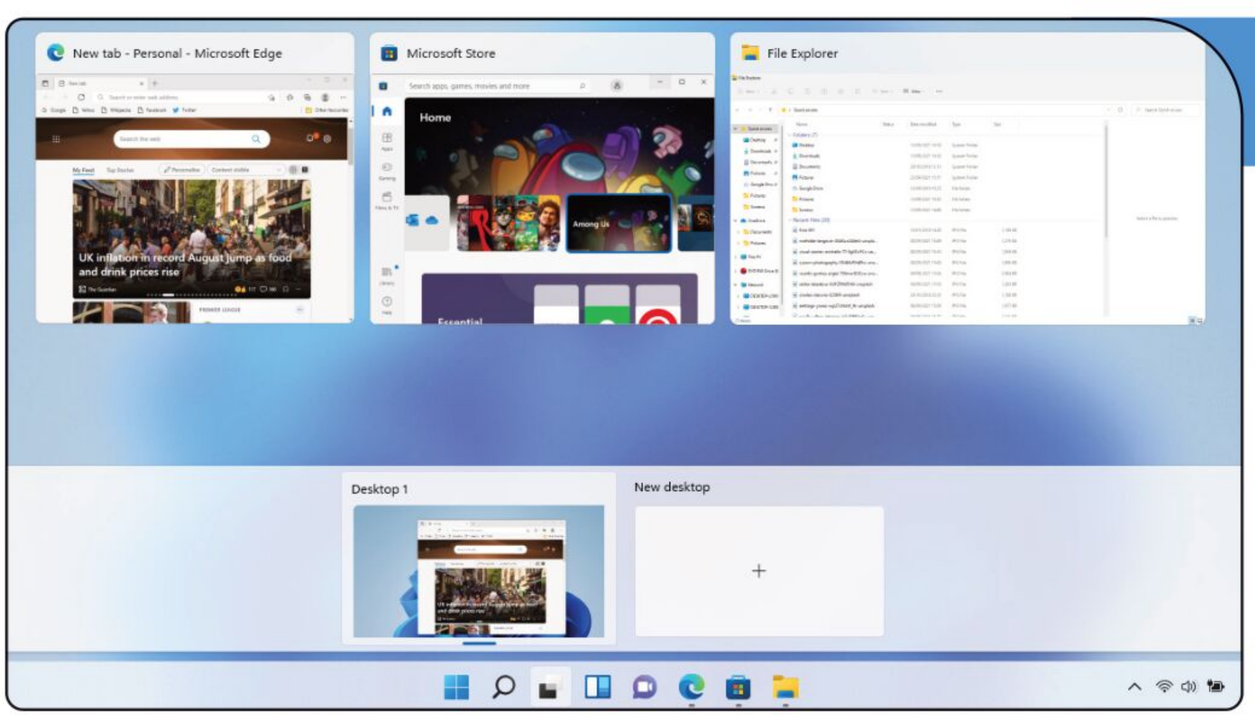
If you right-click on one of the windows/apps shown in Task View, you will see several more options. Snap left/right will open the selected window, but "snapped" or positioned to the left or right of the home screen. There are also several options for showing/hiding the window on new desktops.

Using Multiple Desktops



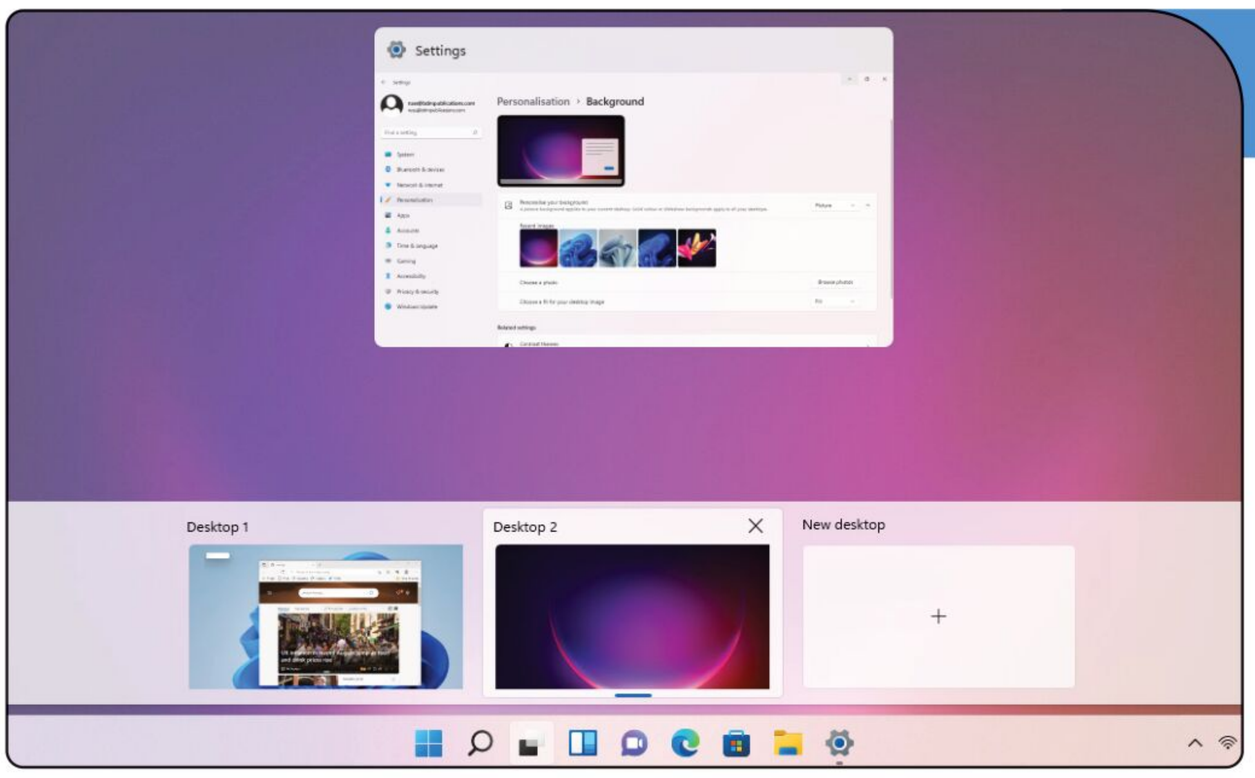
Step 1

One of the great features in Task View is the ability to add extra desktops. Virtual desktops are essentially extra workspaces, so for example you can have one space with your email and chat windows open and another where you're working in PowerPoint without email distractions.



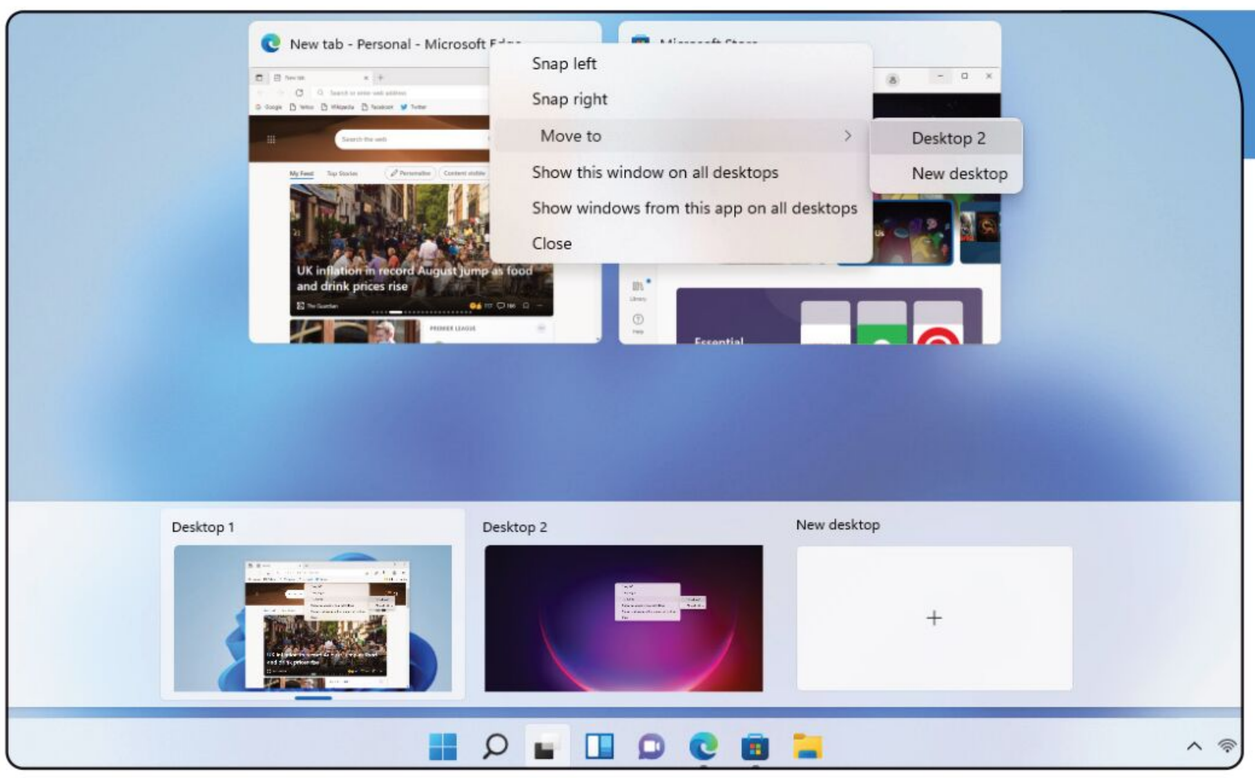
Step 2

Click or tap the New Desktop button at the bottom of the Task View screen and you will see an entirely new and blank desktop. If you had any apps or windows open in the main desktop, they won't be open here. Don't worry, they haven't been closed, they are still open on the other desktop.



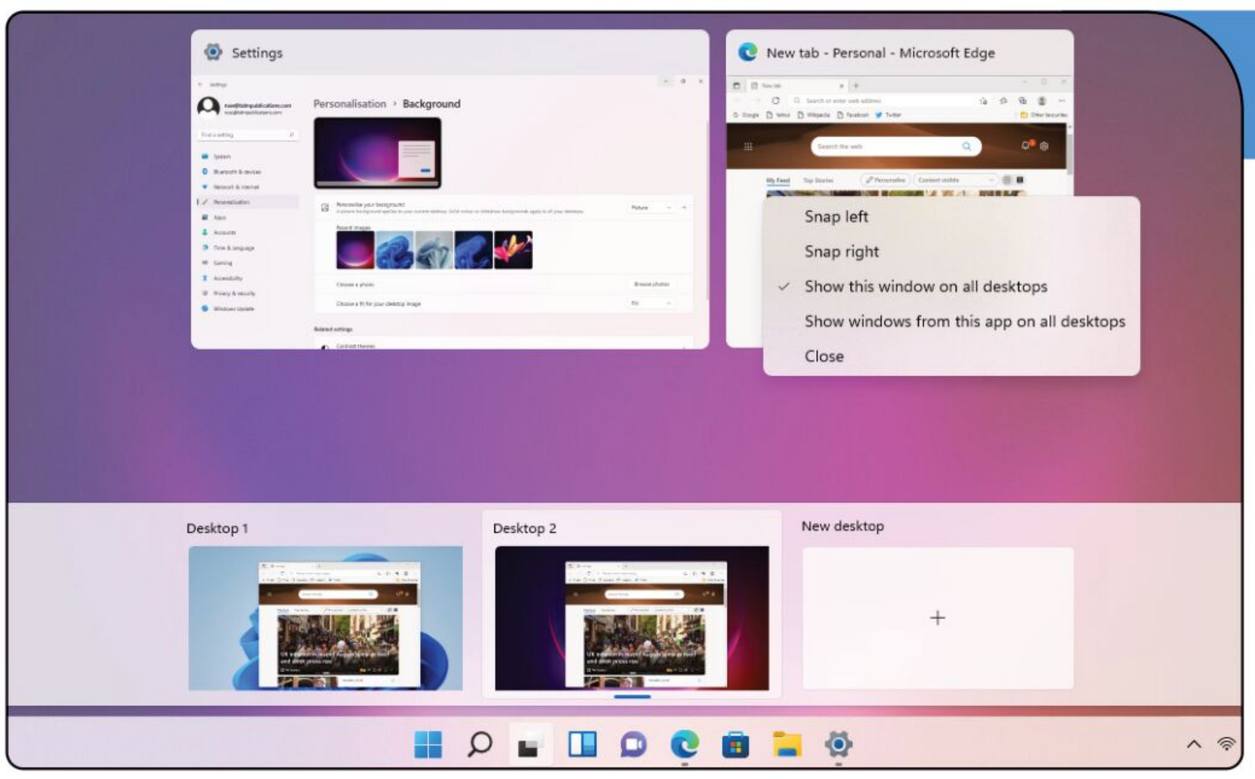
Step 3

With Task View open, right click on one of the desktop previews at the bottom and you can choose a different background wallpaper (making identifying which desktop you are on currently easier), and also you can choose to move a desktop to the left or right, switching which one is the main desktop.



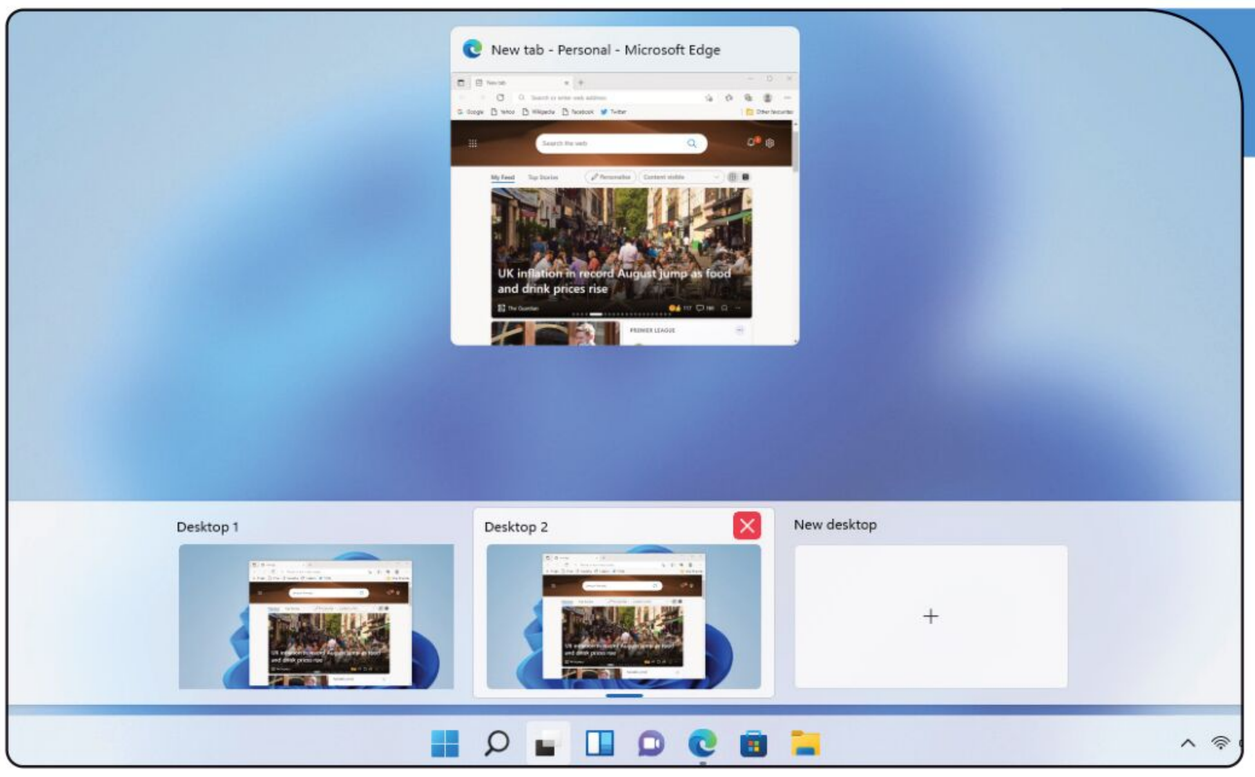
Step 4

You can right-click the apps in Task View to send them to another desktop. You can also drag and drop windows/apps from one desktop to another. If you have an app or window open in one desktop and then try to open it in another, you will just switch to the desktop where it was already open.



Step 5

To get around this problem, open the Task View and right click on an app or window. From the menu, choose either “Show this window on all desktops” or “Show windows from this app on all desktops”. You can also use this menu to move apps or windows between your open desktops.



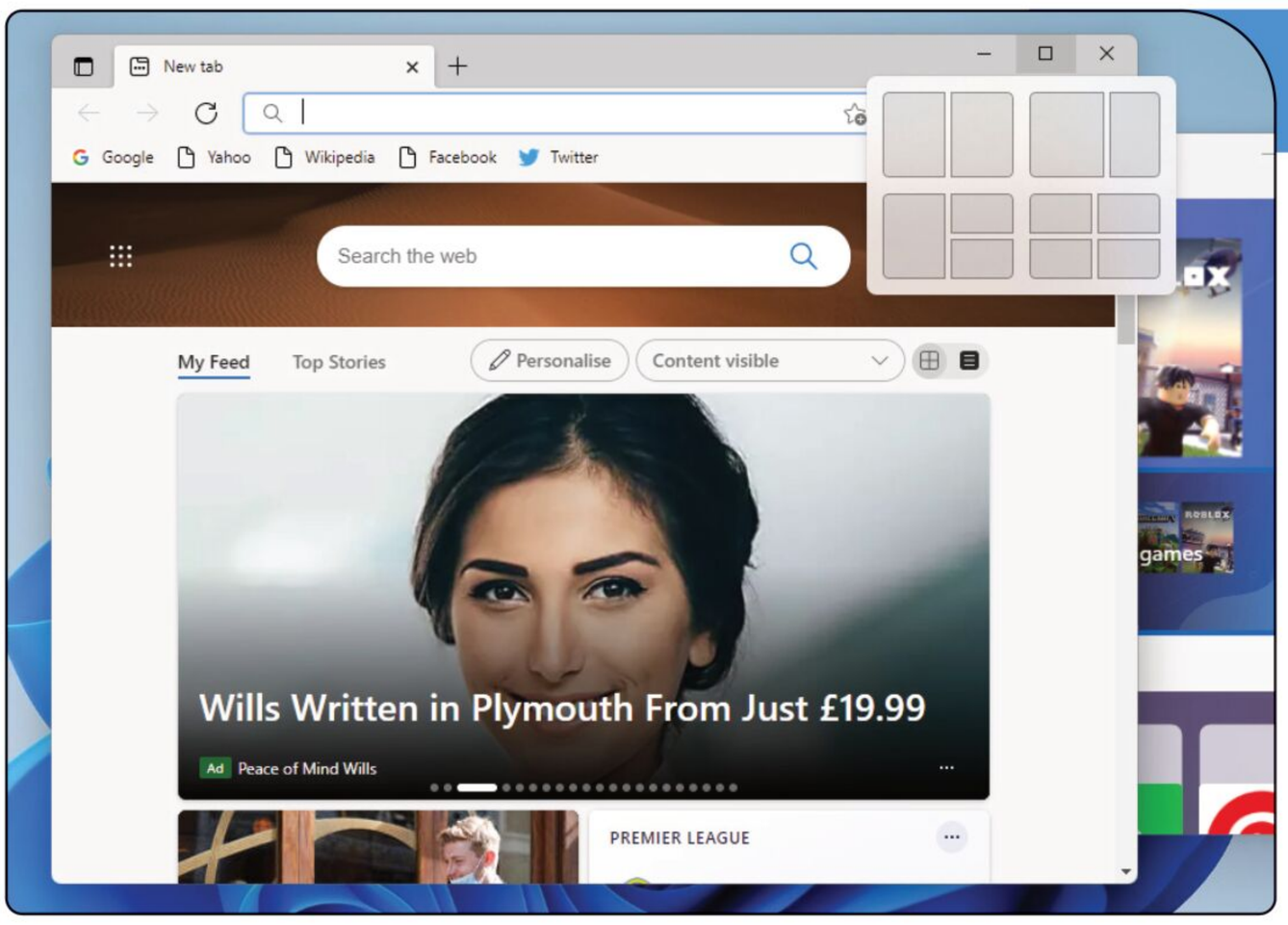
Step 6

If you hover over the apps and windows shown in the Open Tasks panel, you will see an X appear; now you can close superfluous desktops down to save resources. Doing this doesn’t close any apps down, so you don’t need to manually move them. It just automatically adds them to the main desktop.

Snap Layouts and Groups

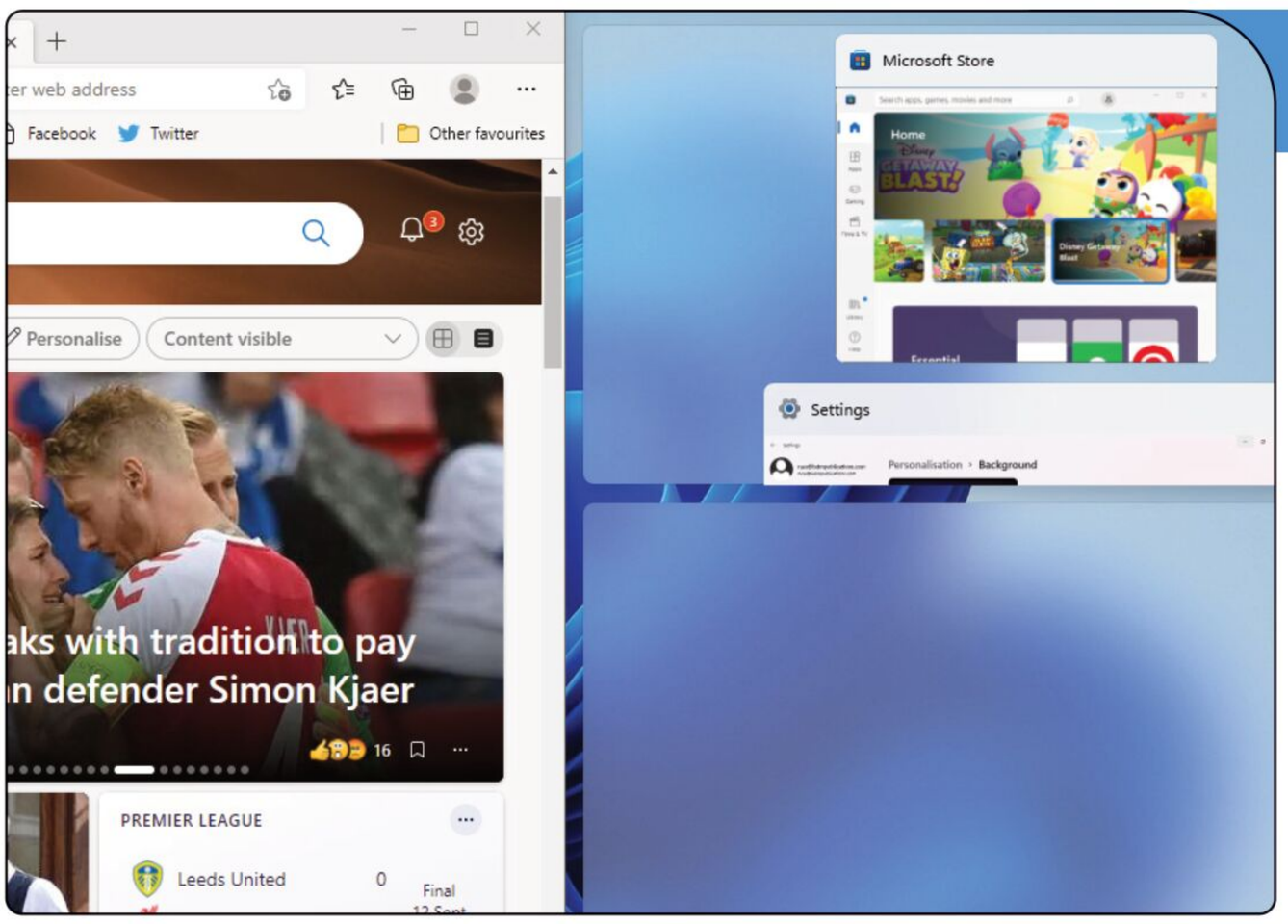
Snap Layouts and Snap Groups, while similar to Snap Assist in Windows 10, are completely new features for Windows 11. Each is designed to make your life easier by giving you new ways to organise and retrieve apps and windows on a busy desktop.

Using Snap Layouts



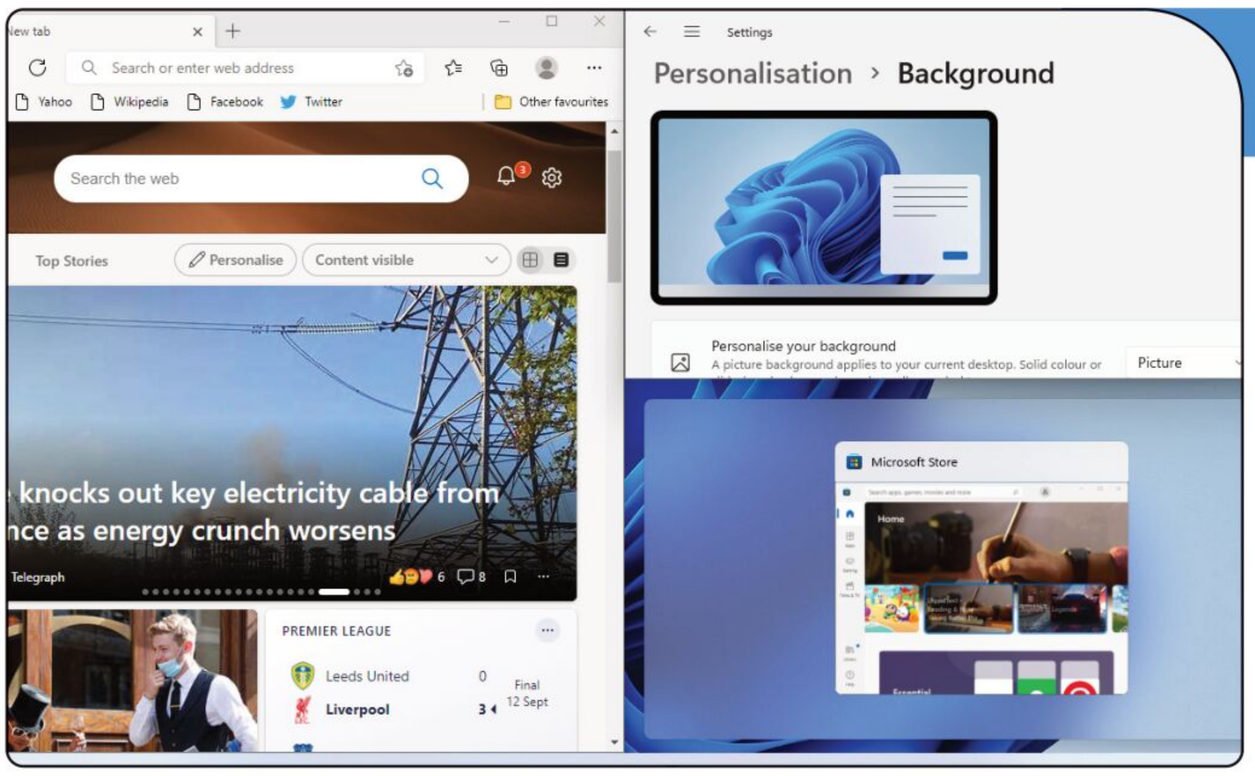
Step 1

Snap Layouts can be created with just one open app or window, but really come into their own when several are open. Move your mouse over the Maximise button (top-right corner) of any open app or window, without clicking. After a second, a brand new menu will pop up, showing the available layouts.



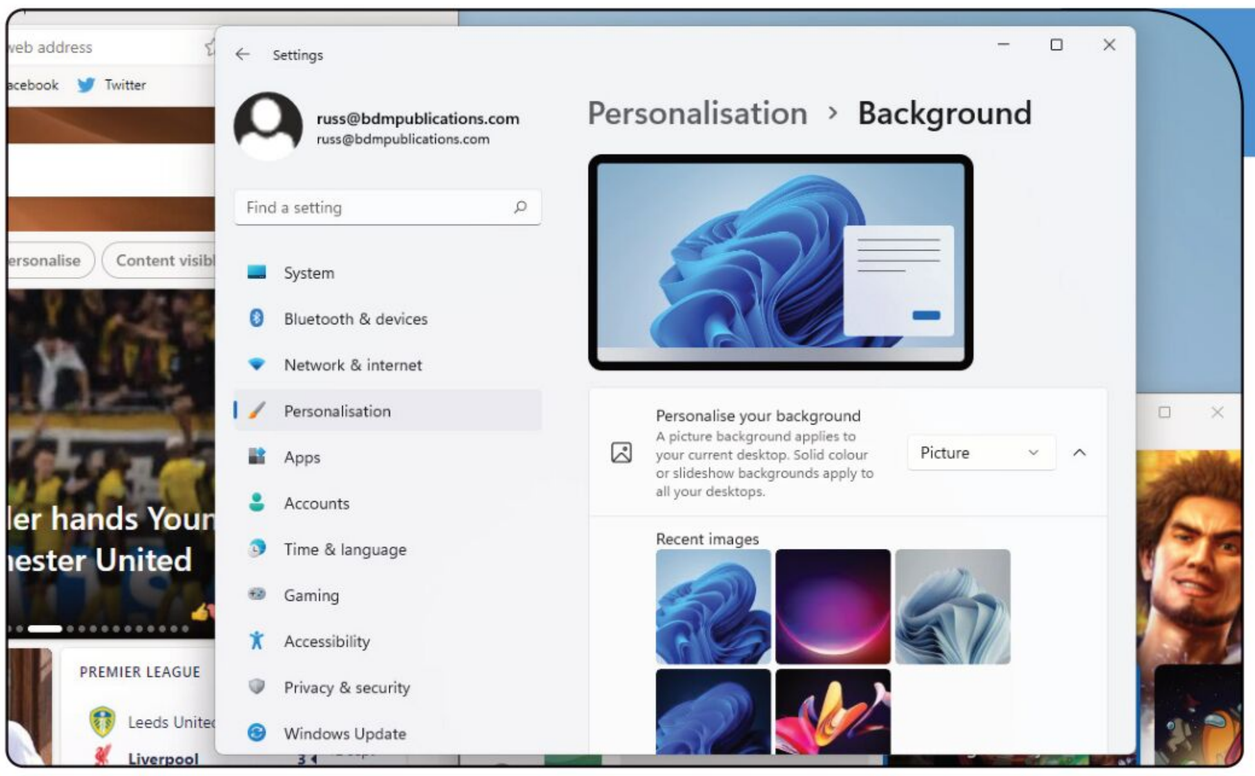
Step 2

There are 4 preset layouts available (at present, although more may be added): 2 equal windows side-by-side, 2 unequal windows side-by-side, 3 windows and 4 equal windows. Click on whichever you want to use, and the window/app you used to open the layout will snap into one of the positions.



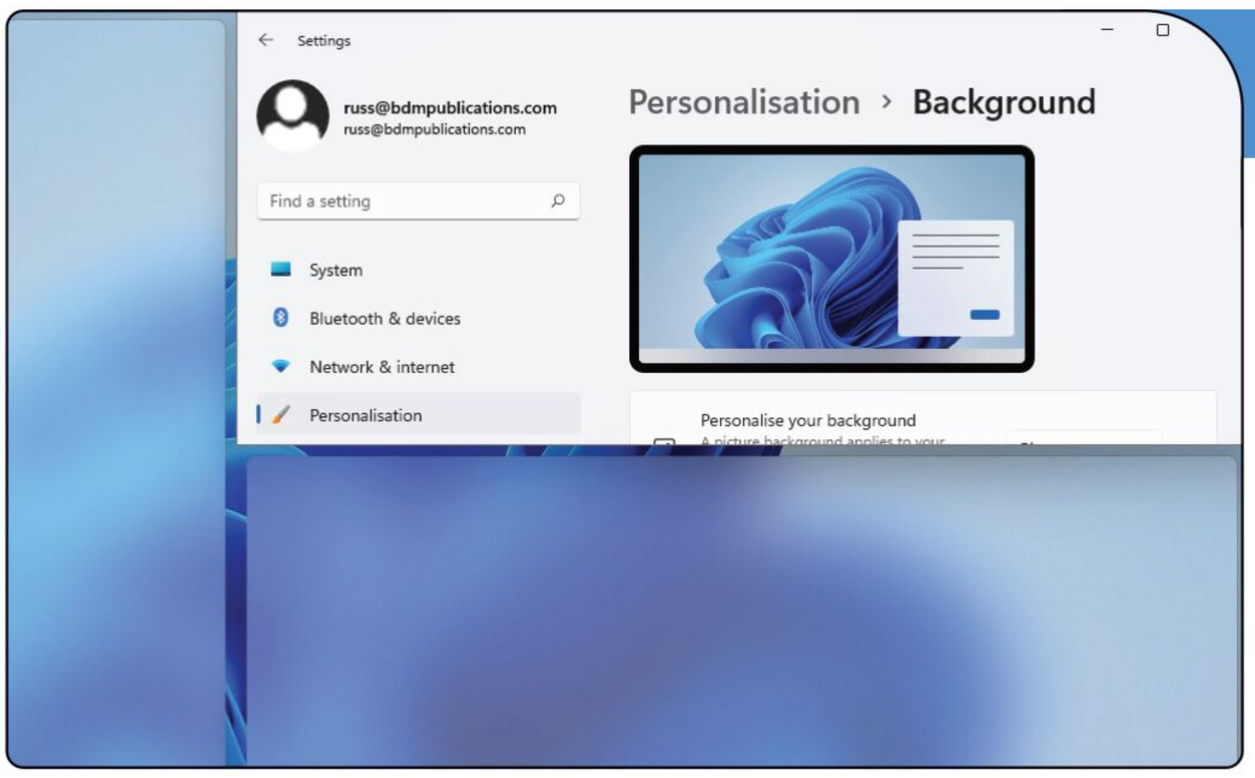
Step 3

Your other open windows/apps will appear as previews in one of the other layout positions. Click one of them to open it in that layout position. The process is then repeated for any other open windows, if you choose a layout with more than 2 spaces. Windows are automatically resized to fit in the layout.



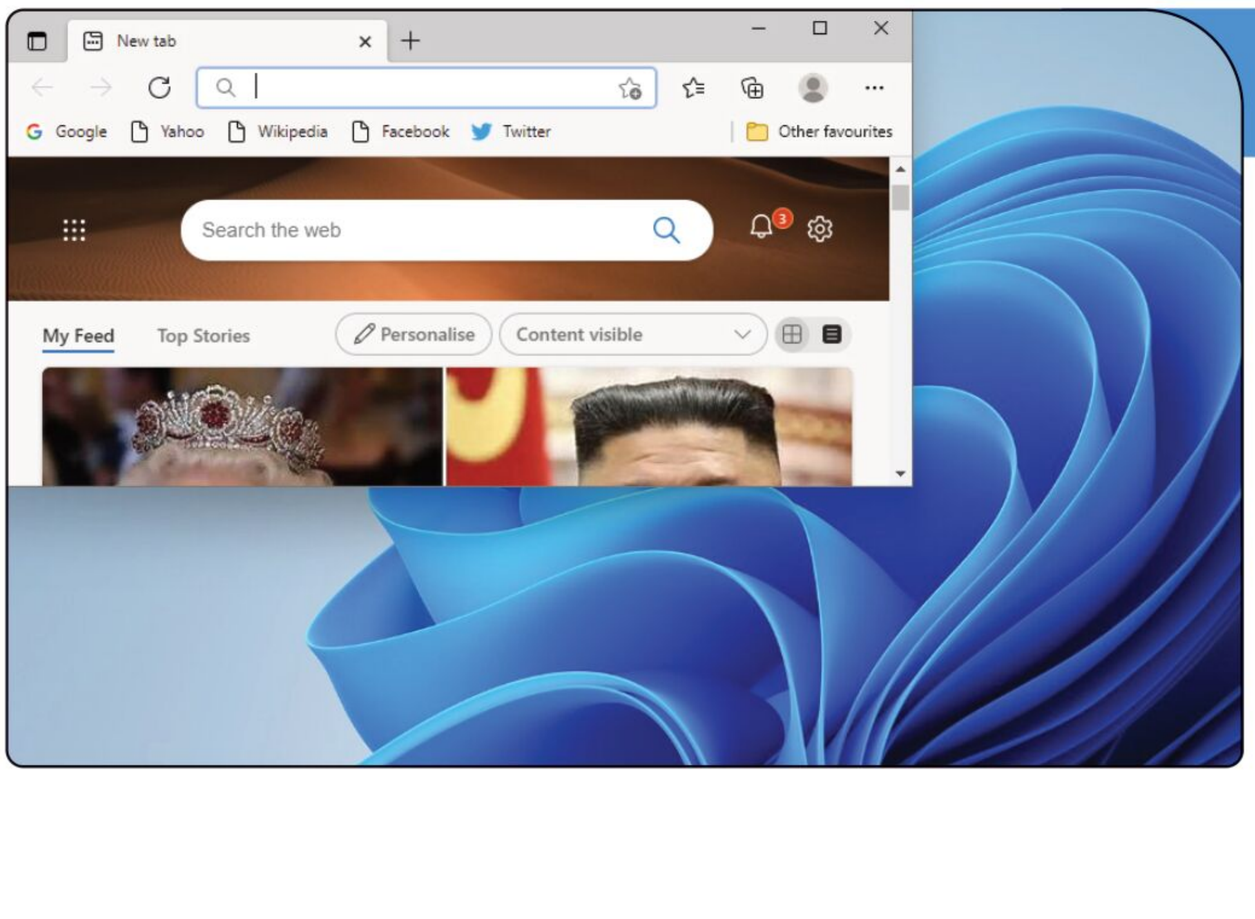
Step 4

If you now try to move a window or app out of the layout, it will switch back to its original dimensions when it unsnaps from the grid. You can create multiple Snap Layouts, each containing different apps/ windows. These remain until the windows are closed or removed from the group.



Step 5

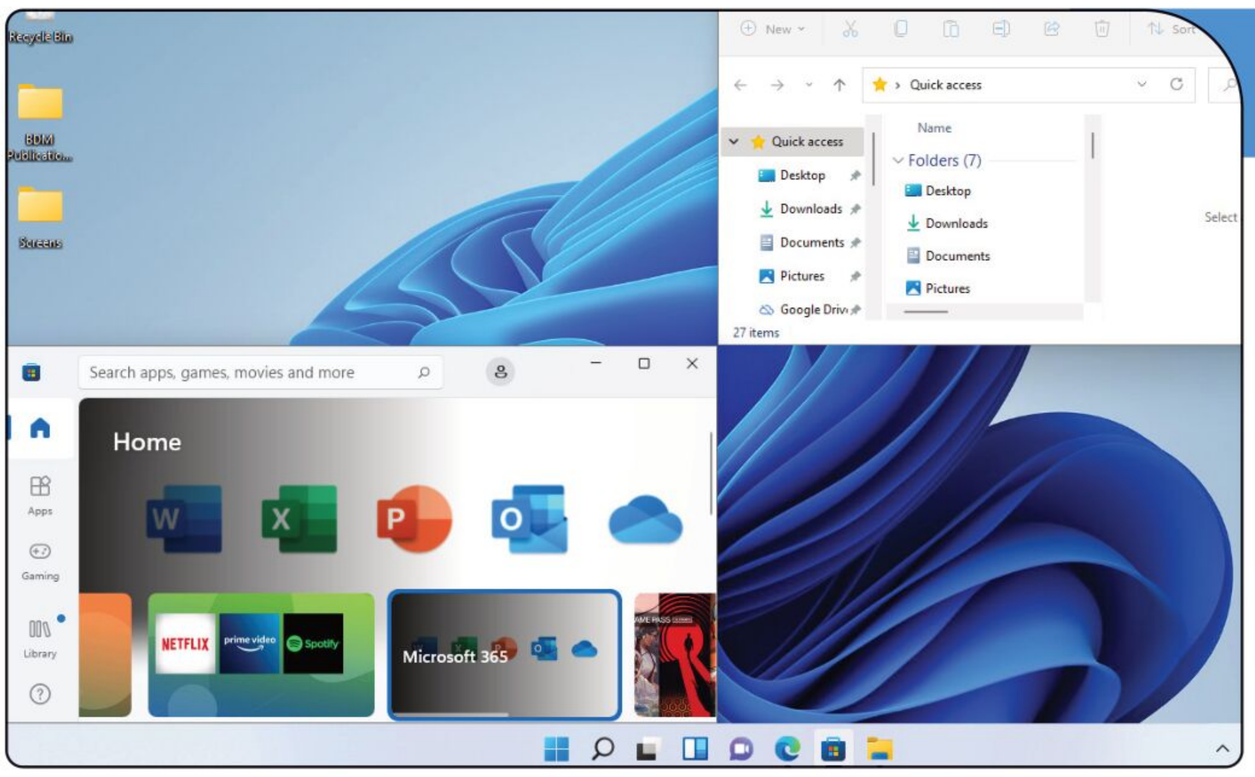
You can change the dimensions of the layout once you have created one. With the layout open, hover your mouse over the line where the windows meet, either horizontally or vertically. A wider bar will appear, which you can click and drag to change the horizontal or vertical dimensions of the layout.



Step 6

You can snap apps and windows into position using a keyboard shortcut as well. Highlight a window and then press Windows Key + one of the arrow keys. Depending on which direction you press, the window will snap left, right, up or down. Combine key presses to snap up and left, for example.

Using Snap Groups

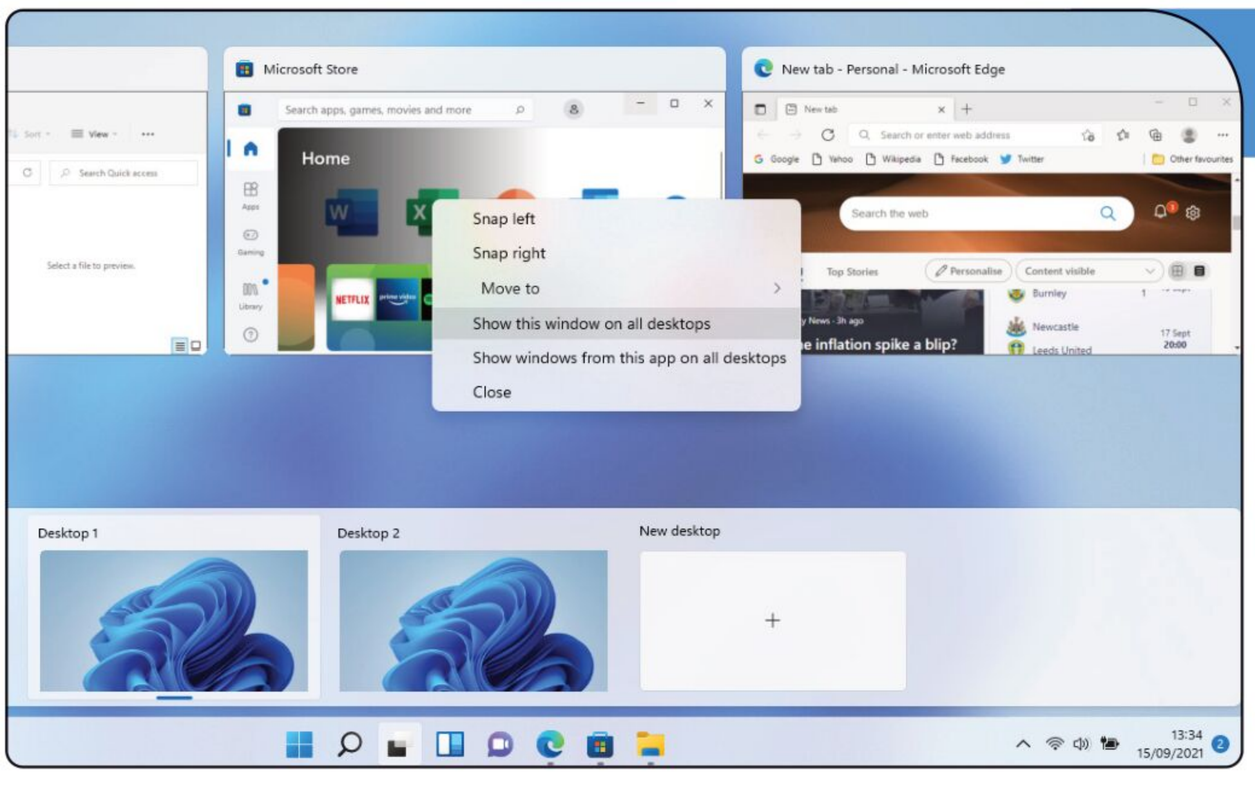


Step 1

Once you have created a Snap Layout, or multiple layouts, you can minimise the whole thing (by clicking the Show Desktop button on the right of the taskbar) or minimise each individual app or window. As long as they are not closed, the layout persists as a Snap Group.

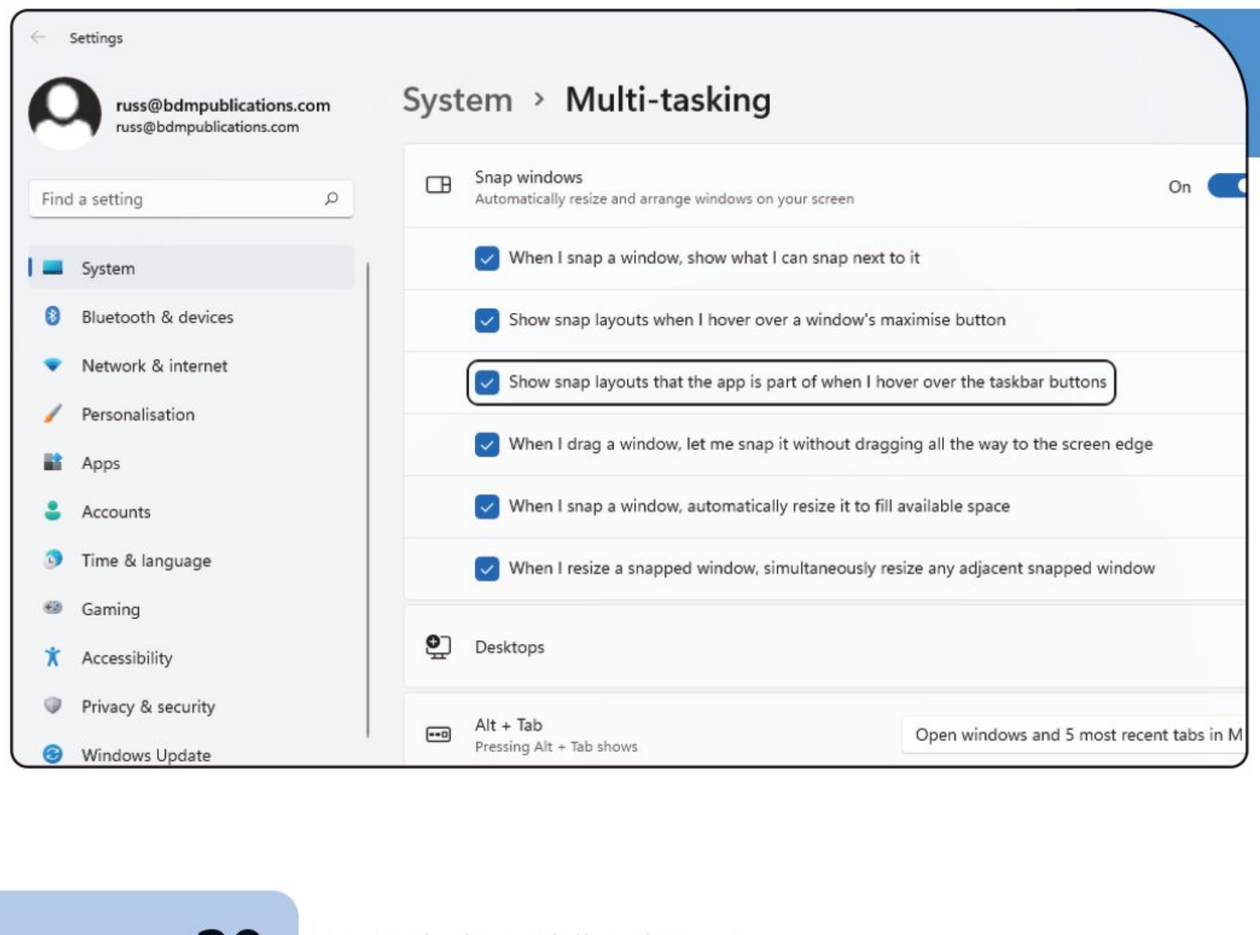
Step 2

If you move your mouse over any of the Taskbar icons of apps or windows in a group, two Peek windows will pop up. One shows the app on its own, and they other shows the app in the group. To re-open the group, just click on the group preview. To open the app on its own, click that preview.



Step 3

If you use multiple desktops, you can move Snap Groups to any of the additional desktop areas. Just open the Task View, and then right click on each of the apps or windows in the group and choose, “Show this window on all desktop”. The group will automatically be recreated on the other desktop.



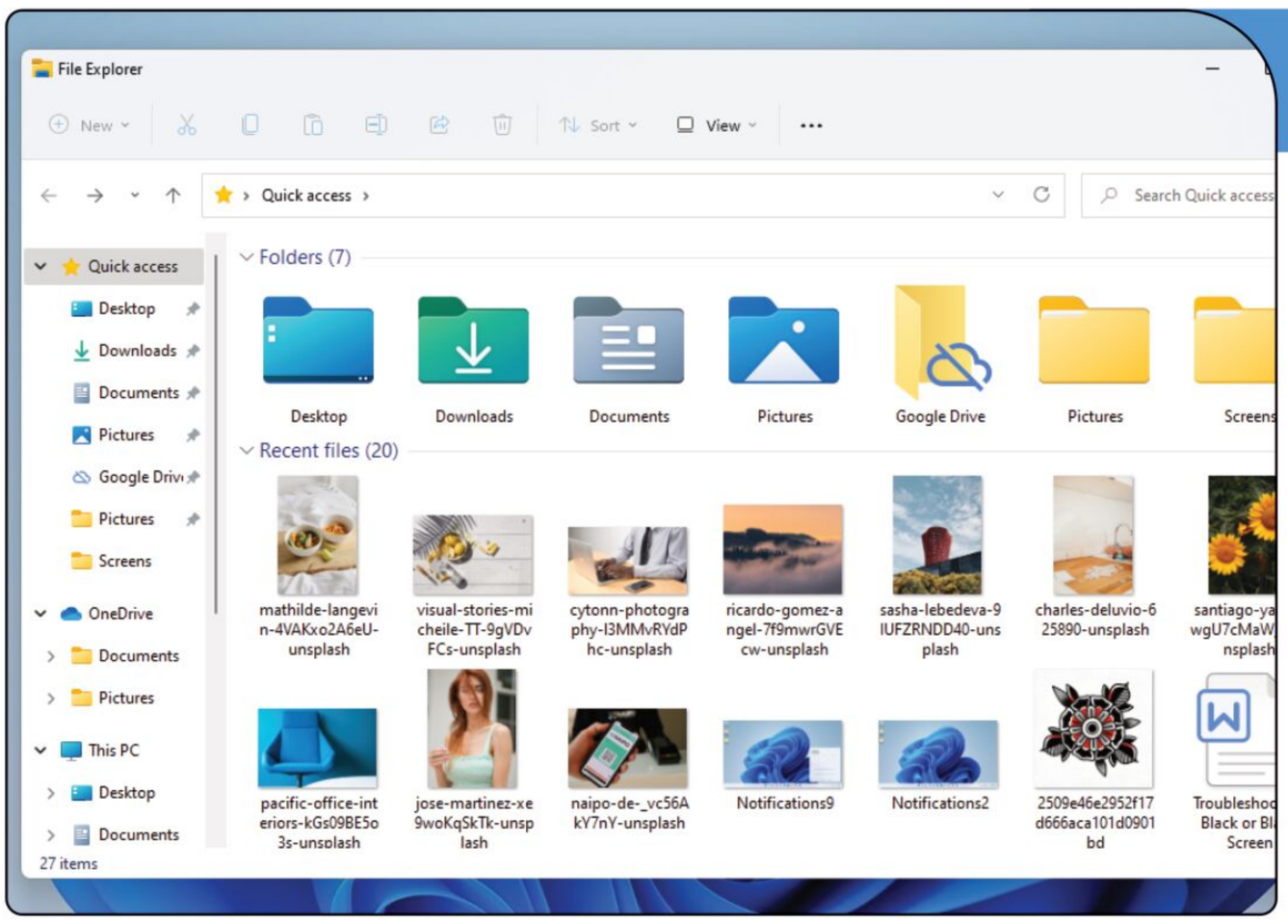
Step 4

You can find a lot of different settings for how windows snap in the main settings > System > Multi-tasking. Click the Snap windows option and a list of different settings will open. You can also, if you wish, completely turn off window snapping here, using the slider switch.

How to Use File Explorer

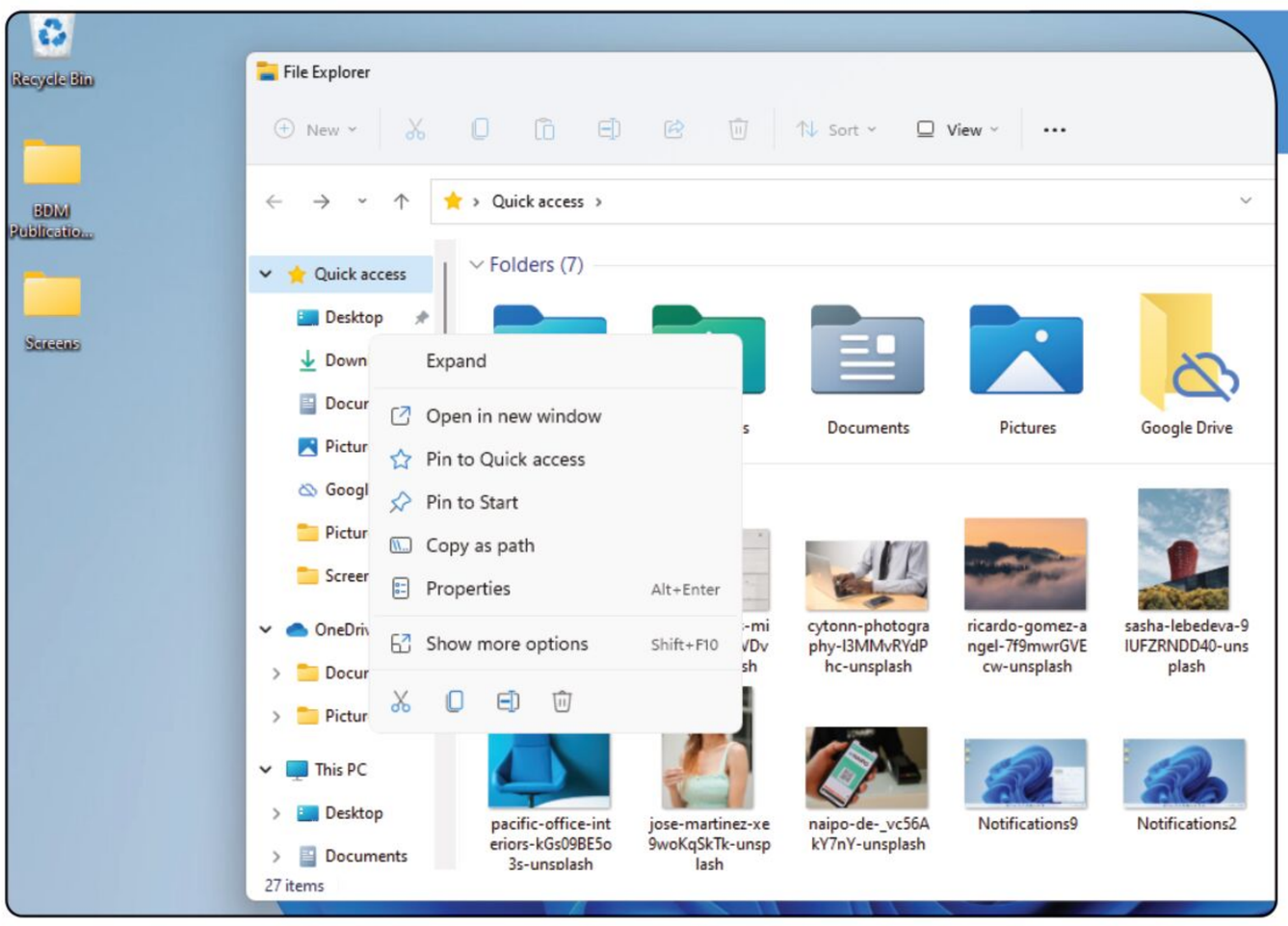
You can just use the powerful and improved search feature to find files and documents on your computer; but the new, simplified File Explorer is often a better choice, especially if you are looking for groups of files or want to preview several files to find the right one.

What's New in File Explorer?



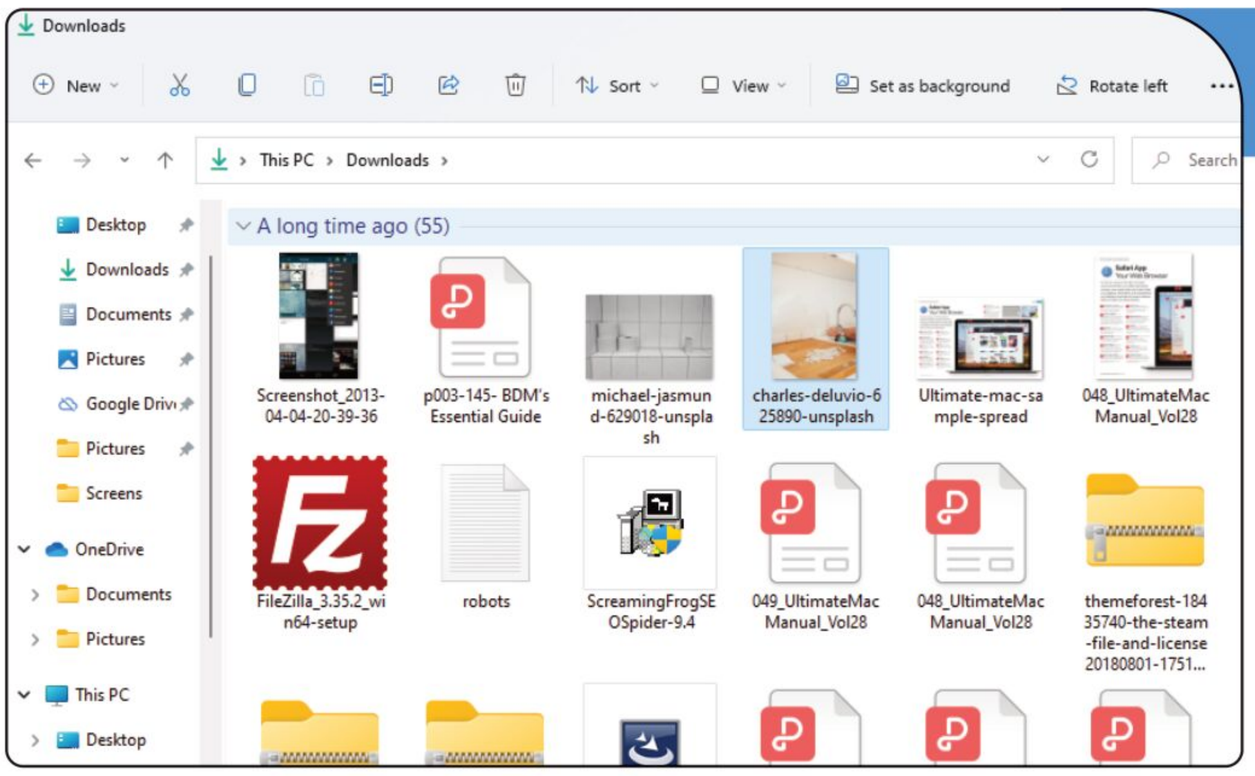
Step 1

The way you browse files in Windows 11 is similar to previous versions of Windows, but File Explorer has been slightly simplified. The main Quick Access window shows you your most frequently used folders (after all, how many of us dip into more than five or ten folders in a day?) and also recent files.



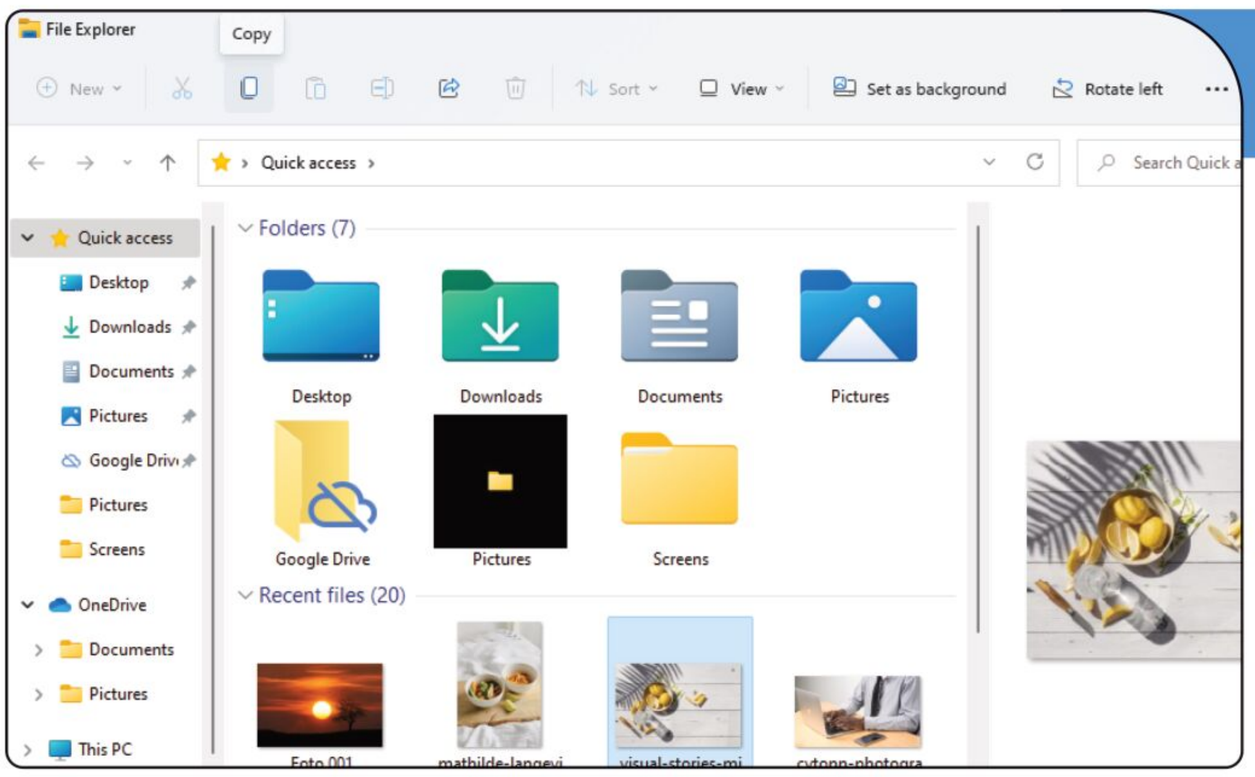
Step 2

The sidebar also works on the same principle, and via a new Quick Access feature you can pin folders or files that you want to stick around. It will also show you Frequent folders too. You can pin things permanently onto Quick Access by right-clicking them and selecting Add to Quick Access.



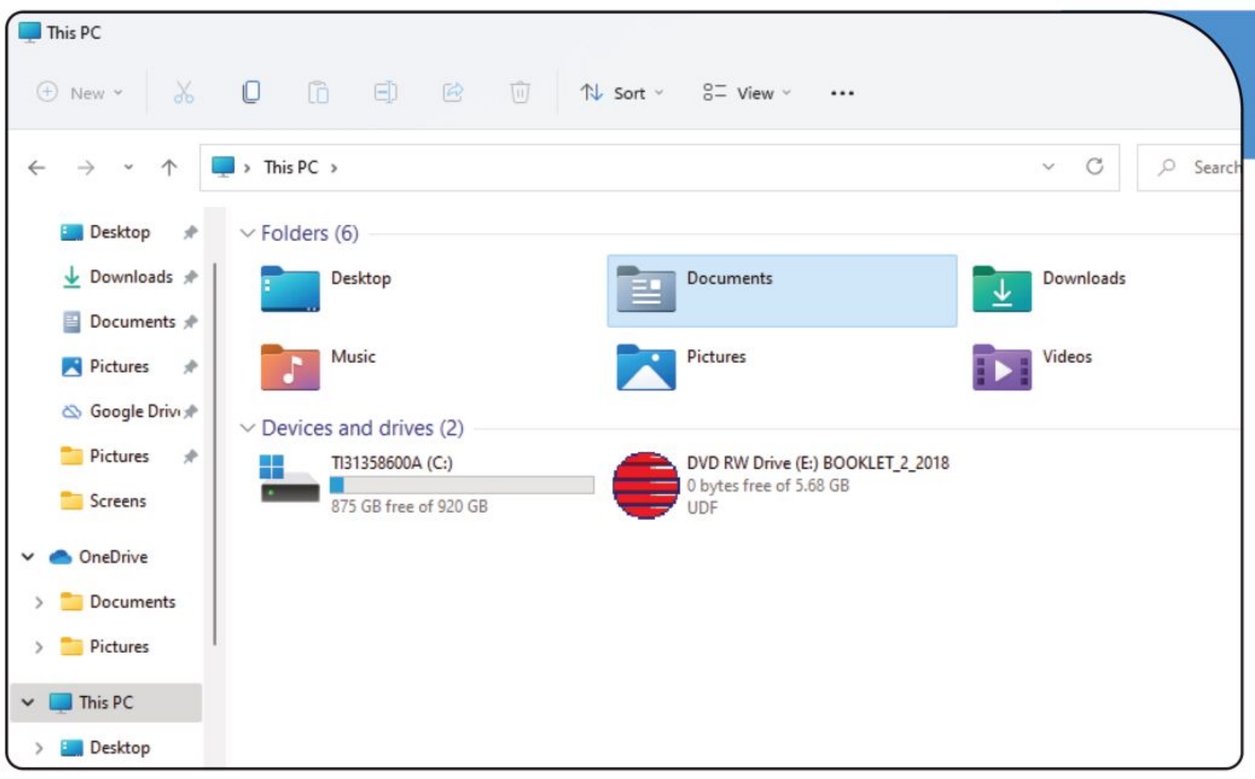
Step 3

There are new icons across all File Explorer views. And there are a lot more file operations that you can access on the menu at the top of the window (known as the 'ribbon'), without the need to use the right-click menu. This makes it easier to use on PCs with touch screens.



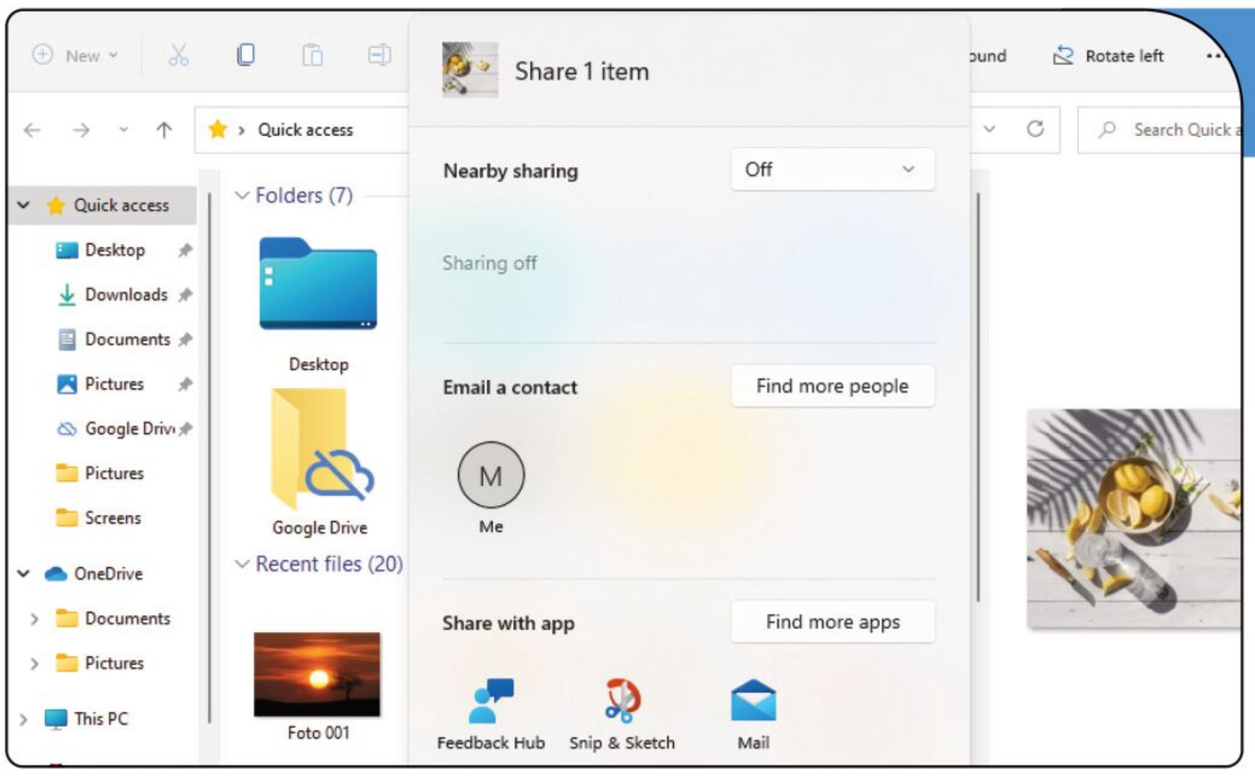
Step 4

The new icons are all fairly self-explanatory if you have used any PC in the past. There are icons for Cut, Copy, Delete, Rename and Share, as well as folder control icons like View and Sort. If you are unsure what any icon does, just hover your pointer over one to see a label pop up.



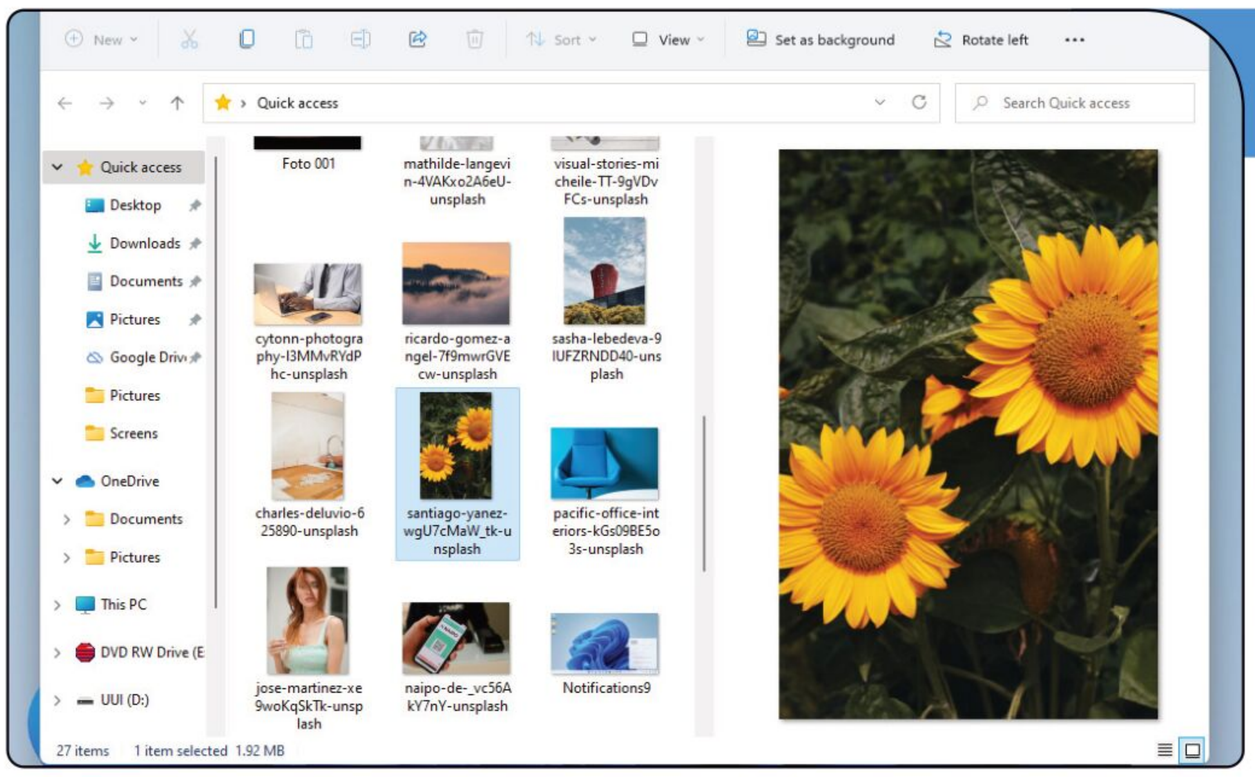
Step 5

The simplification continues on the This PC screen. All of the controls are still there, you just need to click on the More menu (the three dots) in the top bar. This menu is contextual. For example, select a drive such as C: and then click the menu to see options such as "Map network drive" and "Burn to disc".



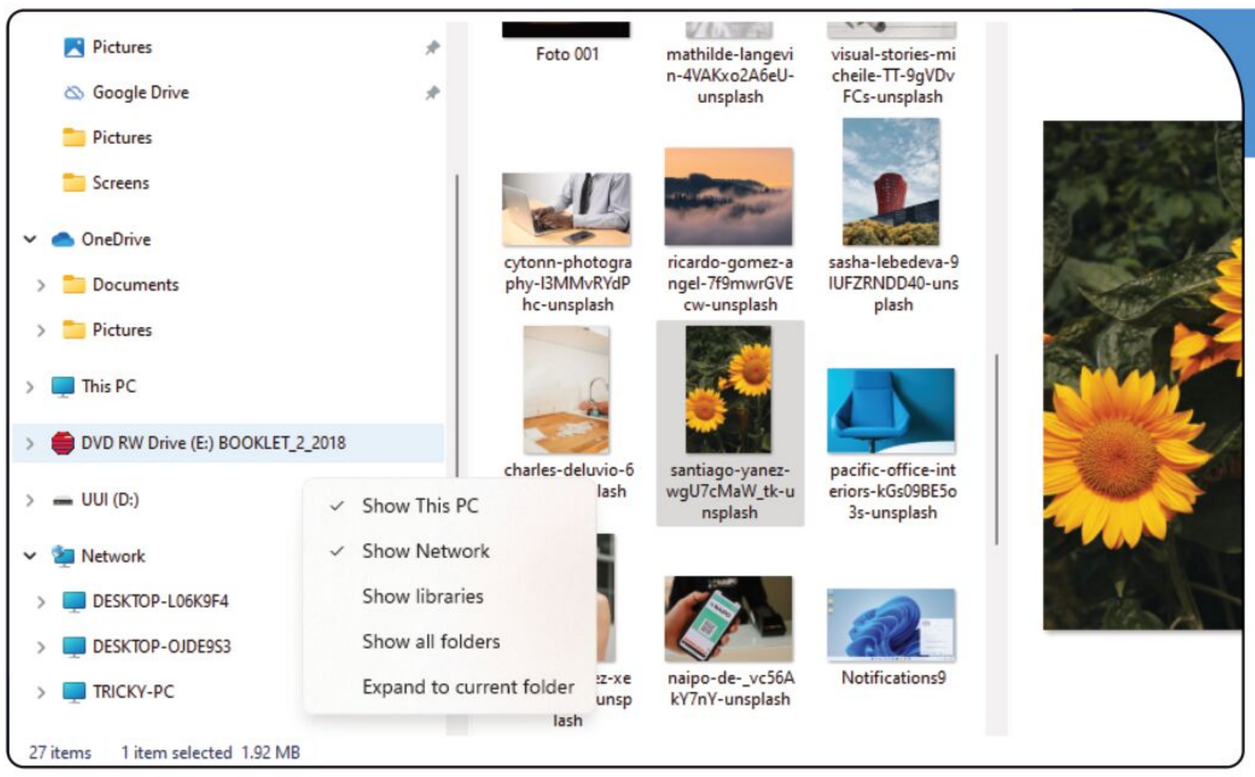
Step 6

Sharing files in File Explorer is again similar to Windows 10. Select one or more files in the window, click the Share button and the share panel will open. The sharing options shown here will vary depending on which apps you have installed and which communication features you have set up.



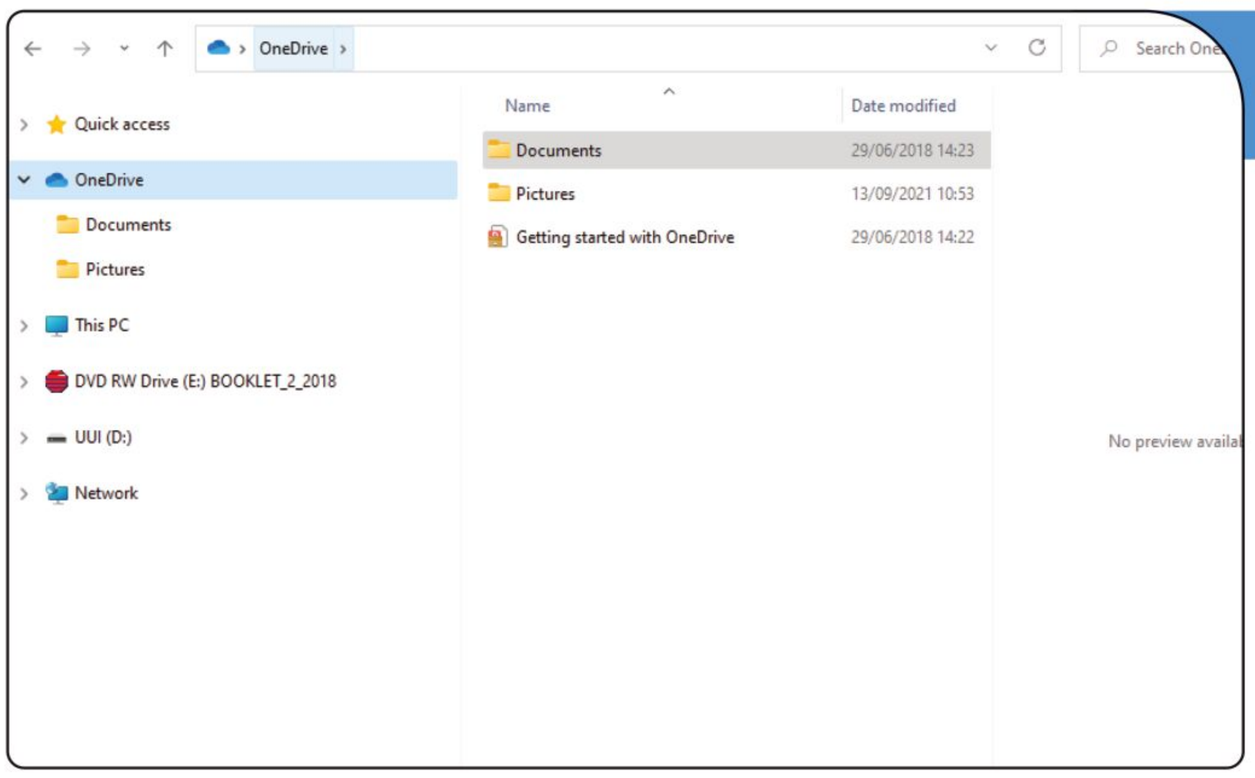
Step 7

When viewing some files, such as photos, in File Explorer, it can be useful to see a larger preview. This feature if turned off by default, but can be enabled at any time. In any folder in File Explorer, click the View tab and then click Show. From the new menu you can choose to see a Preview pane.



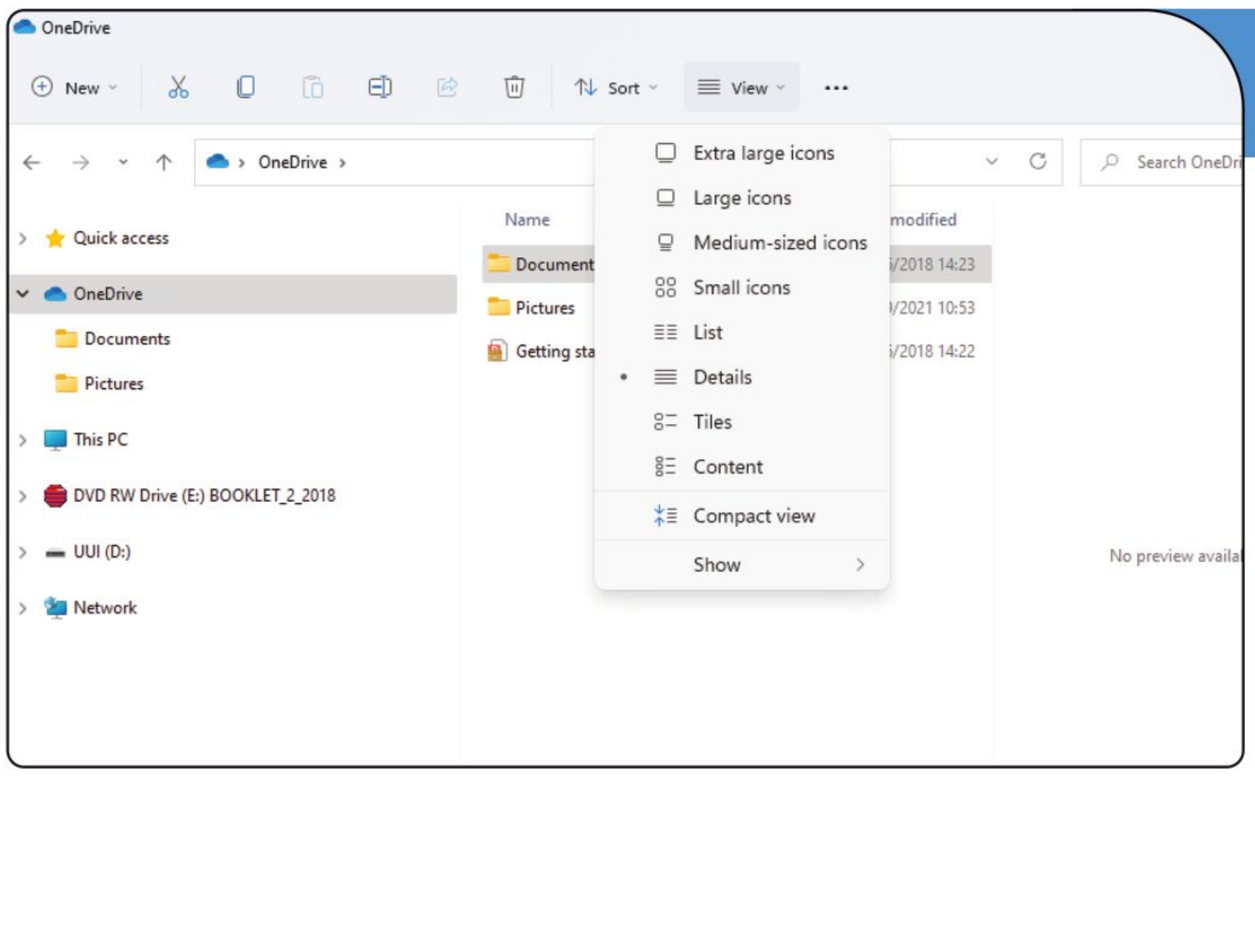
Step 8

You can access just about every folder on your computer, both system and created folders, from the File Explorer. There are several folders in the sidebar that are always shown, including This PC, Network and OneDrive. Right click on the sidebar to add even more useful folders to this area.



Step 9

If you've come from an earlier version of Windows, you should be familiar with OneDrive. It's Microsoft's cloud storage application and it's available to access directly from File Explorer in Windows 11; so you can view your cloud-stored files just as if they were on your computer.



Step 10

You can quickly change how you view files in File Explorer using the folder view buttons in the bottom-right corner (thumbnail view or detail view). There are many more folder options, including privacy and view options, accessed by clicking the More button and then choosing Options.

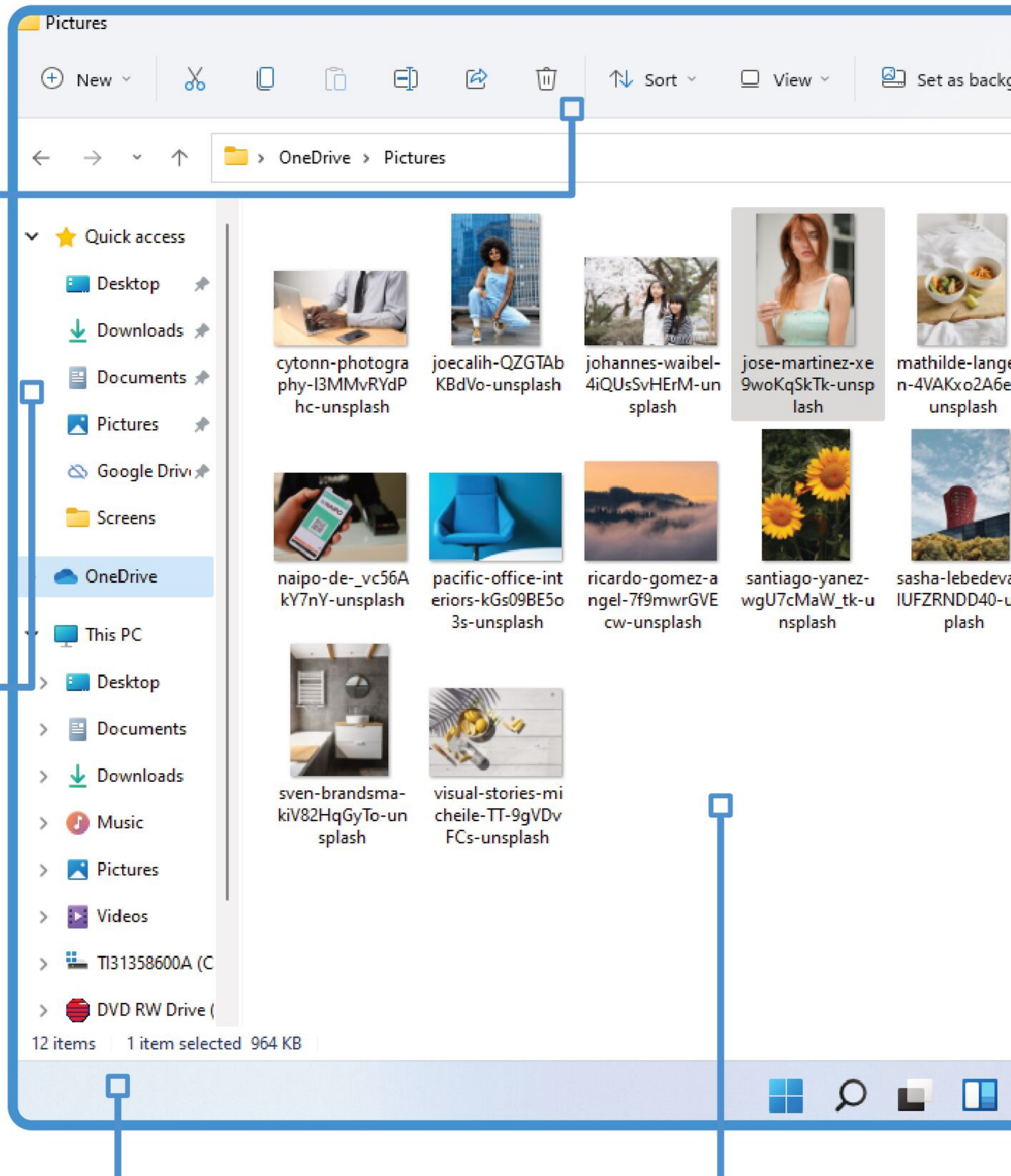
Inside File Explorer

File Explorer Toolbar

The simplified Explorer toolbar still contains all of the tools you need to manage the different files and folders you can view. Once you have selected a file or folder in the main pane, more tools become active. You can also click the "More menu" button to see additional options such as Burn to disc and Compress to Zip file.

Navigation Pane - Folders

The left-hand sidebar contains a list of different file folders on your computer. Clicking on any of the folders shown here will display the various files and folders inside; in the main pane. The list is split into sections, including Quick Access/ Recent, OneDrive and This PC. If you right-click on a blank area, you can choose to show All Folders here.



Info Bar

The thin bar along the bottom of the File Explorer displays several bits of useful information. If nothing in the main window is selected, the info bar shows the total number of items in the selected folder. Click on a file and the file size is also shown here. If you select several files, the number of items selected is shown, along with the total size of all selected items combined.

Folder Contents Pane

When a folder is selected in the File Location sidebar, its contents are shown in the main pane. The contents of any single folder may vary, but Windows uses standard icons to show Word docs, text files, various different image formats and shortcuts to apps and software. Images will usually be displayed as a thumbnail.

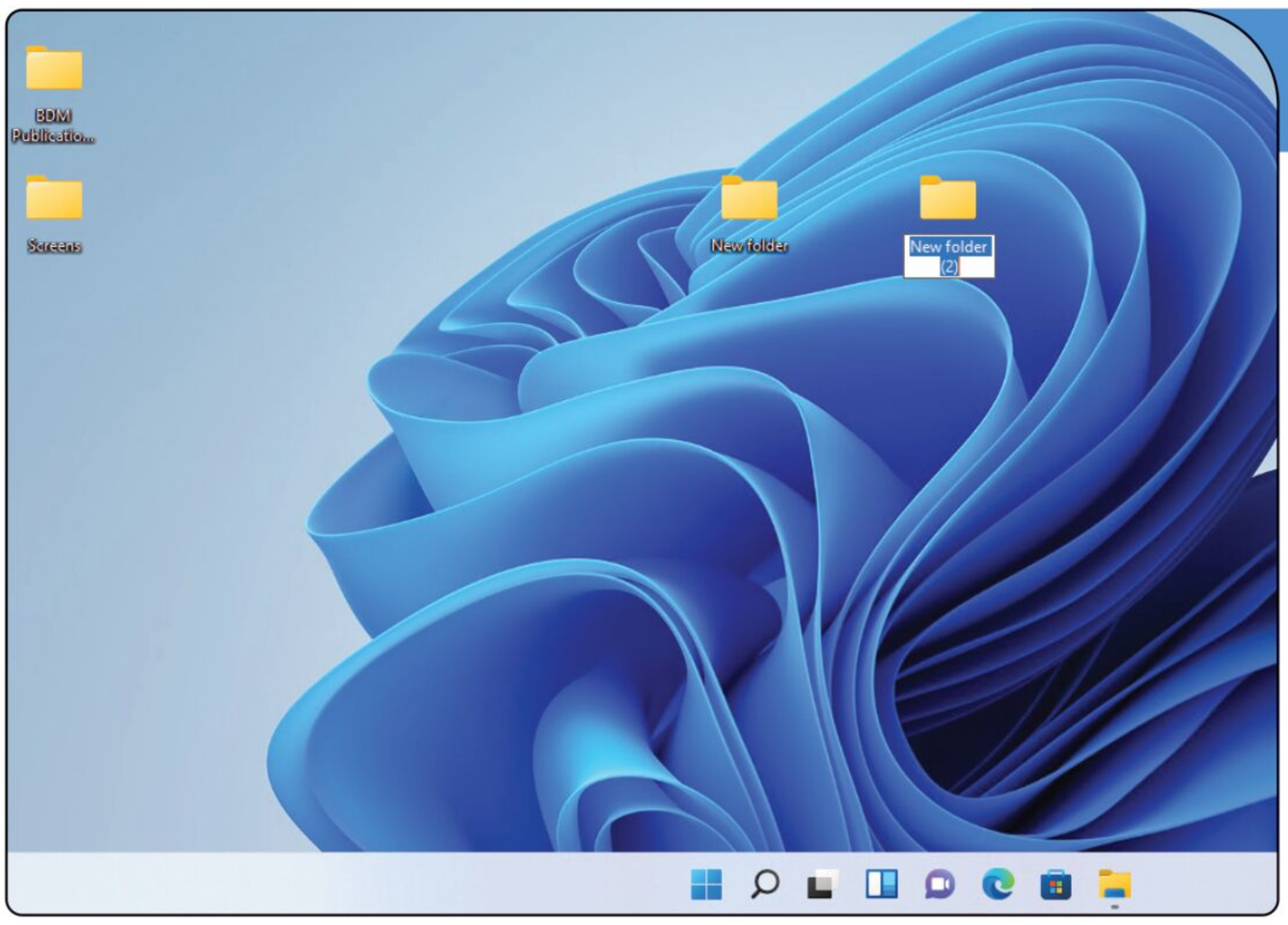
Managing Folders

Despite all of the changes to the Window's OS, folders have remained one of the core tools for organising your files. Much more than just boxes to keep your photos or music files in, folders can really help to improve how you use Windows 11 on a day-to-day basis.

Creating New Folders

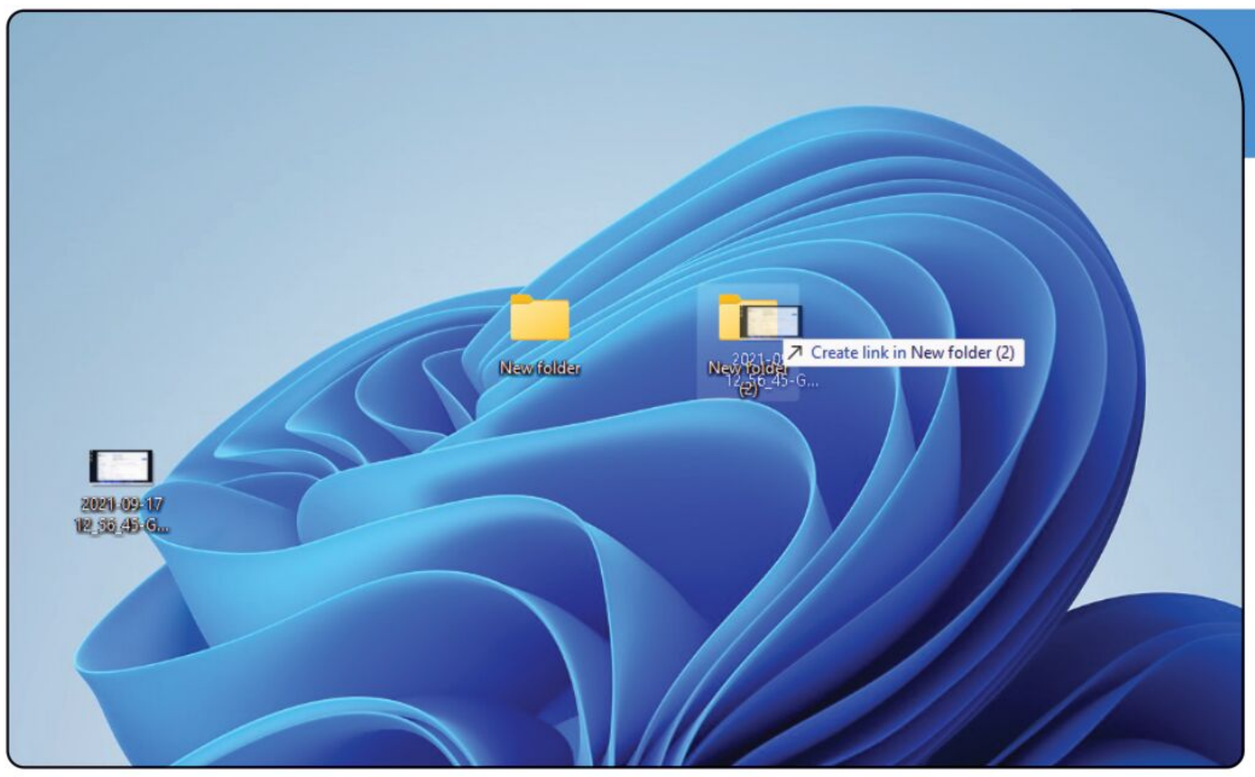
Step 1

On the desktop, right-click and select New folder from the action menu that appears. The familiar yellow folder icon will then appear at that position on the desktop (wherever you clicked), with the name automatically set as 'New folder' but highlighted ready to change.



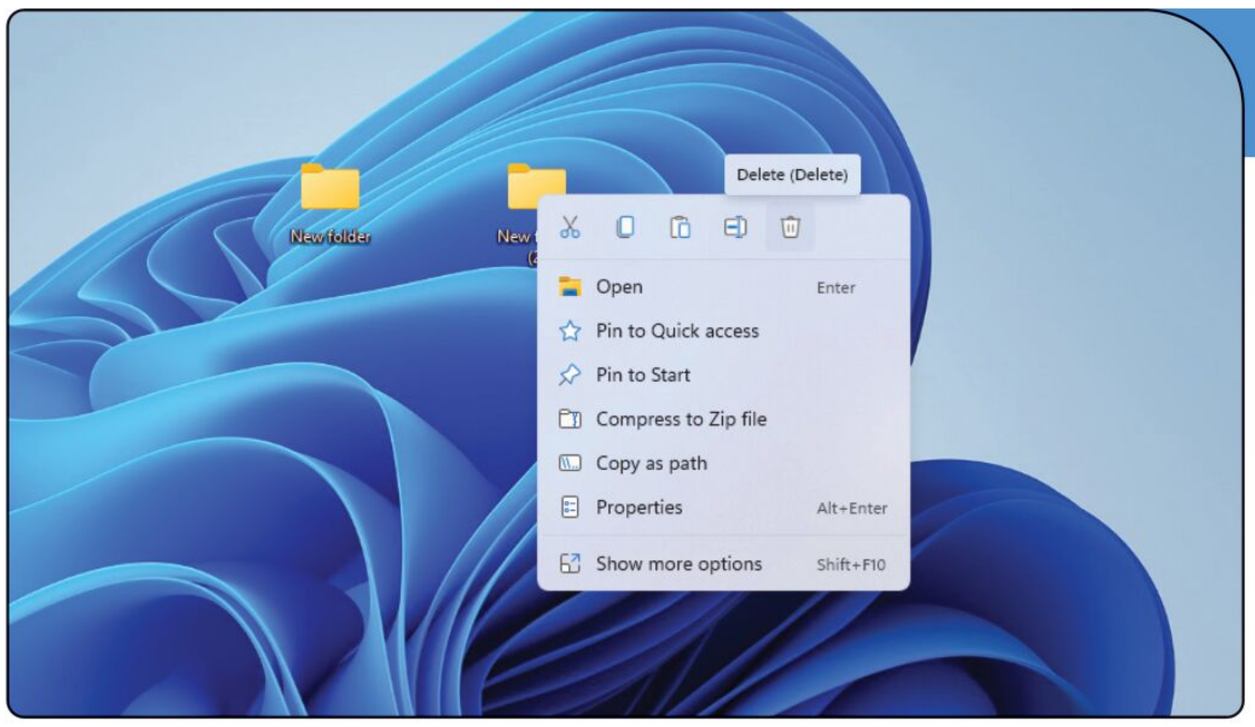
Step 2

You can leave the name as 'New folder' if you wish. If you then create a second folder next to the first, it will automatically be named 'New folder (2)'. You can rename a folder at any time by left-clicking on the title once, or right-clicking and selecting Rename from the menu.



Step 3

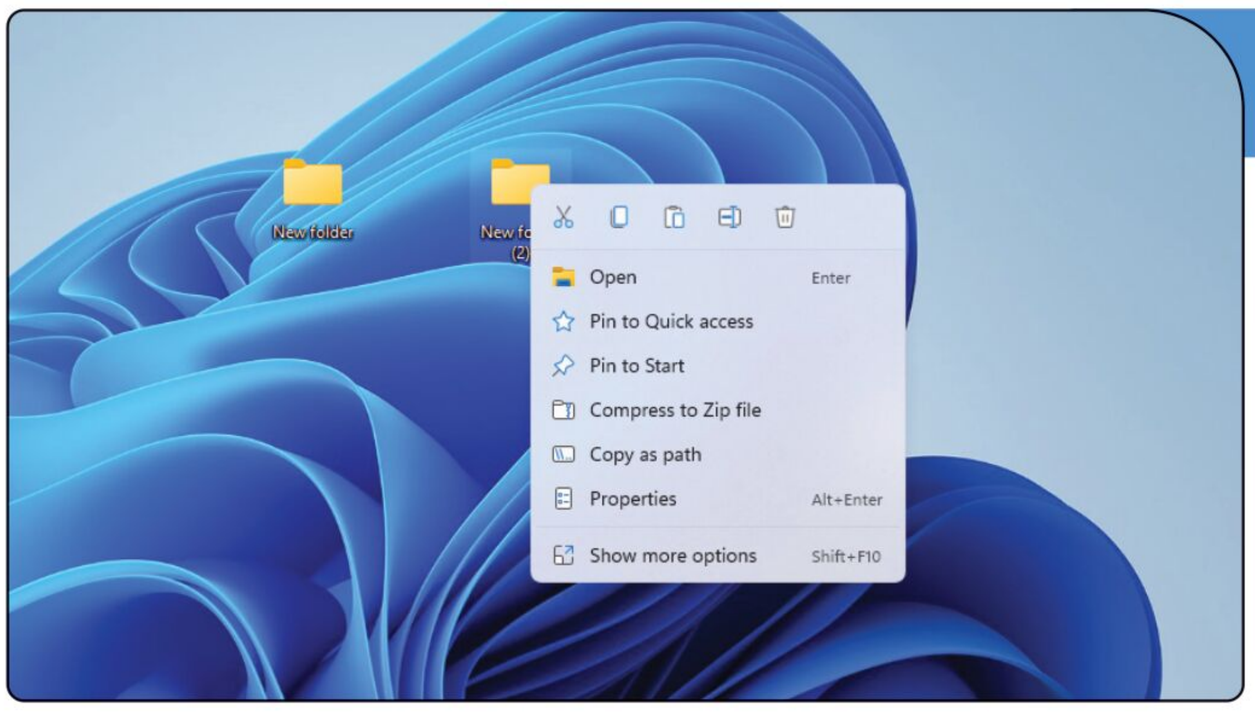
Double-click any folder to open it and view the contents. You can move items into a folder by selecting, dragging and dropping into an open folder or a closed one. If the folder is closed, drag the selected items over the top of it until the folder is highlighted, then release.



Step 4

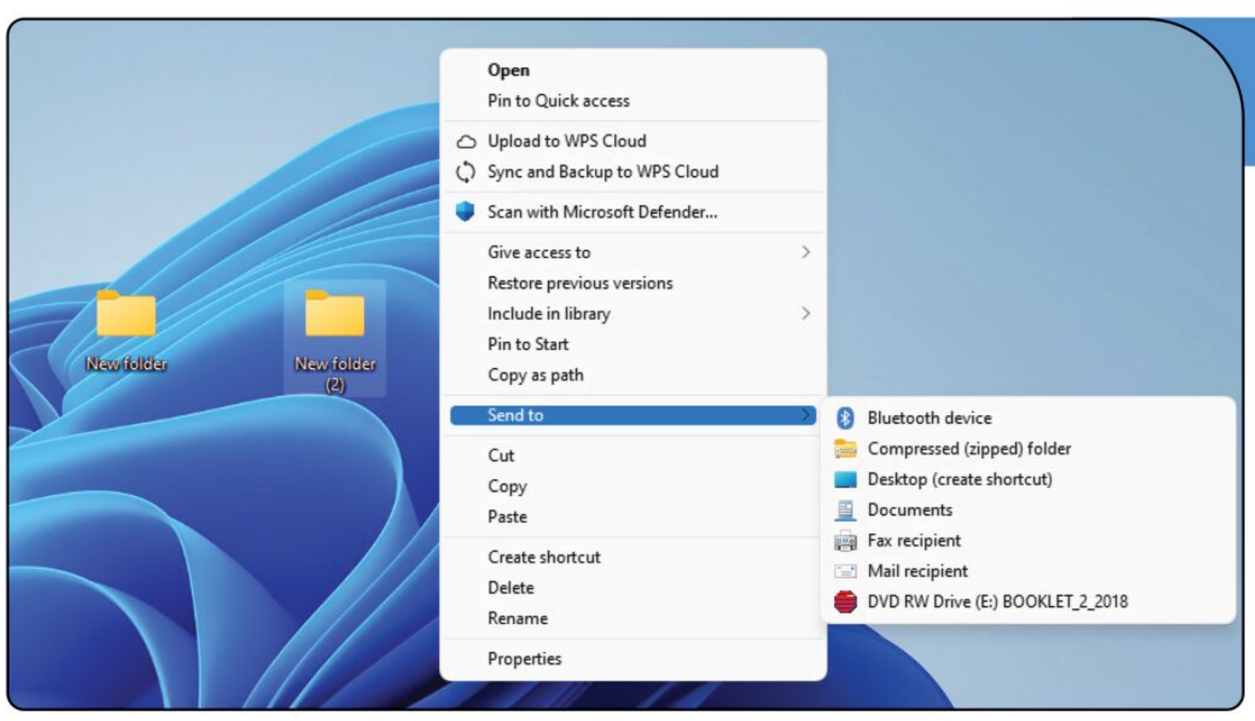
To delete a folder, right-click on it and select Delete from the action menu. You can also click and drag the folder to the Recycle Bin icon on your desktop. Anything in the folder will also be placed in the recycle bin. To move folders around the desktop, just click, drag and drop them.

Managing Your Folders



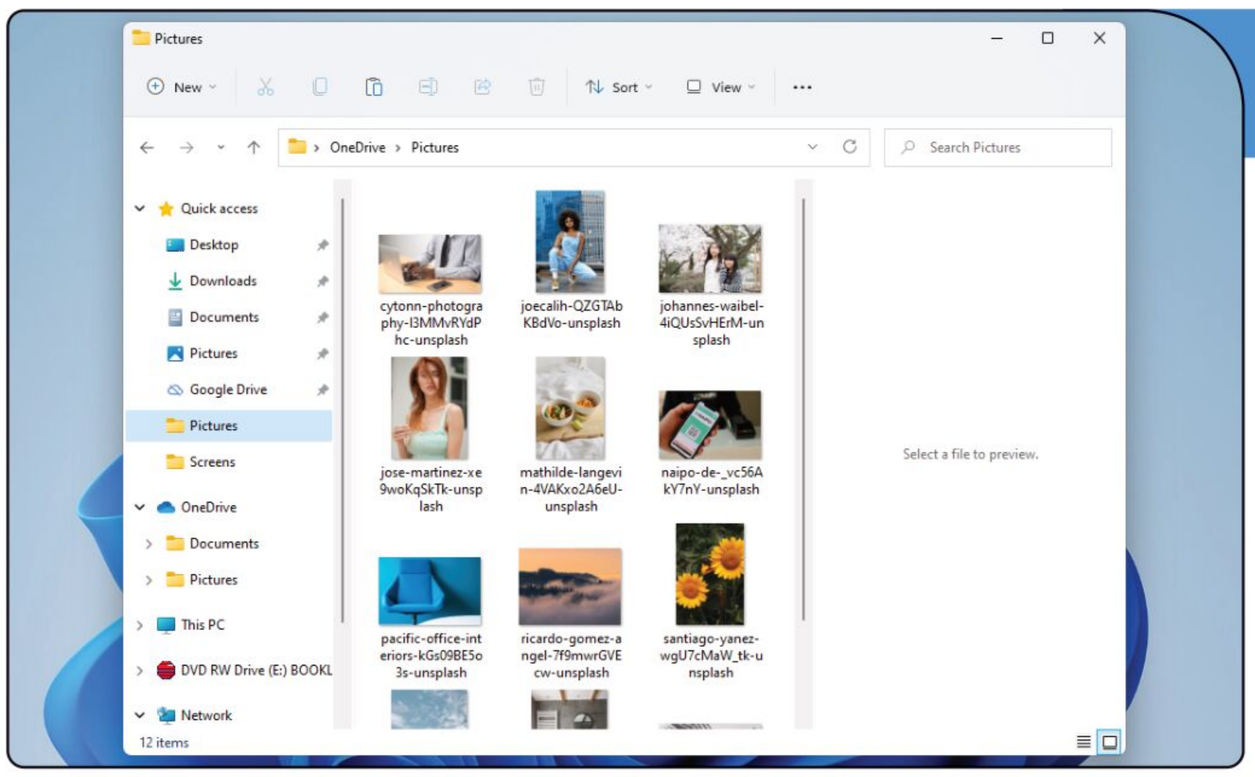
Step 1

You can manage a folder in a number of ways, without even opening it. Right-click on any folder and the action menu appears. The exact options that appear will depend on the apps or software you have installed but can include: scan for viruses, compress, shred, zip and more.



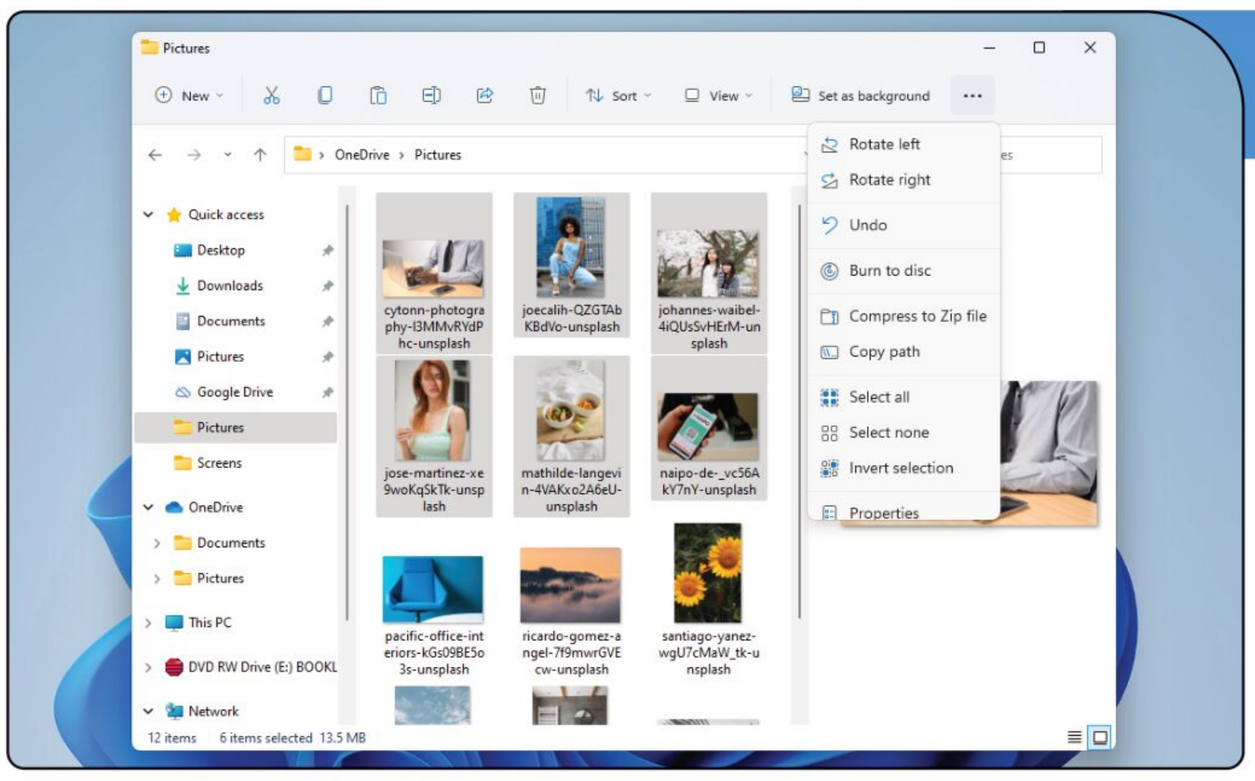
Step 2

The standard (Windows 11) options in the folder action menu include: Pin to Quick Access, Open, Share, Pin to Start, Send To, Cut, Copy, Rename and Delete. Some of these options are shown as new icons along the top of the action menu. You can see more folder options by clicking that option.



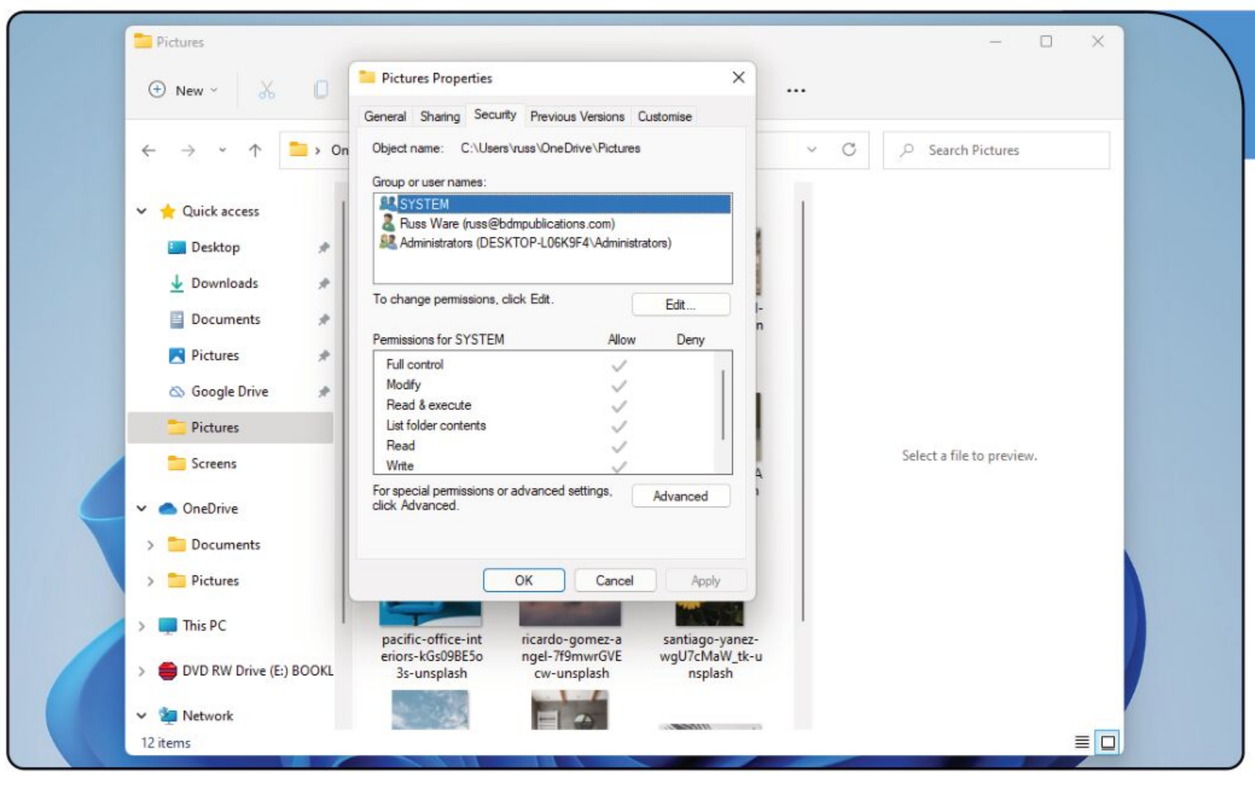
Step 3

Open the folder and a whole range of further options are available along the top of the new window. Again, these are a mix of icons and test options. When you select something in the folder, yet more options will appear, which vary depending on the type of file you selected in the folder.



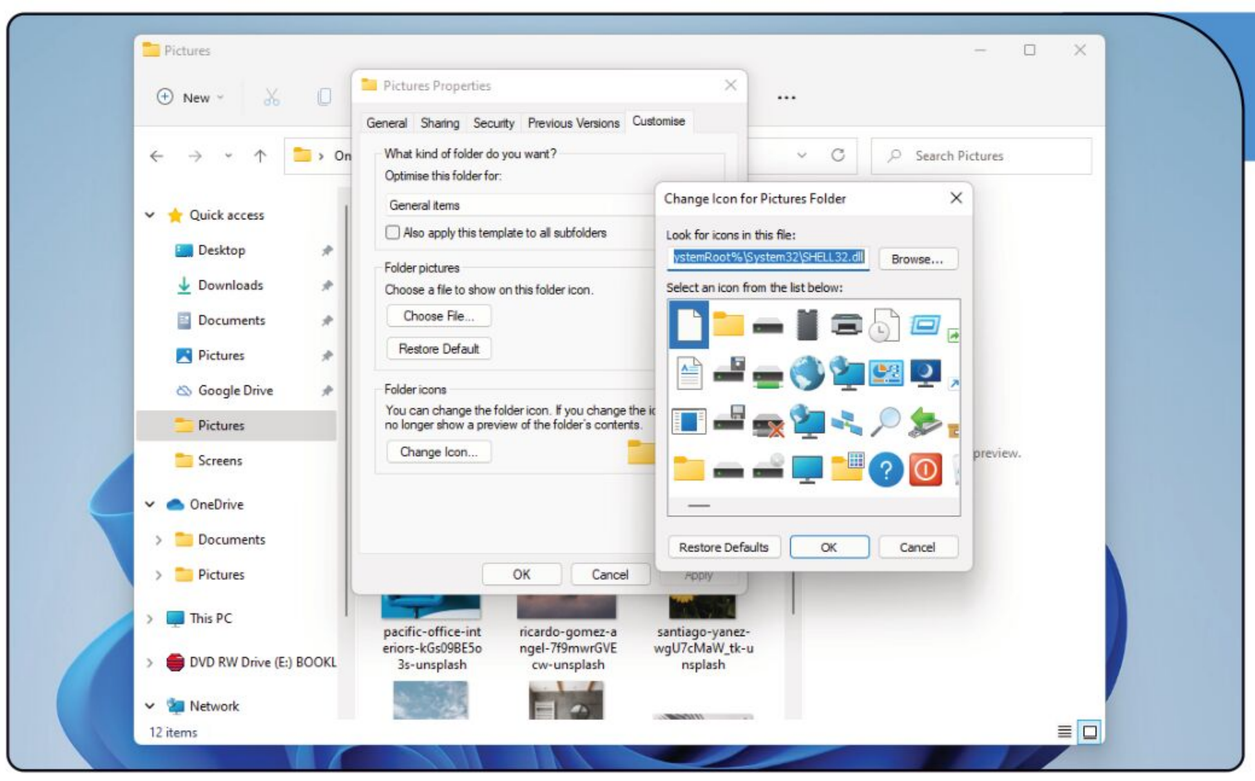
Step 4

Most of these options are self-explanatory, such as copy, paste and select all, but some are a little more confusing. Most casual computer users won't need to use 90 per cent of the options in day-to-day use but it is worth understanding them anyway. Add a few files to the folder and experiment.



Step 5

If you want to get really deep into managing your folders, there are even more options to explore. Open any folder and right-click anywhere inside the main window. From the action menu that appears, click Properties. Here you can manage all sort of things; from security to icon style.



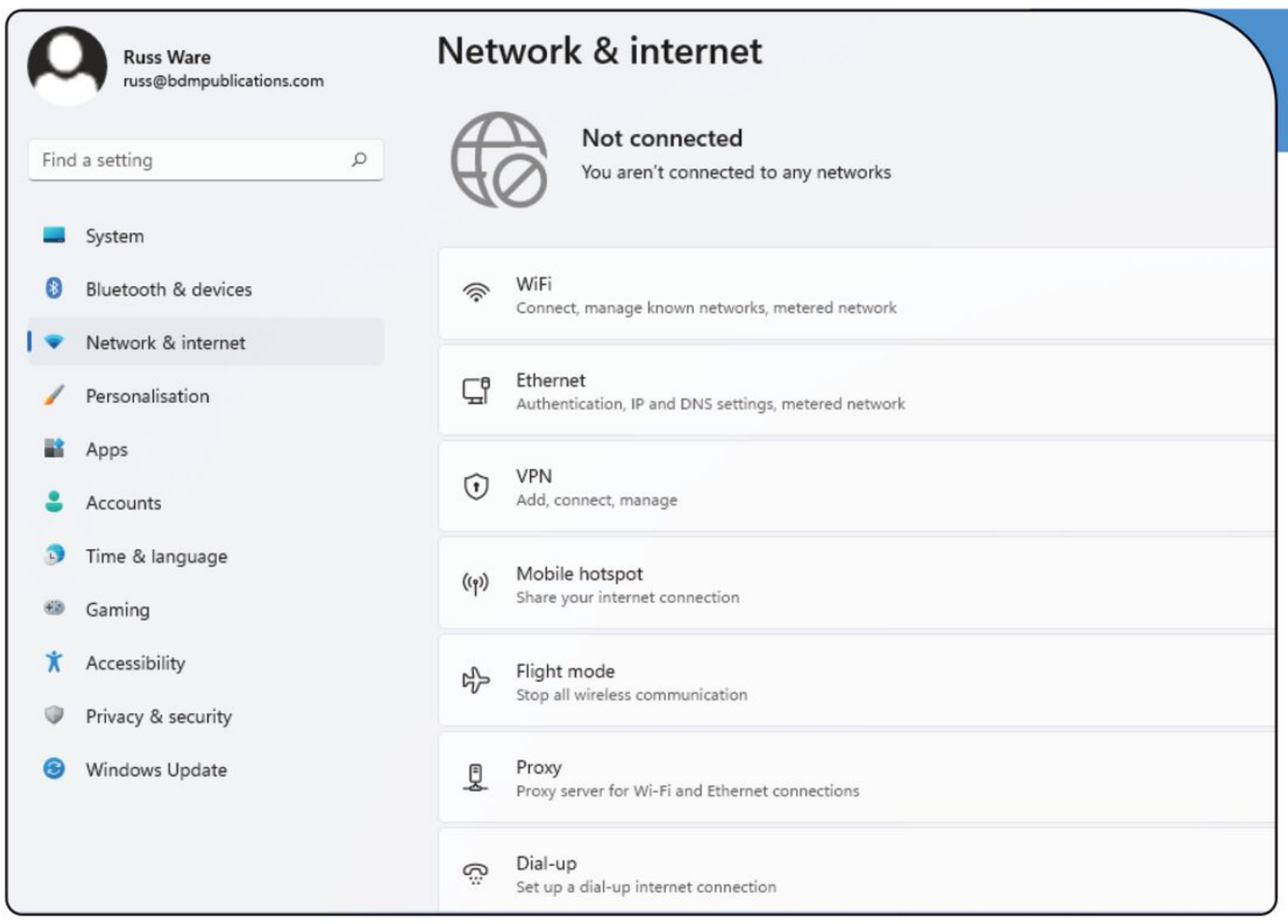
Step 6

To change the icon style (which will change the style of all folder icons), click the customise tab and then click Change Icon at the bottom. Scroll to view all of the available icons (downloaded icons can be accessed by browsing), click on your preferred icon and click OK.

Connecting to the Internet

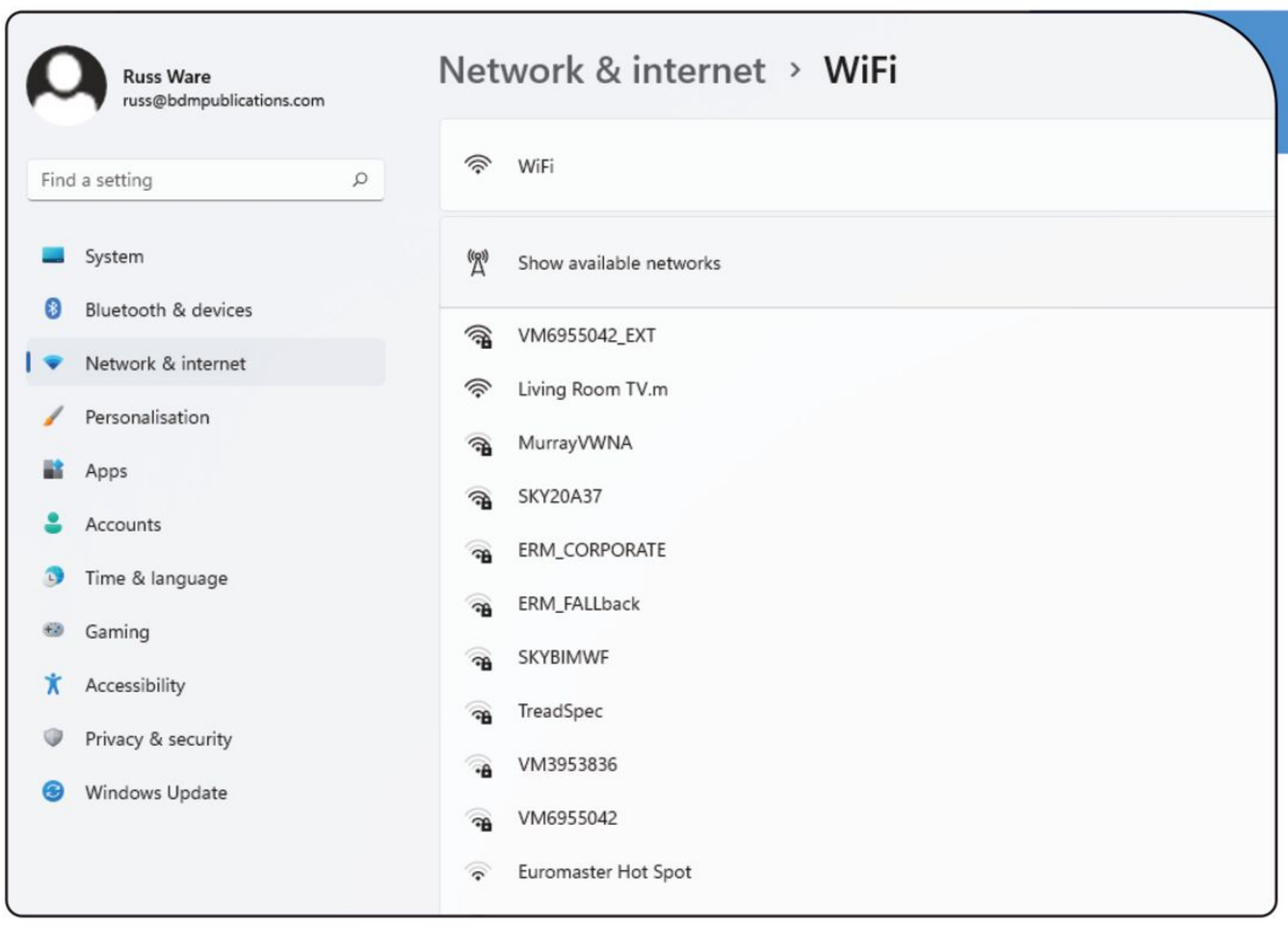
Windows 11 makes joining and managing networks easier than ever, bringing all of the relevant settings together in one place, including VPN and hotspot settings; and even the Wi-Fi adaptor hardware properties.

Connecting to Wi-Fi



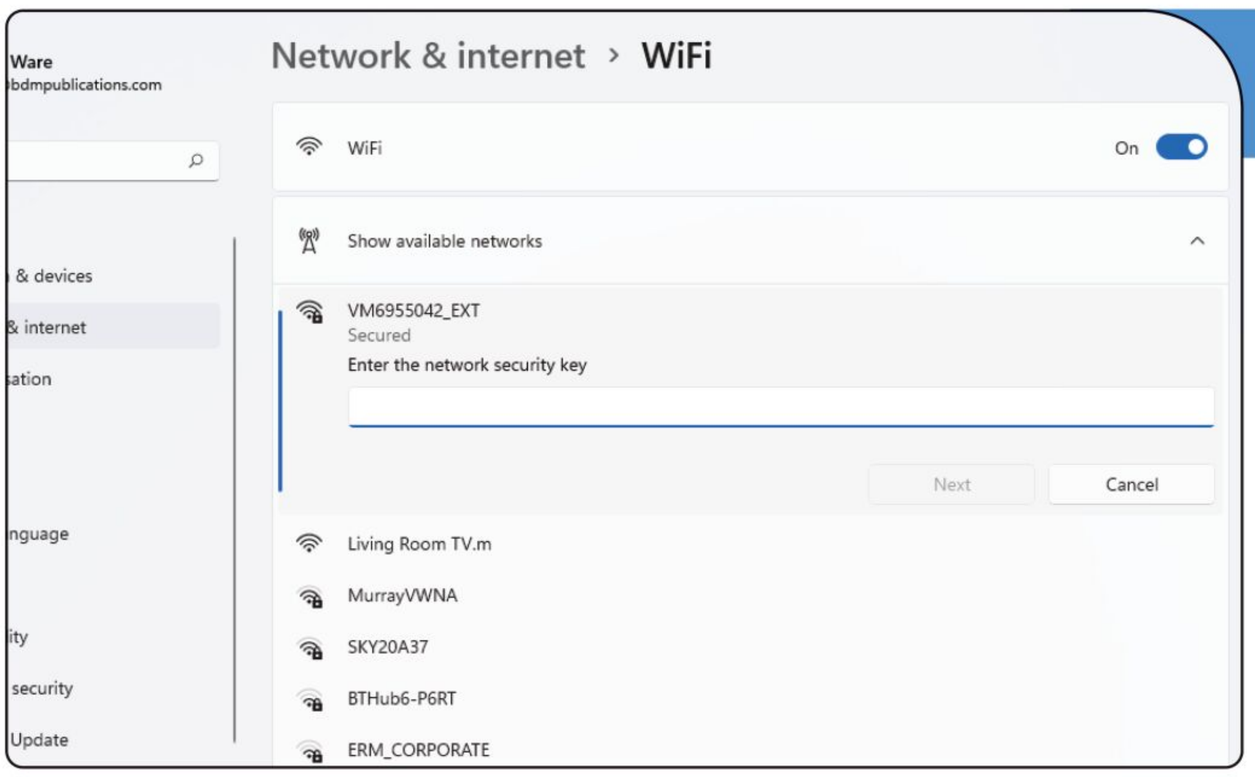
Step 1

If your computer is not connected to the Internet, Windows will display a small globe icon on the right side of the taskbar. You can either click this and select Wi-Fi from the quick settings, or you can open the main Settings app > Network & Internet > Wi-Fi (the best route with a brand new connection).



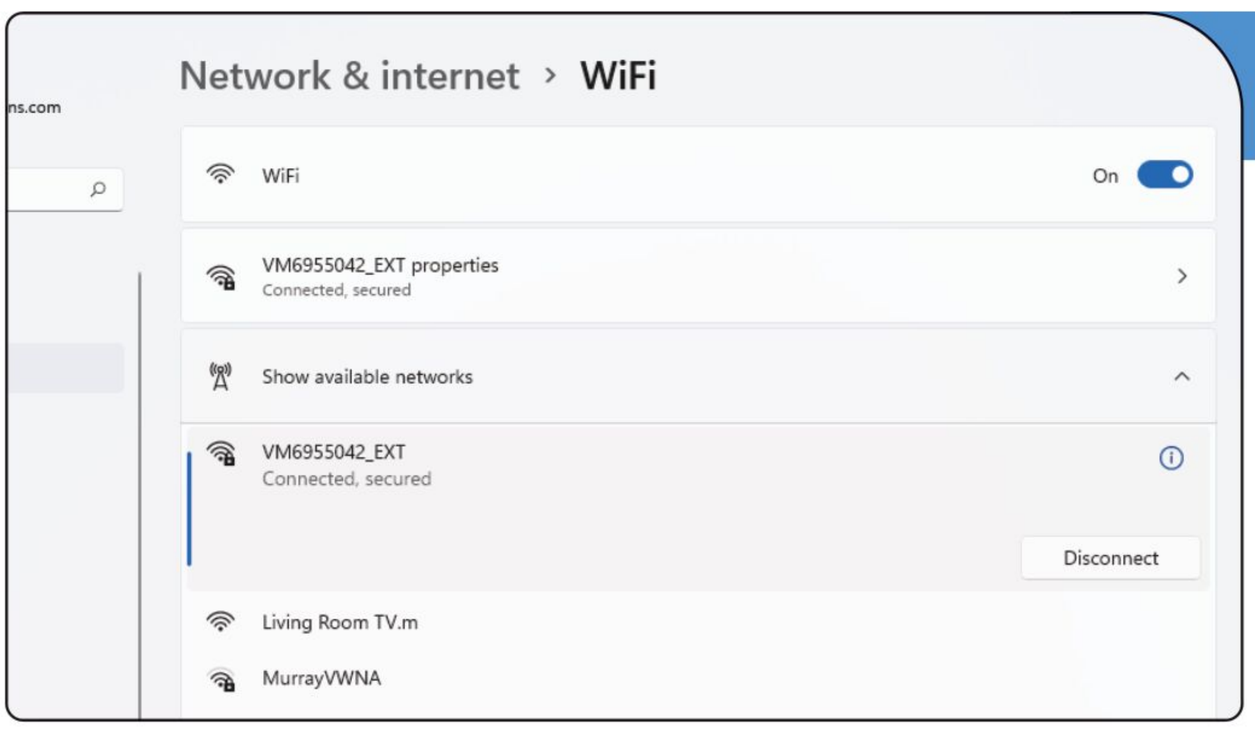
Step 2

Use the slider switch to enable Wi-Fi on your computer. Now click "Show available networks" to see a list of the networks within range of your computer. This may take a few seconds to scan and find the networks. Hopefully you will see the Wi-Fi network you want to connect to.



Step 3

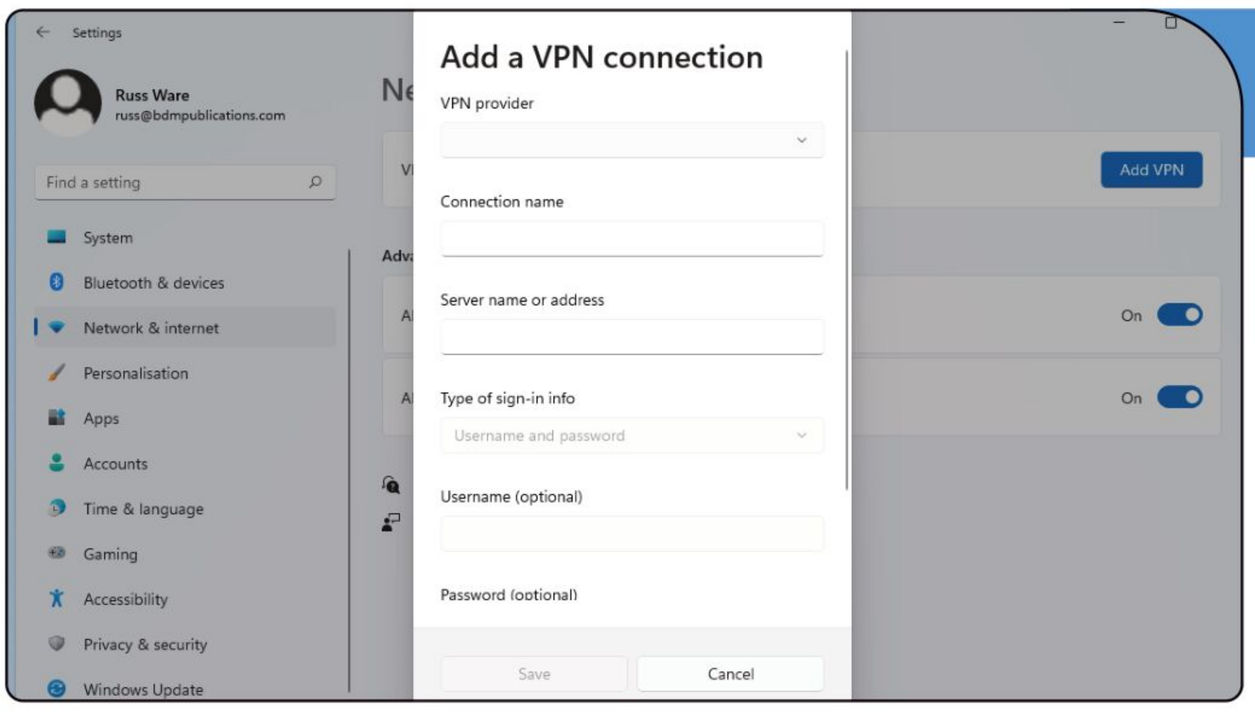
Click on the required network name in the list and then click "Connect". As this is probably the first time you are connecting, you will then need to enter the password (Network security key) for the network. Click "Next" and as long as the network/password is correct, you should be good to go.



Step 4

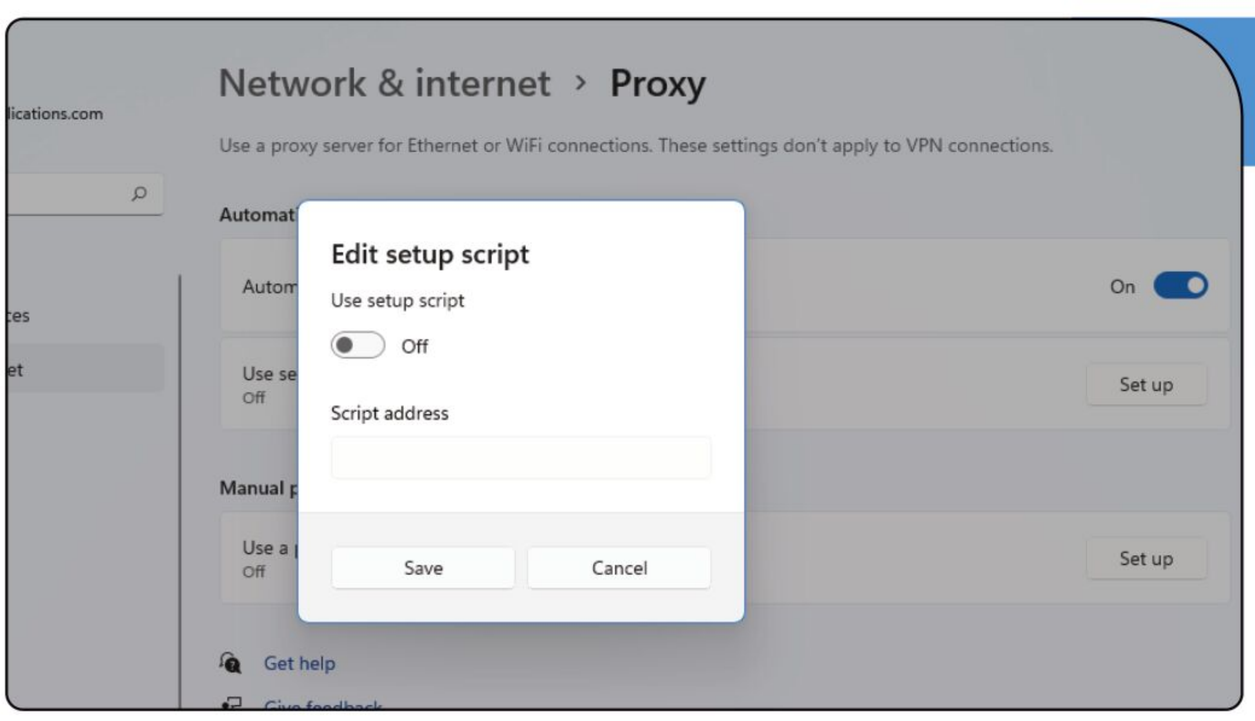
To disconnect from the Wi-Fi network at any time, open Settings > Network & Internet > Wi-Fi again, and click on the networks list. Click the Disconnect button. You can also choose to Forget the network (sometimes useful for troubleshooting connections), in the Manage known networks section.

Manage Network Settings



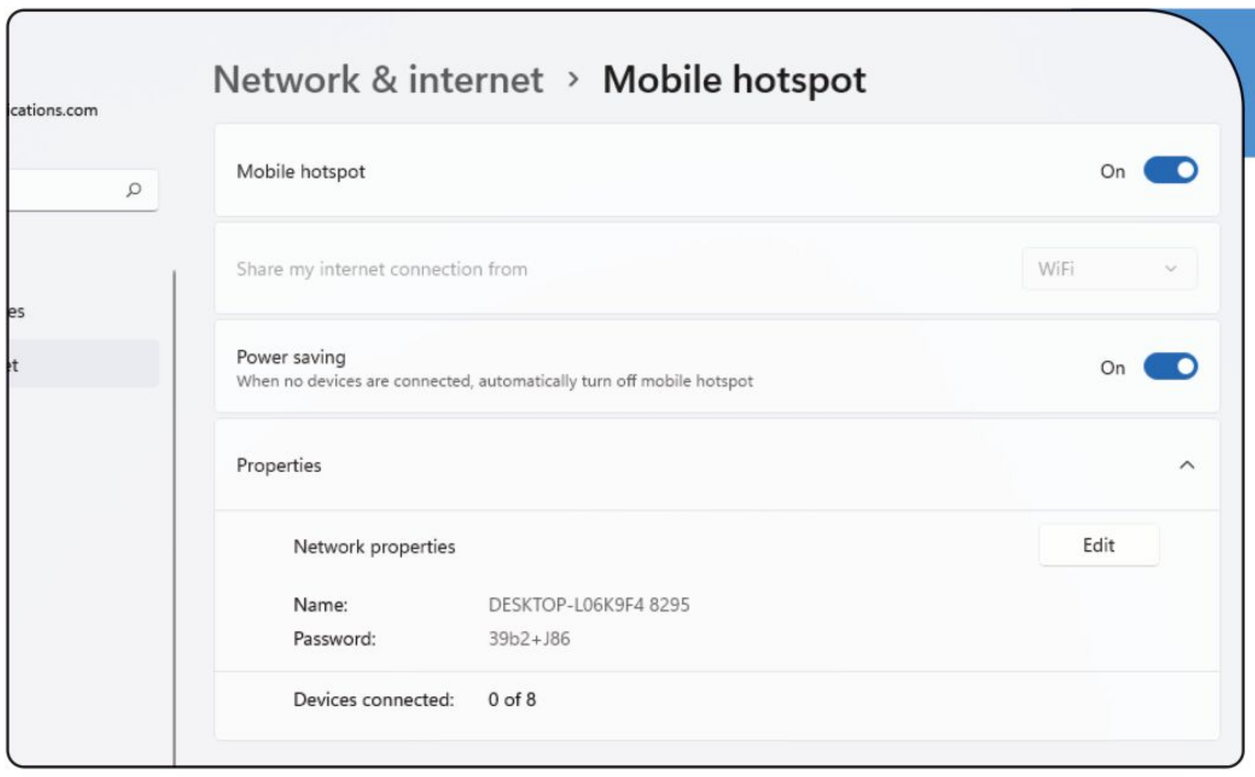
VPN Settings

If you need to log in to a home VPN or corporate network, this is where you will need to enter the appropriate VPN settings. It's fairly easy to do but you'll need the configuration details from your IT help desk (they will have to enable your VPN access), plus your username and password.



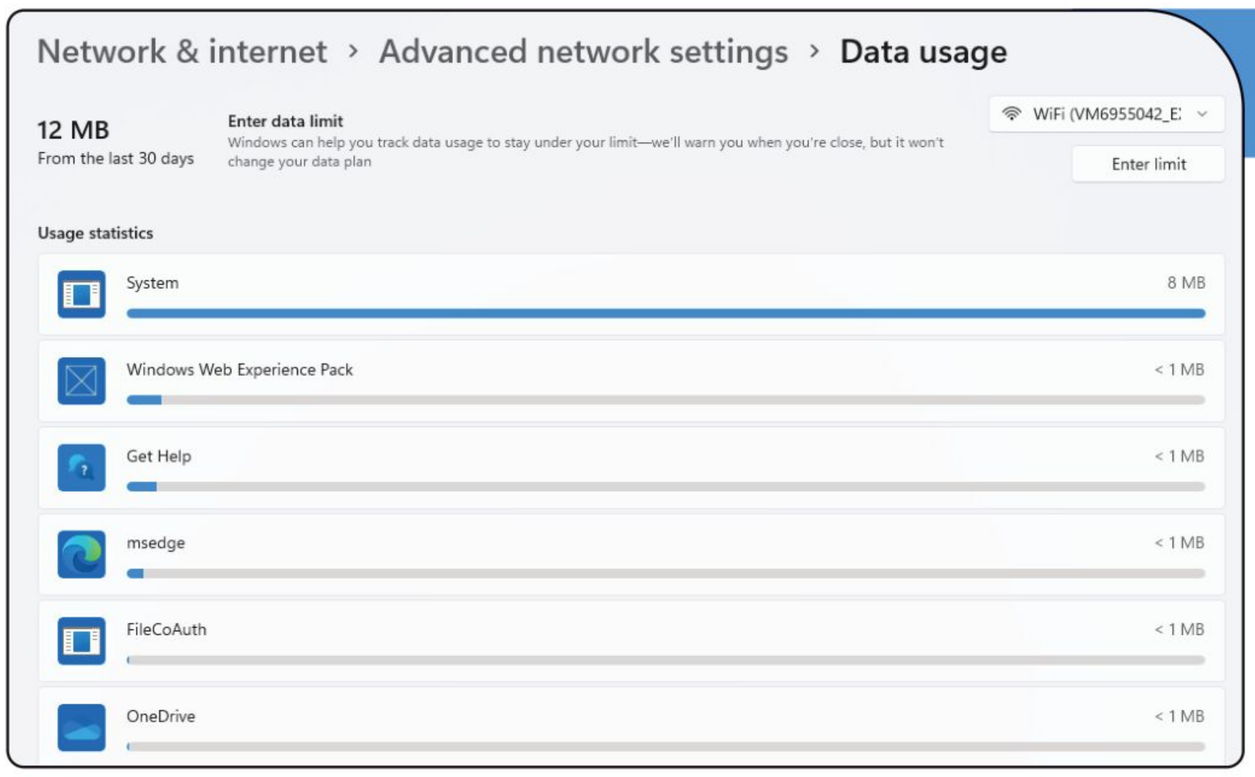
Proxy Settings

If you use a proxy server, this is where you enter any specific settings to do with that. However, Windows 11 should automatically detect proxy settings. Note that the settings you configure here won't apply if you connect via a VPN, because a VPN essentially skips the need for a proxy.



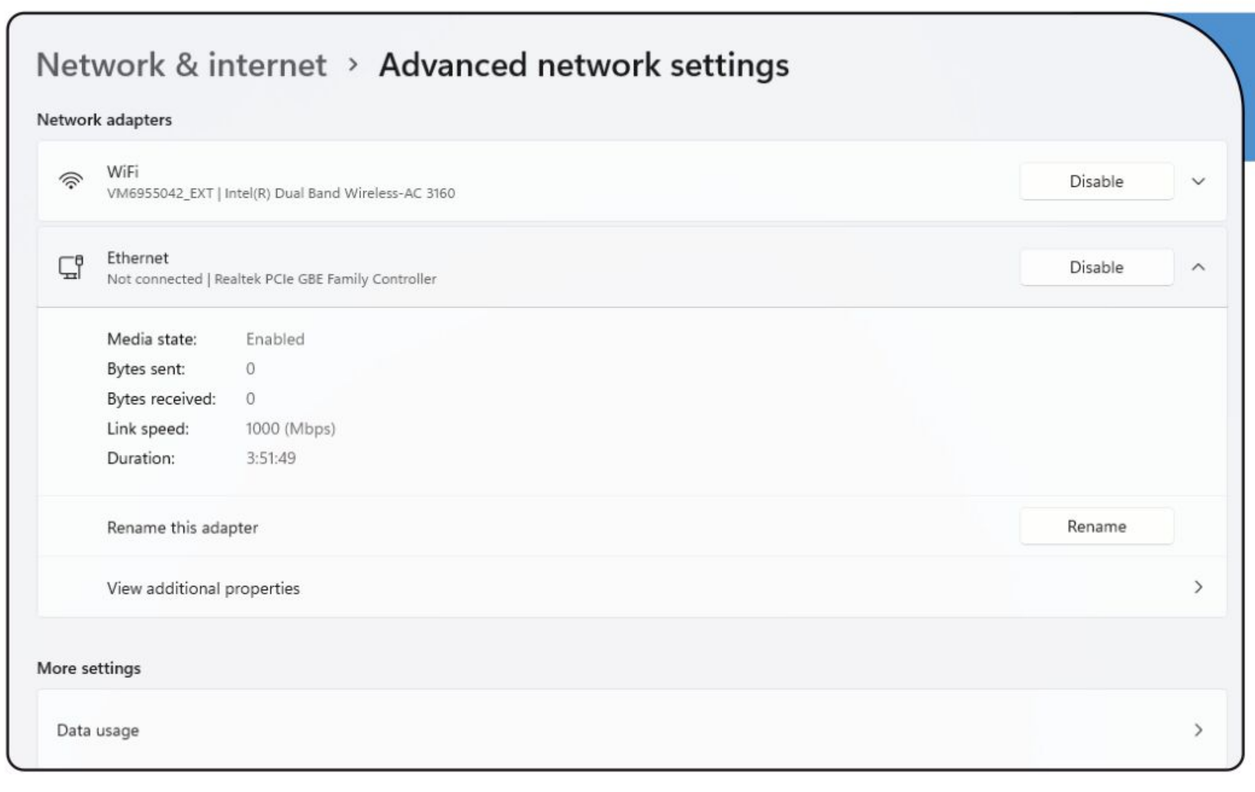
Mobile Hotspot

You can turn your Windows 11 PC into a mobile hotspot, sharing your Internet connection with other devices over Wi-Fi. You can share Wi-Fi, ethernet or cellular data connections. Once enabled, other devices will be able to see your computer when they search for networks to connect to.



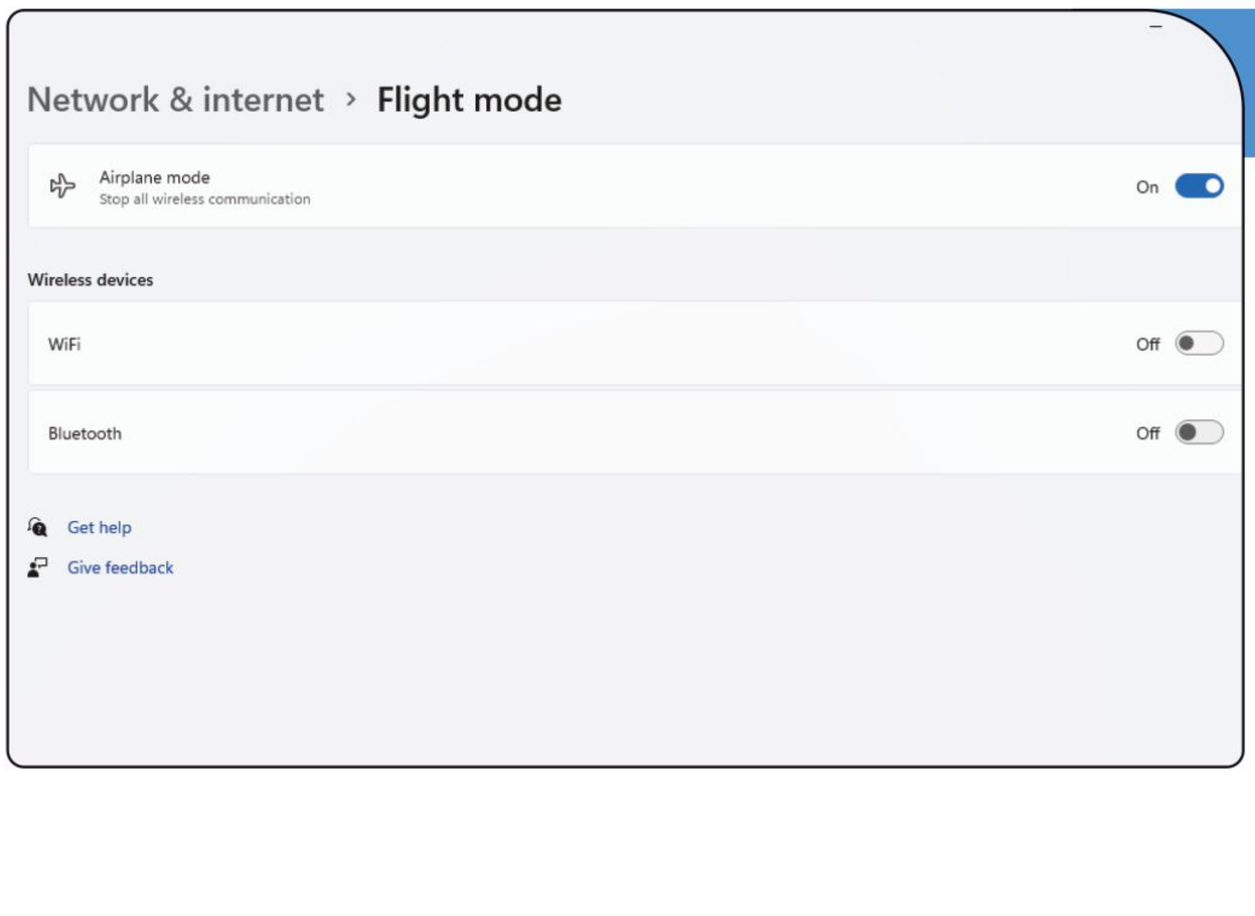
Usage Stats

In a move designed to keep up with more mobile-based computing devices, Windows 11 includes a data usage page in Settings too. Here it splits your data between wired and wireless. We'd like to see more advanced settings than this too, so you could see how much data you used on a public wireless hotspot, for example.



Disable Adaptors

Another thing you can do is to disable and re-enable your network adapter (like the Wi-Fi card in your laptop). View your network connections by clicking Advanced Network Settings in Network Internet and then right-click the network connection in question. You can disable or re-enable it.



Flight Mode

If you are using a laptop, you will also have access to Flight mode settings (this can also be accessed through the Quick settings panel from the home screen). Here you can disable Wi-Fi and Bluetooth individually, or simply use the Flight Mode slider switch to disable all wireless connections.

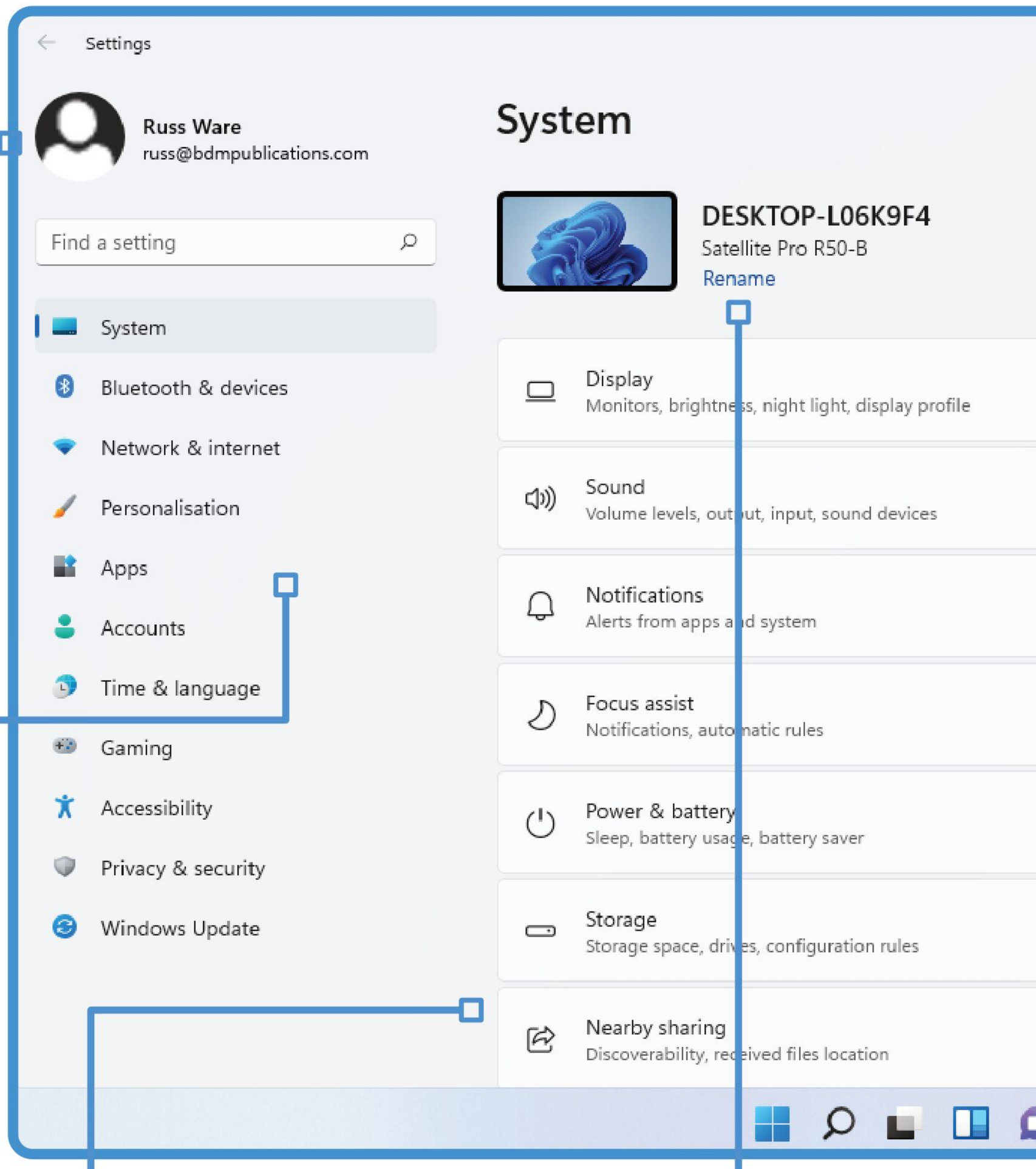
Windows 11 Settings

Account & Search

At the top-left of the settings window, you will see your Microsoft account name and email address, along with an avatar image (if you have chosen one). Clicking this will take you to the settings Accounts page. Below that is a search field, allowing you to look for specific settings within the app.

Settings Categories

In the left sidebar are all of the main settings categories, from System settings to Windows Update settings. This sidebar remains visible no matter where you are within the settings app. Clicking each category heading will open a list of sub categories.



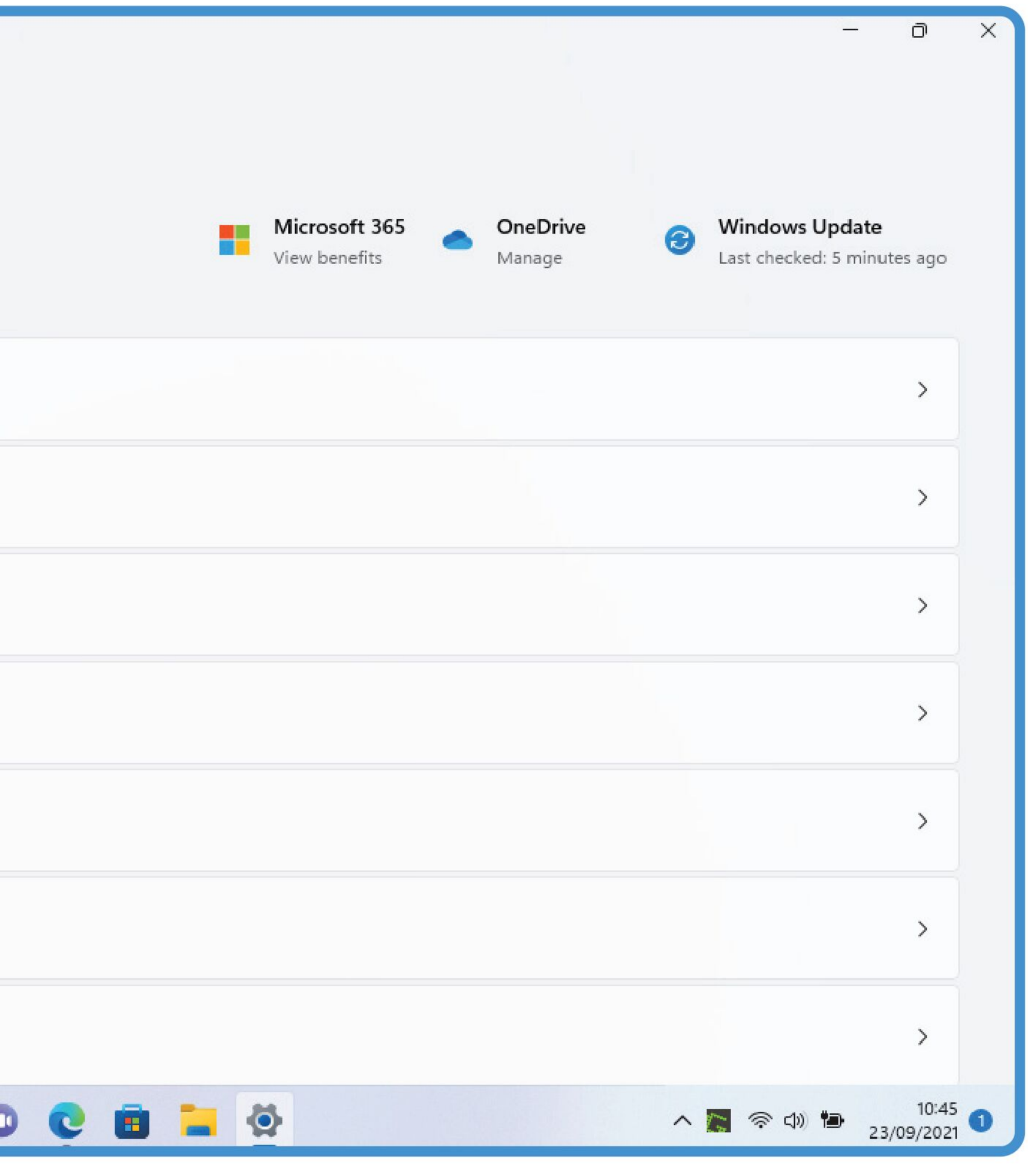
Settings Sub-categories

This is where you'll find the individual settings you can change. Some of the settings can be controlled using slider switches displayed in the main sub-category, but most will take you to a more detailed selection of options when clicked. Certain details about current settings may be displayed along the top of the sub-category.

Quick Info Panel

Along the top of several settings categories you'll see relevant information about the current settings. For example, at the top of the System settings, you will see the name of the PC, Windows Update status and links to OneDrive and Office365. For Network & Internet, there's currently connected network, data usage and network properties.

The main settings app in Windows 11 has been completely redesigned, making it much easier to find everything you need to keep your computer working the way you need it to. You can find the settings app in the Start menu, or open it by pressing the Windows Key + I.



System Settings

These are the core settings for your computer. Things like Display, Sound, Power & Battery and Storage can be found in this settings category.

Network & Internet

View, connect to and manage your Wi-Fi, Network and other Internet settings here. You can also find a section for adding a VPN, and setting up a Mobile Hotspot.

Accounts

Manage your account settings, from your Microsoft account to your Family Safety, in this section. You can also find your PC sign-in options here.

Privacy & Security

The privacy settings contains sections for all of the main areas where your privacy may be compromised, including some which might not be obvious at first.

Windows Update

It is important to make sure that your Windows computer is up-to-date with all the latest updates and revisions. Here you can check to see which updates are available to download and install.

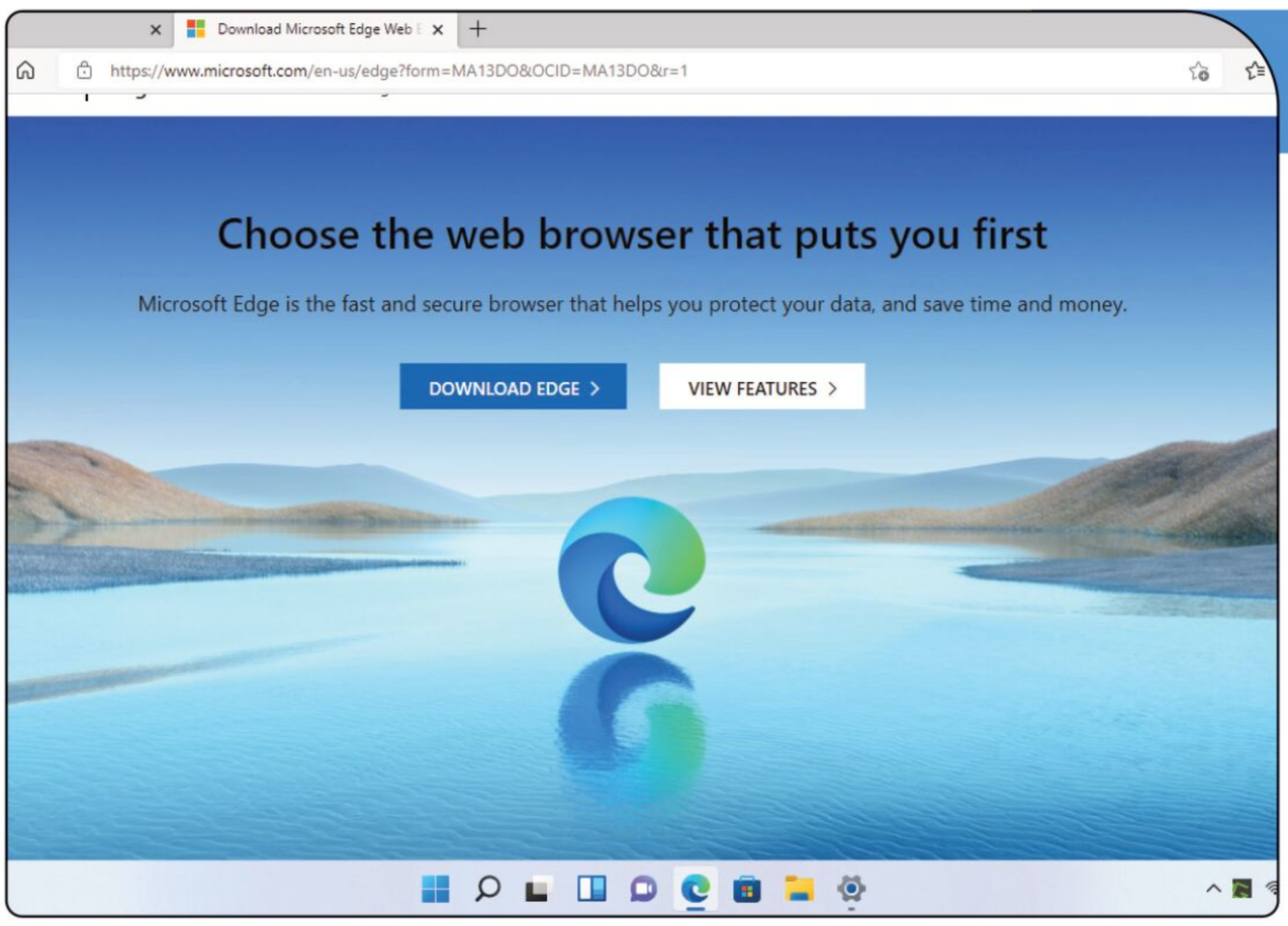
Accessibility

If you have additional accessibility needs, you can find lots of settings here to make life easier. From a narrator tool and screen magnifier, to closed captioning and mouse and keyboard settings.

Browsing with Microsoft Edge

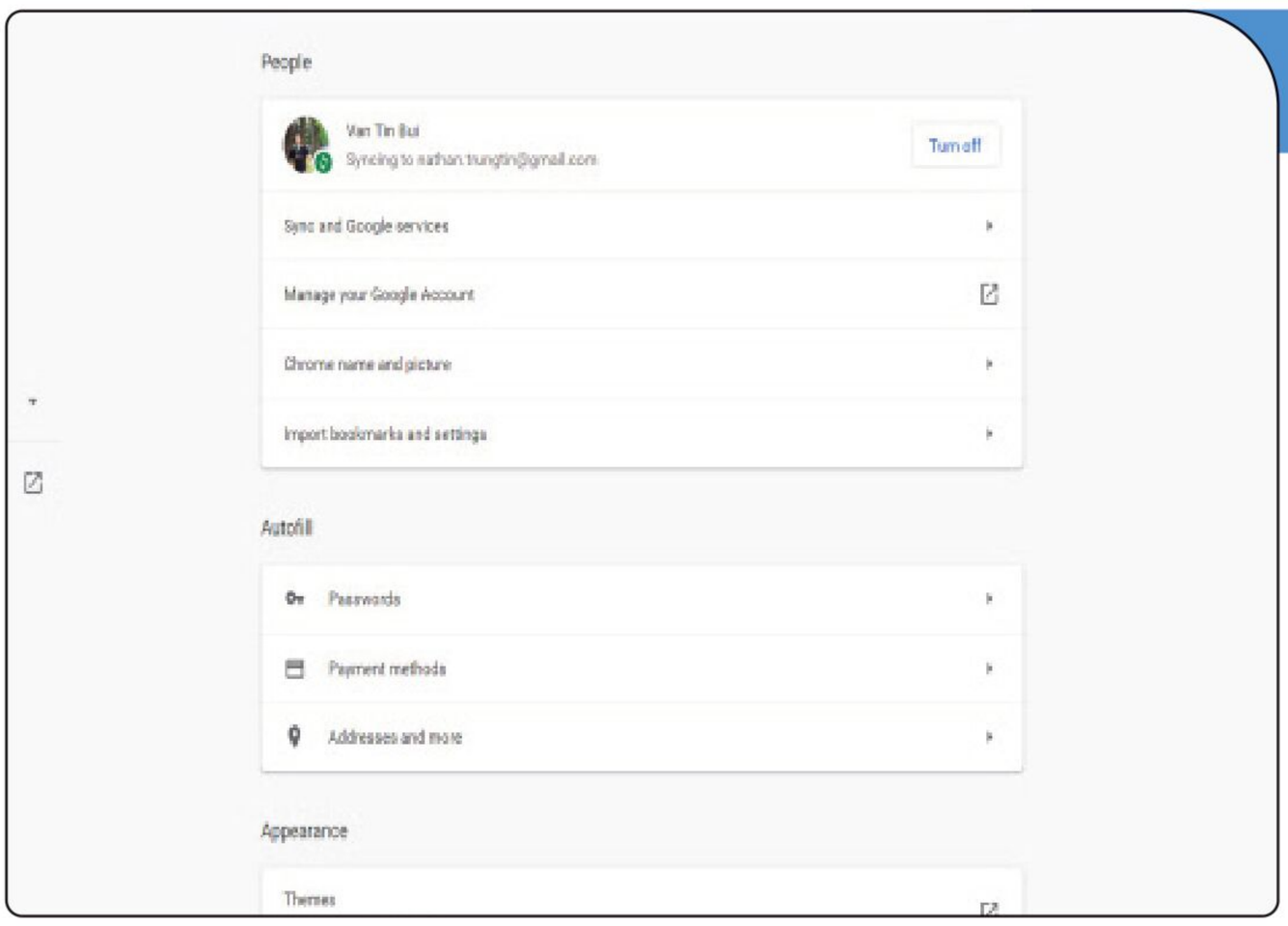
Edge Chromium, is a significant change to the original Edge browser; and offers a much better experience. Based on the Google Chrome browser, Edge is focused on modern web standards, privacy and security and has an impressive feature and tool list.

Get Started with Edge



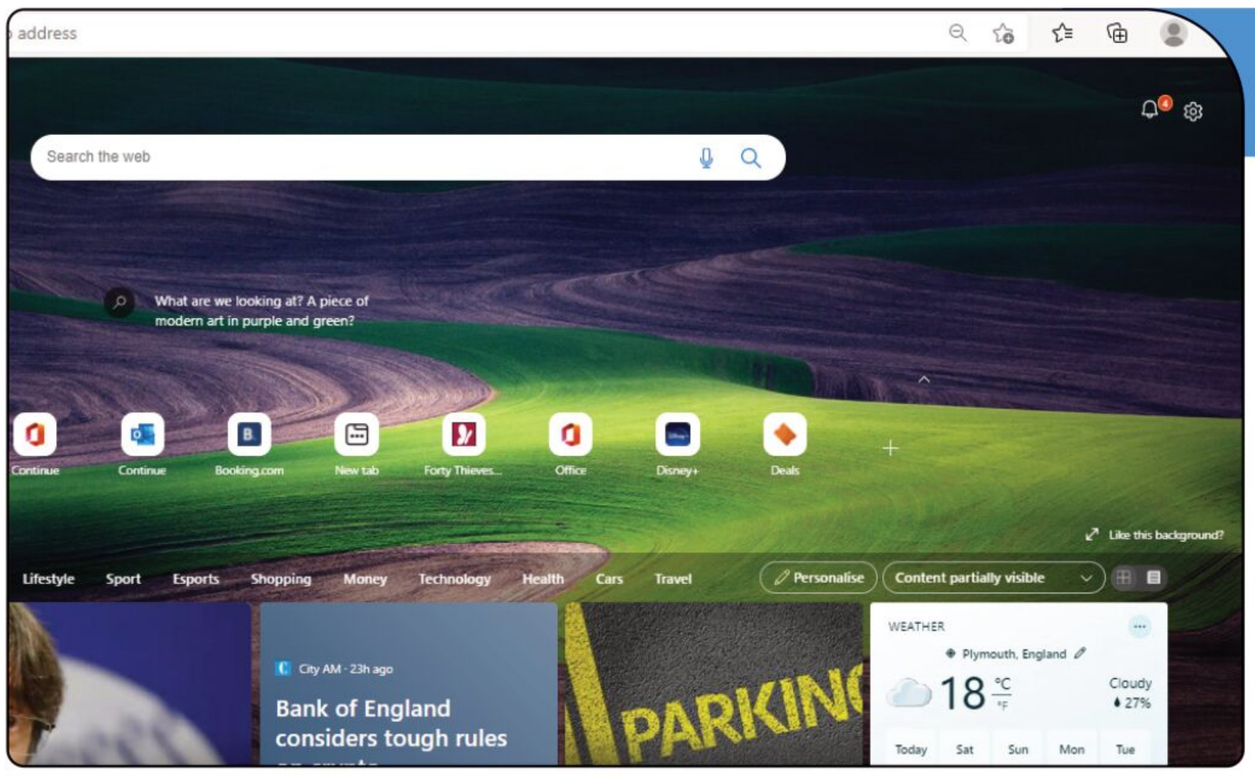
Installing Edge

Edge comes pre-installed with Windows 11, and if you have upgraded from Windows 10 (and were using Edge previously) it should already be set up and working as normal. If you bought a PC with Windows 11 installed, or have never used Edge before, it will require a bit of setup to begin with.



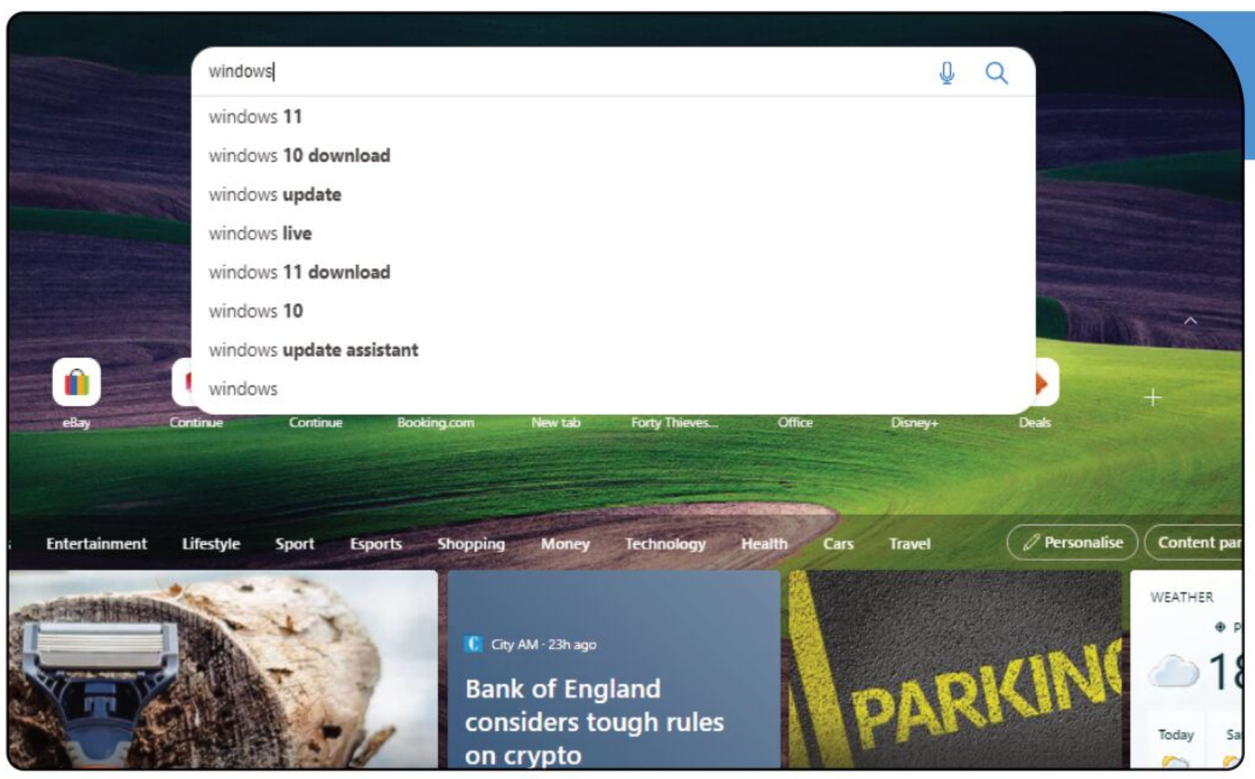
Edge Setup

During setup, you have the option to import browser data such as bookmarks and favourites from Google Chrome (left), choose the initial start page layout and set up syncing across devices (other computers, your phone, etc.) Once installed, Edge opens at the start page.



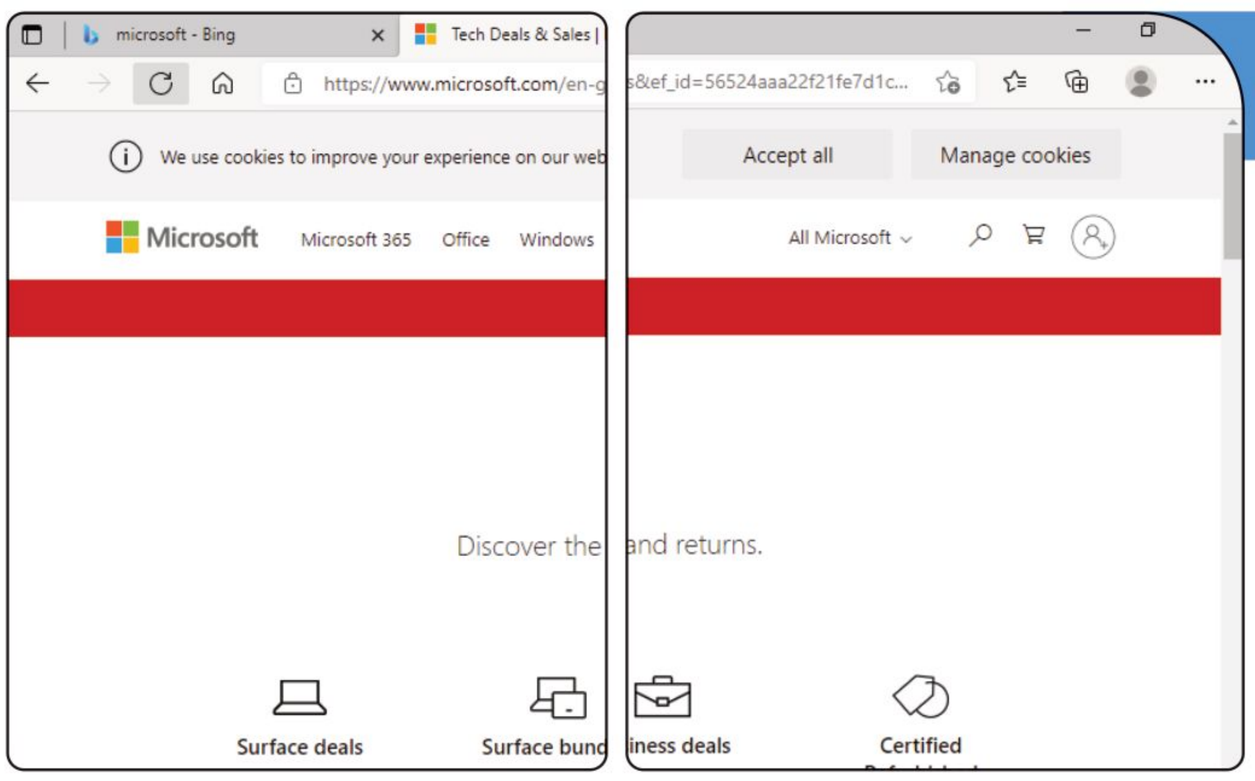
Start Page Layout

Depending on the layout you chose during setup, the start page will either display a news feed or a cleaner page (with the news feed just a scroll away below it). You can check out the other layouts easily by clicking the Gear icon at the top right and choosing from the menu.



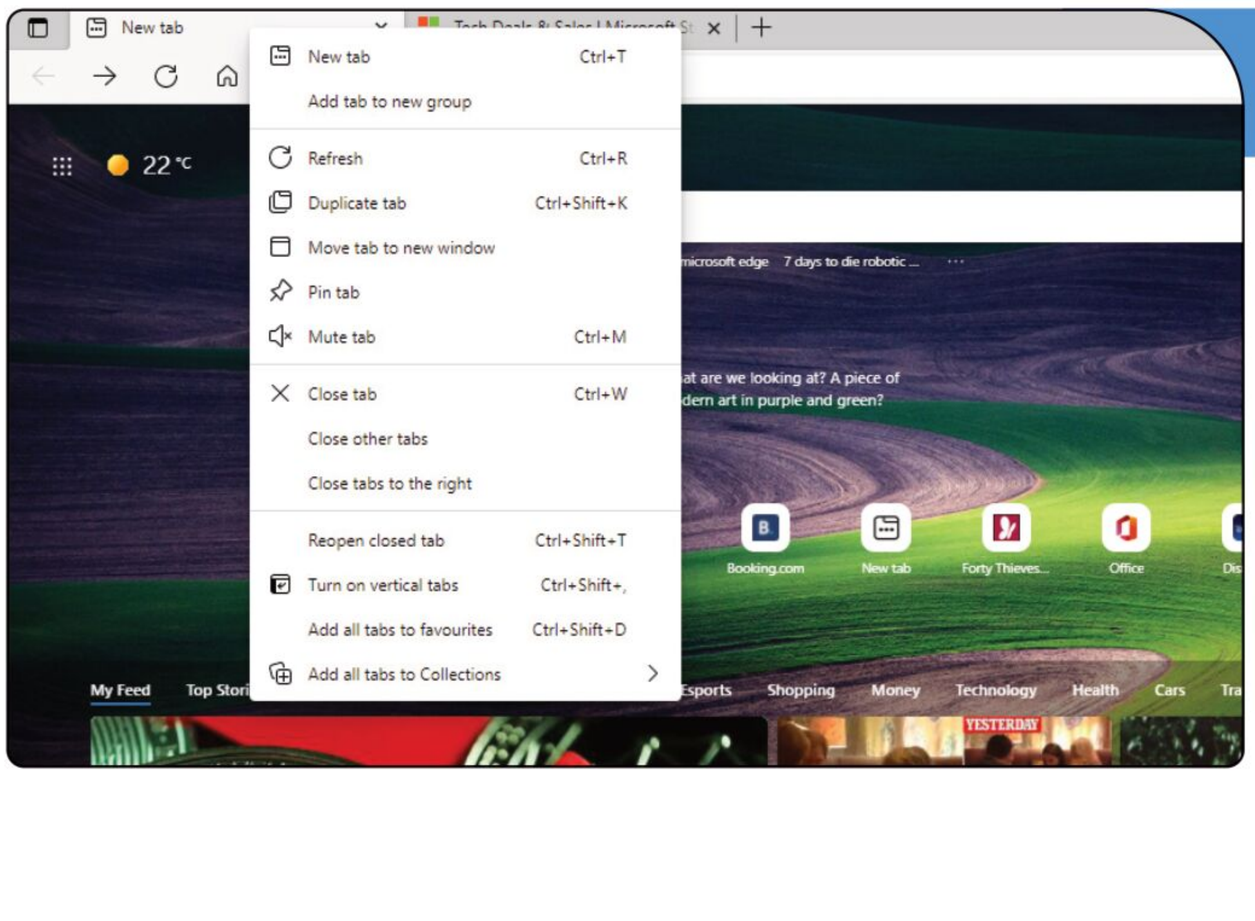
Search in Edge

To search for a website or web page, you can type in the search field at the top (which is always there), or you can type in the search box floating on the Start page. When you type in either box, Edge shows a list of suggestions based on what it thinks you require. The default search engine is Bing.



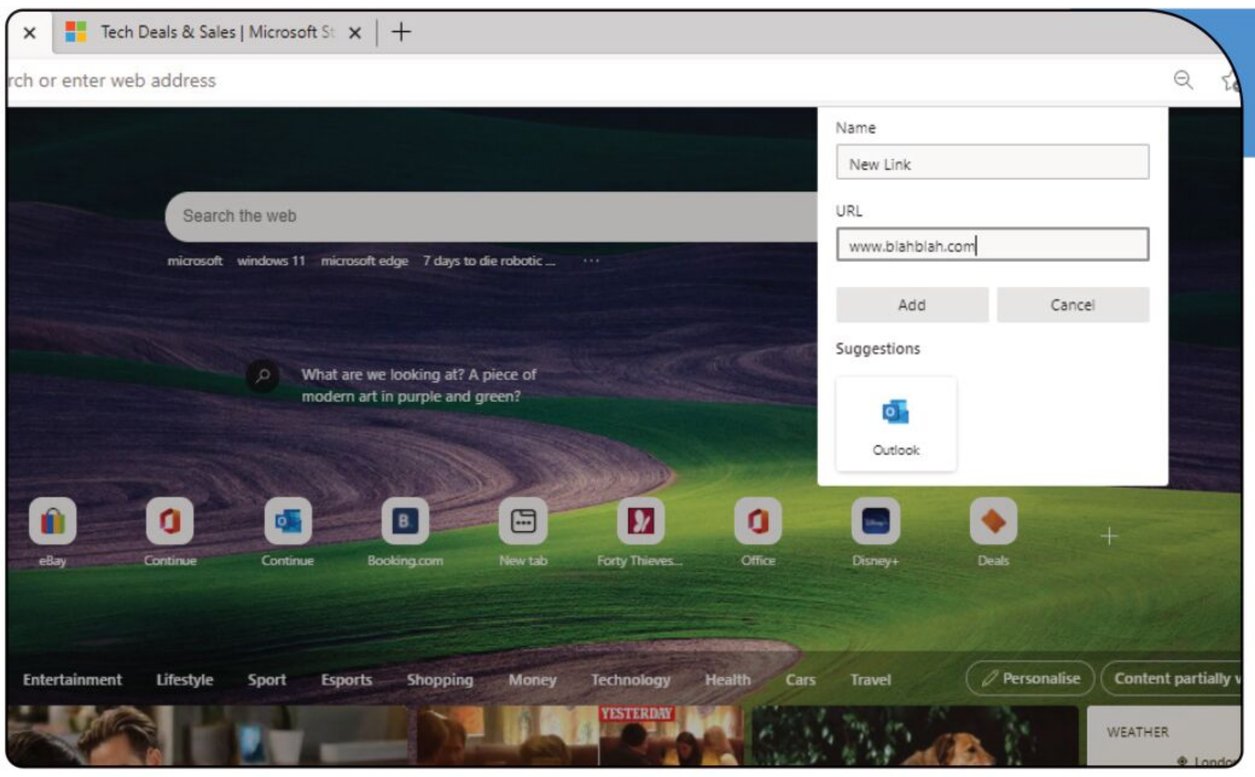
Browser Controls

The browser controls are on the top bar. On the far left is: Back, Forwards and Refresh Page (Home button can be added in the browser settings). On the right are the zoom control, add to favourites, favourites list and collections buttons. There is also a More button to open the browser menu.



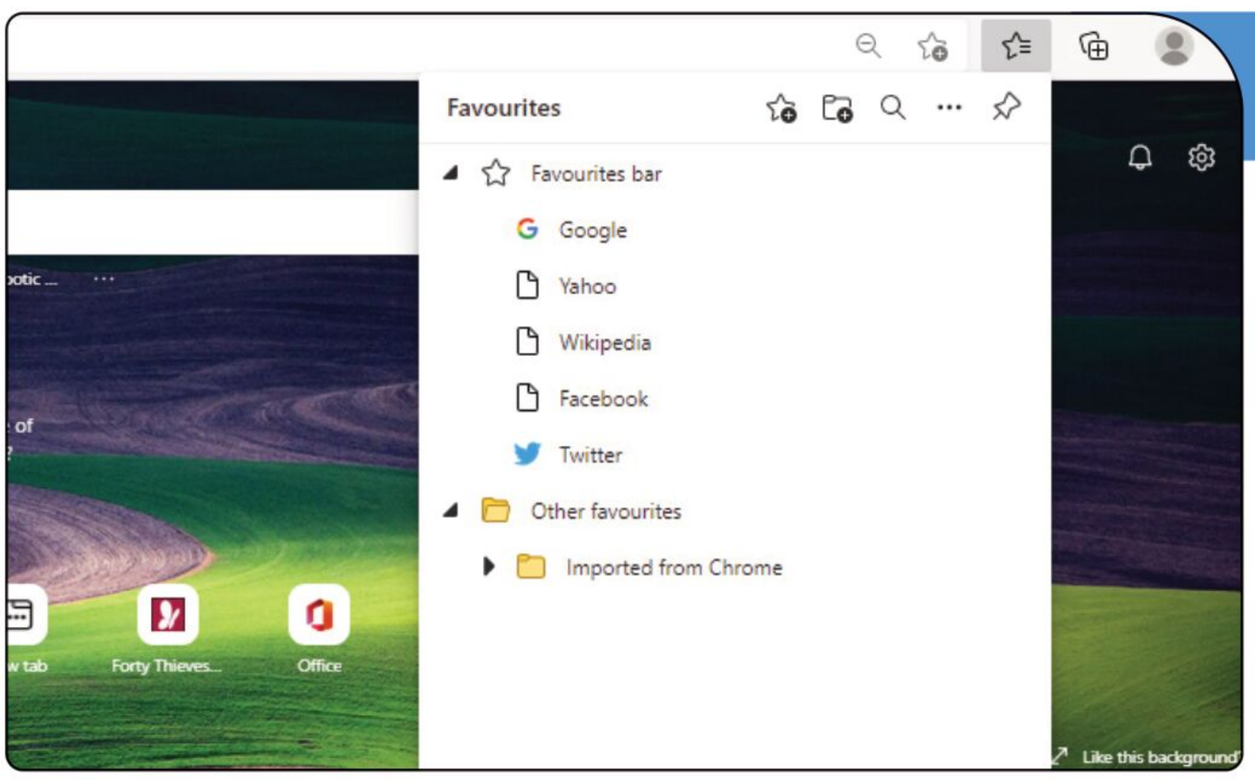
Edge Tabs

Clicking the + opens a new tab and clicking the small X closes the tab. To the left of the tabs is the Tab actions menu button. You can use this to move tabs to the side of the window (vertically), create tab collections and restore recently closed tabs. Right-click on any tab to see additional tab options.



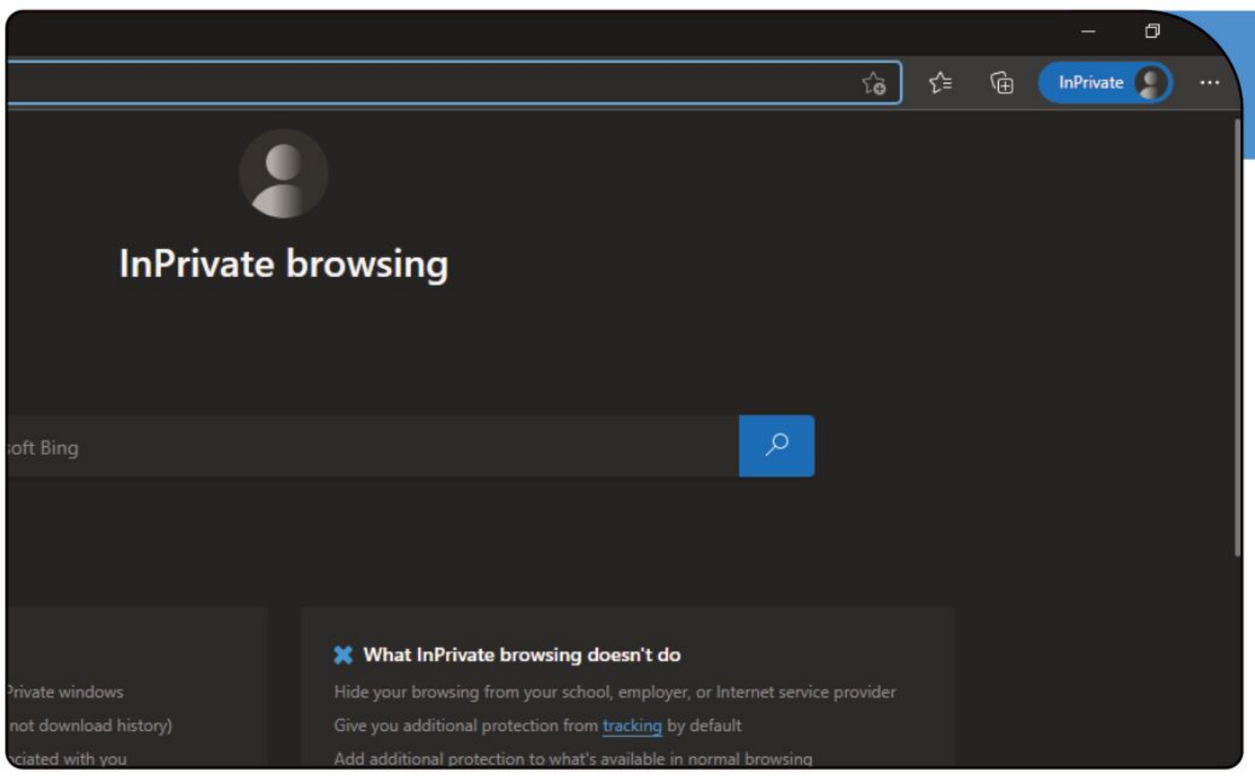
Quick Links

Each Start page layout includes a row of quick links (website icons) below the Start page search field. These will be auto-populated if you are new to Edge, but as you use the browser, these will be replaced by your recent/often visited sites. You can add sites by clicking the + button on the right.



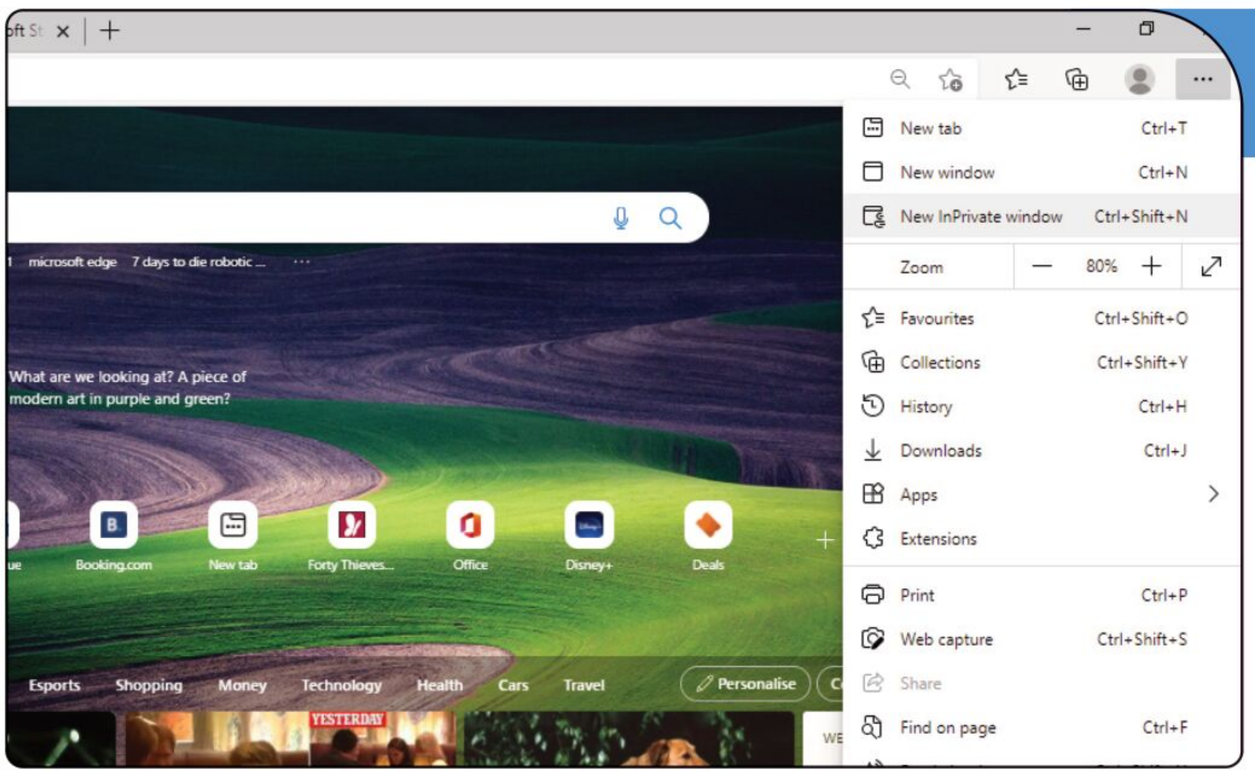
Favourites

To access Favourites, or bookmarked sites, click the button directly to the right of the address bar (star with three lines). Clicking it opens a fly-out list, at the top of which is the option to "Manage favourites". This opens the list in a new page, where you can remove or re-order them.



InPrivate Window

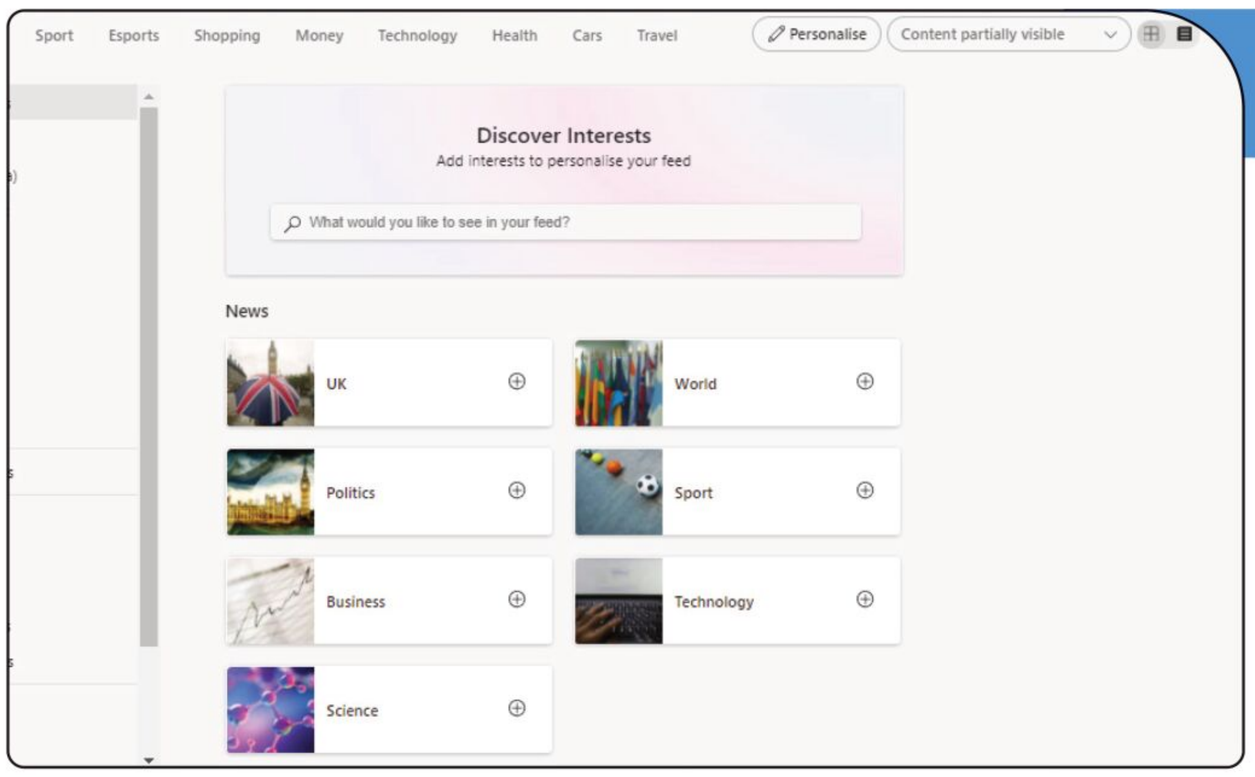
If you want to browse in private mode when using Edge, you can do so easily. To open a new InPrivate tab, click the browser menu button at the top right and select "New InPrivate Window". You can also open a new private tab by using the keyboard shortcut Ctrl + Shift + N while Edge is active.



Edge Menu

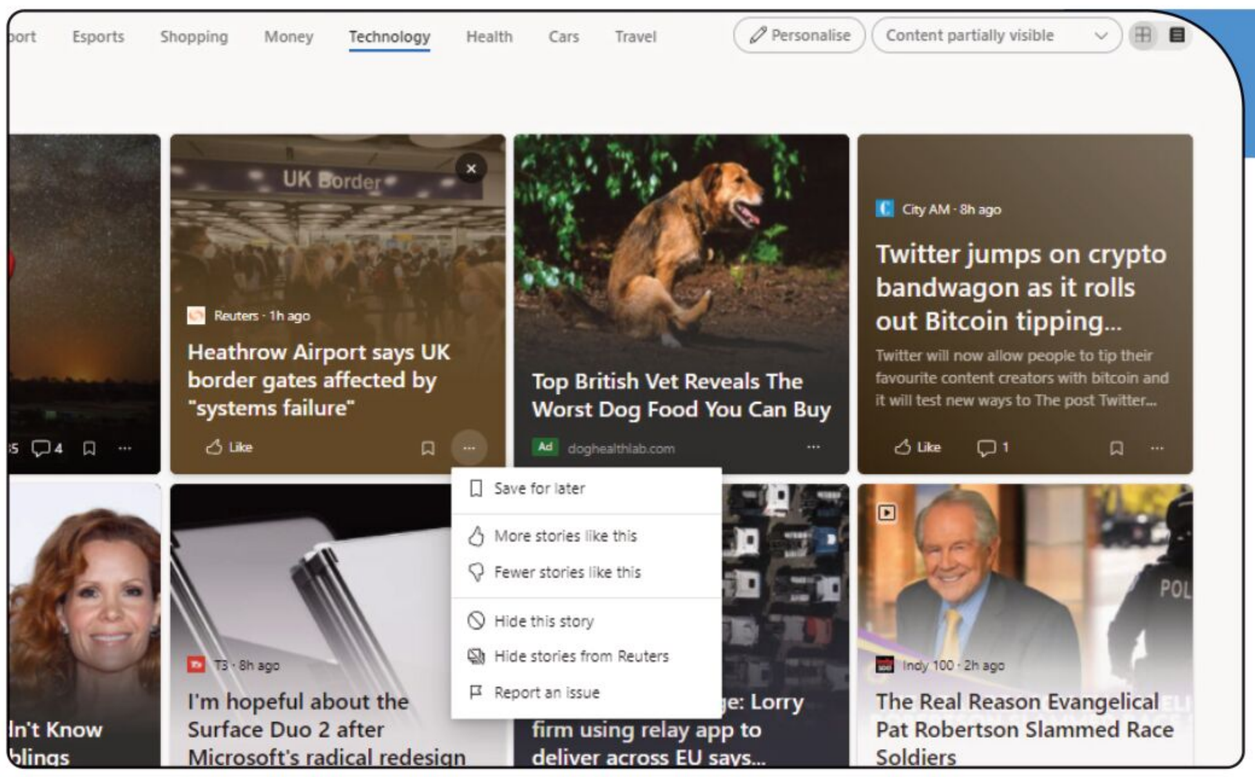
Click the Menu button (three small dots on the top right) to open the Edge menu. From this menu, you're able to access Settings, print a page and find words or phrases in the open web page. It also contains links to Favourites, Collections, History, Downloads, Apps, Extensions and much more.

The Edge News Feed



Feed Settings

Click the Content visibility button to choose how news stories are displayed (visible, partially visible or headings only). The Personalise button lets you choose which categories are displayed, if information cards are included (weather, etc.), and which news types alert you with a notification.



Curating Stories

The more you use Edge, the more the stories adapt to suit your interests. You can help this process by interacting with stories. Click the X to close stories that don't interest you, click the More menu button on a story to save it, vote for more/fewer stories like this and hide stories from that source.

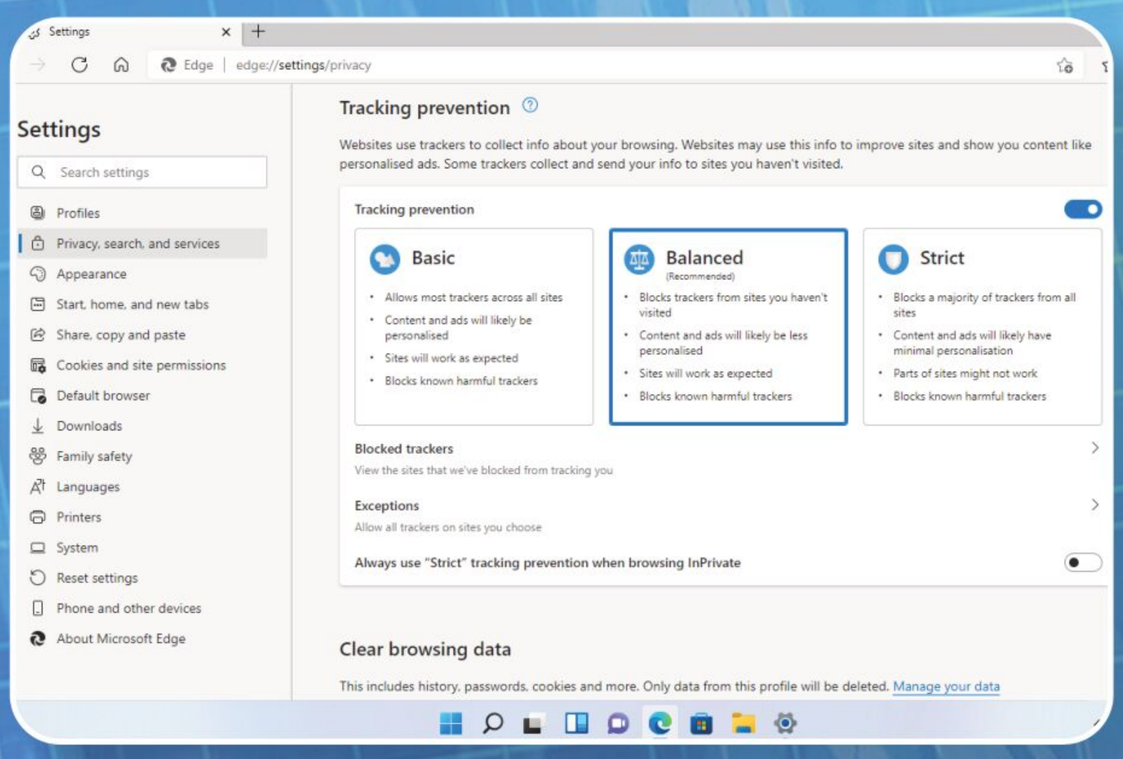
Edge Privacy

Microsoft seems to be taking users' privacy choices seriously with Edge Chromium, and you now have a much easier way to control your browsing data and history. The biggest improvement is Tracking Prevention. You can access these settings in Browser Menu > Settings > Privacy & Services.

You can choose three different levels of tracking prevention: Basic, Balanced and Strict. These options all block known harmful trackers, but how personalised content (such as adverts) is displayed and how well all website features work, depends on the level you choose.

Our advice is to switch to Strict and then see how it affects your favourite websites. If you find things are not displayed as they should be, you can always switch back to Balanced.

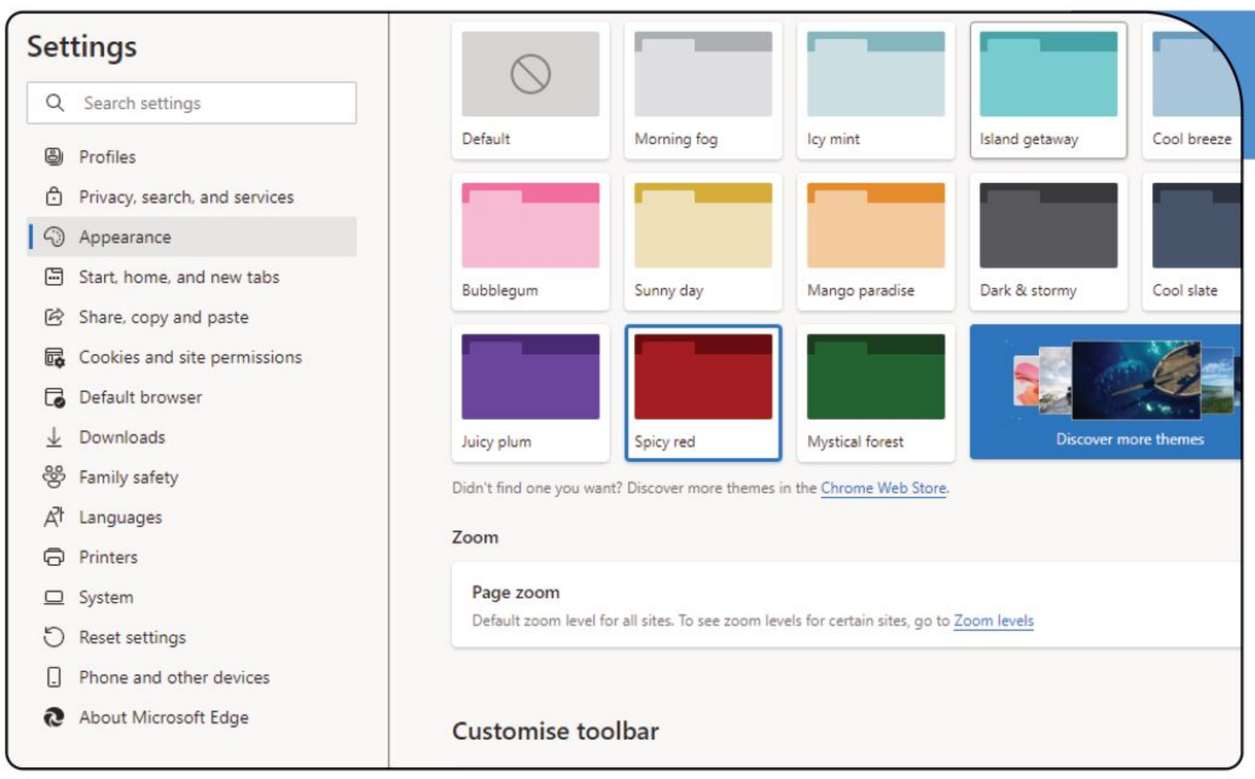
You can view sites that you have blocked from tracking you, and also allow exceptions if there are sites which you want to allow to track you.



Personalising Edge

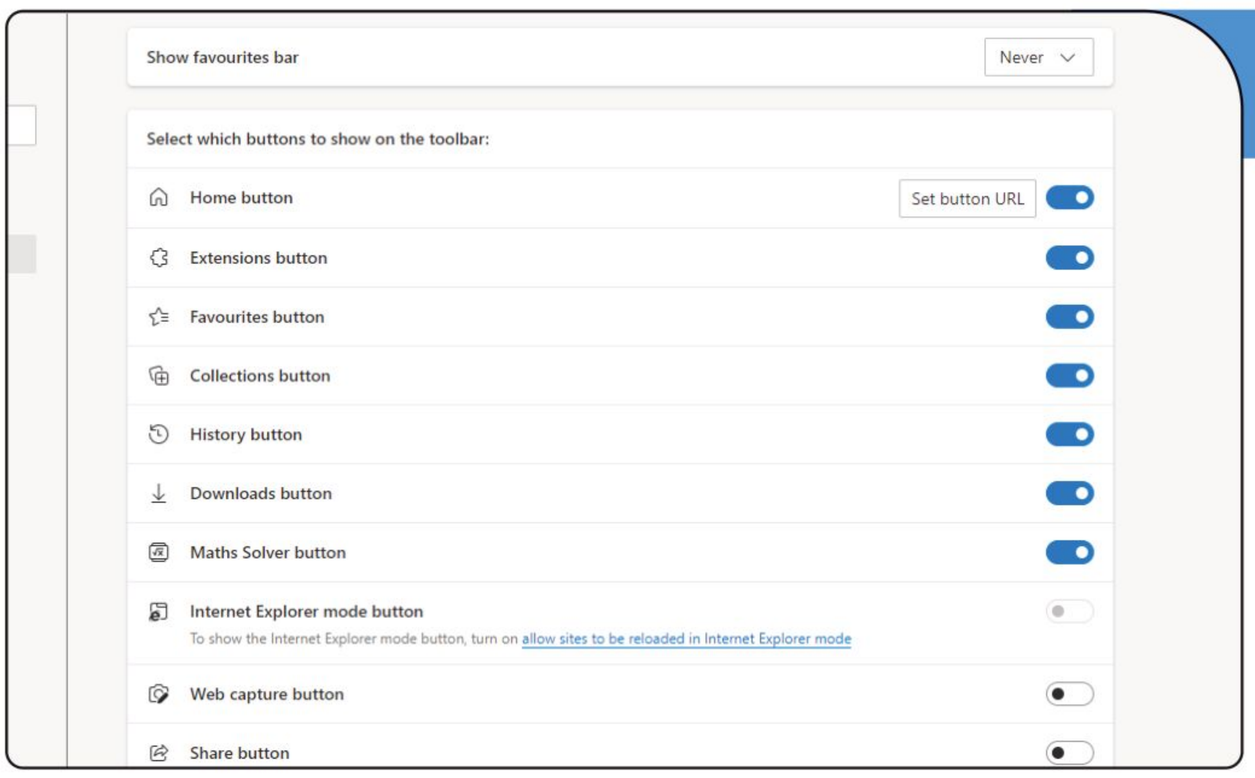
Light or Dark

If you have changed the system theme to light or dark, Edge should automatically be set to the same. You can, however, choose the theme for Edge separately to the system theme. Open the Edge menu > Settings, and click Appearance. Choose the light, dark or system default theme.



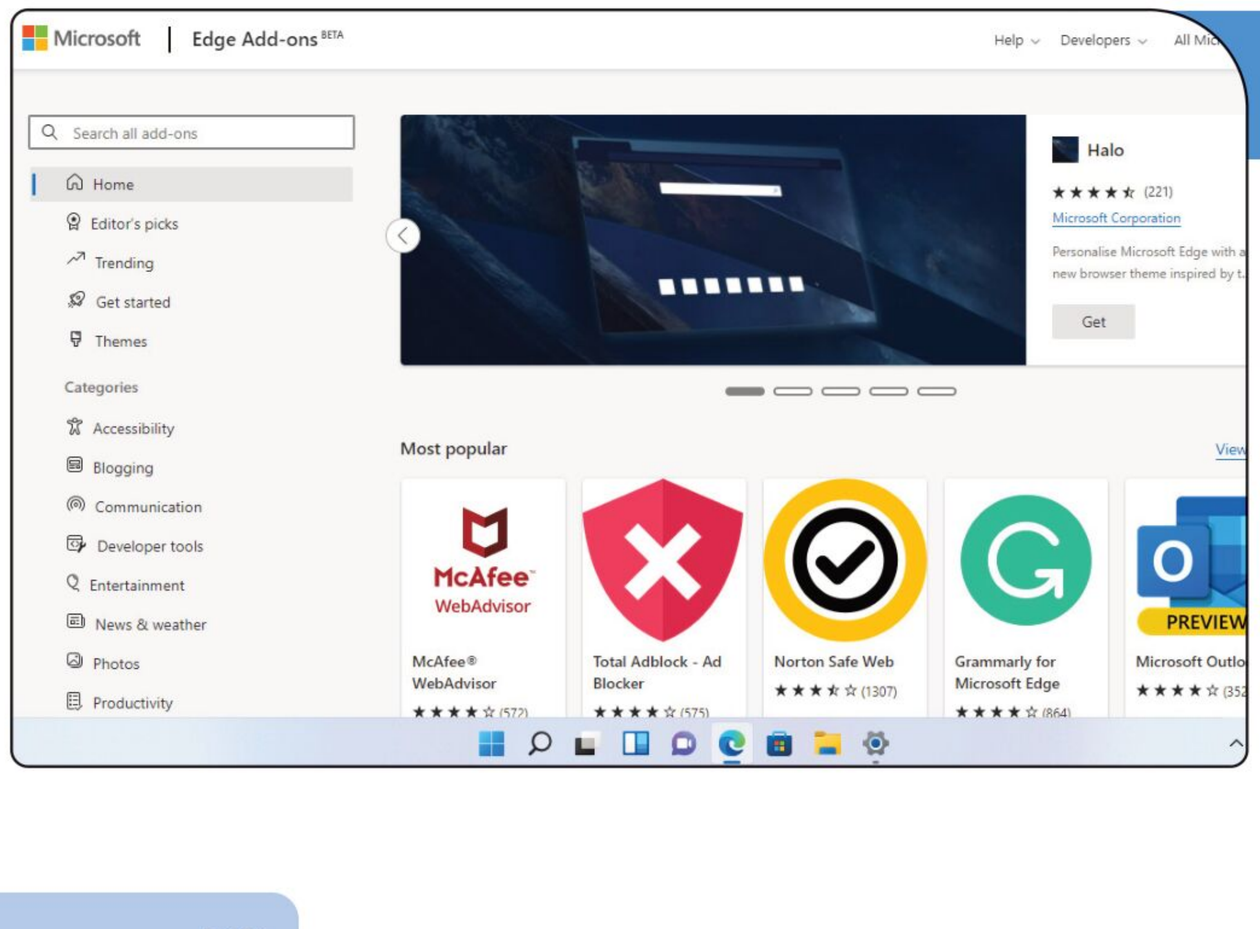
Edge Themes

As well as light or dark, Edge lets you choose from about 15 other theme colours, from Morning Fog to Mystical Forest. Go to Edge menu > Settings > Appearance and click on the theme colour you want to apply. This will only apply colour to the top bar and tabs. It will not override the light/dark setting.



Browser Controls

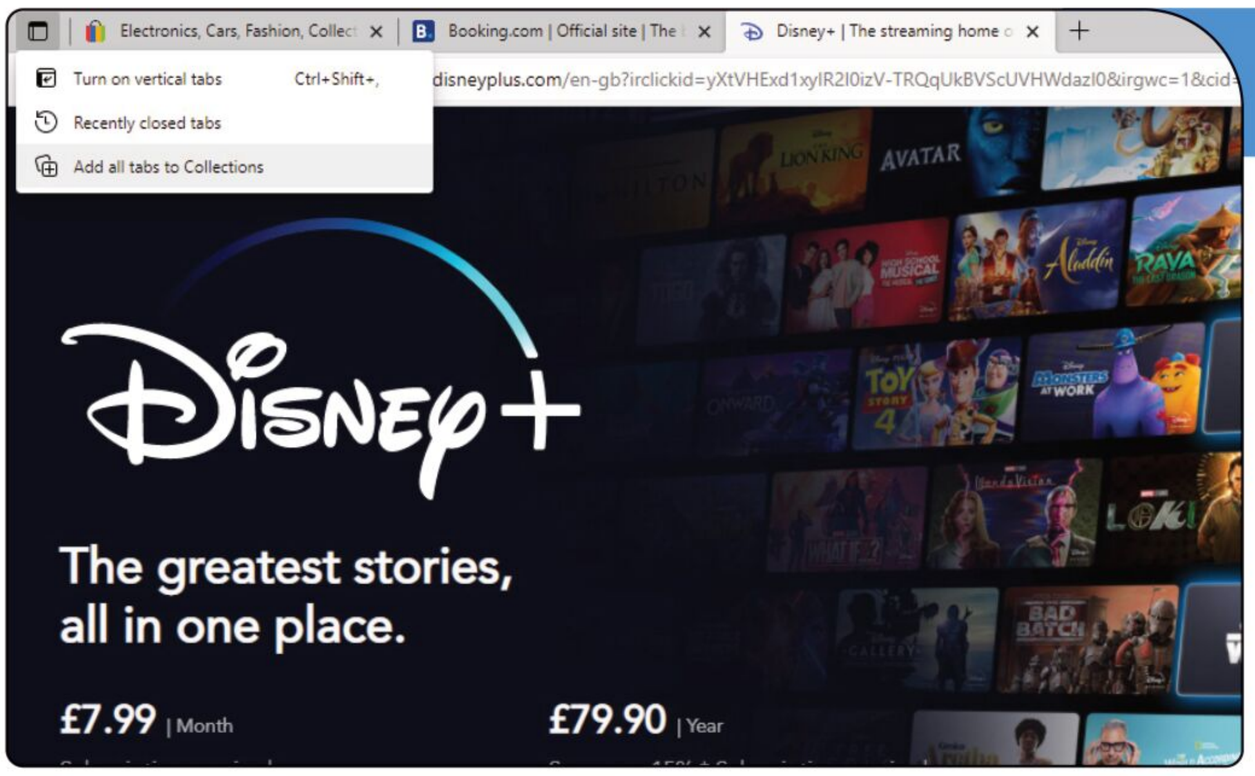
The default browser controls are Back, Forward and Refresh page. Open the menu > Settings > Appearance and you can scroll down to see more buttons to add. These include Home (including option to set the URL), Extensions, History, Downloads and strangely, a Maths Solver button.



Extensions

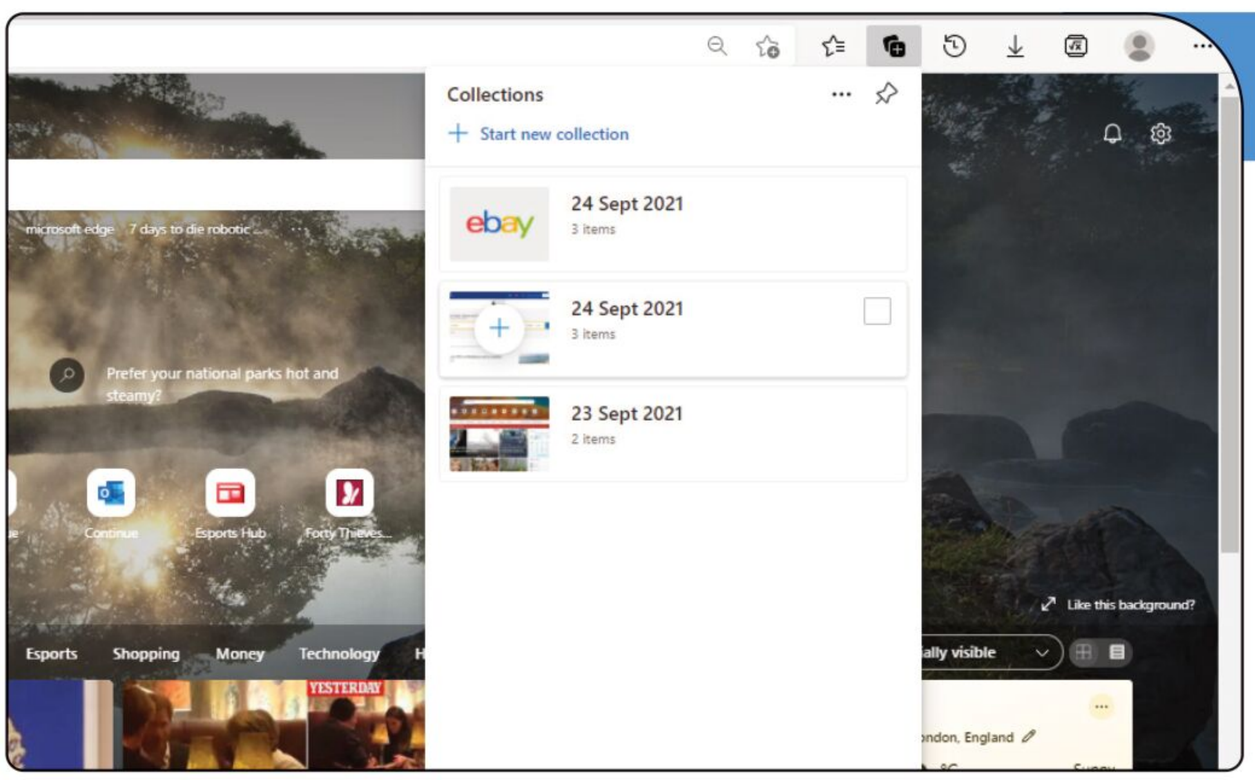
Just like the previous version, Edge Chromium features extensions, which are downloaded from the Microsoft Store. You can view installed extensions in the Browser Menu > Extensions. There are fewer extensions available for the new version, but this situation will improve as it matures.

Edge Collections



Step 1

Open the websites that you want to save in a Collection, in separate tabs. Click the Tab Actions button (top-left) and from the menu, select "Add all tabs to Collections". A notification will appear below the Collections button in the browser tools bar, confirming the Collection was saved.



Step 2

To open a Collection, click the Collections button, and right-click on the collection you want to open. Select "Open all [number]". You can edit the collections by clicking on them here, and adding or removing pages. You can also rename the collections by clicking on the date title at the top.

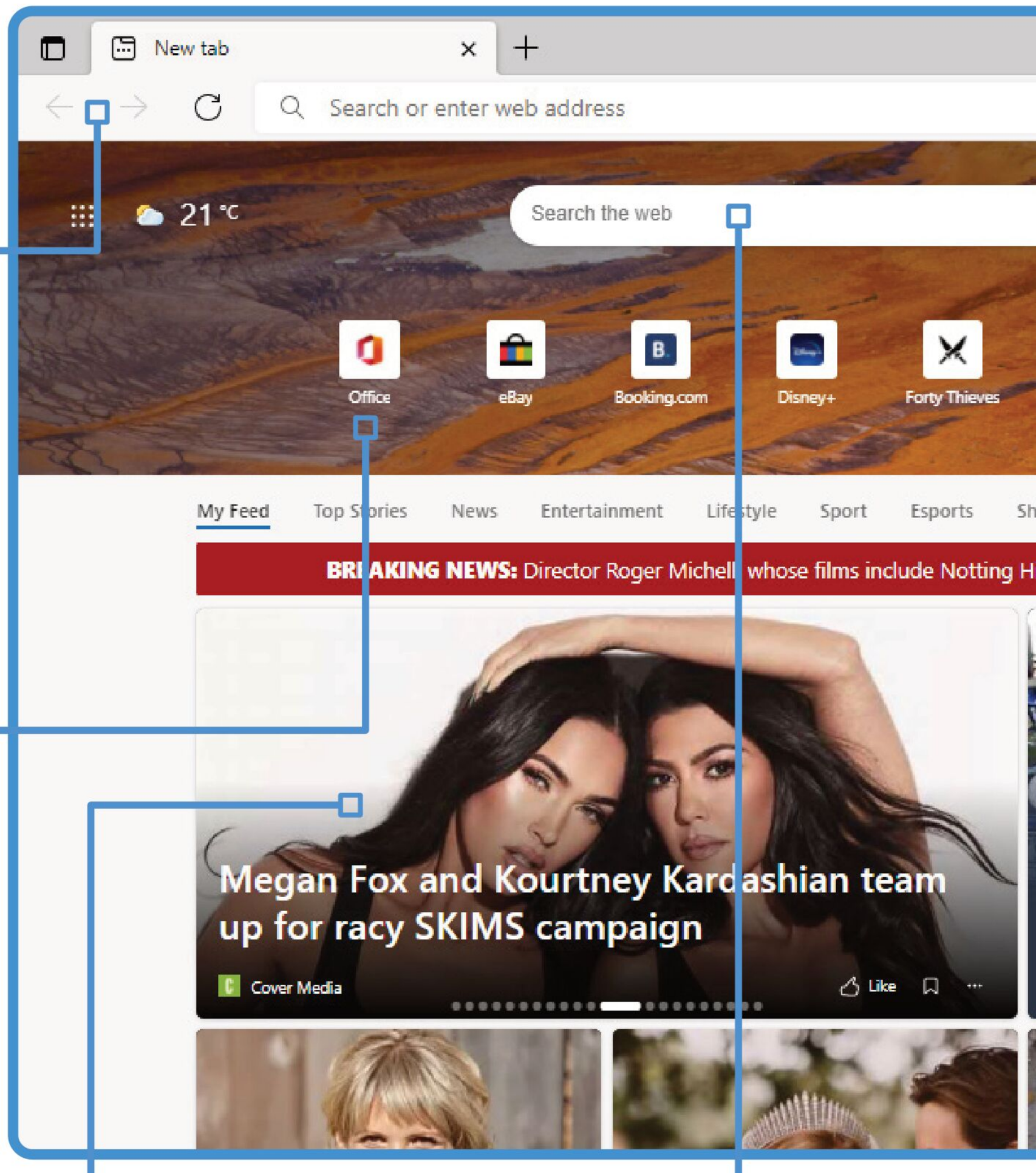
Exploring the Edge Browser

Browser & Tab Controls

In the top left corner, where you would probably expect to find them, are the browser controls. These include the Home button, the Page refresh button and the Page forward/Page back buttons. Also in the top corner is the Tab control, allowing you to set the tabs vertically, or restore closed tabs. Right-click on the active tab to see additional options.

Recently Viewed/ Favourites

A group of icons are displayed for the most recently visited websites/ pages. These automatically update as you browse, but can also be edited to show your favourite or most-used sites by clicking on the + symbol at the end of the row of icons.



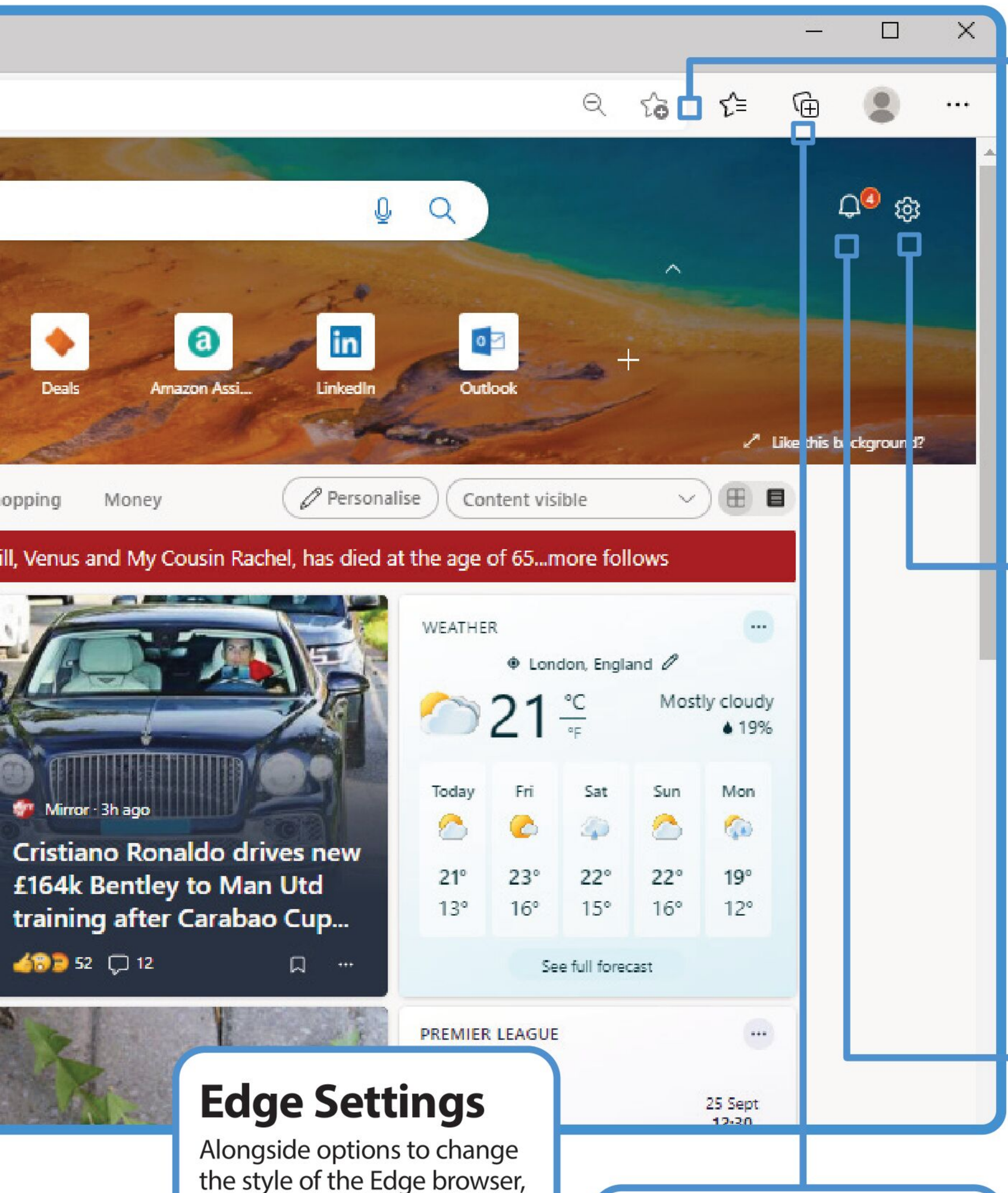
News Feed

The Start screen of Microsoft Edge is also a news feed. The news feed is provided by MSN and is made up of news stories based on your geographical location. Either the feed is displayed at the top, or you scroll down to it; depending on the layout you choose. Click "Personalise" to filter the news types, and click "Content visible" to choose how stories are displayed.

Search Fields

There are two search fields in Edge, one at the top (which is also the address field when viewing a website), and one which floats at the top or middle of the start page; depending on the layout you choose. Use either of these and search suggestions appear as you begin typing.

Edge continues to get better, and the latest version in Windows 11 is no different. You should be familiar with it if you are upgrading from Windows 10, as it is basically the same version; but let's take a look at the newest and best features of Microsoft Edge.



Favourites Menu

The Hub from the old version of Edge, which contained favourites, history and a reading list has gone. Instead, you can access Favourites and Collections here. The star with a + icon in the search field is the button to add a new web page to your favourites.

Start Page Layout

You can customise the Start screen in several ways here. There are three preset layouts: Informational, Inspirational and Focused. You can also choose a custom layout, which lets you turn on/off individual elements, such as pic of the day and the news feed.

Notifications

The small alarm/bell icon opens a list of top news stories. A badge will appear on top of it to tell you how many new stories are waiting to be read. As you browse the news feed, Edge will learn what type of news you like to read and tailor the notifications accordingly.

Edge Settings

Alongside options to change the style of the Edge browser, including changing to a dark theme, are several important settings. You can choose how the Edge browser opens, showing the Start page or another specified page for example. The advanced settings include options to block pop-ups and allow Flash Player.

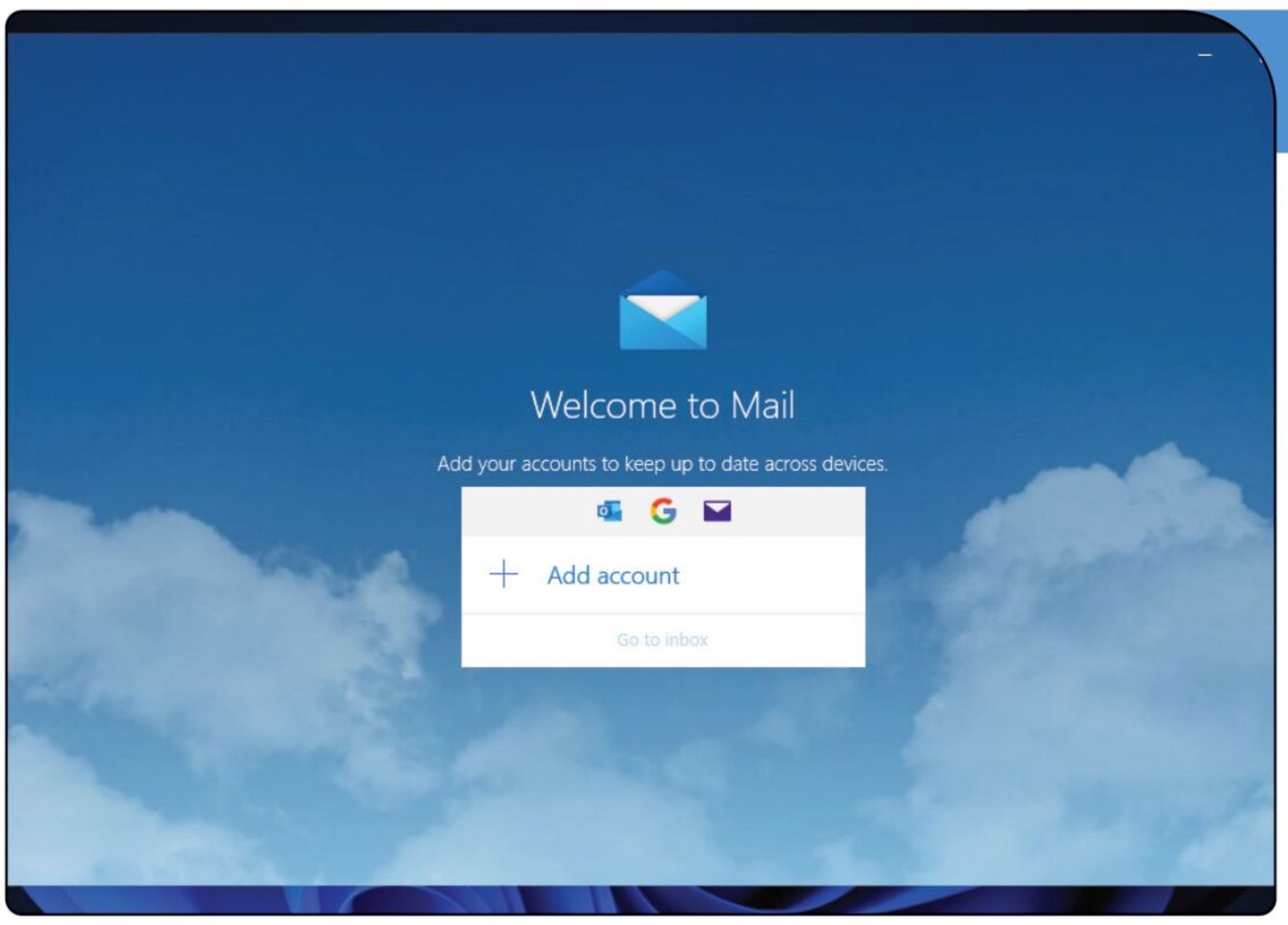
Collections

Collections are groups of tabs/web pages that you can save and then instantly return to using this button. To save a Collection, click the Tab Controls button at the top-left, and choose "Add all tabs to collections".

Using the Mail App

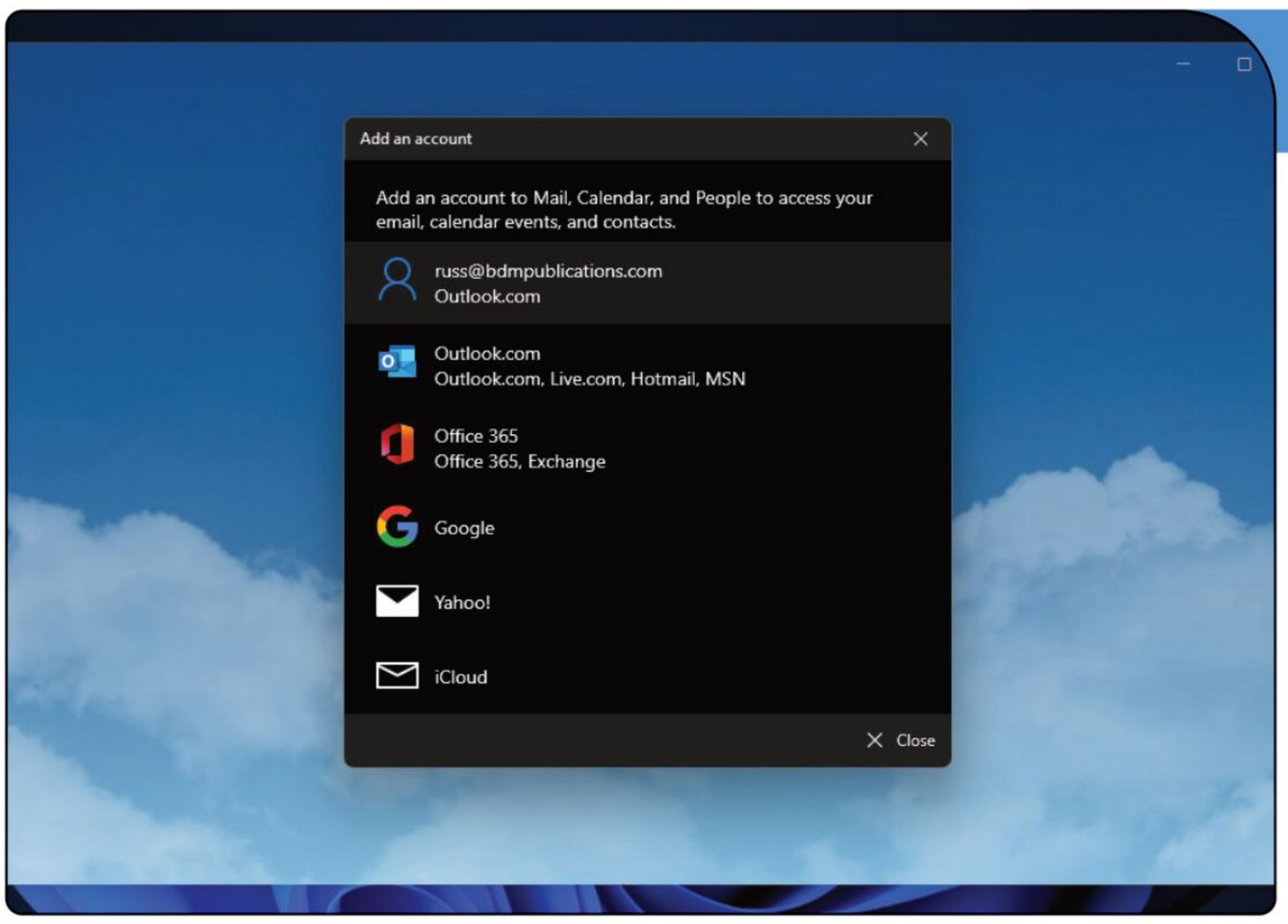
The Mail app in Windows 11 remains a simple and easy way to have all of your emails in one place. If you have updated from Windows 10, your email should already be up and running. But if not, here's how to set up the Mail app in Windows 11.

Setting Up Email Accounts



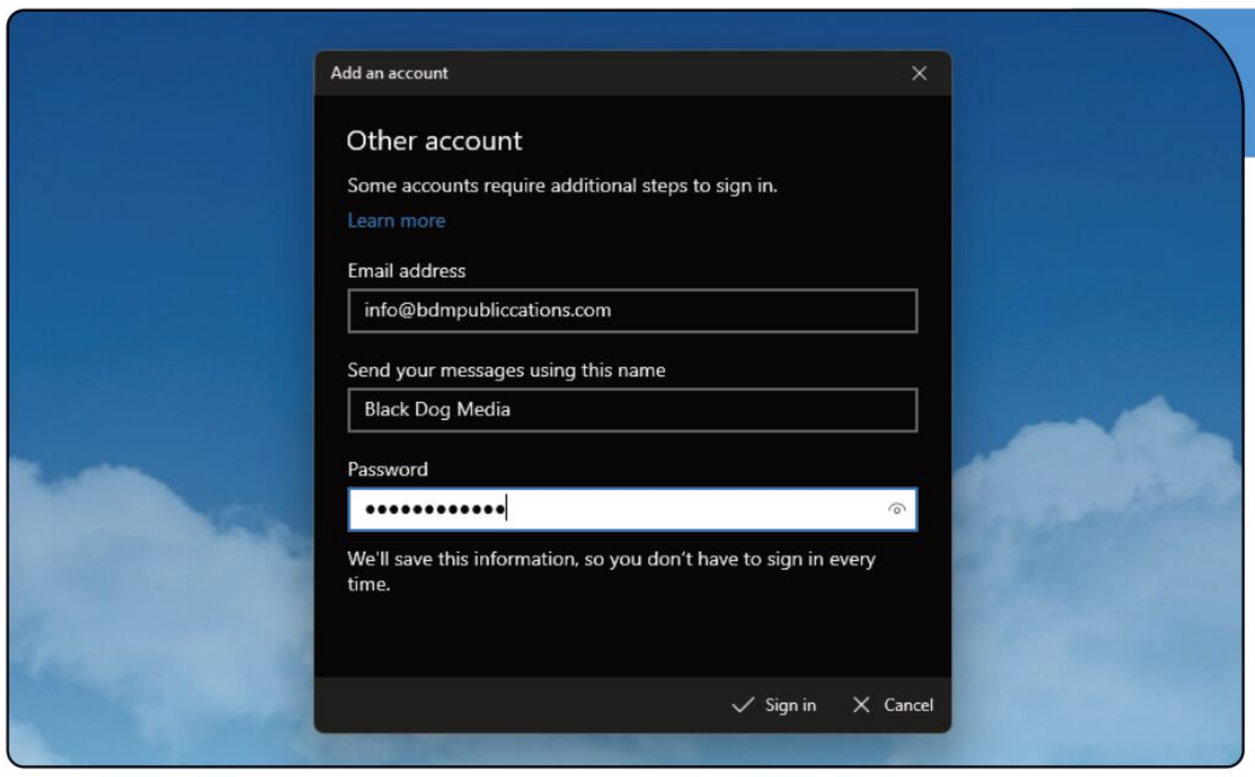
Step 1

If opening Mail for the first time, you will be greeted by a welcome screen, containing a link to "+Add account". Click this to open the list of available account types. You will need the server, password and other information required for each email account you want to add to Mail.



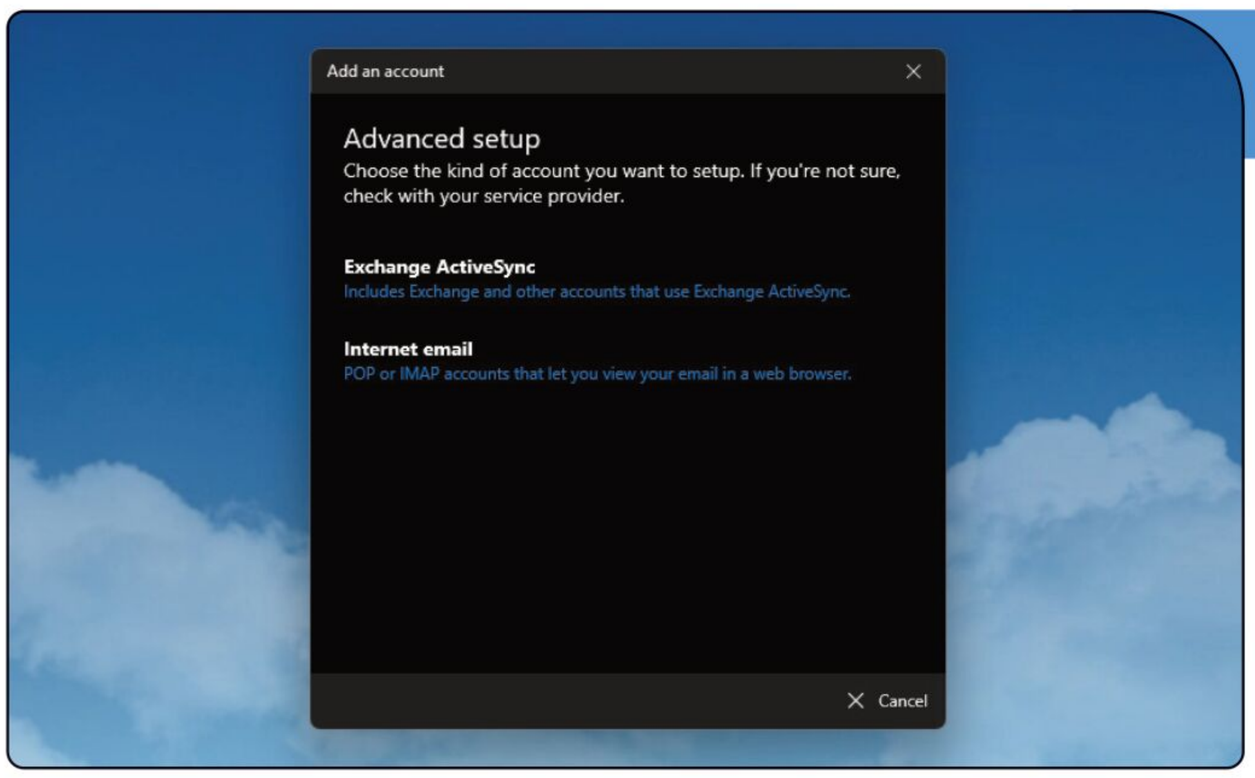
Step 2

You can add accounts from many popular providers including Google, Yahoo! and Apple's iCloud. You can also set up other more specialist accounts if you have the details. Finally, there's also an option to add a Microsoft Exchange account, if your workplace uses that (including Office 365).



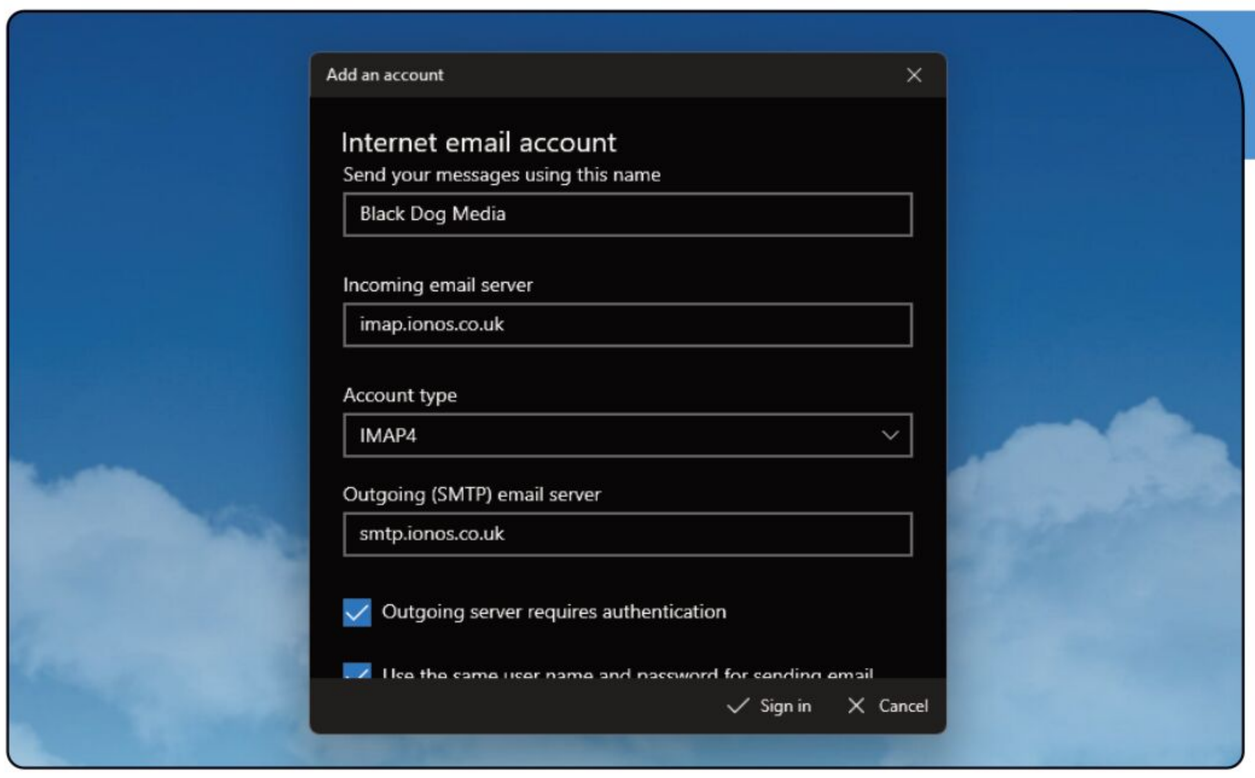
Step 3

Click the email account type you want to set up first. We are going to start with the POP, IMAP option. Enter the email address, sender name and password for your account. You can get this info from your email service provider if you don't have it to hand. Then click "Sign in".



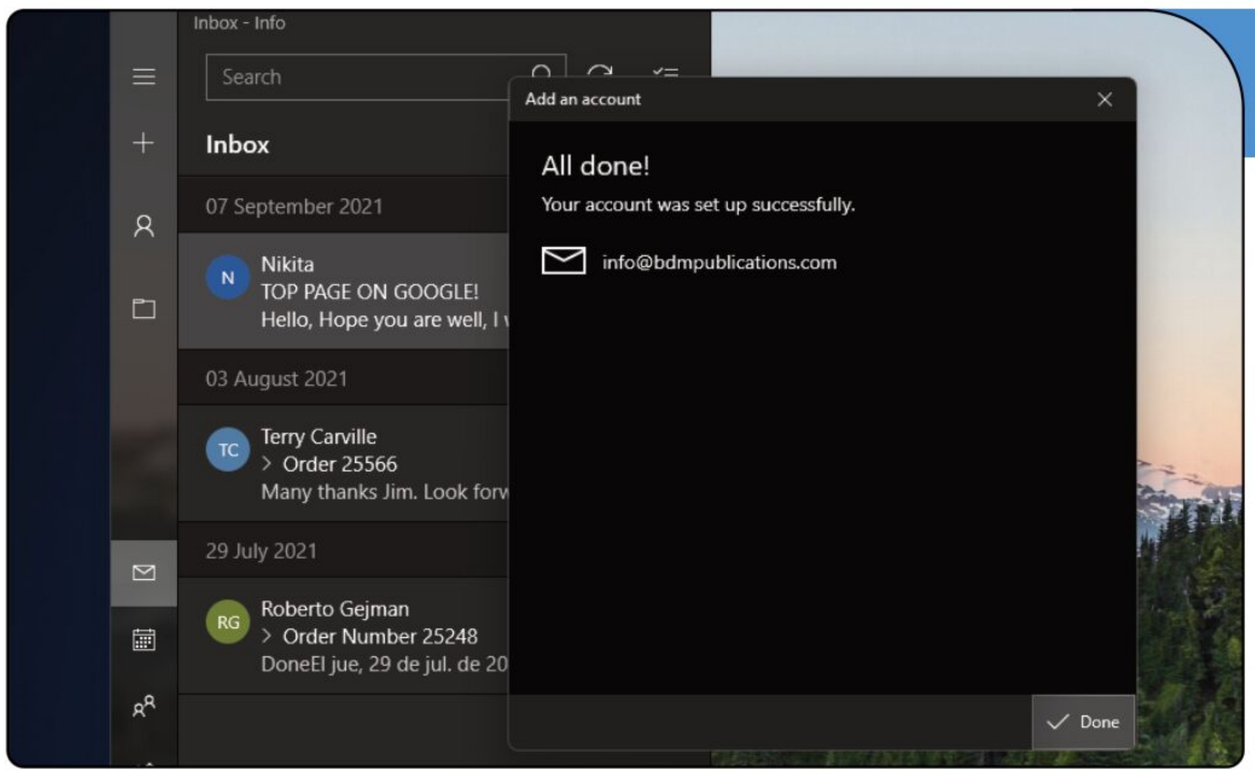
Step 4

The app will try to look for the server settings needed to set this email account up. If it finds them, you should be finished. If not, you will need to add the settings manually. If this is the case, click "Cancel" and then select the "Advanced setup" option in the account list.



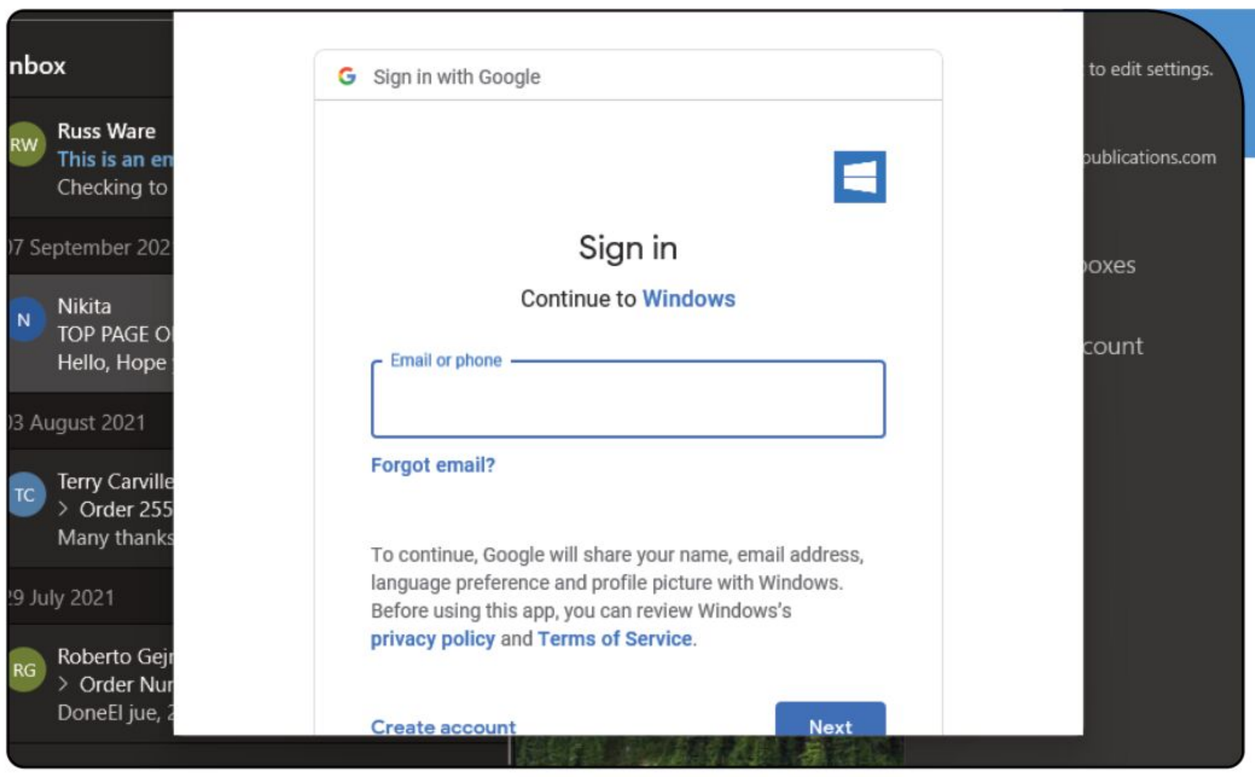
Step 5

Choose the relevant option (in our case, this is "Internet email"), and enter all of the required information; including the incoming/outgoing mail server addresses. With all of the information added, click the Sign in button. If everything was entered correctly, that account is now set up.



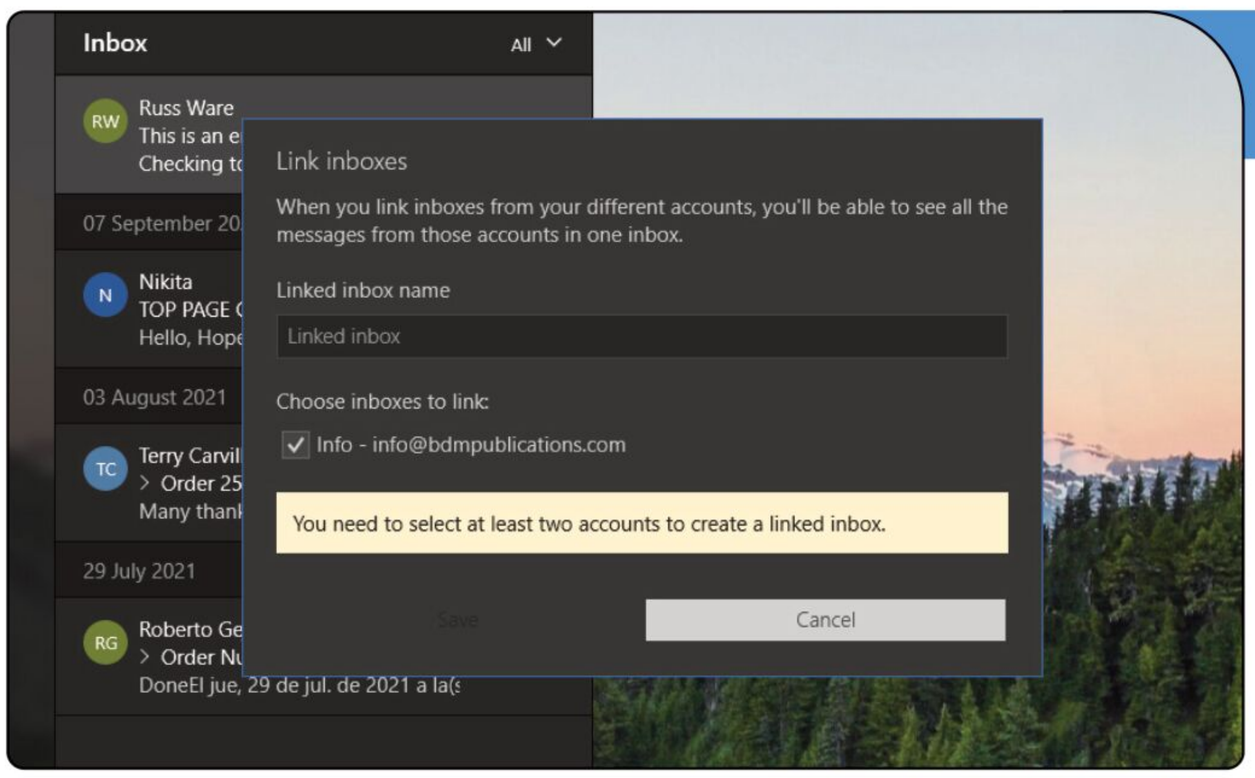
Step 6

To add an additional account after setting up the first one, simply click the settings button in the bottom-left corner of the Mail app window, select Manage Accounts, and then +Add account. Select the account type and repeat the steps above to add the second, third or fourth account to Mail.



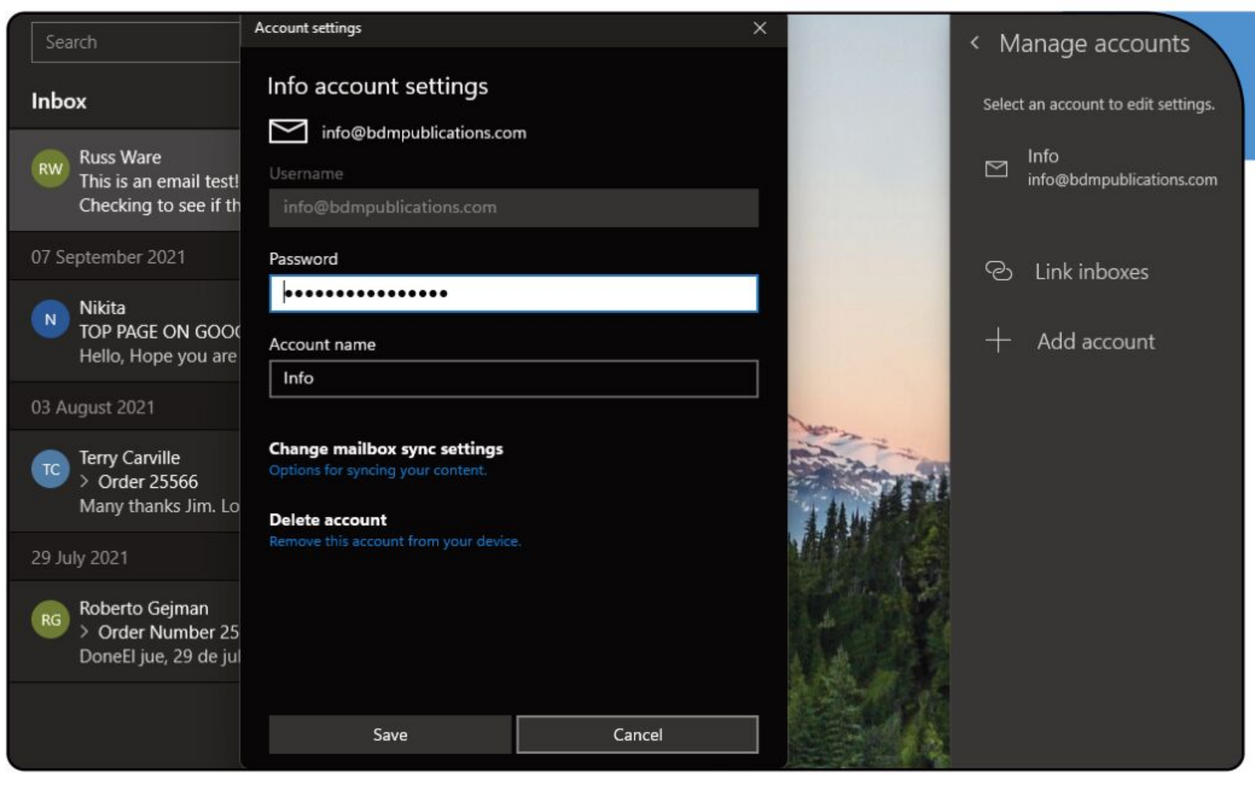
Step 7

If you're adding a Google account, click the option in the account setup list and you'll get the familiar pop-up appearing inviting you to enter your username and password. If you have Google's two-step authentication enabled, you'll get a text message to confirm your identity before you can continue.



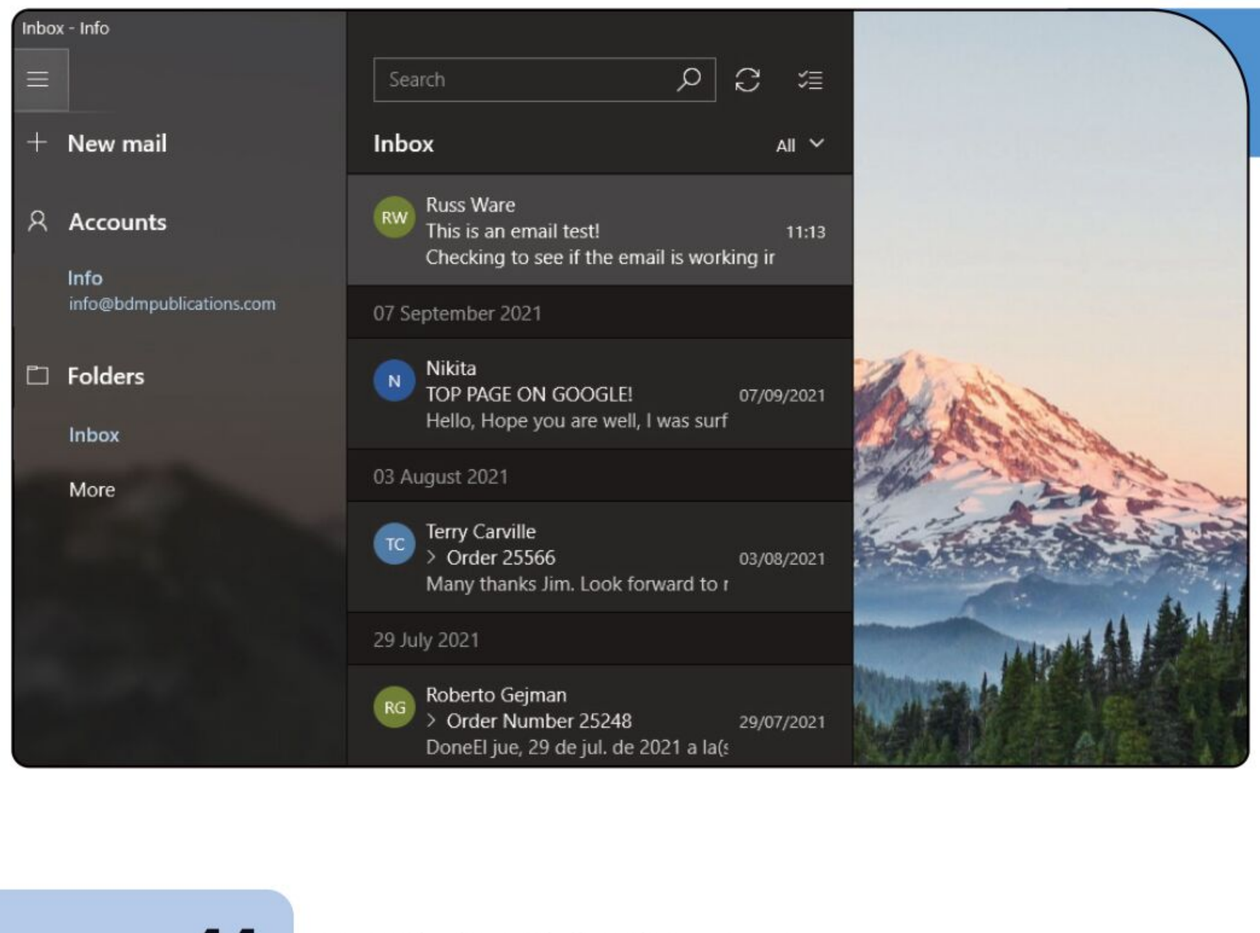
Step 8

Having more than one email account set up in Mail can be slightly confusing. To help with this, the app allows you to Link Inboxes. This puts all of the emails from your linked accounts into one inbox. To do this, click Settings > Manage accounts > Link inboxes. Select the accounts you want to link.



Step 9

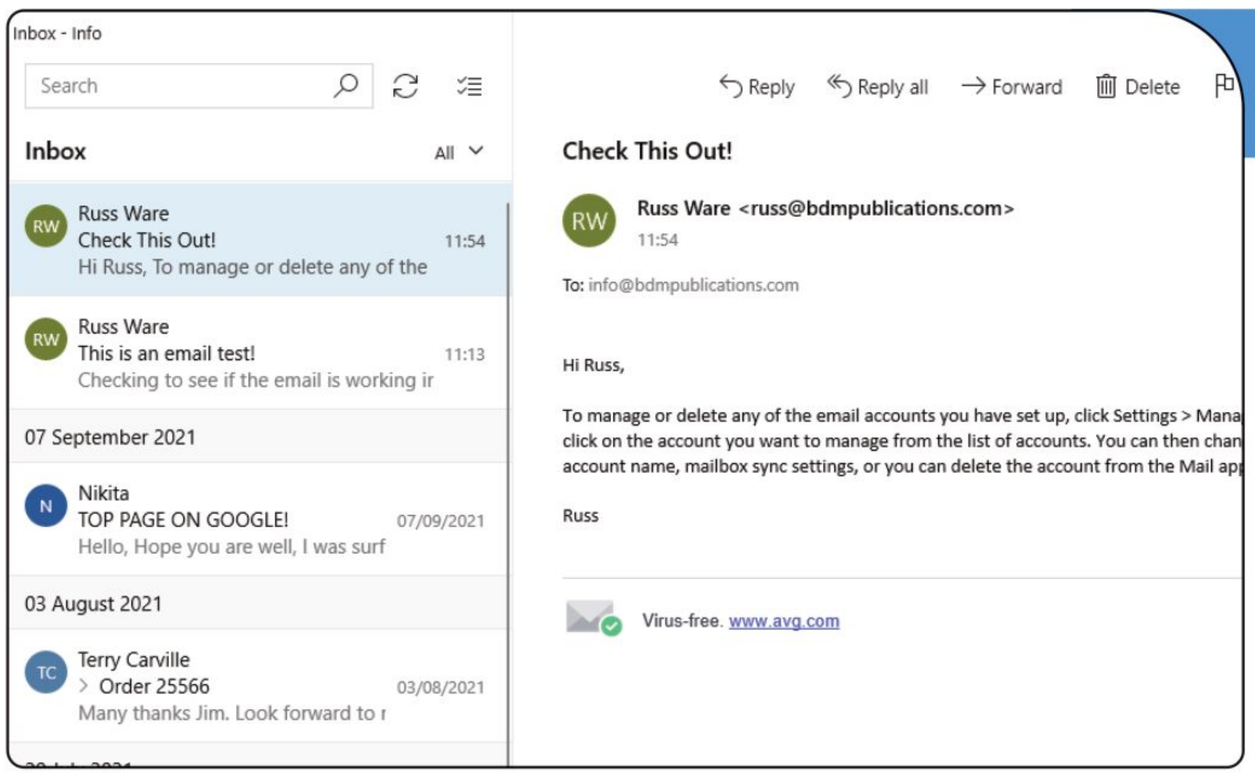
To manage or delete any of the email accounts you have set up, click Settings > Manage Accounts and then click on the account you want to manage from the list of accounts. You can then change the password, account name, mailbox sync settings, or delete the account from the Mail app.



Step 10

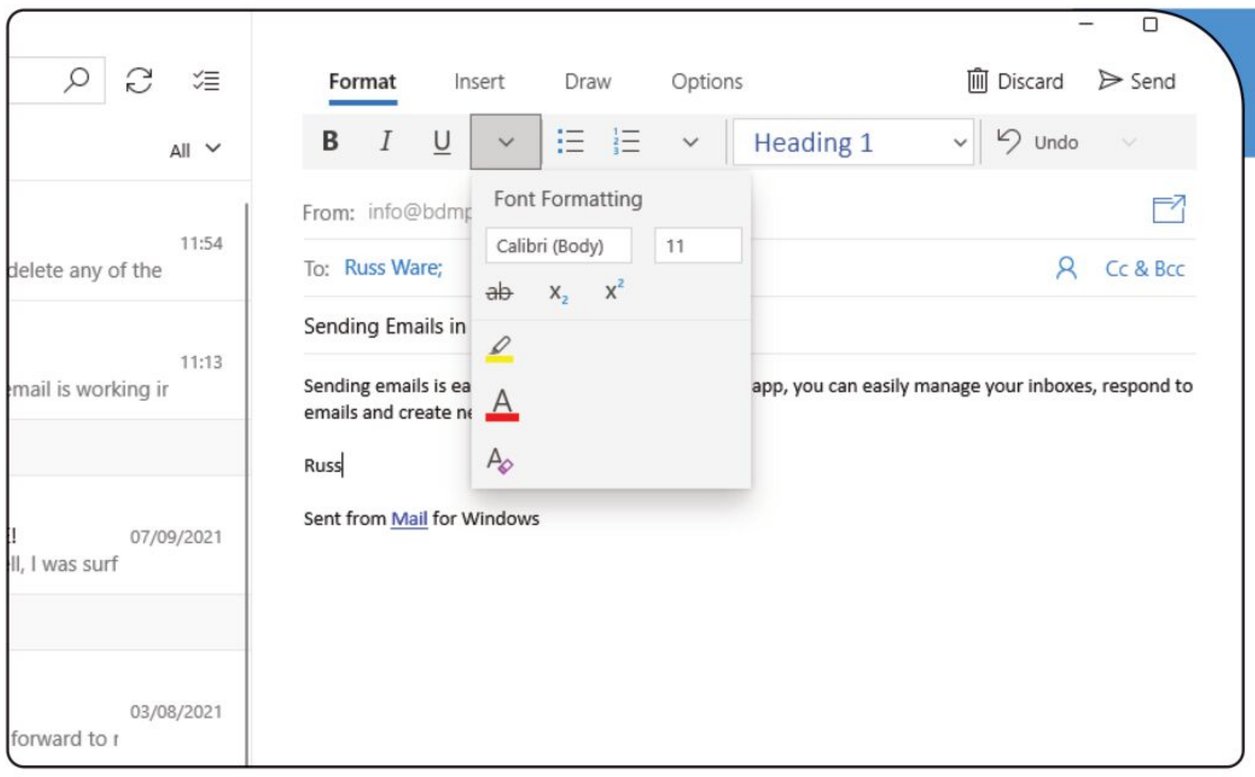
Your accounts are shown in the left sidebar of the mail app. Select them here to view the different folders for each account (inbox, sent mail, etc.), if you have not linked the inboxes. If you don't see the left sidebar, click the Expand button at the top-left of the Mail app window.

Using the Mail App



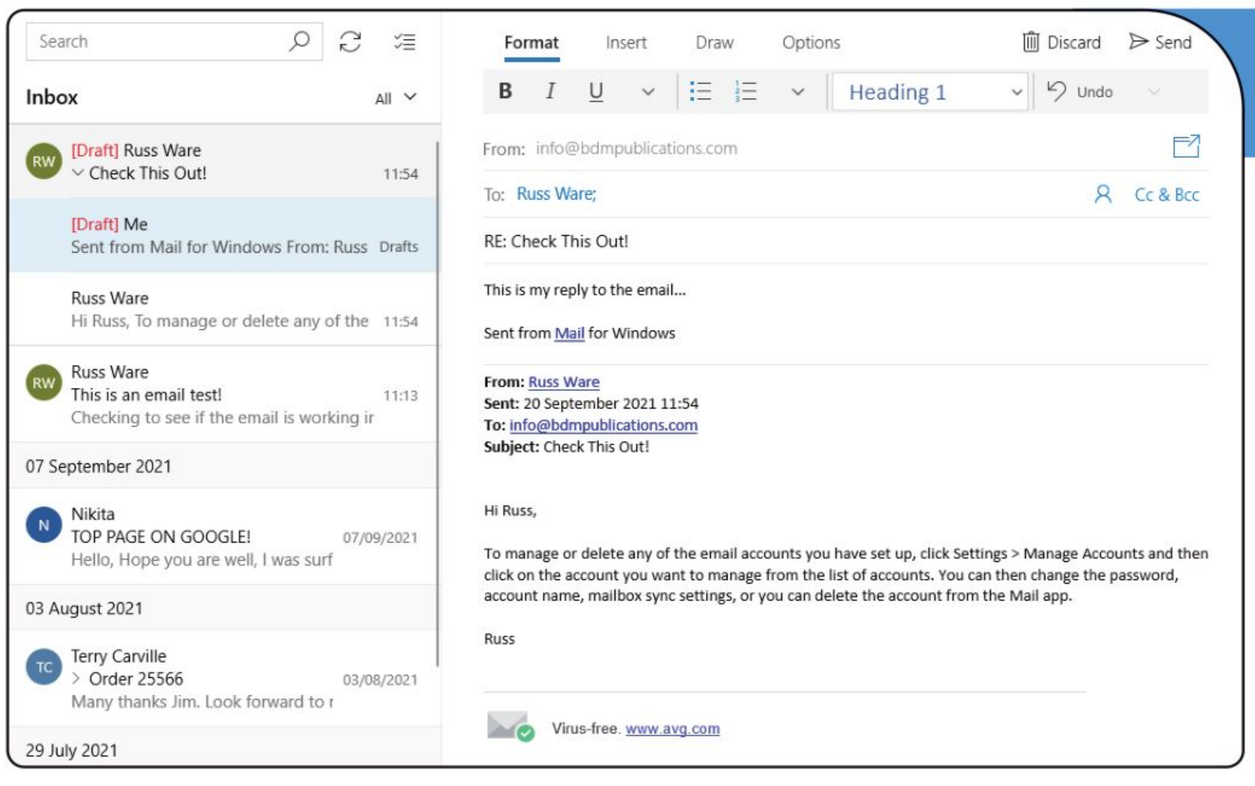
Reading Emails

Emails will appear automatically in your inbox as and when they arrive. New emails will be displayed with a highlight in the list. Click any email in the inbox list to open it in the main panel on the right. You can search for emails using the Mail Search field at the top of the inbox panel.



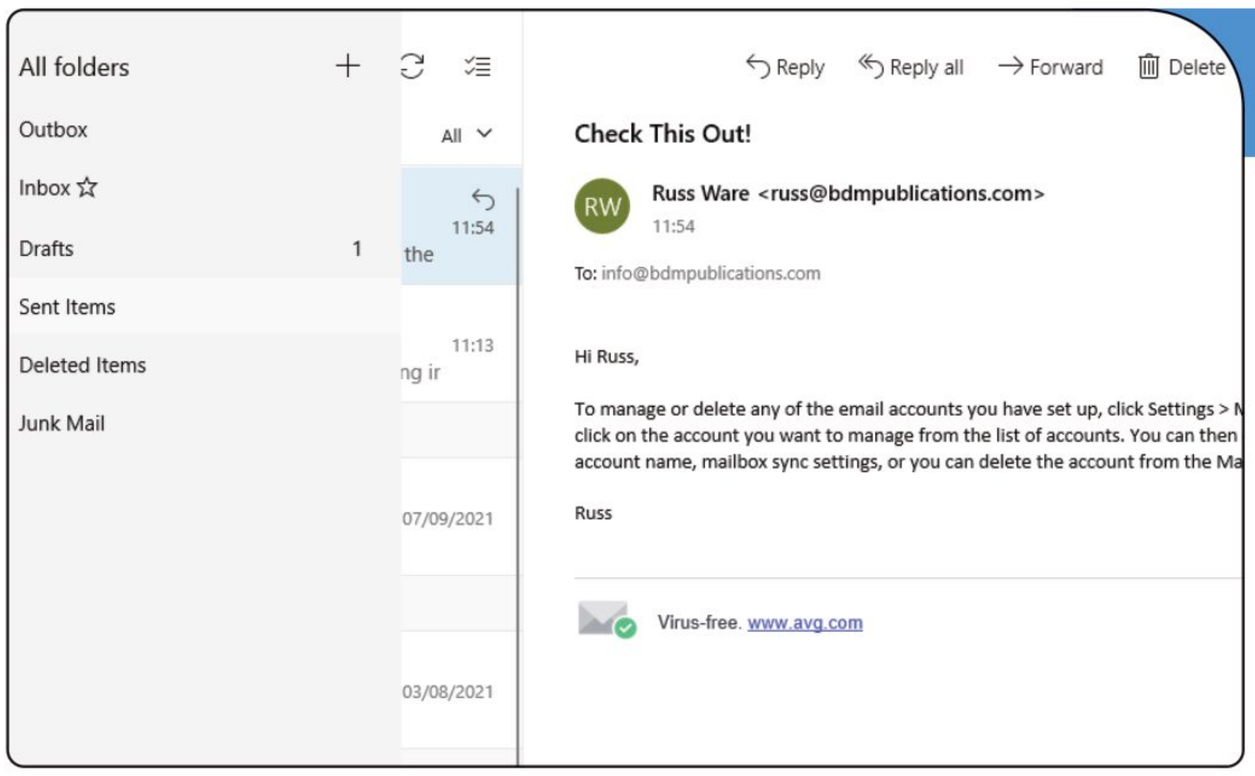
Writing Emails

Click the New mail button in the Mail app menu (the + button if the menu is collapsed). The blank email will appear in the main panel. Enter the recipient's address, subject and then write your email text. Basic text formatting options are available at the top of the email. Click "Send" when finished.



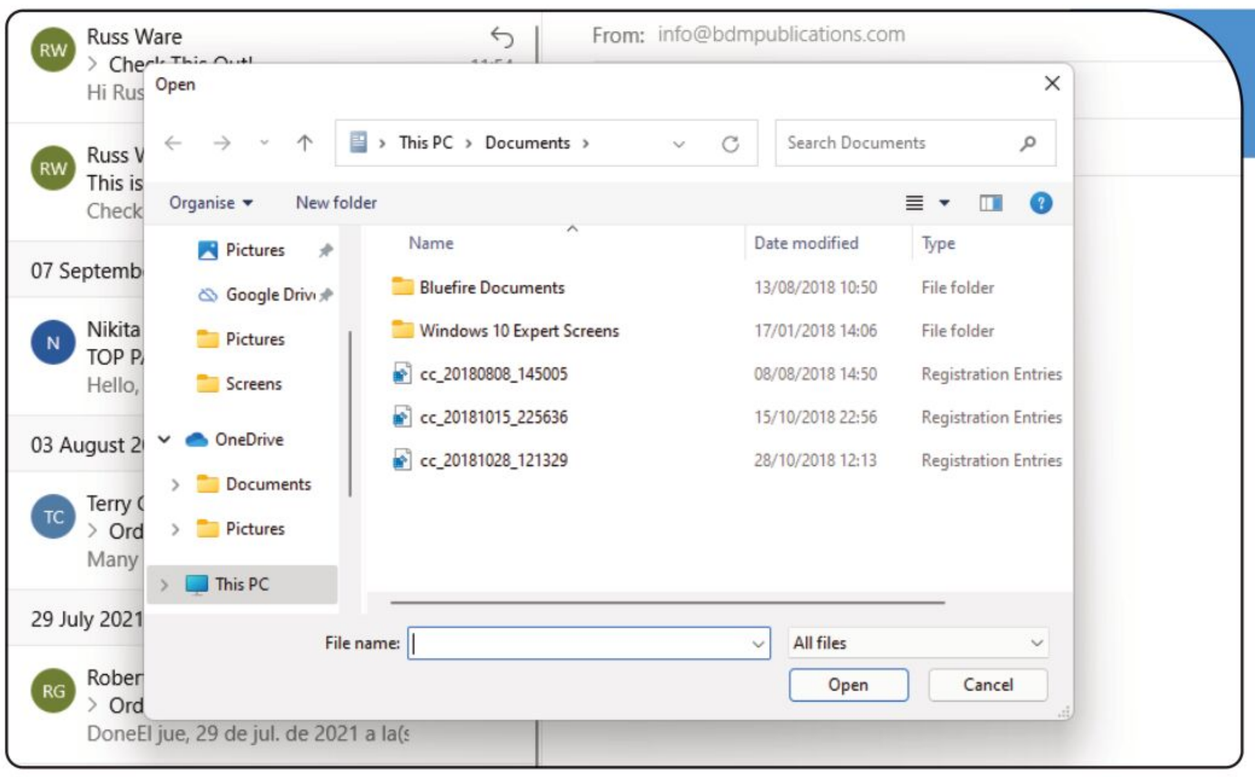
Responding

When viewing any email in the Mail app, you will see a number of options at the top of the main panel. These include Reply, Reply All and Forward, etc., (all of the normal email options). Click reply and you can start typing your reply, with the original email text included below your reply.



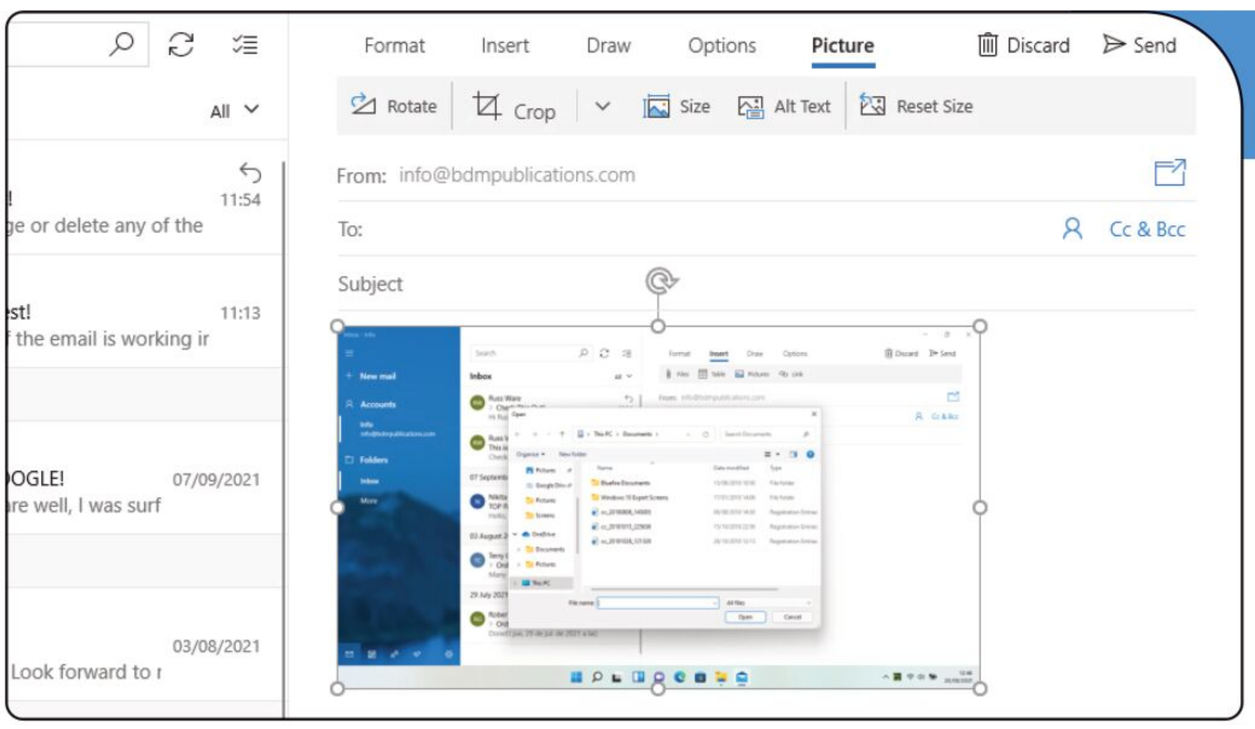
Mail Folders

Open the Mail app menu on the left and you will see the Folders section. The inbox is listed here as well, but to see more folders, click "More". Here you can find the Outbox, Drafts, Sent items, Deleted items and Junk Mail folders. Click on any of them to see the emails in those folders.



Attachments

Adding file attachments to emails in the Mail app is easy. Write your email, and then click the Insert tab at the top. Here you can find the option for attaching files. Click the link and browse to the file you want to attach. Click "Open" and a thumbnail of the attachment will appear in the email.



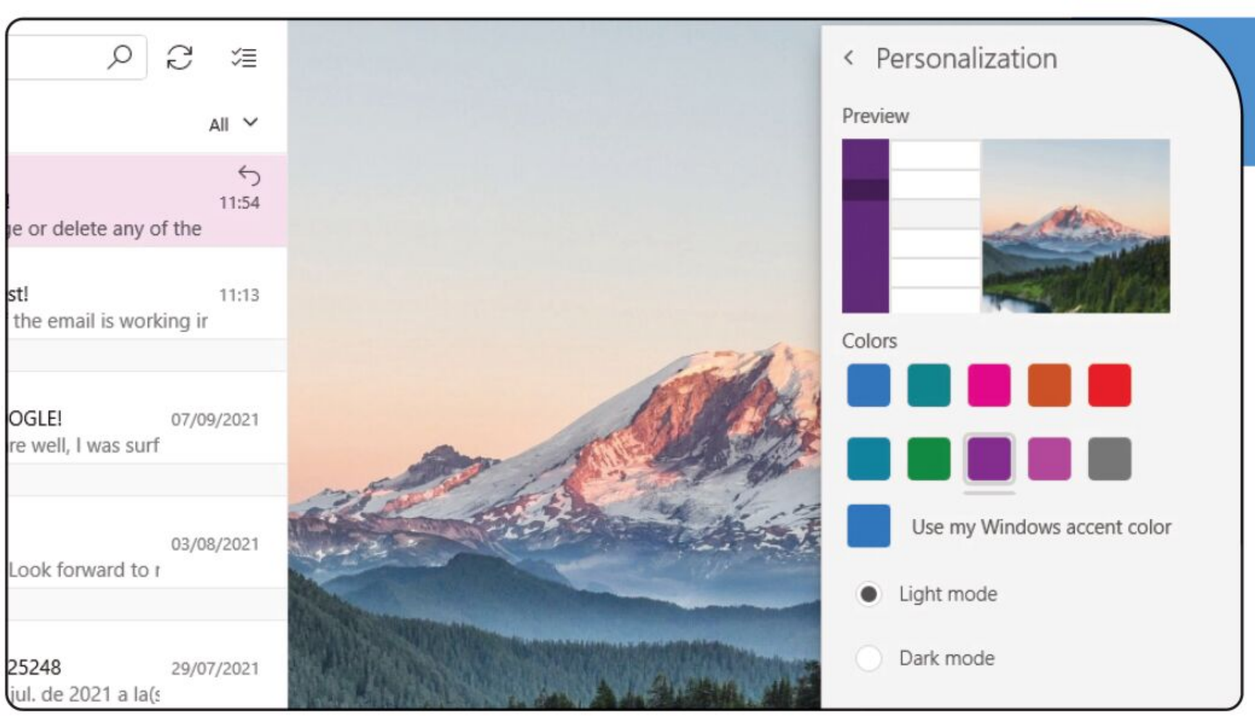
Inserting Images

As well as the button to include attachments, the Insert tab features a Picture button so you can insert an image into your email; as opposed to just sending it as an attached file. Once inserted, you can select it with your mouse and adjust its size (drag the corners as you can see here).

Customise the Mail App

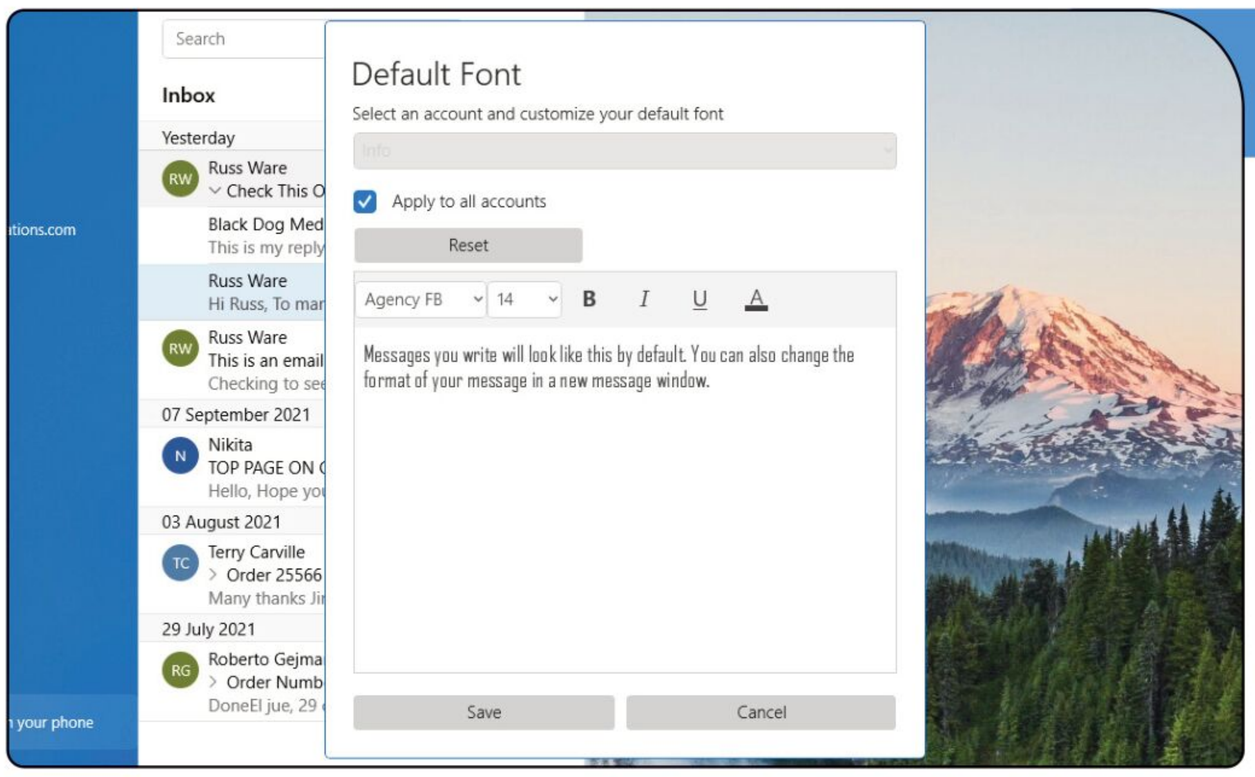
Background

The background of the Mail app is set to an image by default. This is purely decorative, and can be changed. Open Settings > Personalisation in the Mail app, then scroll to the bottom to see the different backgrounds available. You can also add your own image by clicking the Browse button.



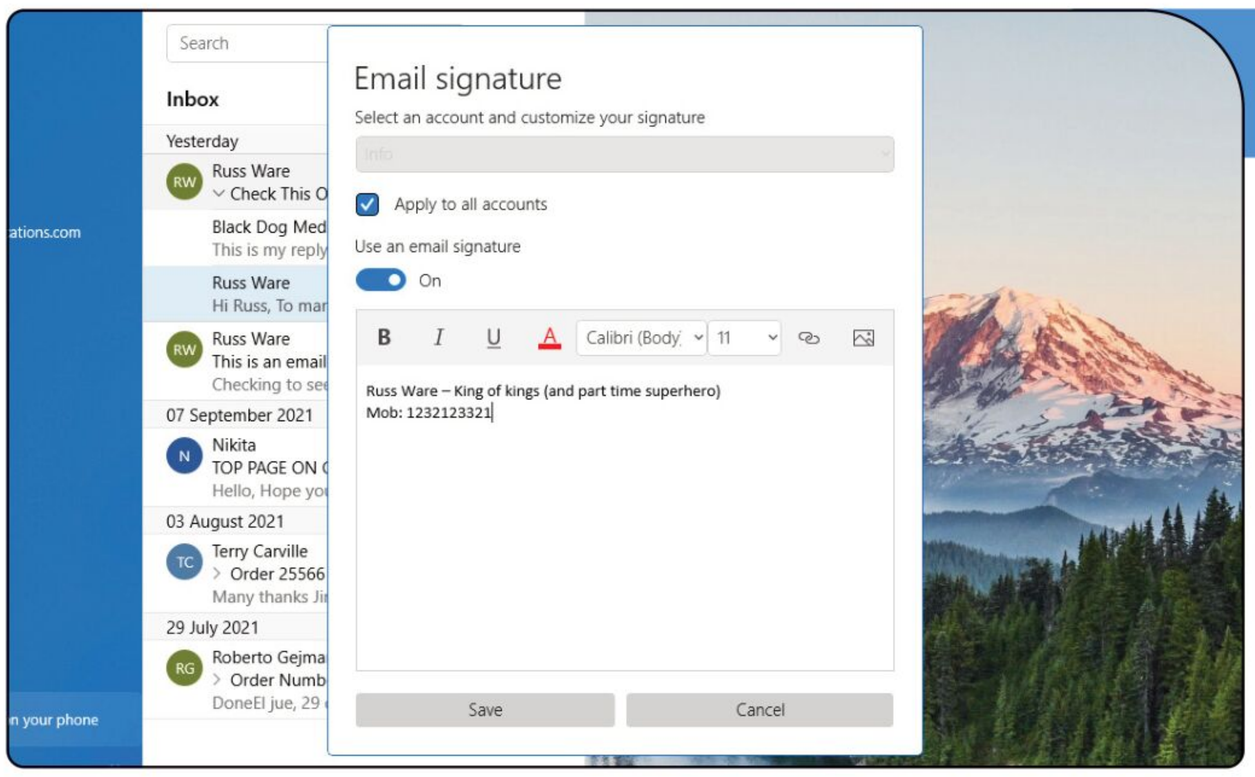
Mail App Colour

The colour tint on the Mail app menu (on the left) and the colour of the accents such as buttons and highlights, can also be changed in the Personalisation settings. Just click a colour block to change it. You can also change the theme of the app from light to dark here, or use the Windows theme setting.



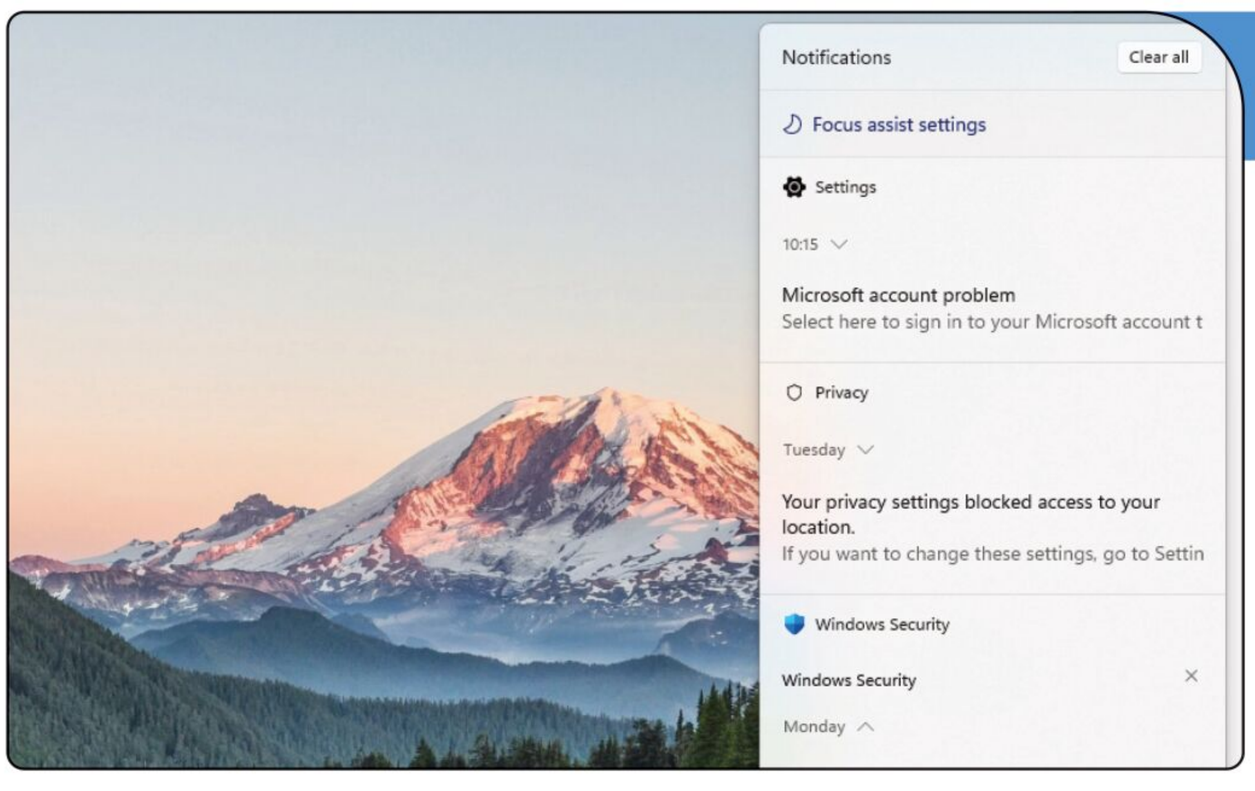
Email Font

The default font for your emails (Calibri Body, unless you have changed the system fonts) can be changed for any and all of your email accounts. Open the Settings > Default font option, and either select an account or "Apply to all accounts", then choose your font, which is previewed in the pane.



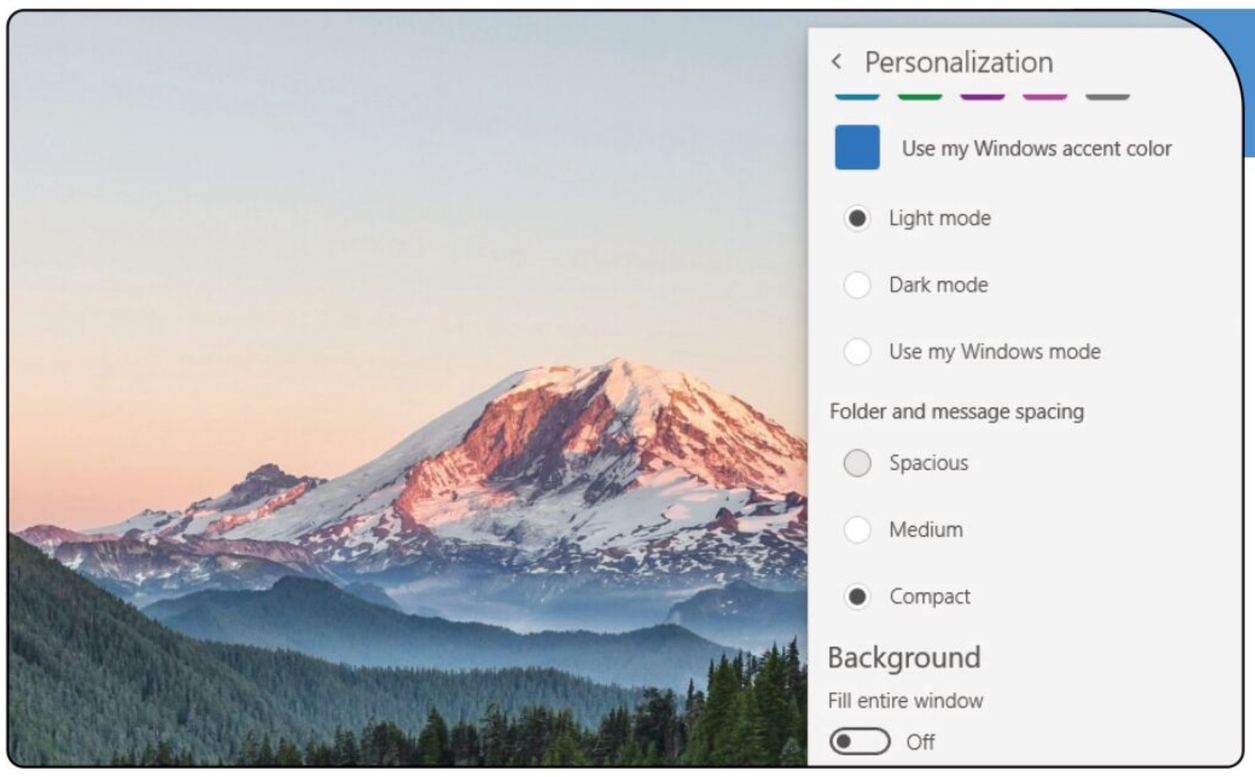
Signature

The default signature for the Mail app is "Sent from Mail for Windows". The signature is automatically added to the end of your email message, but can be changed or turned off completely if not needed. Go to Settings > Signature, choose an account/all accounts and write your signature in the pane.



Notifications

You can easily control how you are notified of new emails. Go to Settings > Notifications, and you can control whether notifications are shown in the Notification center (Action center), if a sound is played and if pinned folders have notifications. As with other settings, you can apply to one account or all.



Message Spacing

Depending on the device you are using (tablet, touchscreen, large monitor, etc.), you might want to change the spacing between messages and the folders in the Mail app (e.g. to make touch easier). To do this, go to Settings > Personalisation, and choose from Spacious, Medium and Compact.

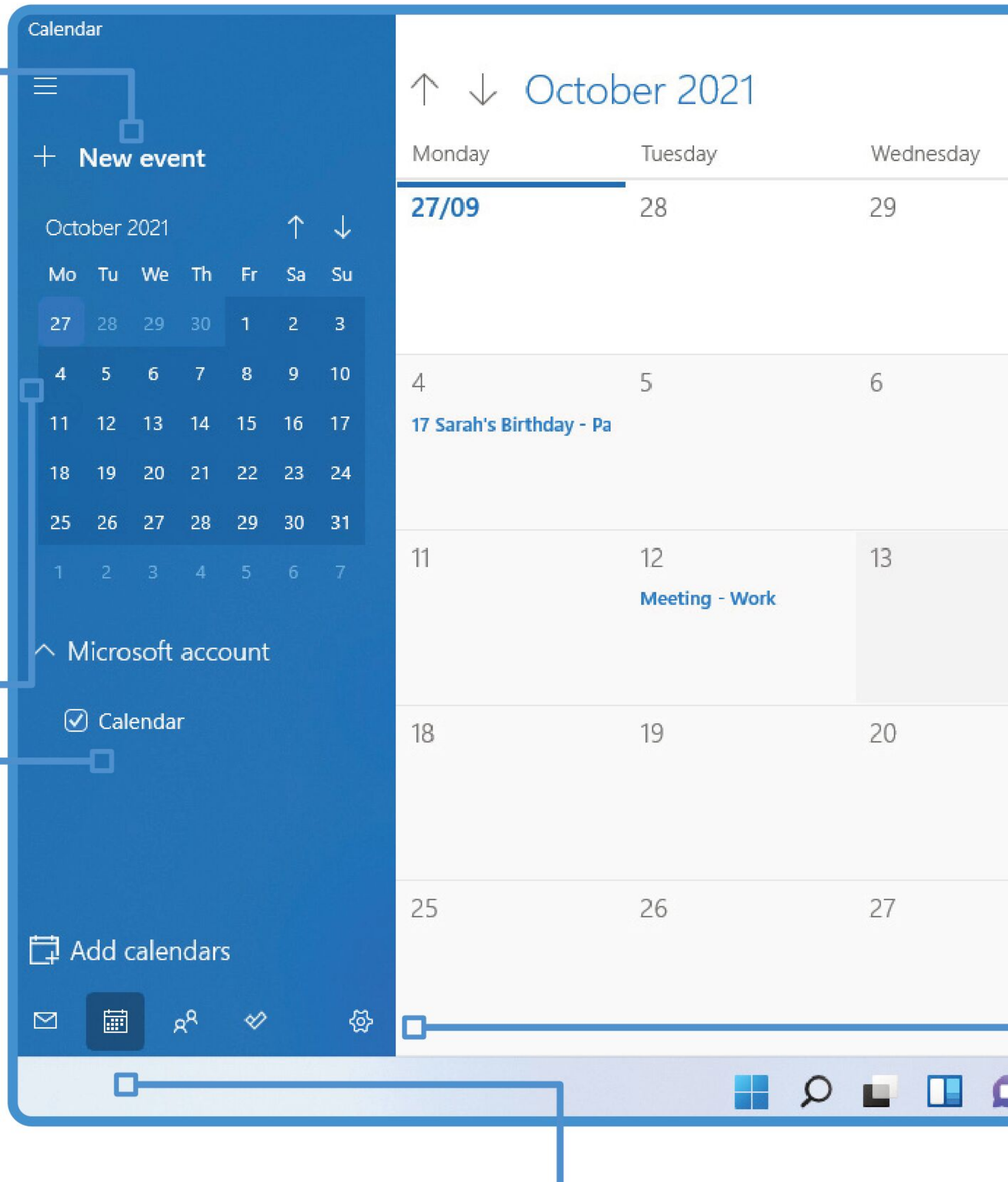
Inside the Calendar App

Add New Event

There are two main ways to add a new event to your calendar. You can either click on the date in the main window or, if the date you want is not in view, you can click the New Event button here. You can then add an event name, location, and a start and end date. Give the event a short description, especially if you plan to share it with a contact. You can do that by adding people using the pane on the right of the Add Event screen.

Monthly View

No matter which view you choose for the main Calendar pane - day, week, etc. - the month preview always shows a full month. You can use the arrows above the mini calendar to skip to different months and clicking on a date brings that date into view on the main Calendar pane. The current day is highlighted in the Month Preview.



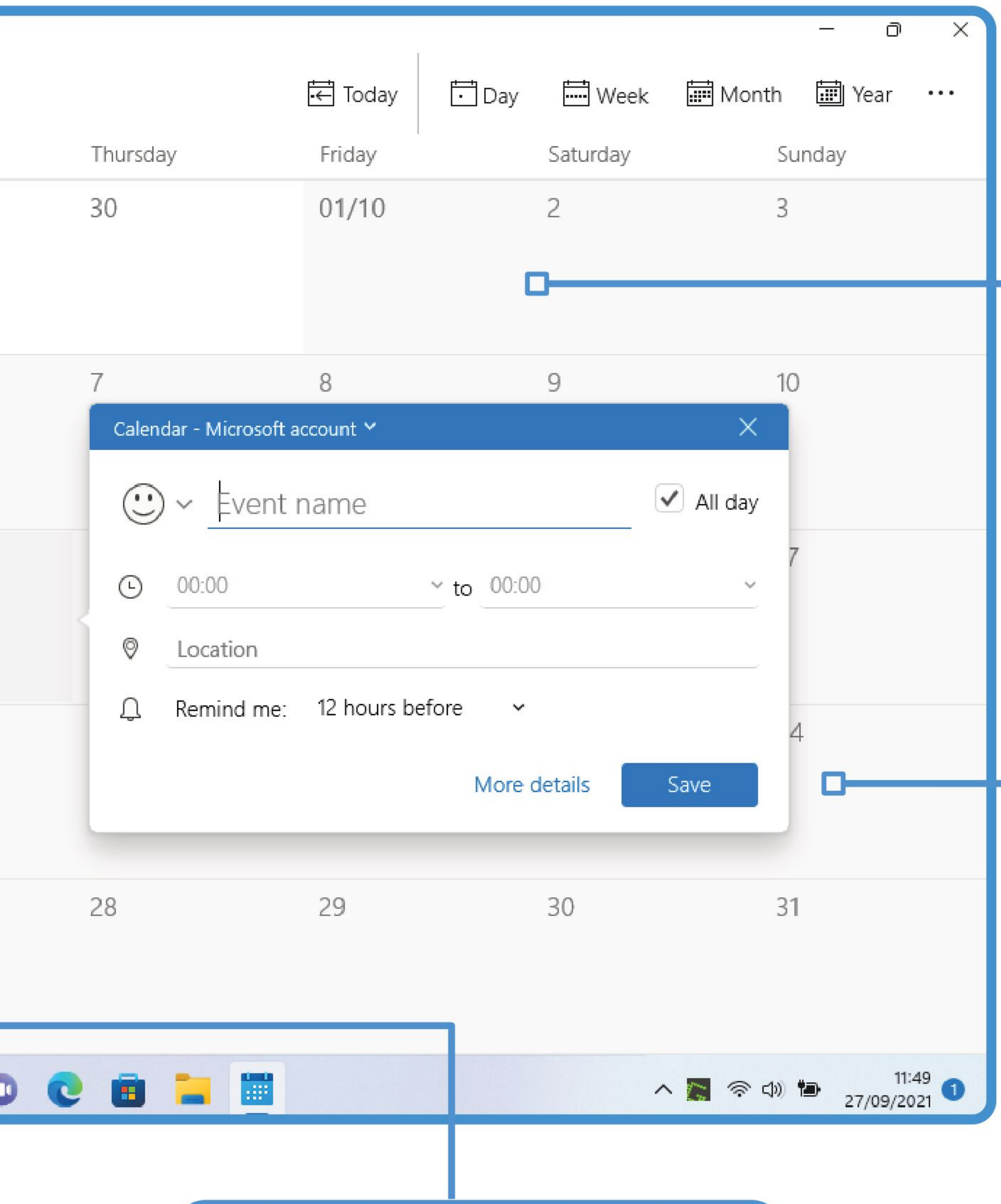
Linked Calendars

Your calendar can be linked to your email account, which is shown here. If you are using Gmail for your email account, and have any calendars set up in Google Calendar, these are also shown here. You can use the checkboxes to select and deselect calendars from showing in the main pane; each is colour coded, so you know from which custom calendar an event comes.

Switch Tabs

The Mail and Calendar apps are closely linked, and you can quickly switch between the two using the buttons here. Receive an email with an appointment in it, and you can quickly add it to your calendar using the tools in the Mail app. You can also quickly switch to the People app and the ToDo app using the tabs/buttons here.

The Windows 11 Calendar app is a fully integrated planning tool that can be linked up to your email accounts and easily synced to your other Windows devices. You can add new events manually, or you can simply use it to view national and public holidays.



Calendar Pane

The main Calendar pane, however you choose to view it with the View buttons, contains several different bits of useful information. Public and national holidays are automatically added, based on location. The current day is accentuated in your chosen highlight colour. Weather and temperature information is shown for the current day, along with a few days after. Clicking the weather symbol opens the Weather app.

Add Event

Click on any day in the main pane, or any hourly slot in day view, and a mini Add Event pane opens. You can use this to add an event to your calendar quickly. The pane includes event name, time-slots and location; it also lets you choose into which custom calendar you want to add it. If you choose to add more details, click the More Details button, if not, click Done to add the event.

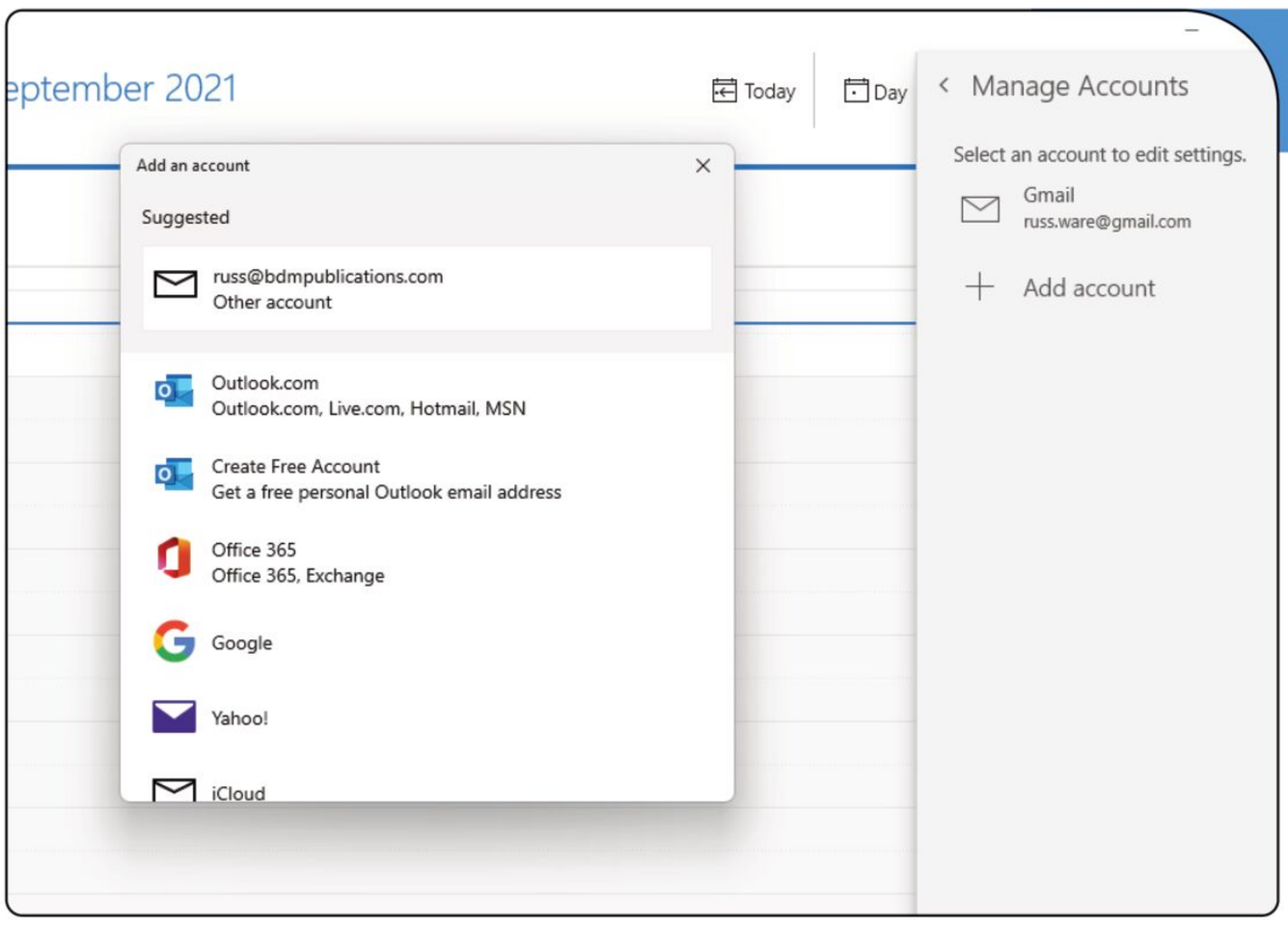
Calendar Settings

Alongside various customisation settings, such as the ability to choose light and dark themes and change the default highlight colour, are settings for adding new email accounts and changing the default view. You can also add public or national holidays manually, if they have not been correctly added automatically.

Managing Calendar

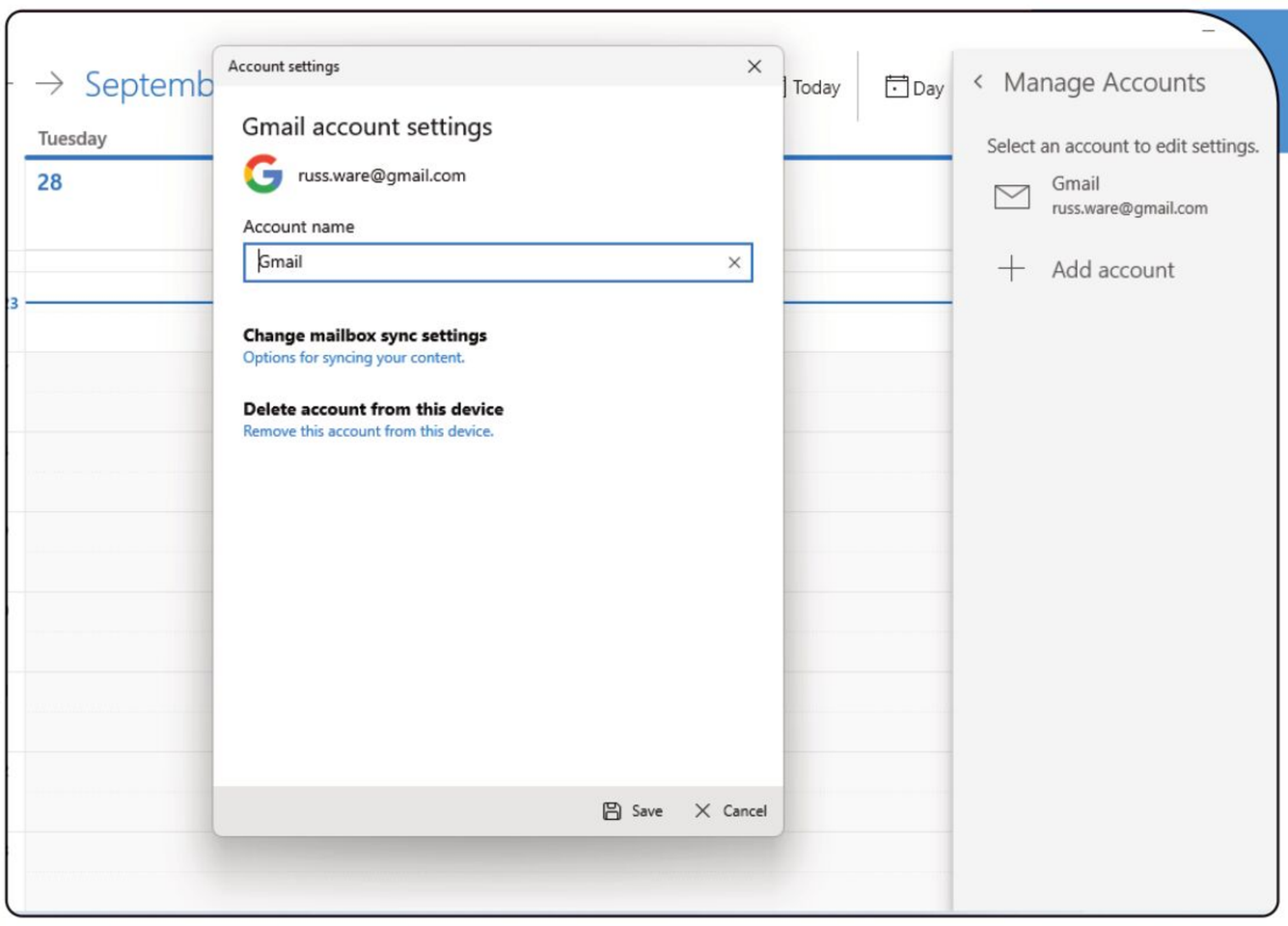
Digital calendars are no longer the preserve of business people scheduling appointments via email. With mobile phones now our new diaries, digital calendars are being used by increasing numbers of people to organise their busy lives. Welcome to Calendar.

Setting Up Calendars



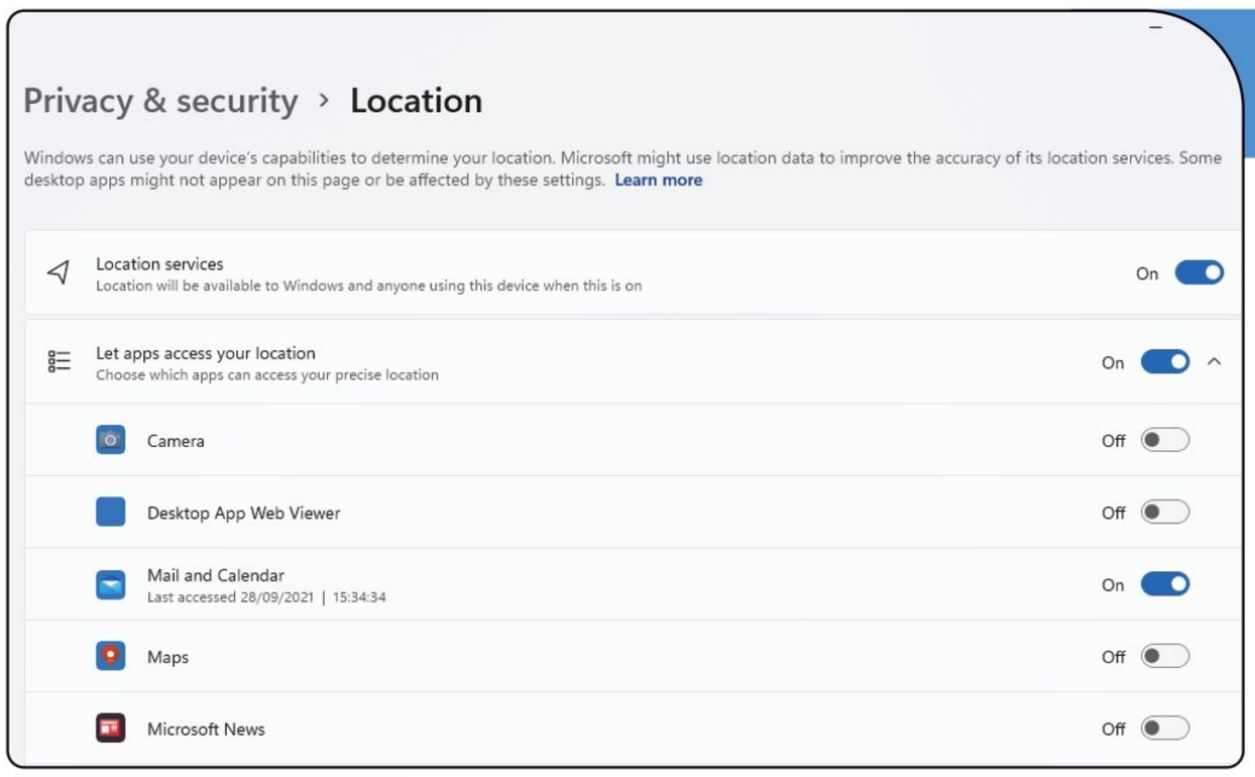
Accounts

Like Windows 11's email app, Calendar also enables you to add multiple accounts; and from different providers too. So whether you use an Outlook calendar at work or have shared Google calendars, you can join them all together in the Calendar app. To Start click on Add Accounts.



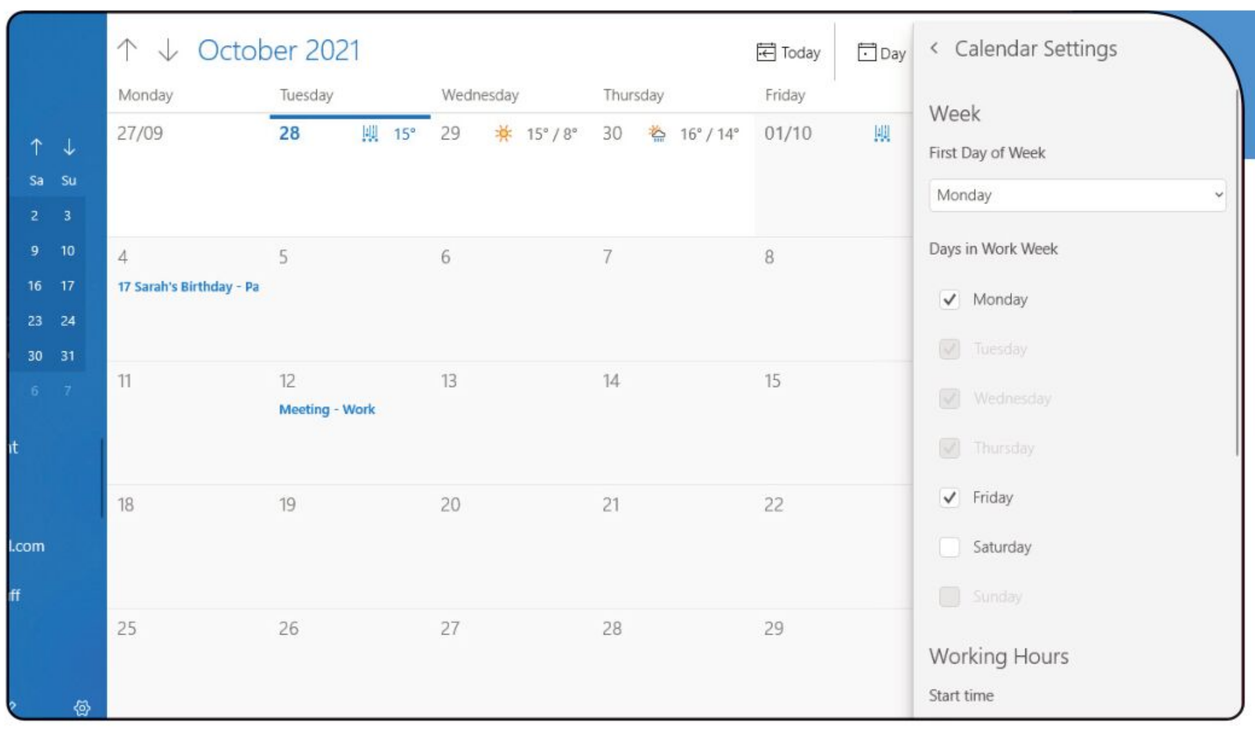
Sign In

Now add the accounts you want to use in Calendar. You can do this at any point you choose via Settings > Accounts. From there you can easily add an Outlook.com, Exchange, Google or iCloud calendar; or enter advanced settings for any other calendars you may have from other providers.



Allow Location

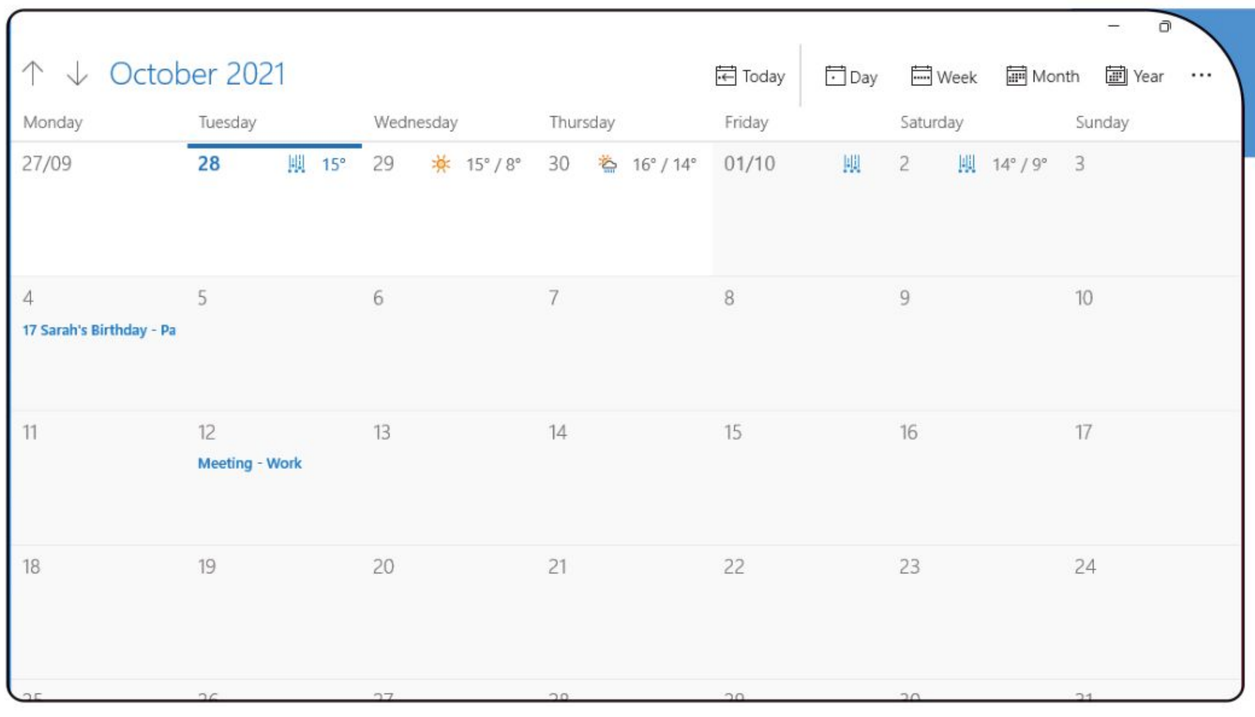
You'll be asked to enable location access for Mail and Calendar. This is predominantly for one simple reason – Calendar shows you the weather for your location each day. You can always revoke access via the Settings app. Go to Location and you can turn off Calendar's access to Location.



Settings

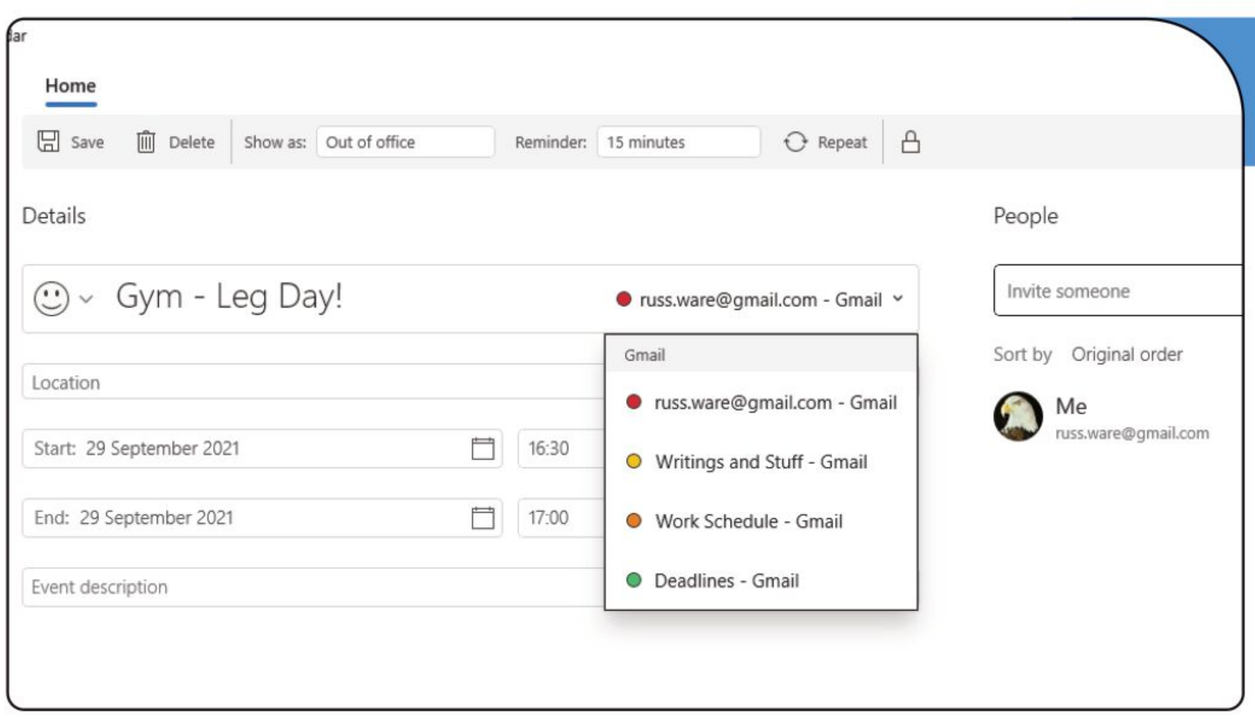
The calendar settings are fairly basic, boiling down to adding accounts, changing the appearance and setting the weather region. The only other settings are the controls to how the calendars are displayed (First day of week, Days in work week, Week numbers on/off, etc.).

Creating and Managing Events



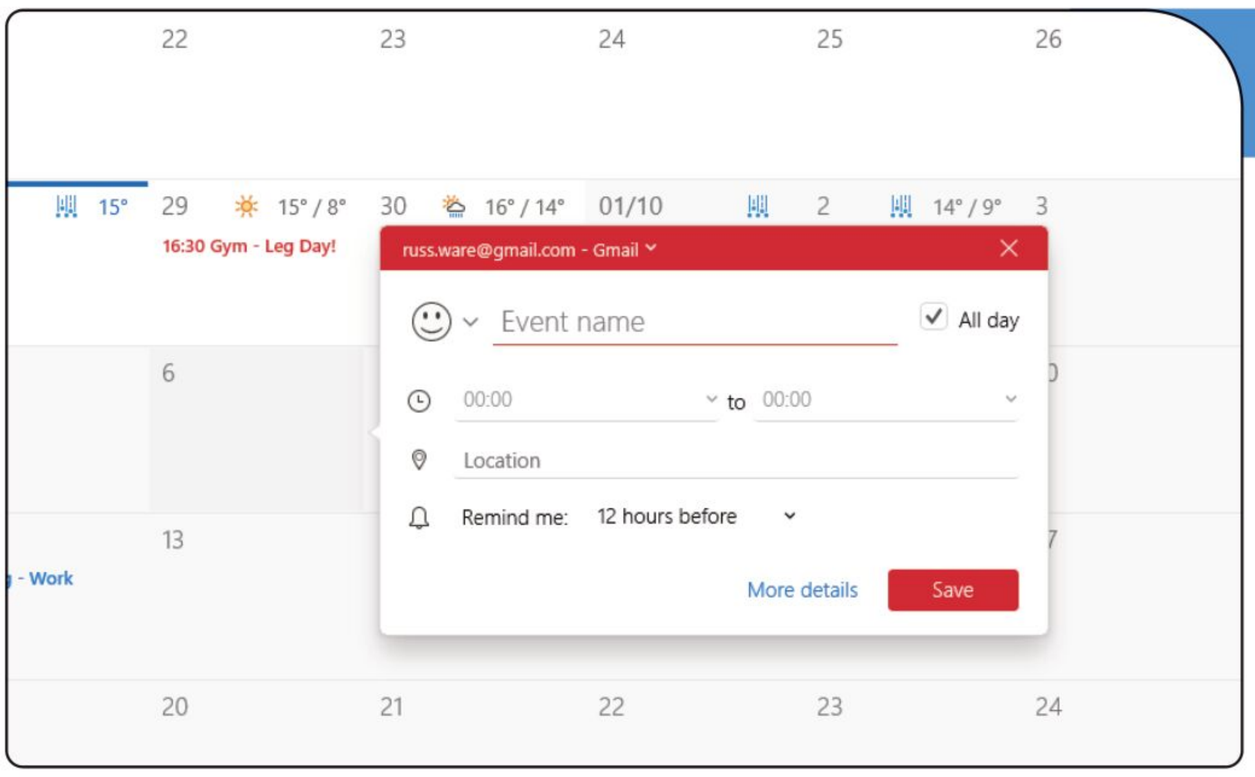
Step 1

The default view when opening the Calendar is the month view. You can switch to the different views (Day, Week, Month and Year) using the buttons along the top of the calendar. There is also a button here to take the view back to the current day, if you have been browsing future or past months.



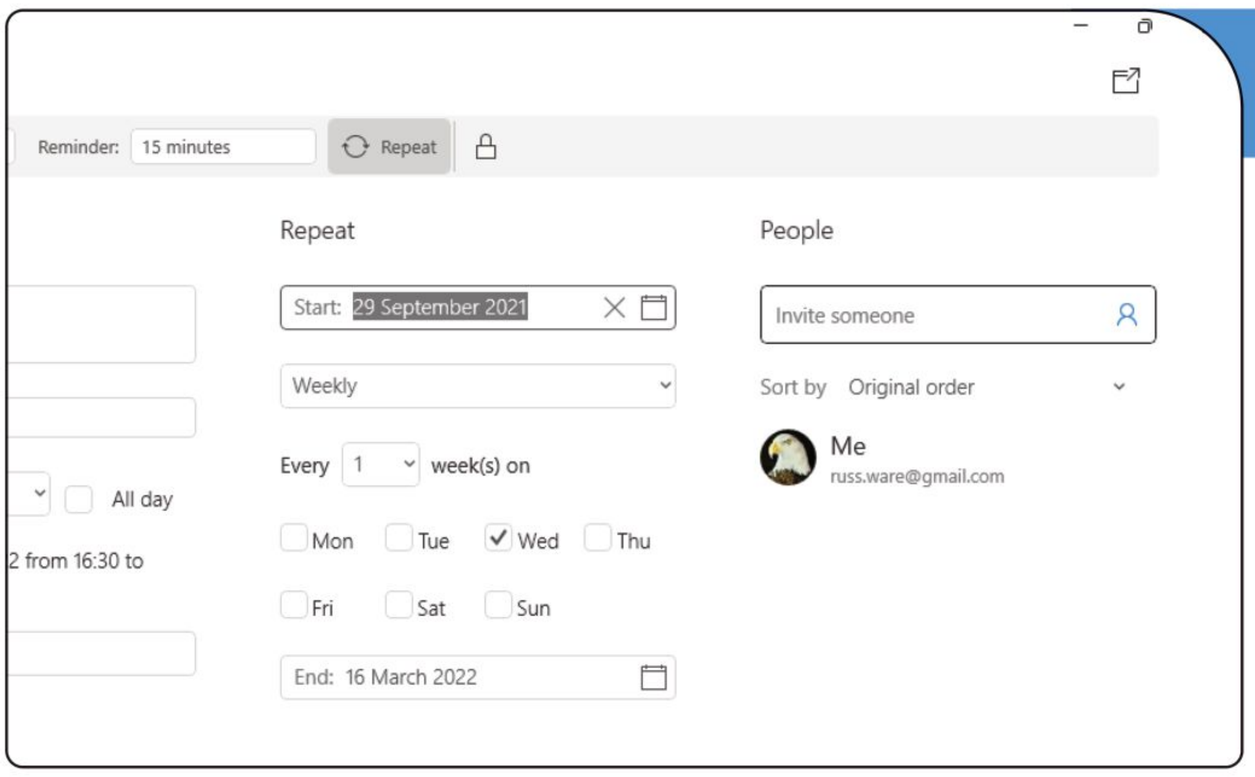
Step 2

Click the New Event button in the top left. Add the name of the event, a location should you wish to, plus start and end dates and times. You're also able to invite people by email using the field on the right-hand side. This will then insert the event into their calendar as well.



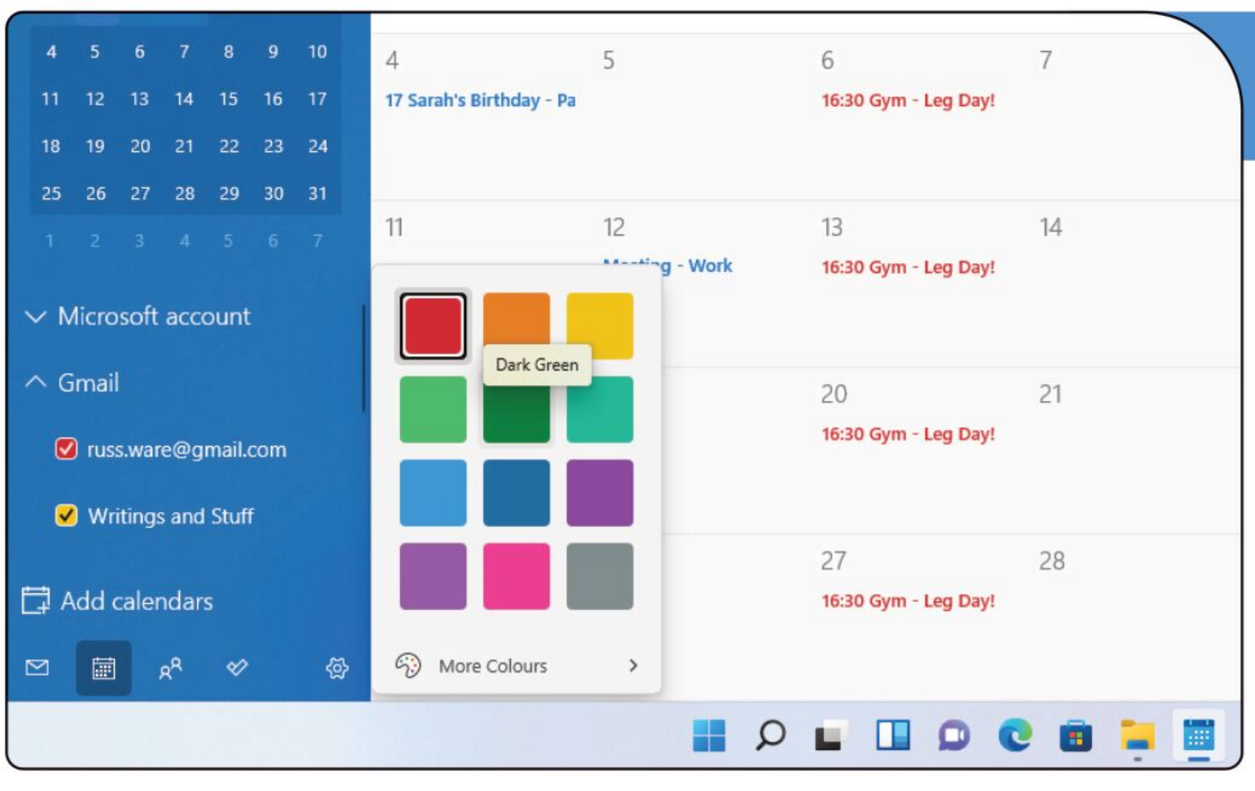
Step 3

You can also add events by clicking on the relevant date block (or time block in Day view), and then adding the event details in the quick event pop-up box. If you want to see the full, new event screen at this point, you can click the “More details” link in the quick event box.



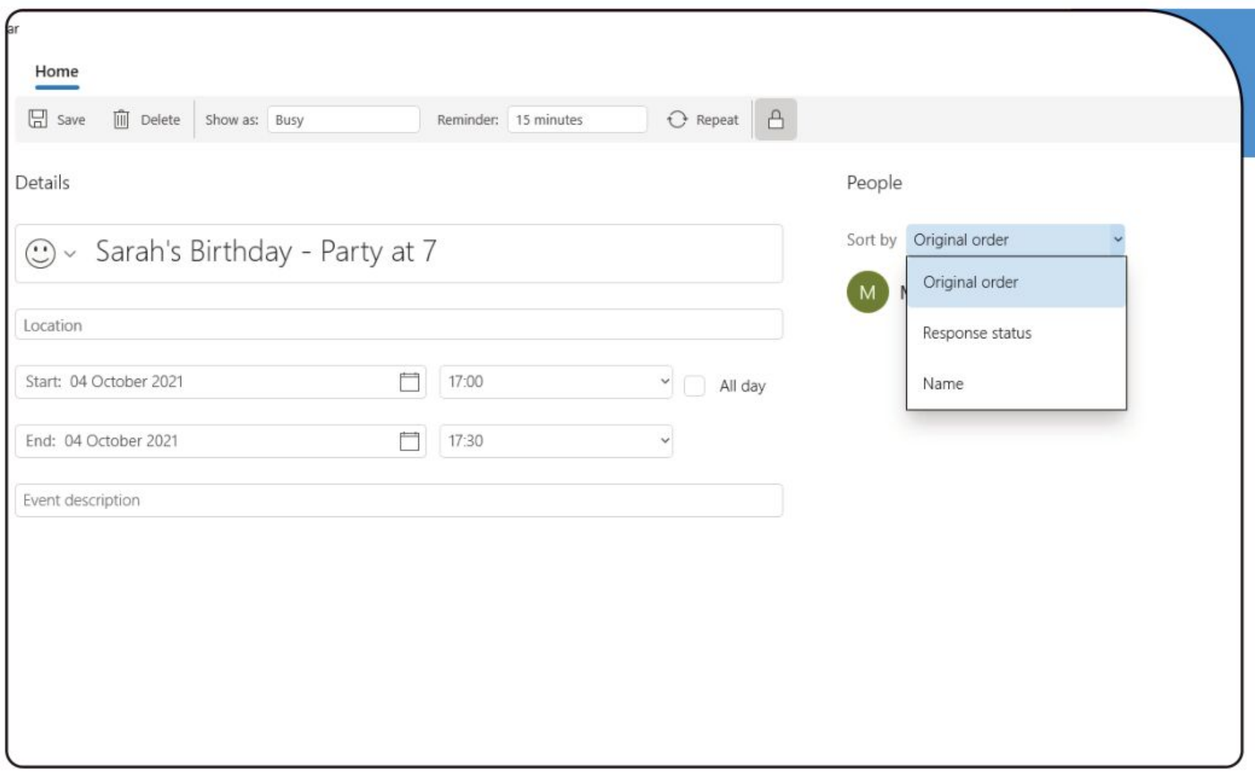
Step 4

You can also choose to set repeat events – just click the Repeat button in the toolbar when you’re creating a new event. Check the days you want. You can repeat daily, weekly, monthly or yearly, depending on what you need to do. You can even set a date when the repeated events end.



Step 5

You’re also able to assign different colours to different calendar accounts. Each calendar account you add will automatically be assigned a different colour. You can then change this assigned colour by clicking the arrow next to the calendar name and choosing from the pop out menu.



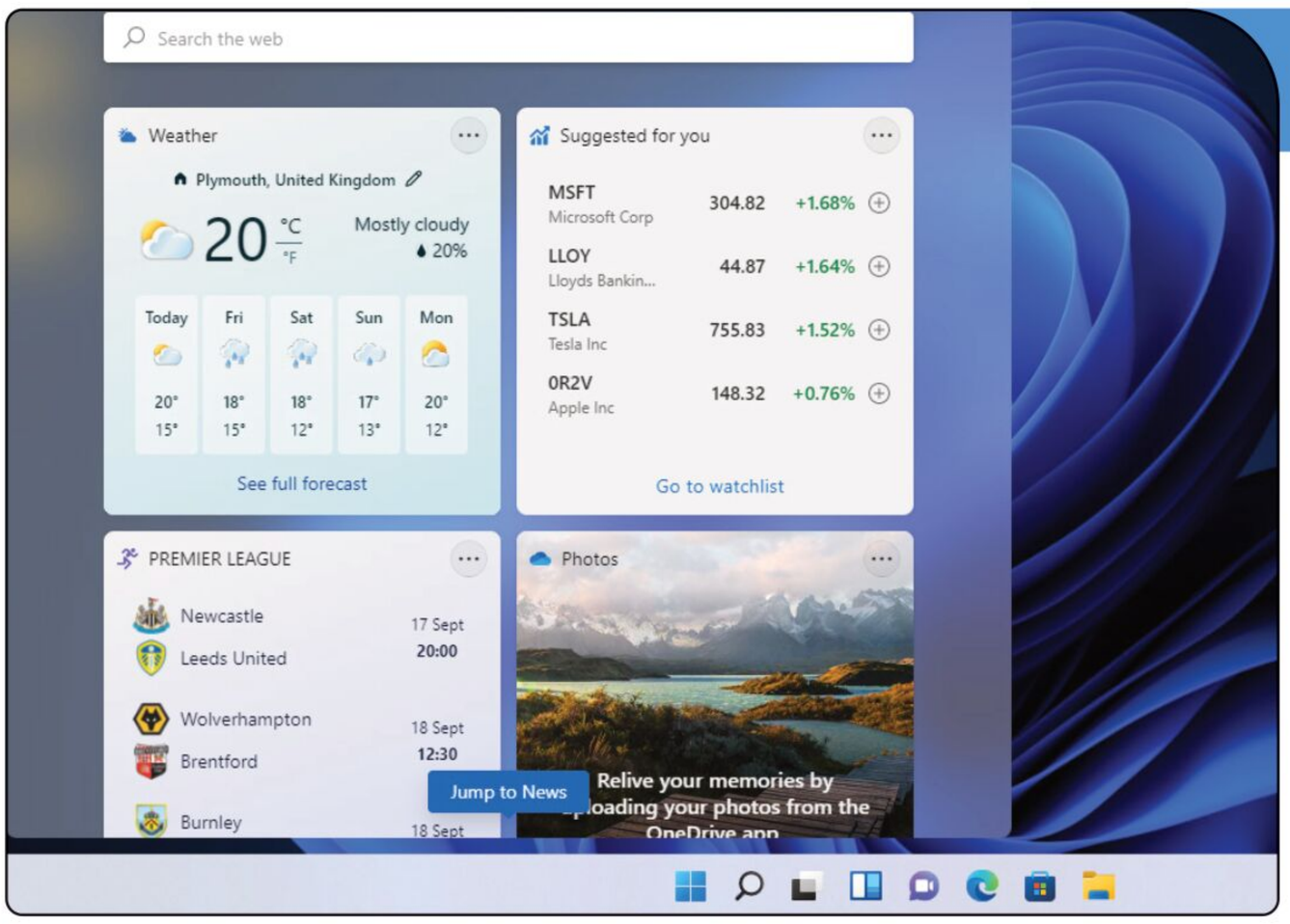
Step 6

One of the best things about the Windows 11 Calendar app is how admirably it copes with multiple calendars. So providing they invite your account (or you invite them), you’re able to easily share events with others. If you do share, you can set certain events as private, so only you see them.

Widgets in Windows 11

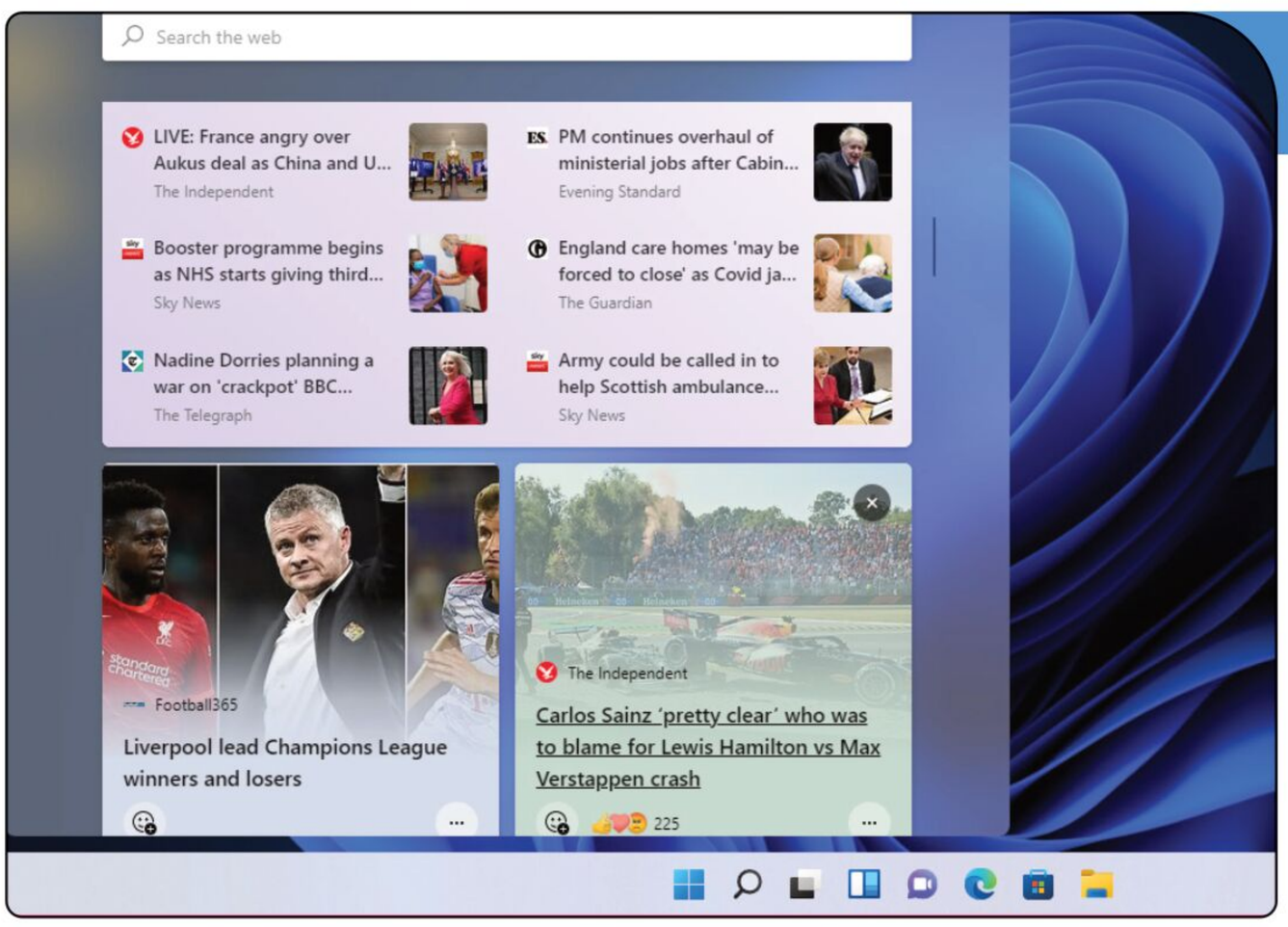
Widgets are desktop app previews, allowing you to see important information from Windows apps, without needing to actually open those apps. The concept of widgets is not new, but the way they are managed and displayed in Windows 11 is new.

Wonderful Widgets



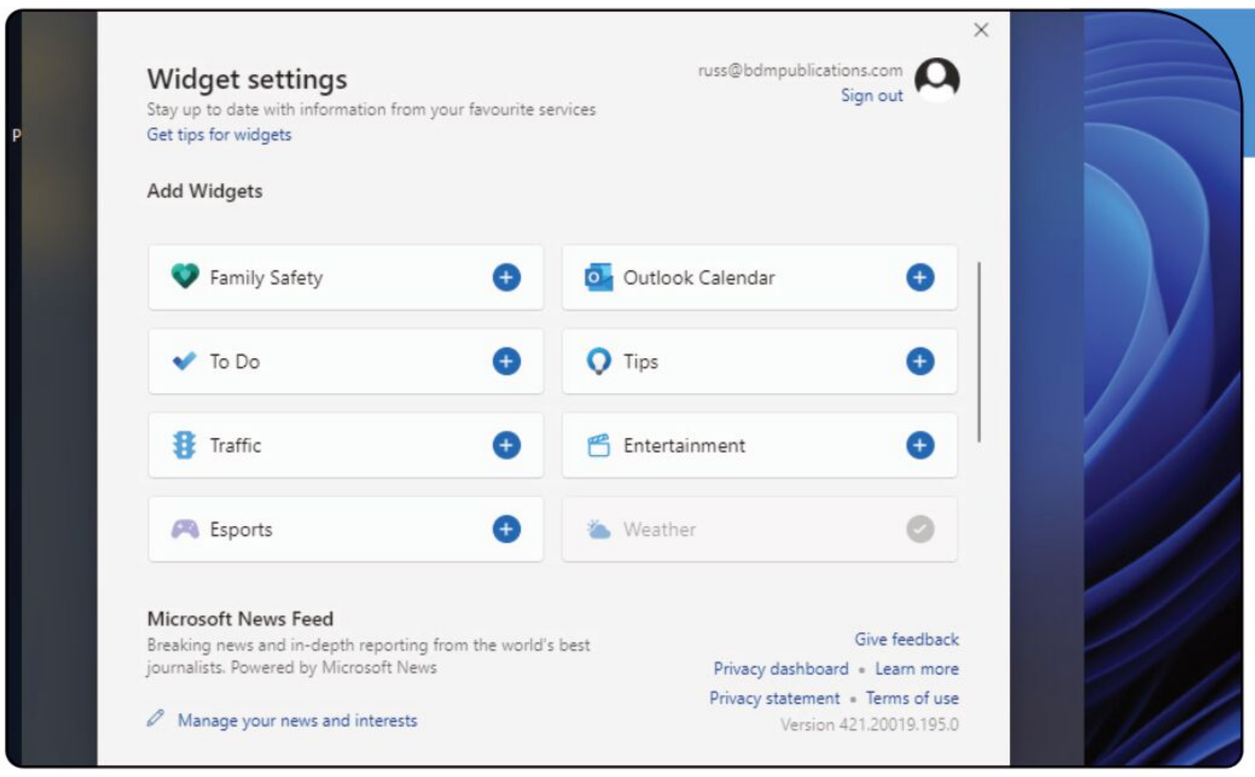
Step 1

To open the widget panel, click or tap the button in the Taskbar (the blue and white square icon) or press Windows key + W on the keyboard. The panel then slides out from the left side of the screen, and will sit over the top of any other apps or windows you currently have open.



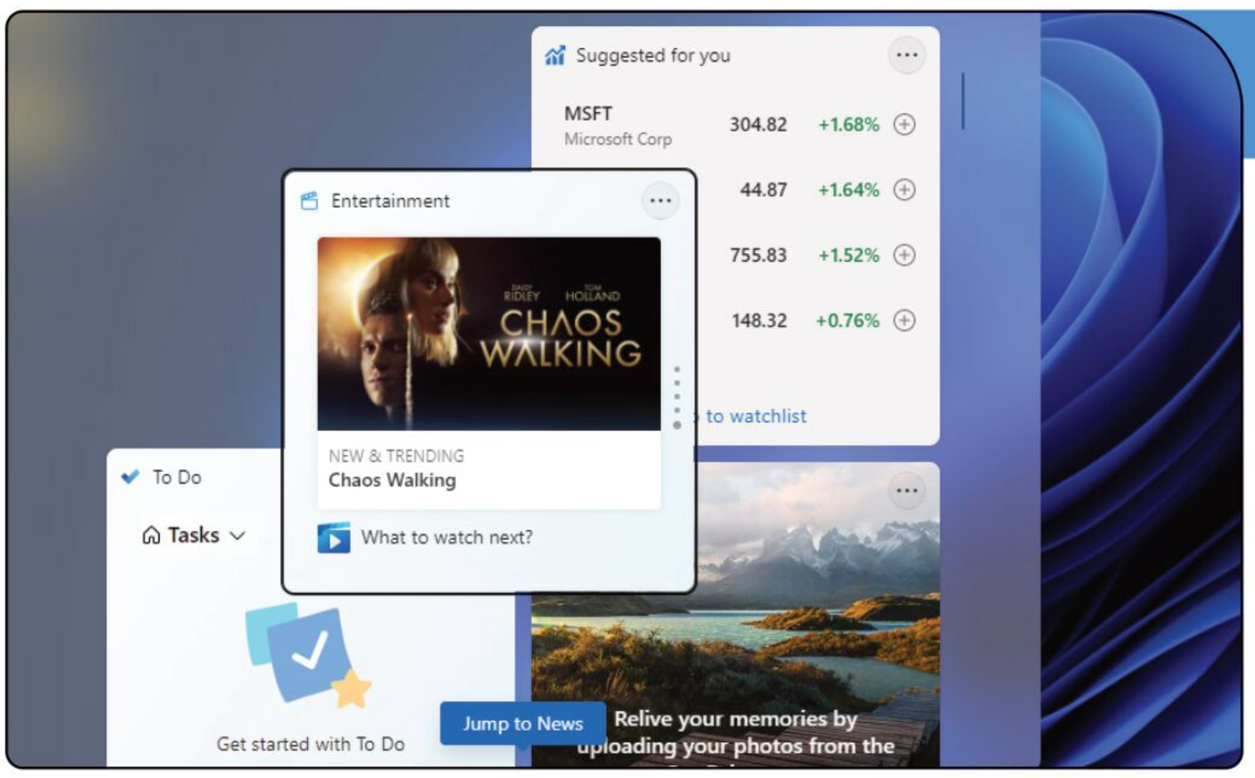
Step 2

The widget panel is initially split up into three main sections: Search, Widgets and News stories. Scroll down the panel to see more content. At the top-right is an account icon, which opens a new panel with account information and the ability to add new widgets.



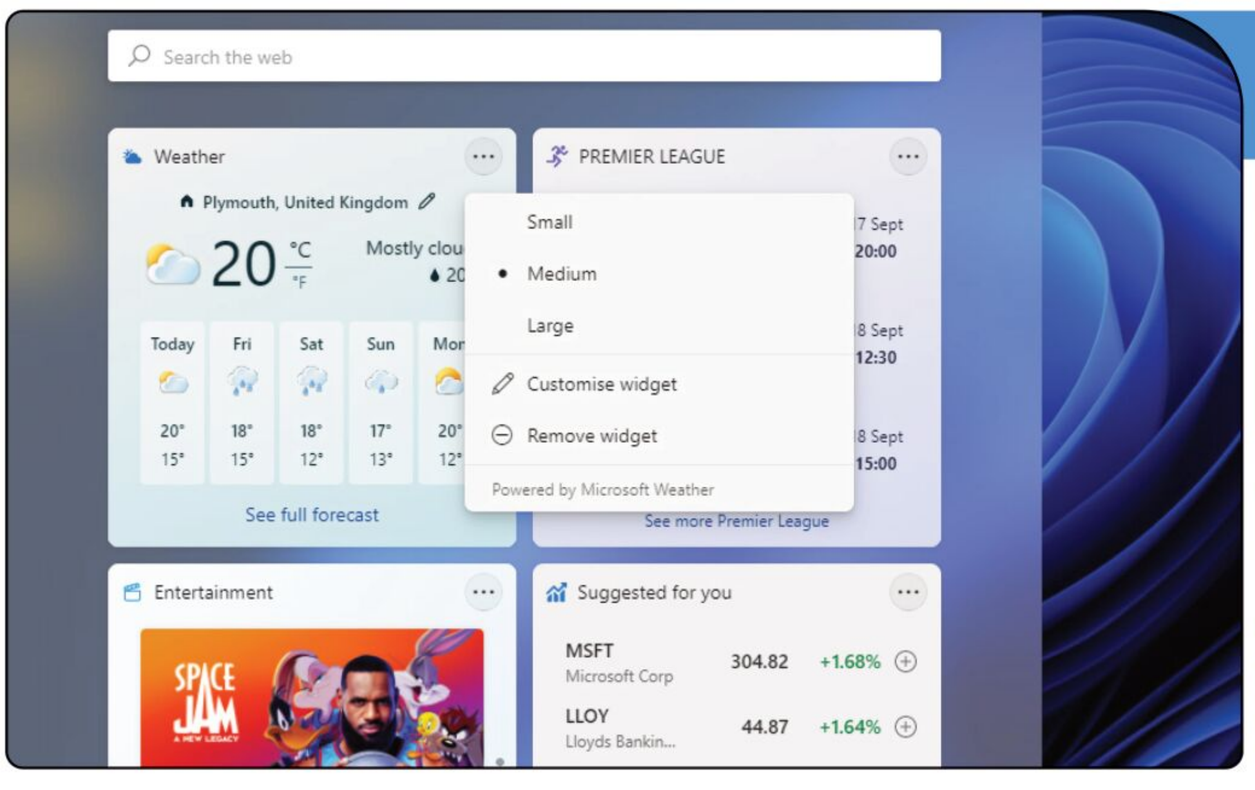
Step 3

The exact widgets available to add will vary, depending on which apps you have installed. As Windows 11 develops, more widgets are likely to be added here, possibly from third-party developers as well as from Microsoft. To add new widgets, just click the + button on each.



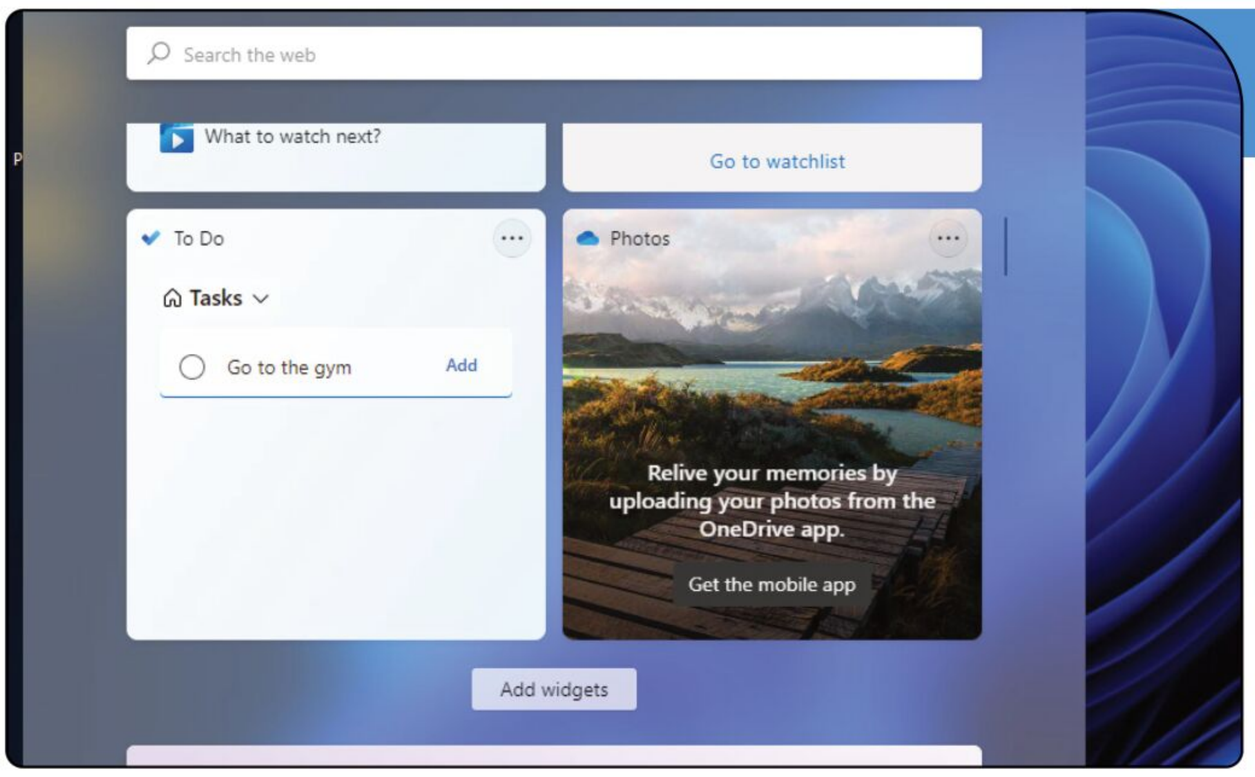
Step 4

After adding widgets, close the account panel and you will see the added widgets in the panel. You can move widgets around in the panel by clicking on the top of the widget and dragging it to the required position. Other widgets will rearrange to fit when you do this.



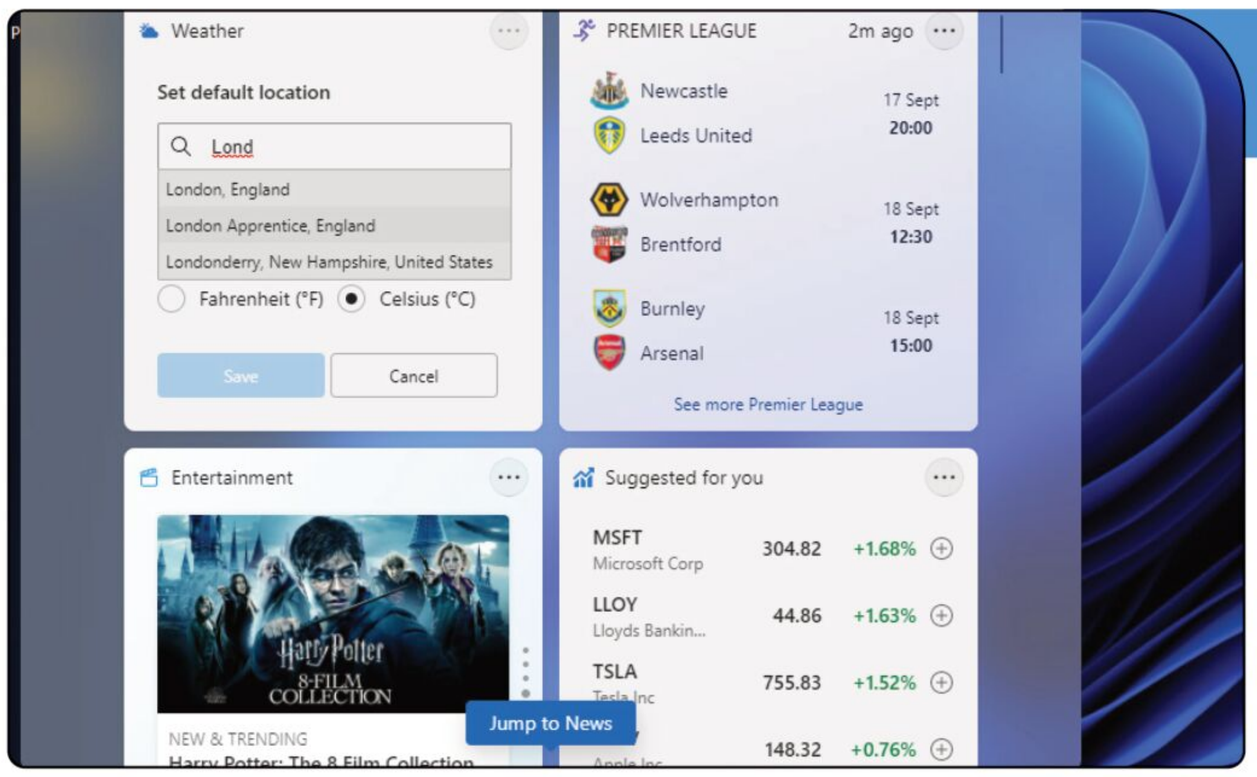
Step 5

To remove a widget, click on the Menu button at the top-right of the widget and choose “Remove Widget” from the menu. You will also see the option to change the size of the widget in this menu. Not all of the widgets will allow all three of the sizing options.



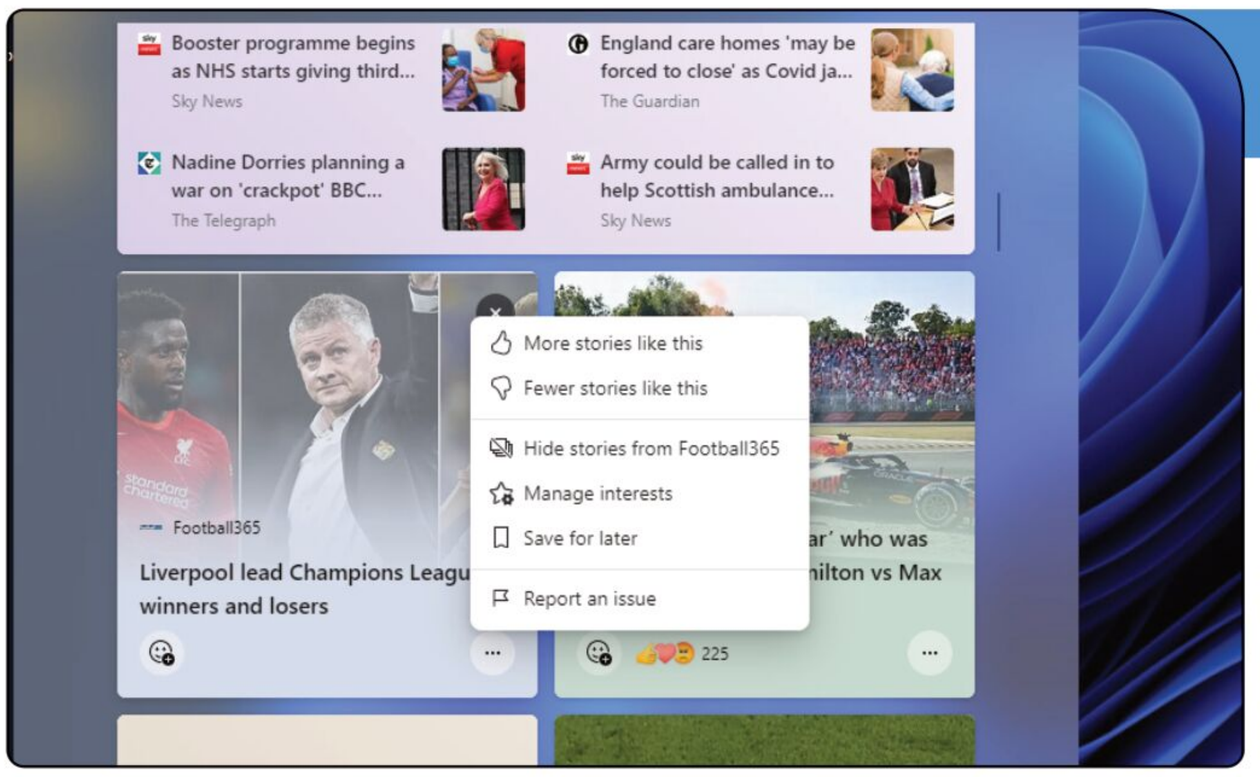
Step 6

Some Widgets allow content editing within the widget. A good example of this is the To Do widget. You can create tasks in the widget by clicking the “Add a task” button, without having to the open the main To Do app. The task then displays instantly in the widget.



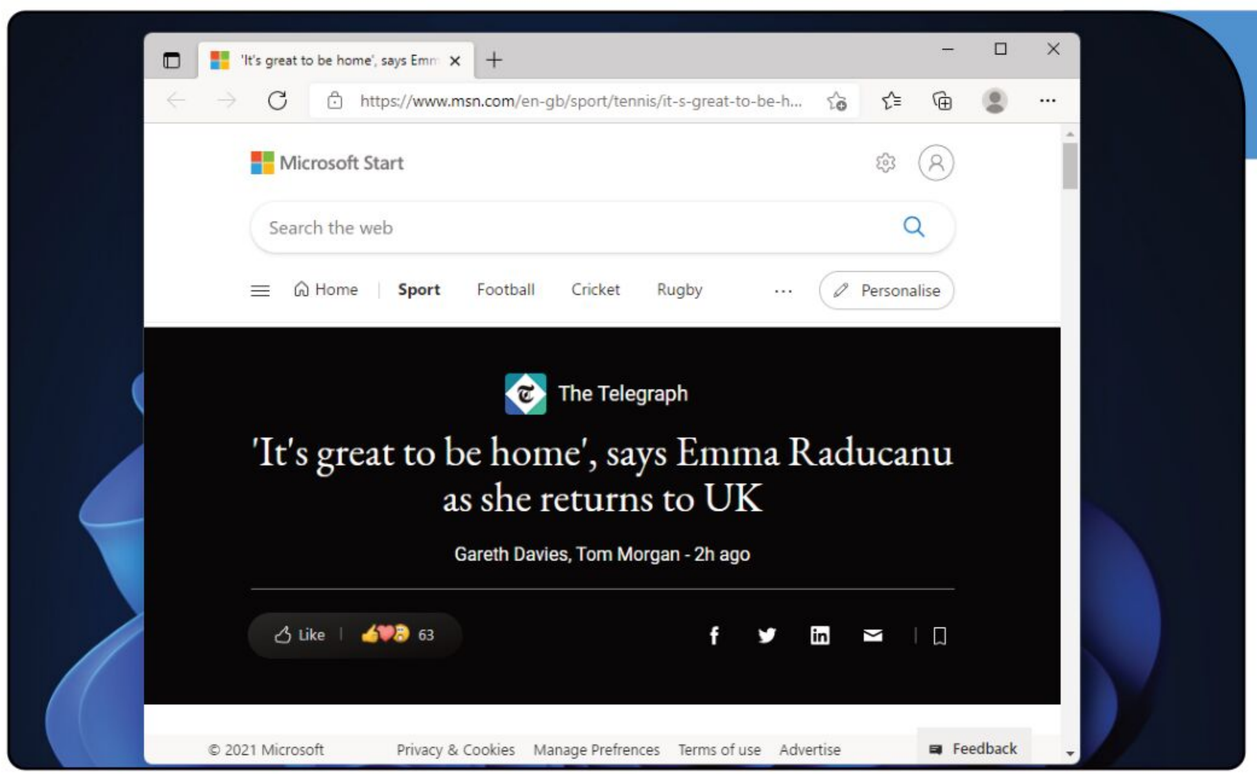
Step 7

Some of the Widgets allow customisation through the More Menu button. The Weather widget, for example, lets you set the default location for the weather forecast that is shown. The Stocks widget lets you change which stock prices are displayed, etc.



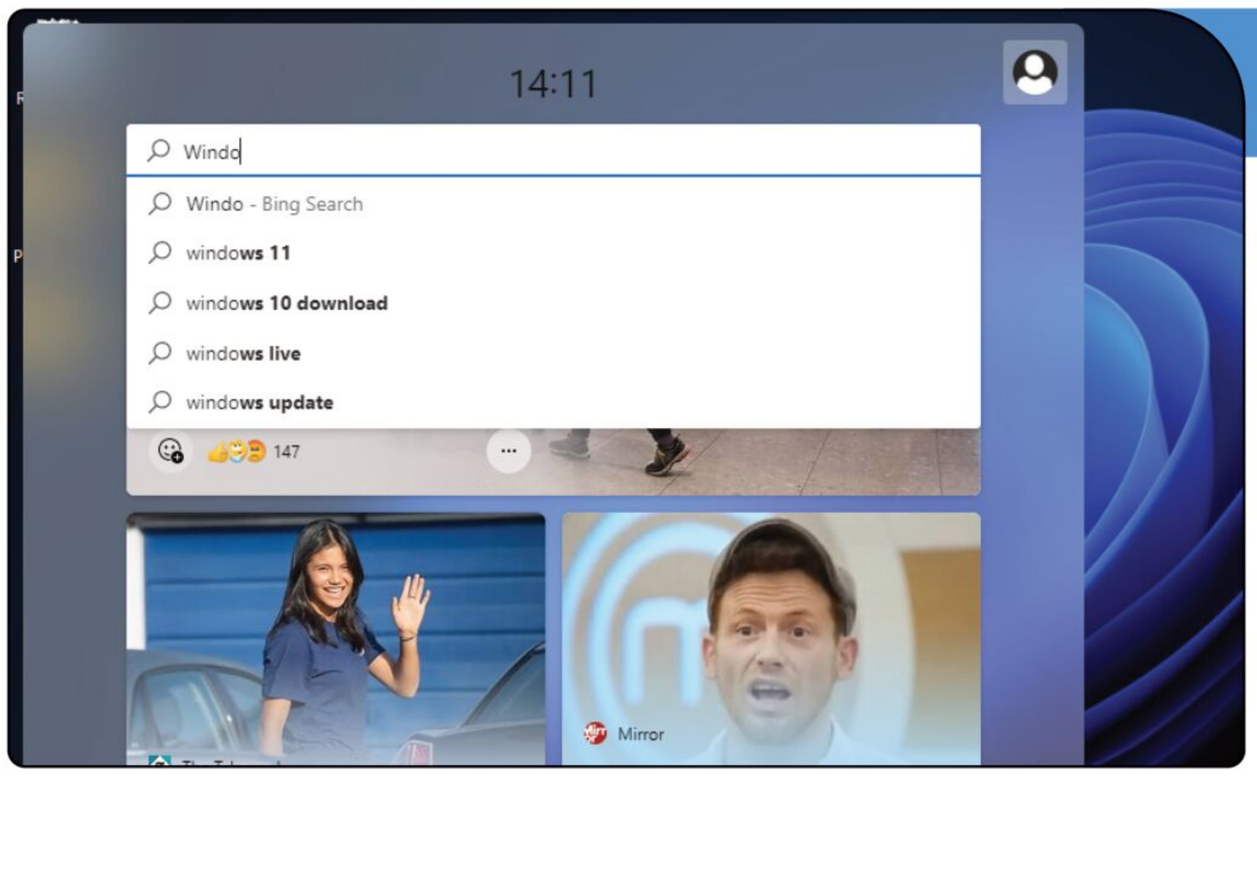
Step 8

The news stories further down the Widgets panel also allow for some customisation. You can click the X to remove a news story, and you can click the More Menu button to choose to see “More/Fewer stories like this”, or to hide all stories from that particular news source.



Step 9

Clicking on a news story will take you to the webpage the story is from. At the top of the News section is a wide panel containing Top Stories. These are the top 6 news headlines. These will change as you like or dislike stories, or choose different news sources.



Step 10

At the top of the Widgets panel is a clock and a search bar. You can type directly into the search bar, with any searches opening in your browser (Edge, by default). The search bar and the clock cannot be removed from the Widgets panel, nor can they be moved.

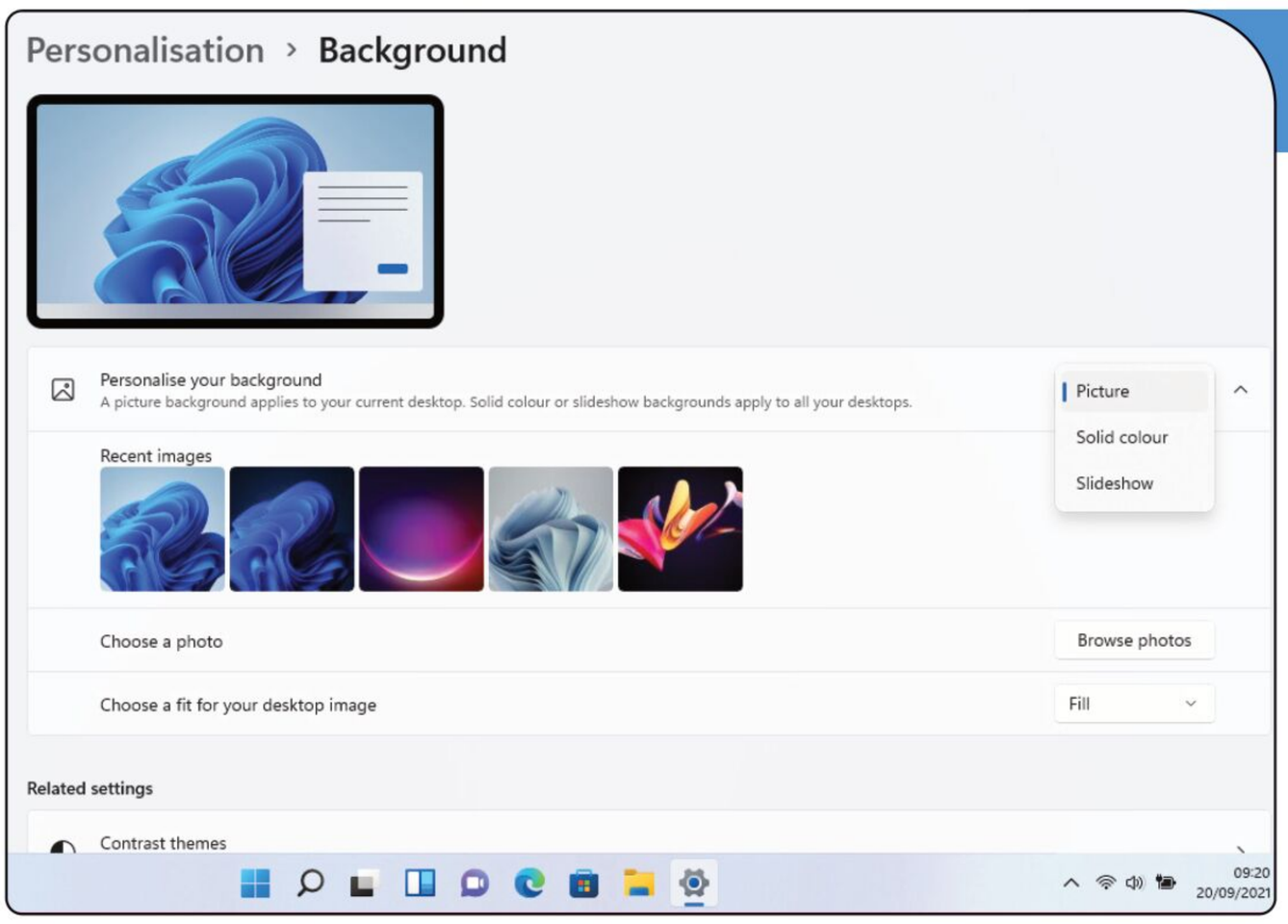
Personalising Windows 11

As with all recent versions of Windows, you can completely change the look of Windows 11 to suit your own needs or style. From the desktop wallpaper and colour theme, to the icons, taskbar and lock screen, everything can be customised and personalised.

Change the Desktop

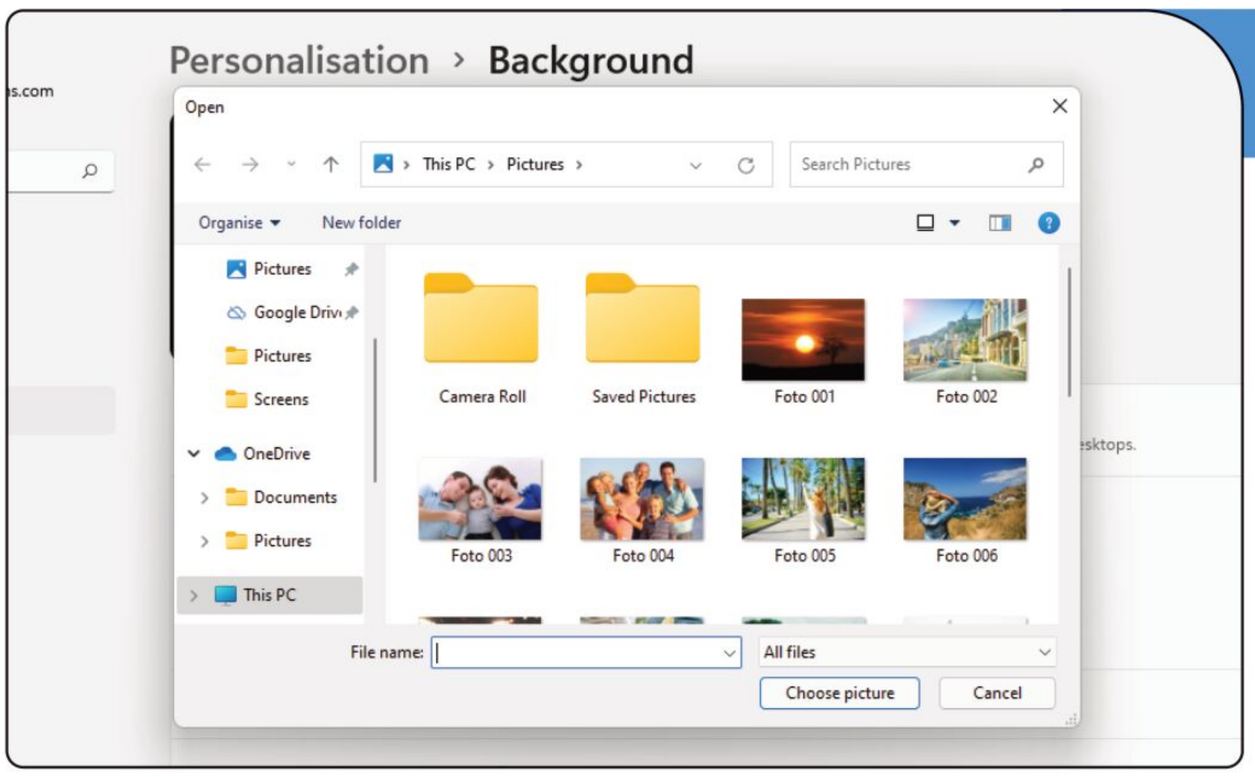
Step 1

You can get started with personalising the Windows 11 desktop in exactly the same way you did with Windows 10. For anyone completely new to Windows, that means right-clicking anywhere on the desktop screen and selecting Personalise from the action menu that appears.



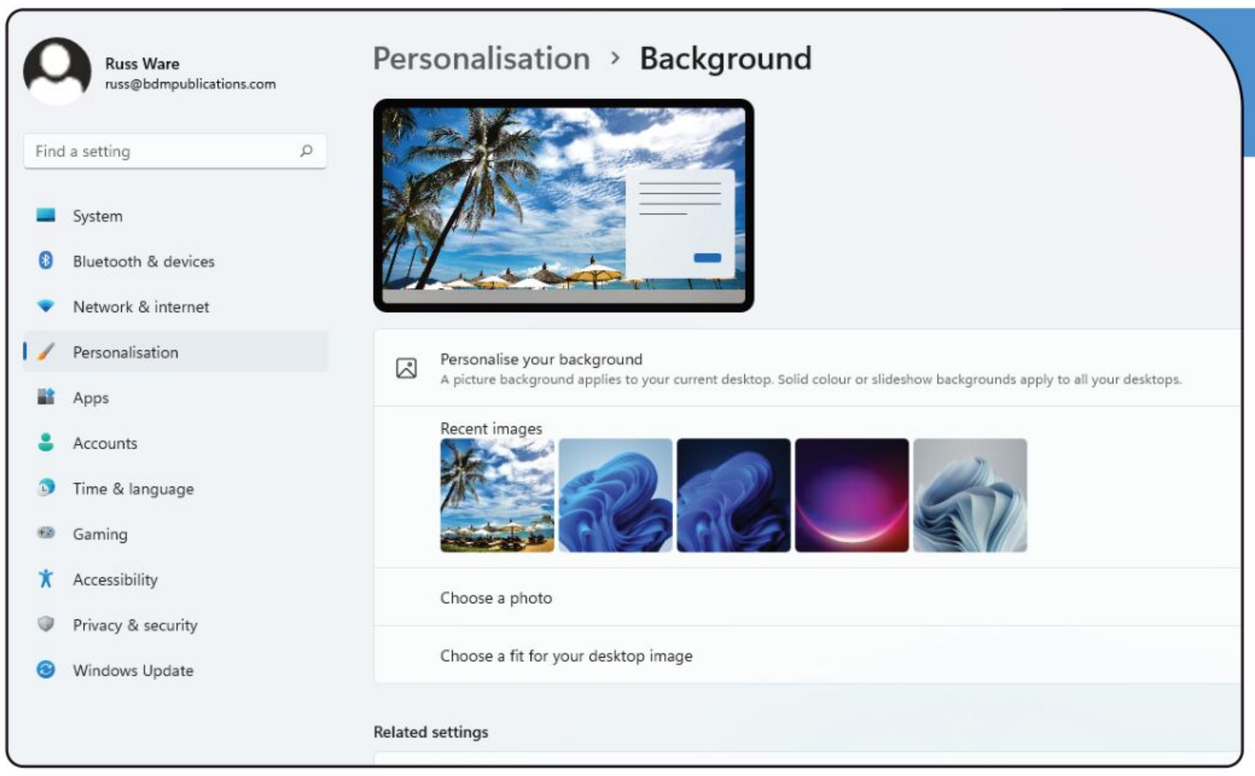
Step 2

The Background settings will be displayed first by default. Click the first drop-down menu to select whether to use the default backgrounds, solid colours or choose to display folders of your own images. Your choices here changes what is displayed in the background settings.



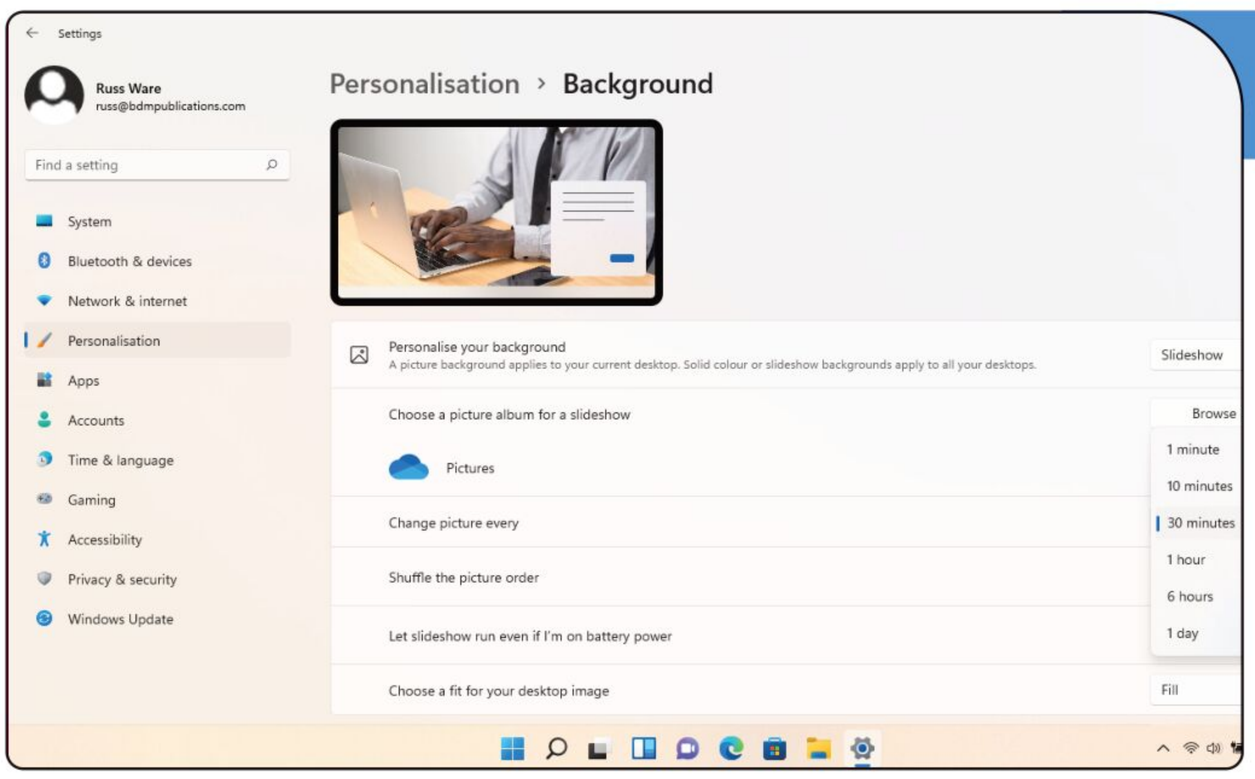
Step 3

To select your own pictures for the background, click on Browse photos in the Choose a photo section and navigate to the folder containing the images you want to use. For best results, use pictures that have the same aspect ratio (i.e. widescreen landscape), as your monitor screen.



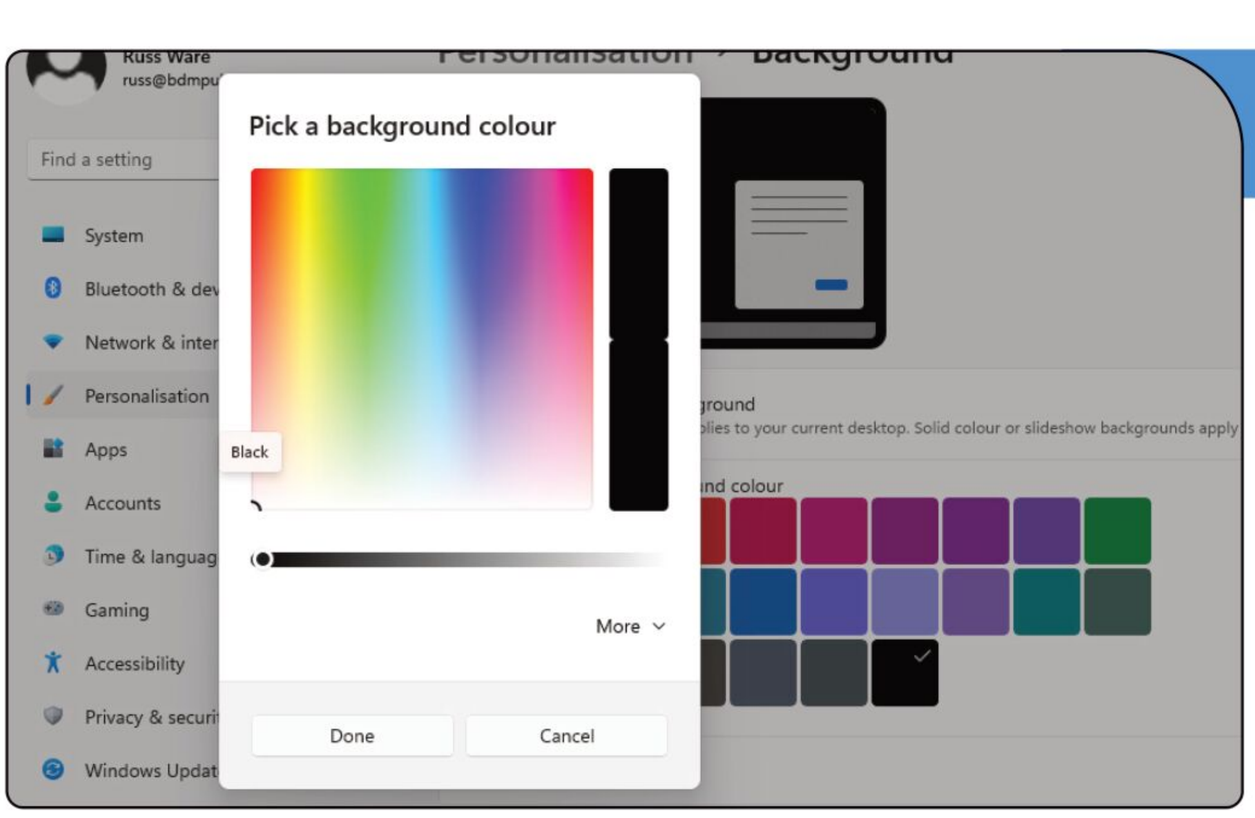
Step 4

To set a picture as your desktop background, simply click on it. It will instantly be set as your new desktop background image (a preview will display). The screen shows you the last five images used or you can click the Browse button to choose a new one from your folders.



Step 5

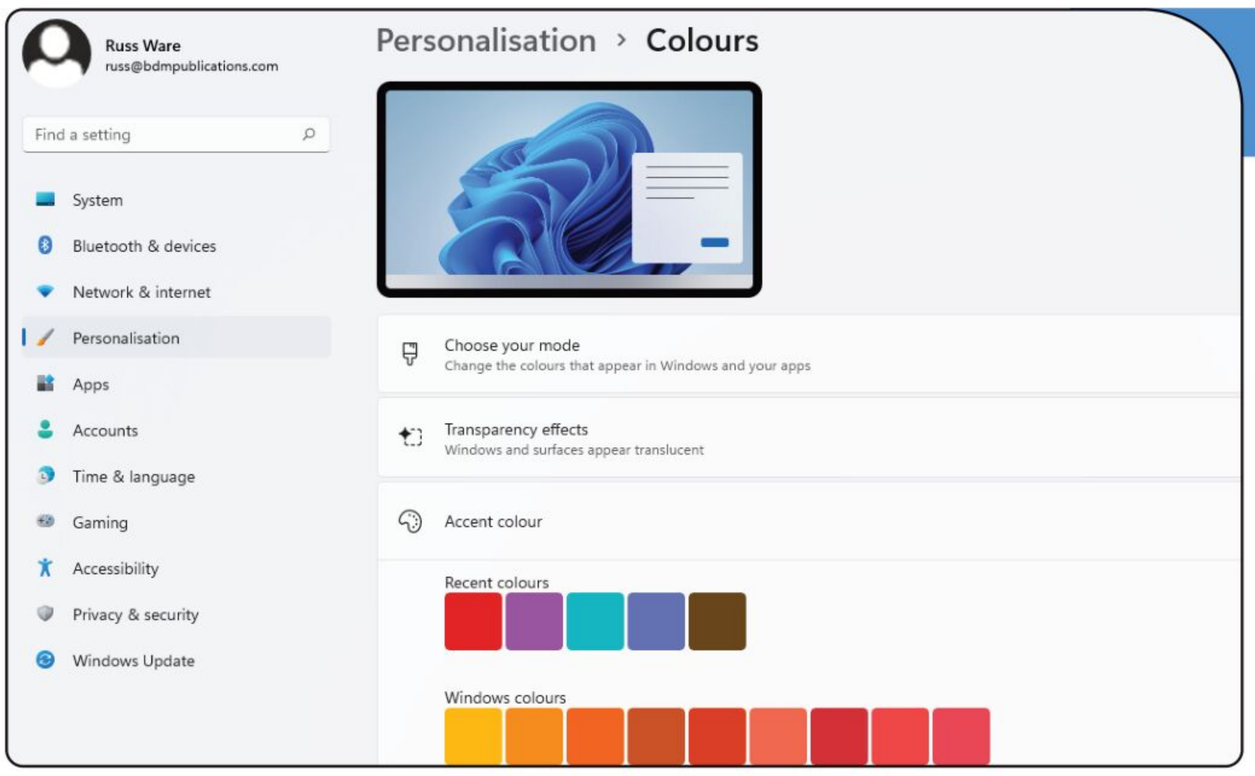
If you opt for Slideshow, you will see some additional options to choose from. You can set the interval for the slide show from the 'Change picture every' menu and decide how you'd like the images to fit on the screen by clicking the 'Choose a fit' menu.



Step 6

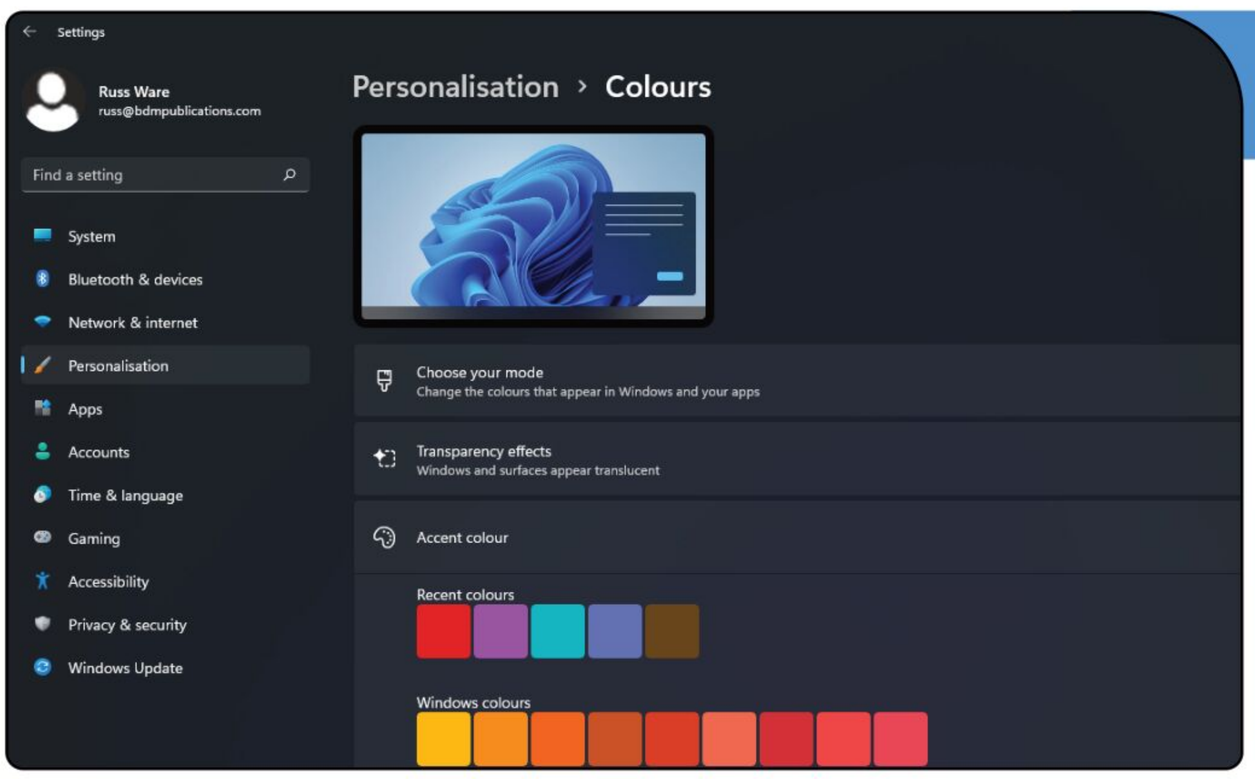
If you choose to set your desktop background as a solid colour, you will see a grid of about 25 colours that you can choose from. If you want to use a colour not shown in the grid, click on the View colours option and use the colour picker to select the exact colour you want to apply.

Setting Accent Colours



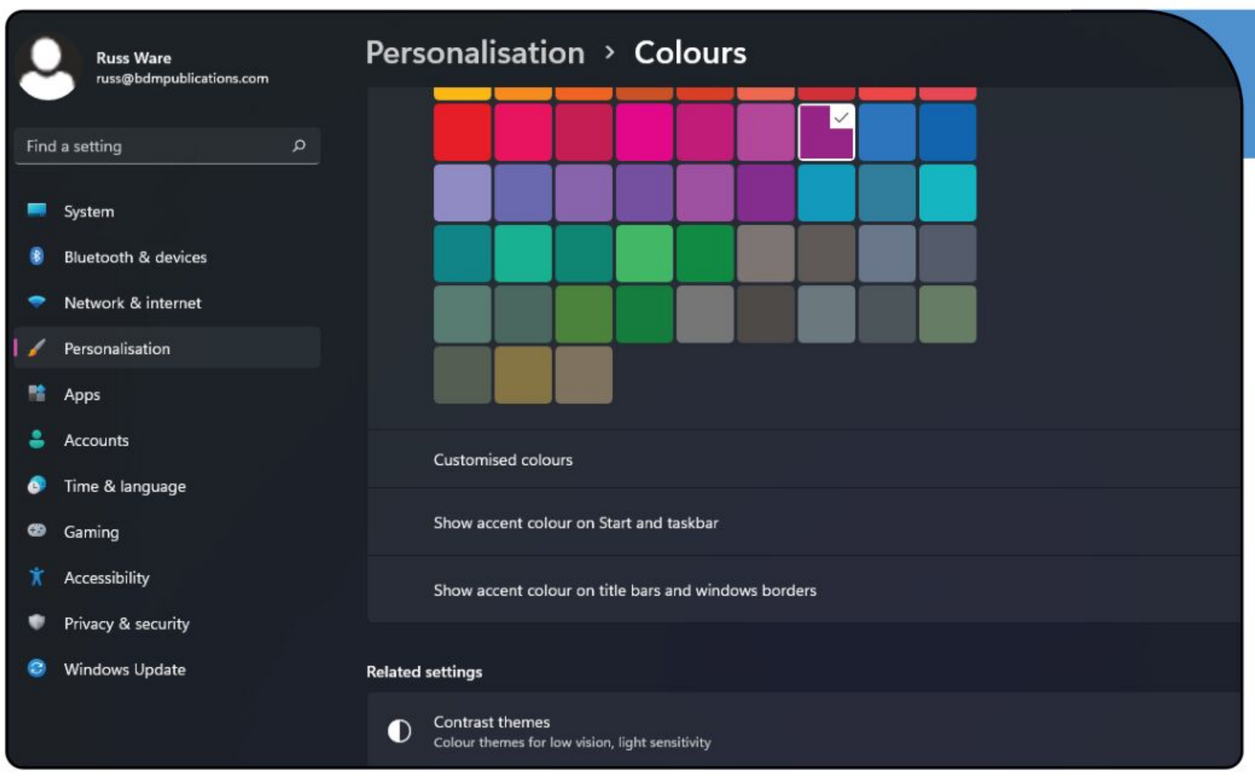
Step 1

Aside from the desktop background, you can also change the colour of the taskbar and the Start menu and other system components. Click on the Colours option in the main Settings sidebar. Here you will see several colour control options, including the option to choose light or dark mode.



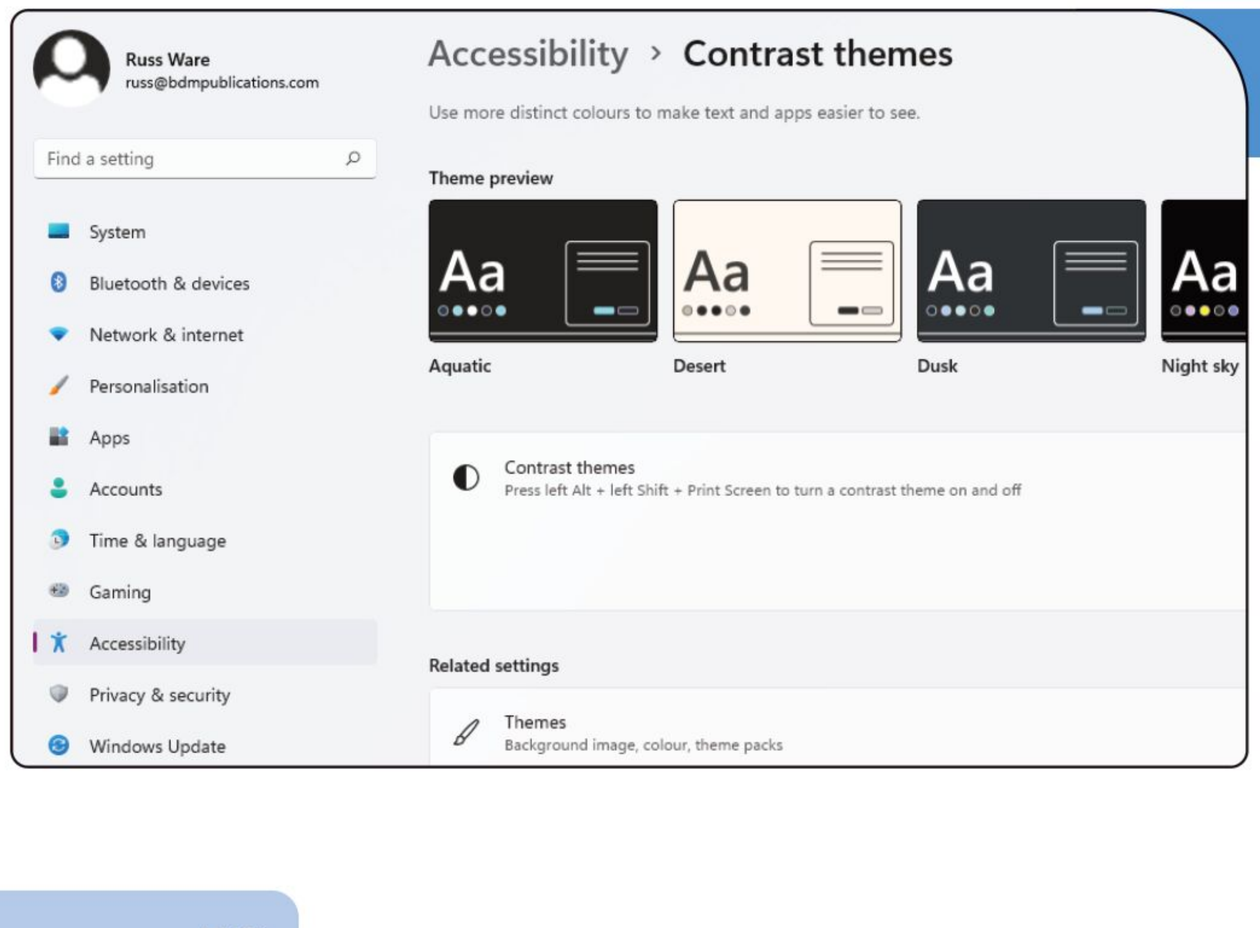
Step 2

Light mode is the default that Windows 11 is set to when installed. Select Dark mode to see an immediate and obvious change. Dark mode affects most menus like the taskbar, Start menu and folders etc. The third option is Custom, which lets you choose light/dark modes separately for system and apps.



Step 3

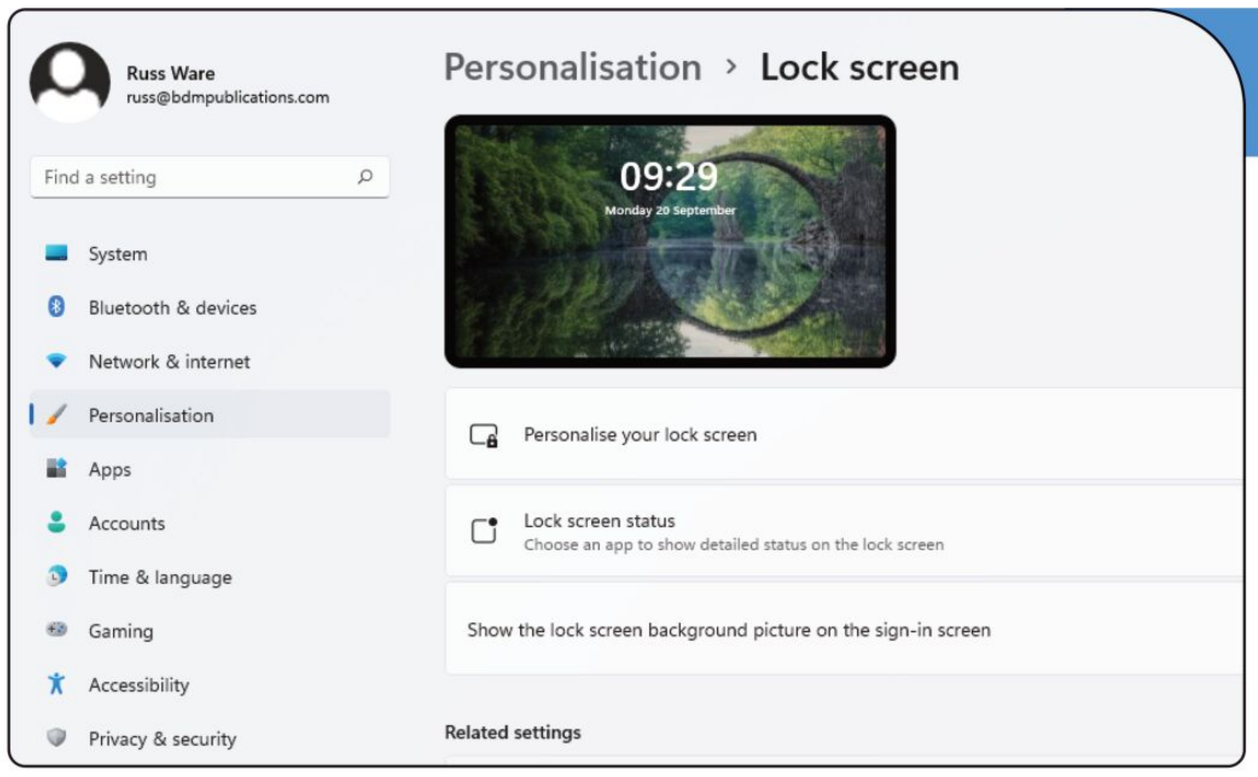
To apply a colour other than light or dark to the taskbar, Start menu and other accents, you need to first select Dark mode, then select a colour from the grid of colours and then select the option below that to "Show accent colour on Start and Taskbar". You can also apply it to title bars and borders.



Step 4

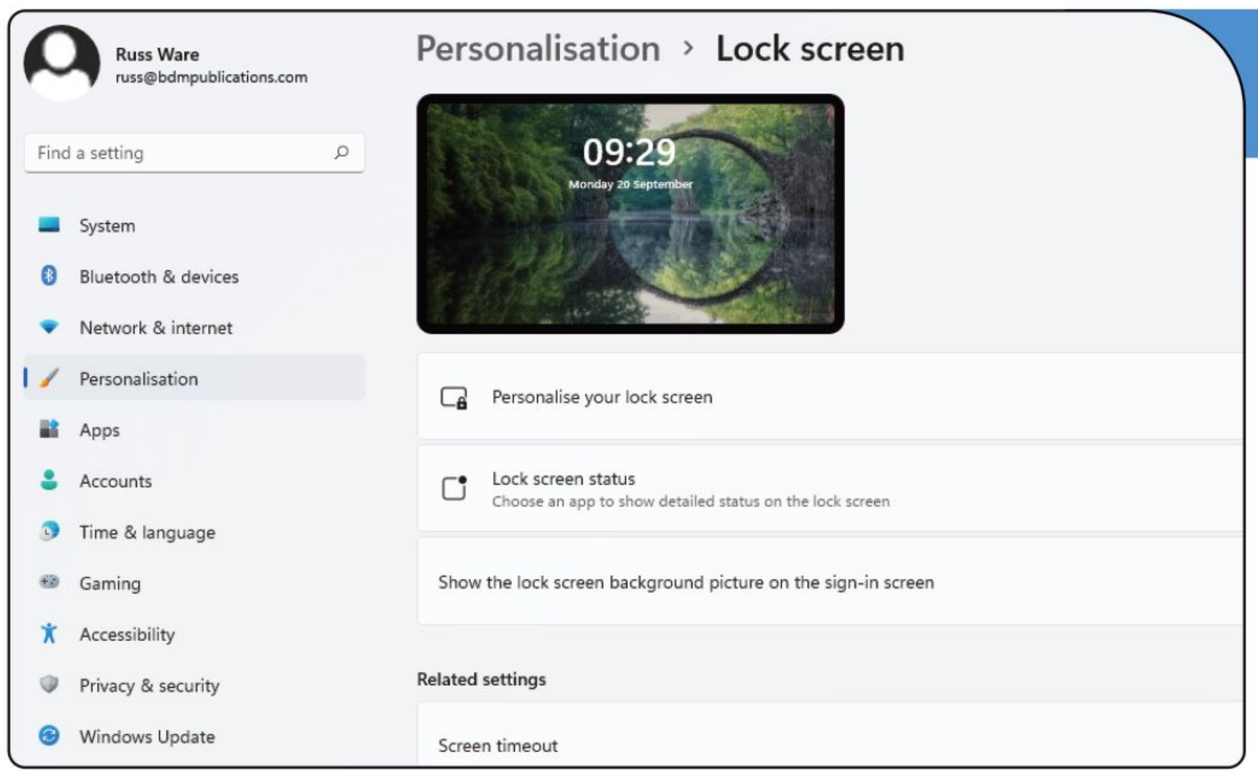
If you need to set the colour scheme to high contrast (if, for example, you have a vision impairment), you can access several preset colour themes from the Colours menu. You will see a preview of the different themes, and can then apply the one you like from the drop-down menu.

Lock Screen Customisation



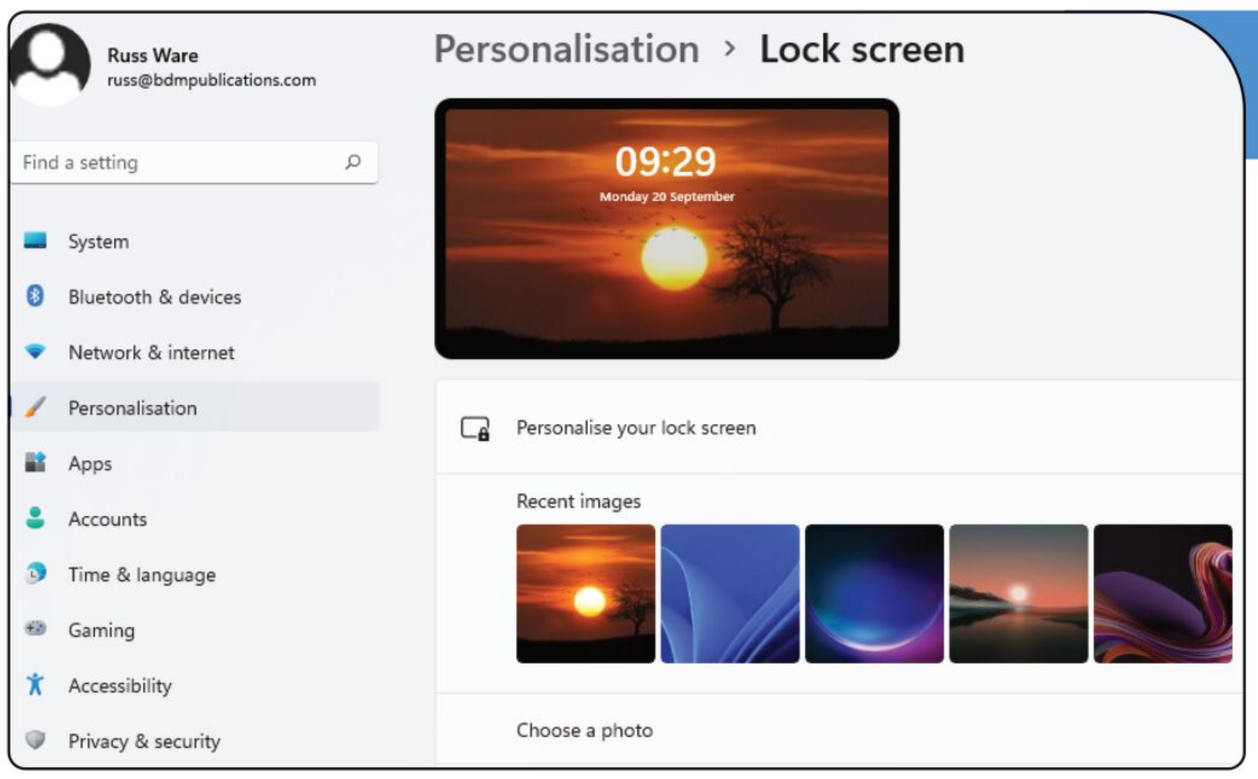
Step 1

The lock screen is enabled by default (as it was in Windows 10) and displays an image and can also display information from one of the built-in Windows apps. To start customising the lock screen, open the main settings, click Personalisation and then Lock Screen.



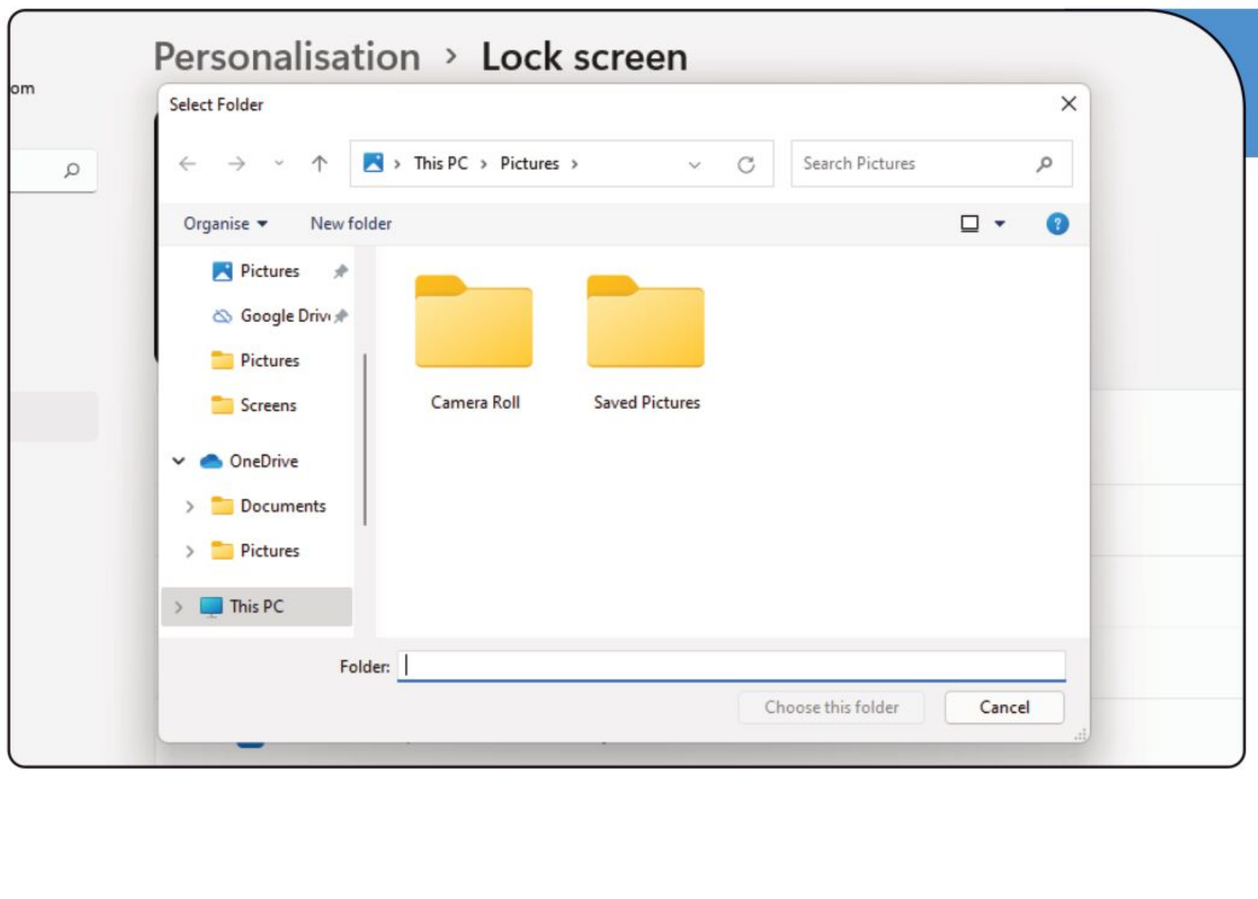
Step 2

The first thing to choose is whether to display one of your own images, a slideshow of images or something from Windows Spotlight. If you choose either of the first two of these, more options will appear to select the images you want to use (single or multiple).



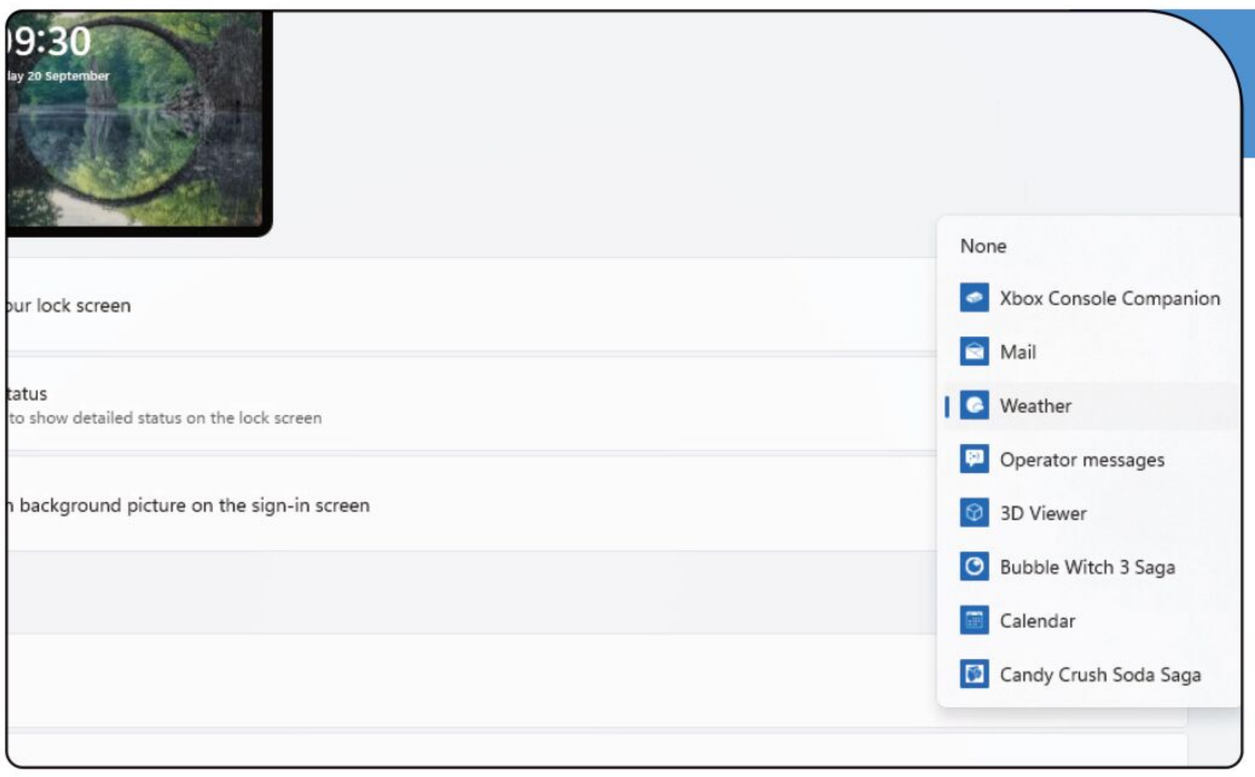
Step 3

If you choose to apply one of your images, some recently used pictures will appear, along with a link to browse your PC for more. When you select an image, it will appear in the recently used panel. You can choose to have facts, tips and tricks displayed over the image, just like with Windows Spotlight.



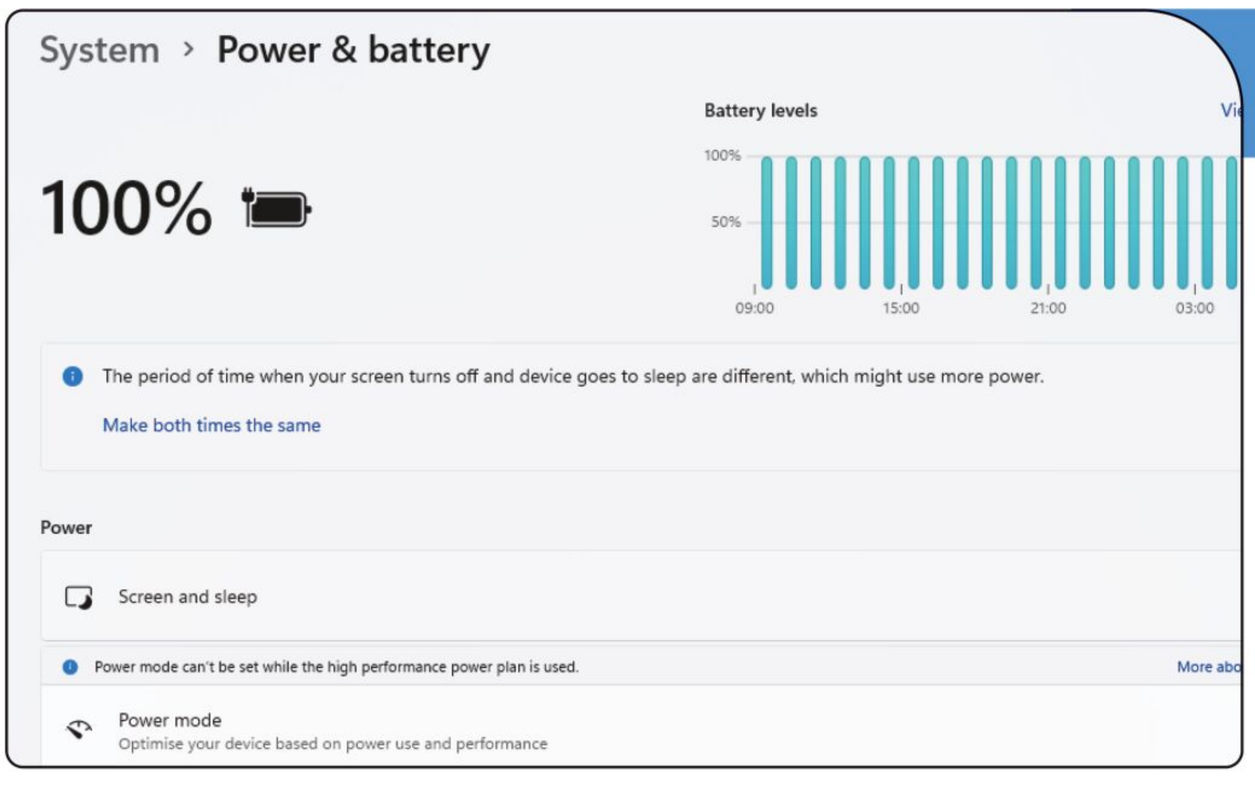
Step 4

If you choose to set the lock screen as a slideshow, you will see the option to add a folder of images rather than just one. You can use an existing folder (such as Pictures), or you can create one. There are several advanced settings for a slideshow, including only using images that fit the screen.



Step 5

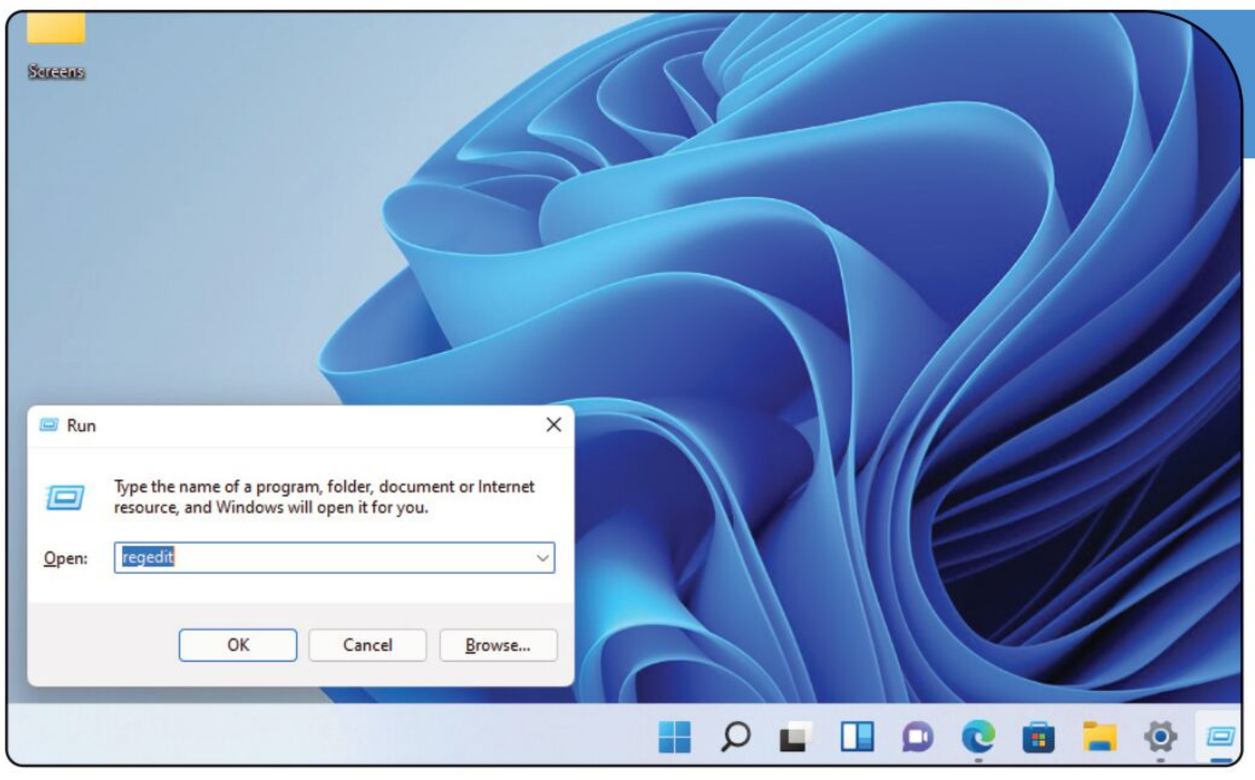
You can add an app status to the lock screen which will show some information from the app you chose. The available apps will vary if you have removed or added some, but should include Weather, Mail, Calendar, Operator Messages and more. You can only add one app.



Step 6

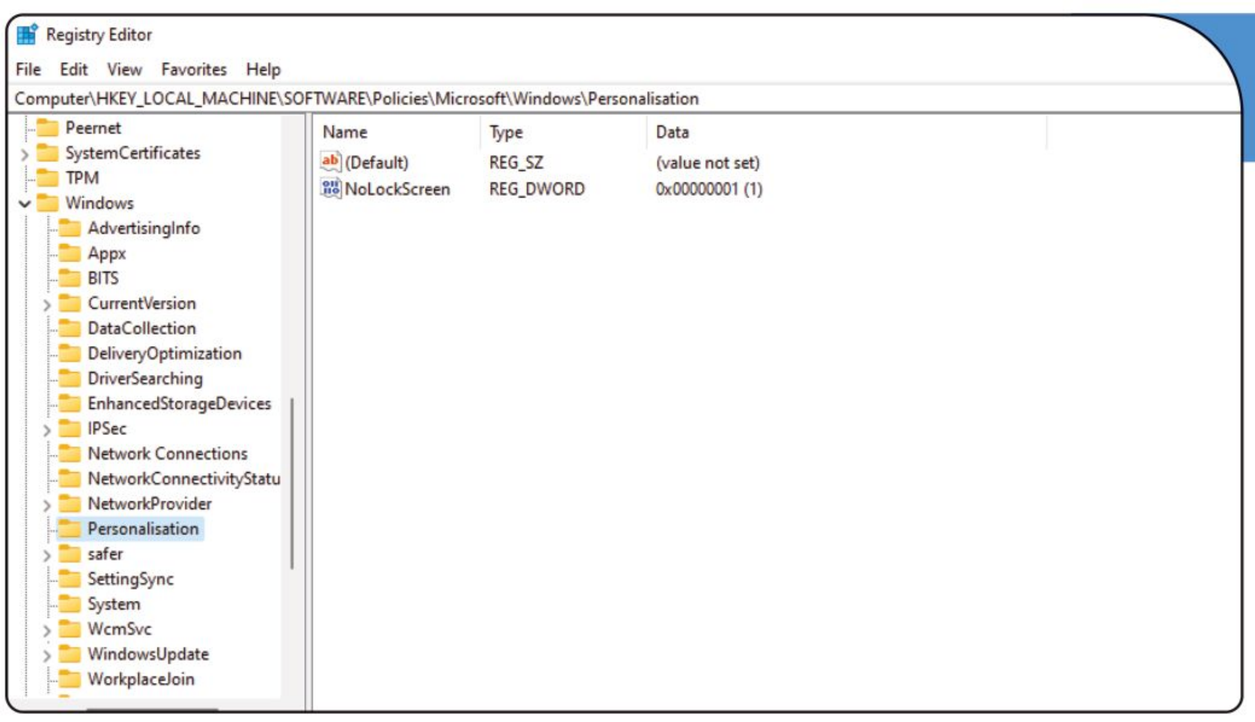
Also in the Lock Screen personalisation section is a Related settings section. Here you will find links to the screen timeout and screen saver settings. The settings you choose there will depend on your personal preference and also on your computer location (for security reasons).

Disable the Lock Screen



Step 1

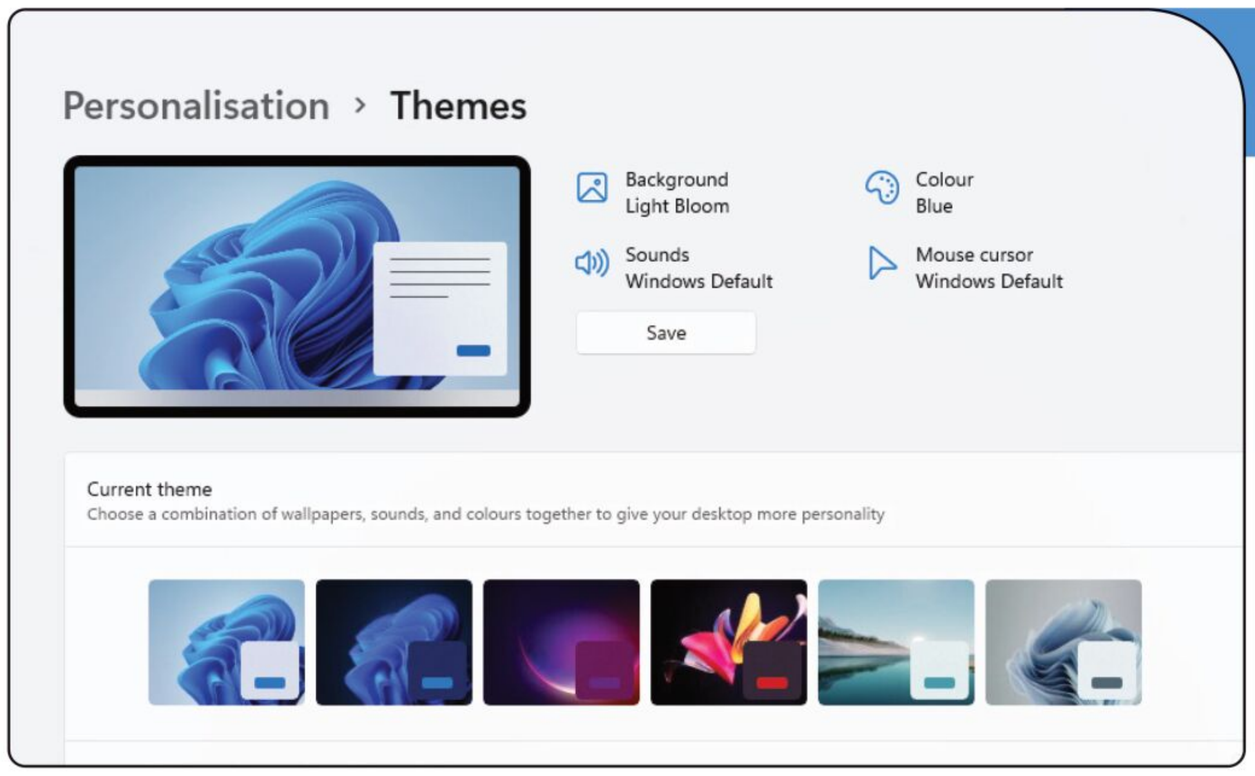
To access the Registry, press the Windows key + R, enter regedit, and then click OK. With the Registry open, navigate to HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Policies\Microsoft\Windows\. Right-click the final Windows folder and click New > Key.



Step 2

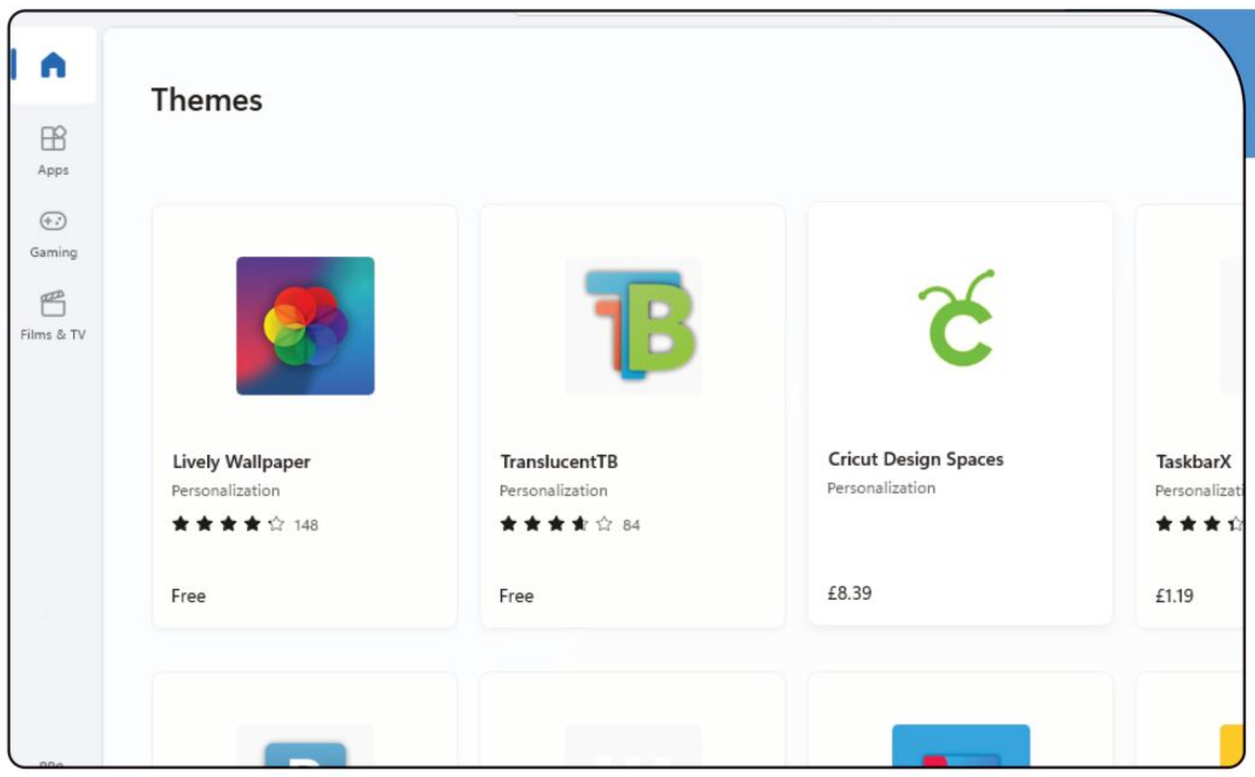
Name this new key "Personalisation" and then navigate inside it. Right-click inside the right-hand pane and select New > DWORD (32-bit) Value. Name it "NoLockScreen". Then double click this new value and change the Value data to 1. Then click OK and exit the Registry Editor.

Adding New Themes



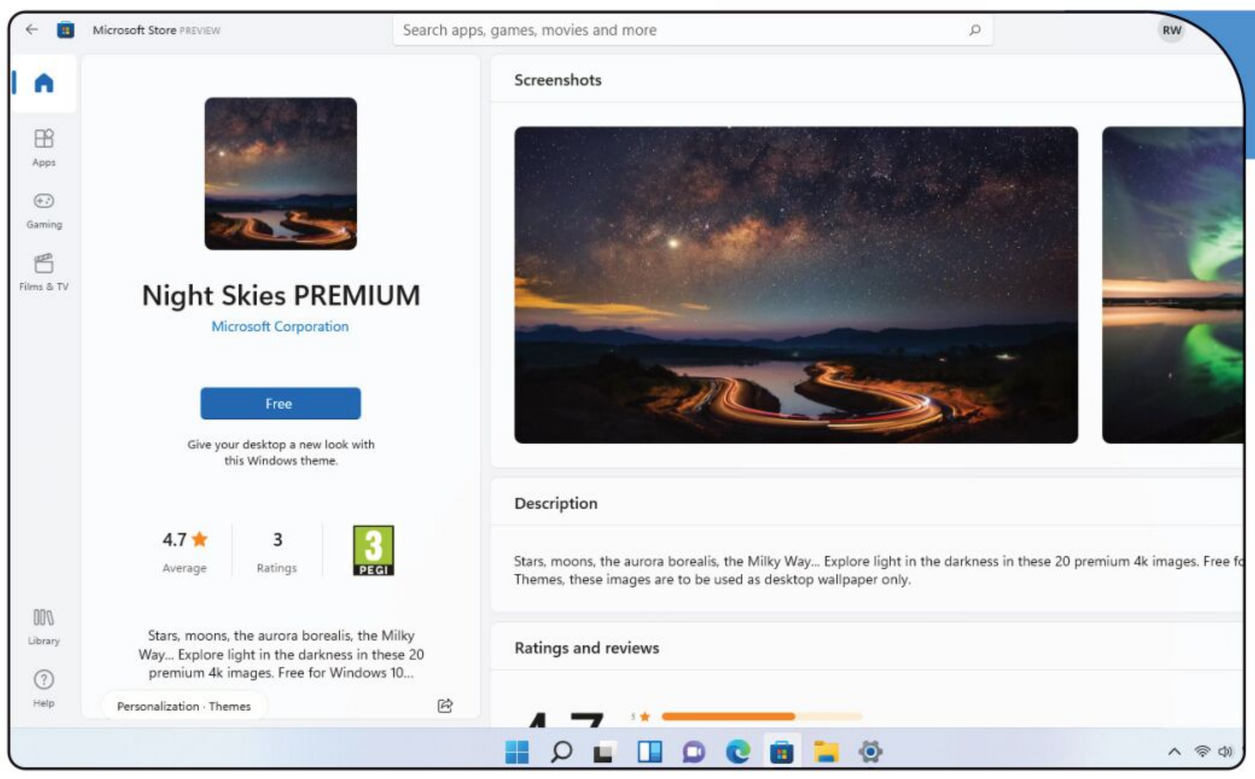
Step 1

You can find new themes in a couple of ways: Open the Microsoft Store app and search for themes, or open the main settings app, go to Personalisation and then click on the themes option. Here you will see a link to "Get more themes…".



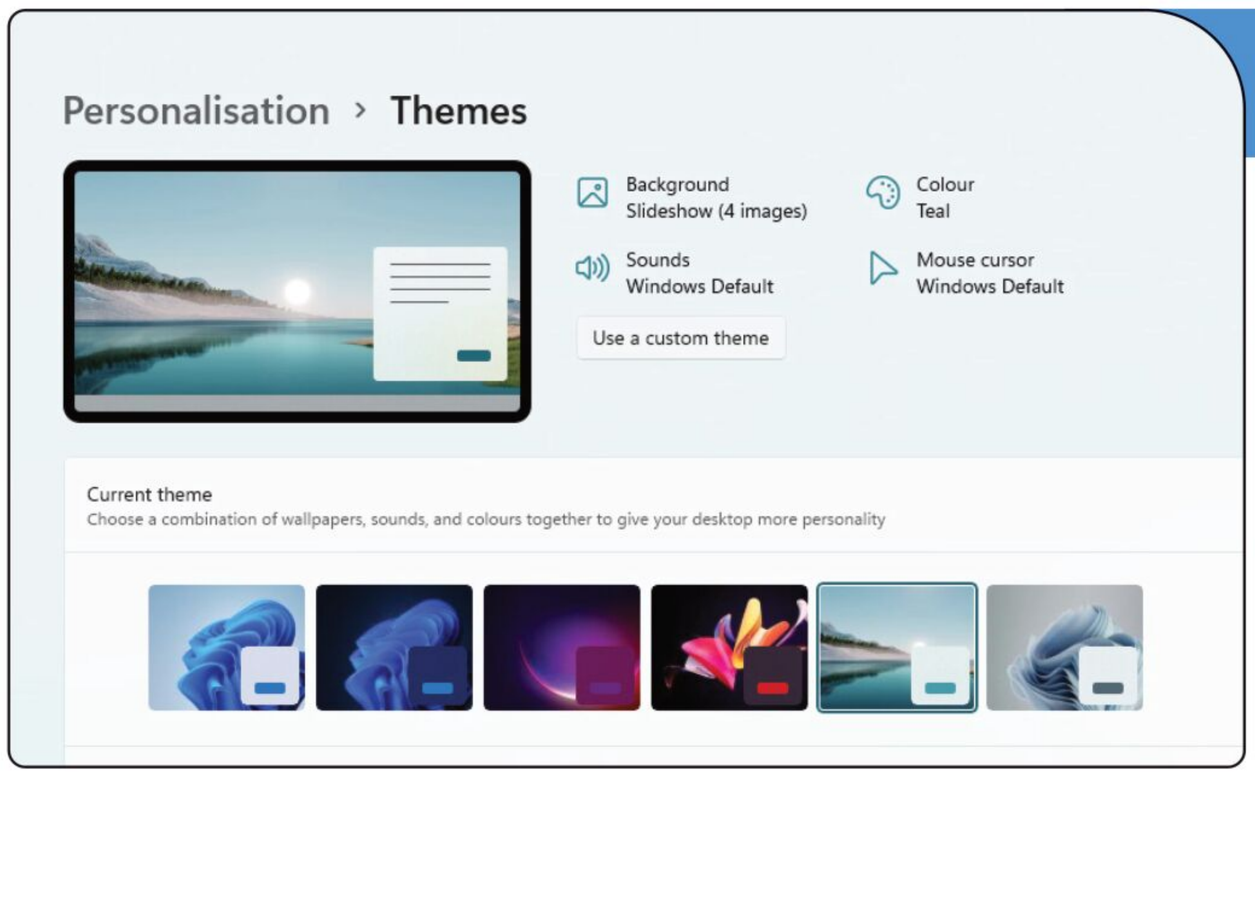
Step 2

Both of these actions should bring you to the same themes page. All themes have now been moved into the Windows Store app, rather than on a webpage. Themes are all listed under Personalisation in the Store, so you can also search for that if your themes search doesn't bring up the expected results.



Step 3

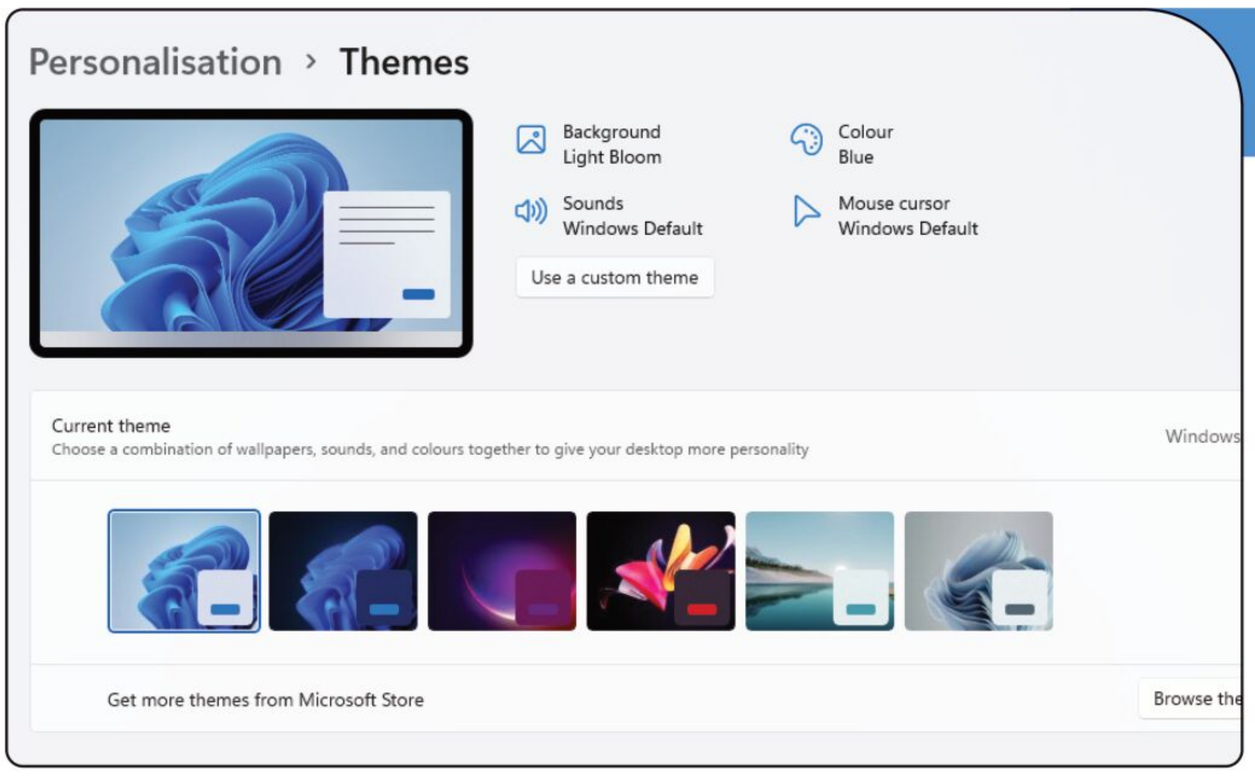
Each theme is displayed with a thumbnail and the number of images supplied shown. The Microsoft Store page also includes information about any other changes the theme will make, such as adding transparency effects or adding Lock Screen images. Download any you like the look of.



Step 4

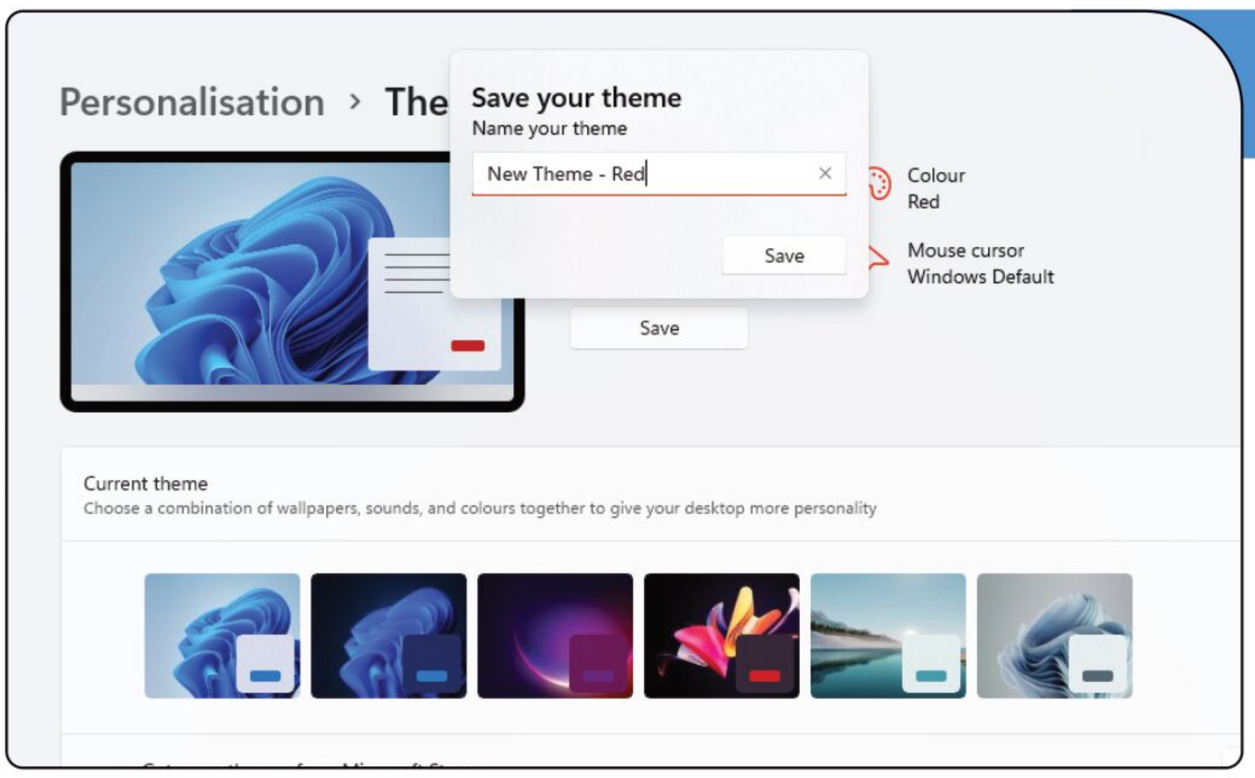
Each theme applied can be customised further using the options in the Themes section. You can alter the background, colour, sounds and even the mouse cursor of any theme, making it completely unique to you. When you have chosen the changes, you will need to click Save Theme.

Modifying Themes



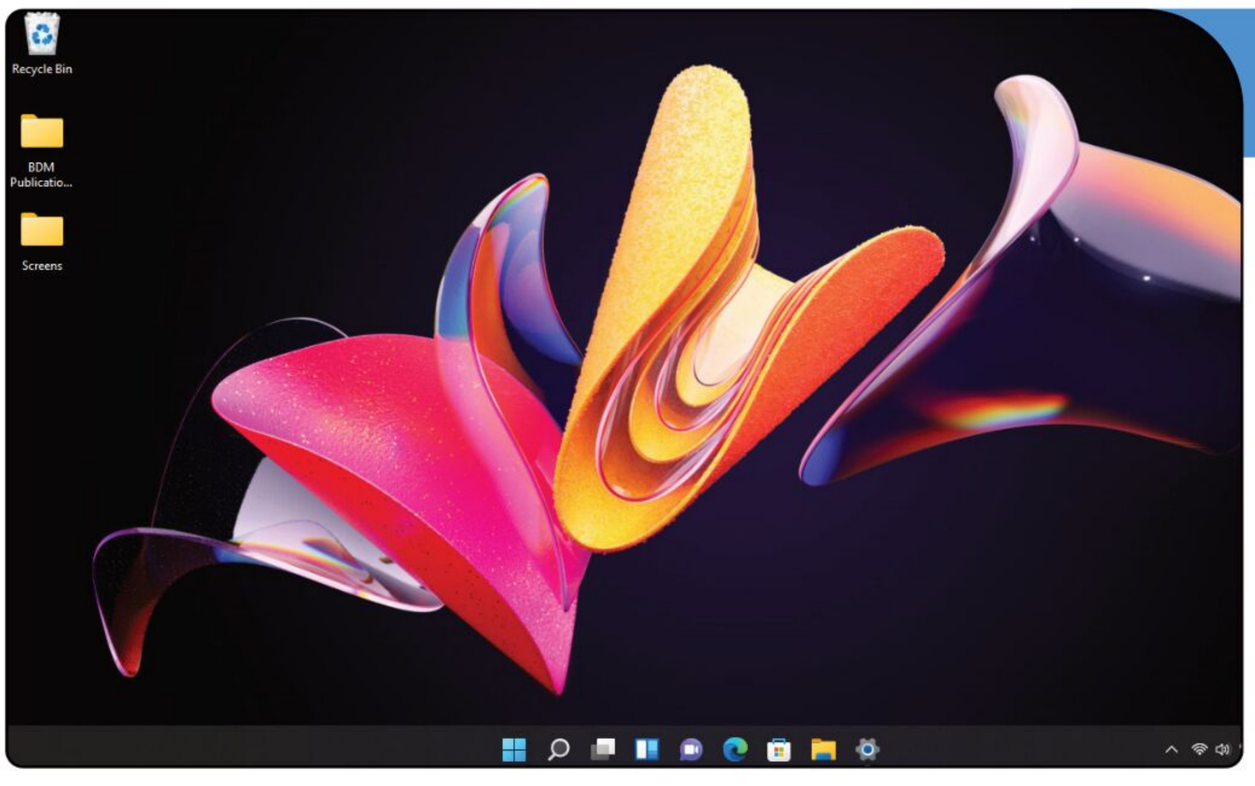
Step 1

You can find the preset themes in Settings > Personalisation > Themes. The current theme is displayed at the top of the page, with details about background, colour, sounds and mouse cursor displayed next to it. Each of these details can be clicked to go to a section where you can edit it.



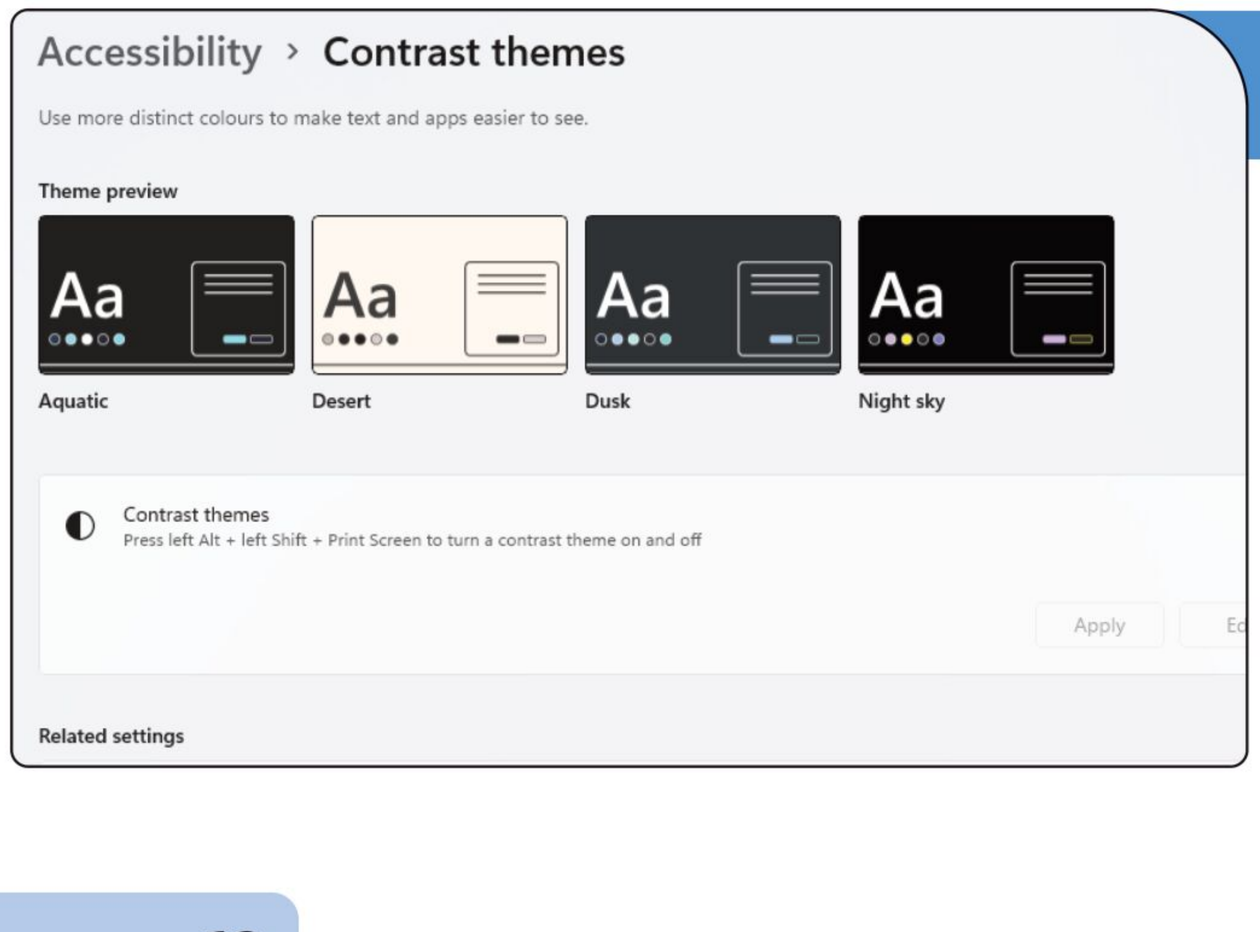
Step 2

Each time you make a change using these links, return to the Themes section to see the changes in the preview window, or minimise the Settings app to see the desktop. When you are happy with all of the changes, click "Save" and the theme will be set and added to the other themes.



Step 3

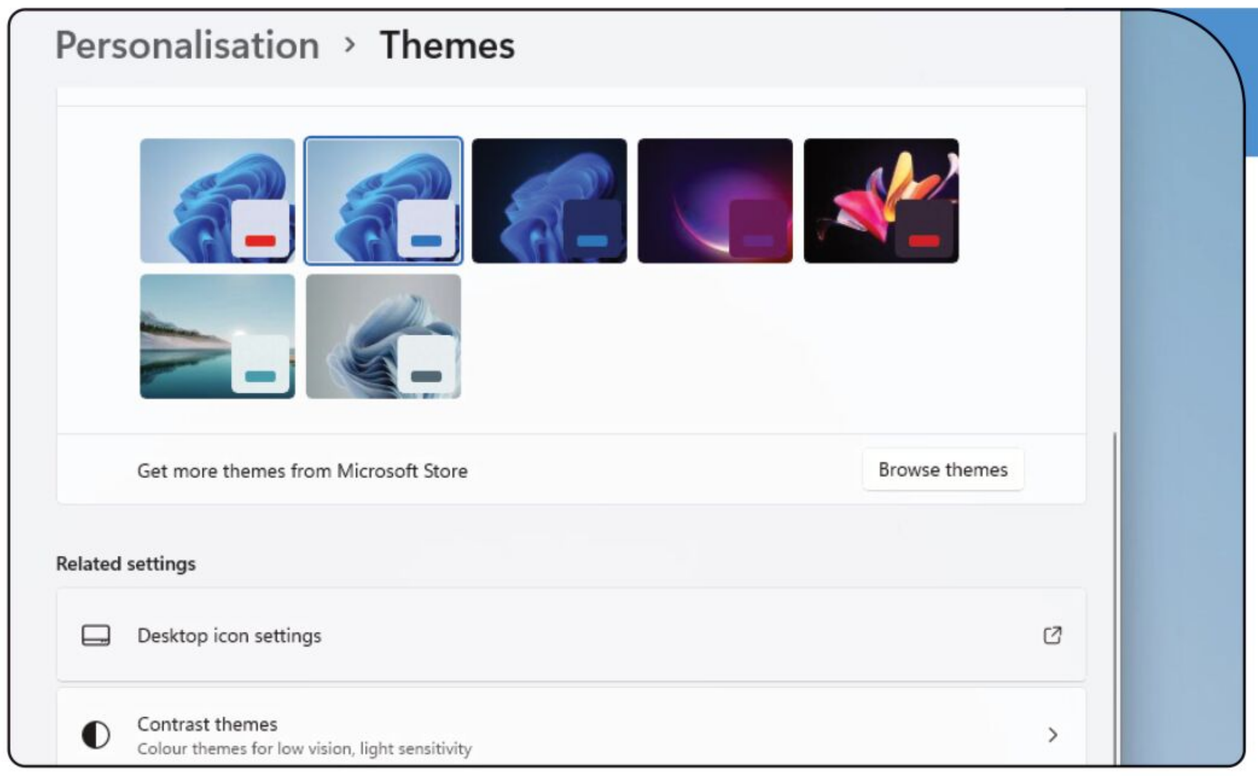
Further down the page are five more preset themes displayed in a panel. Simply click each one to activate it and apply the changes. Minimise the Settings app to see the changes to the background, etc. As with the default theme, the details of the new theme are displayed at the top of the page.



Step 4

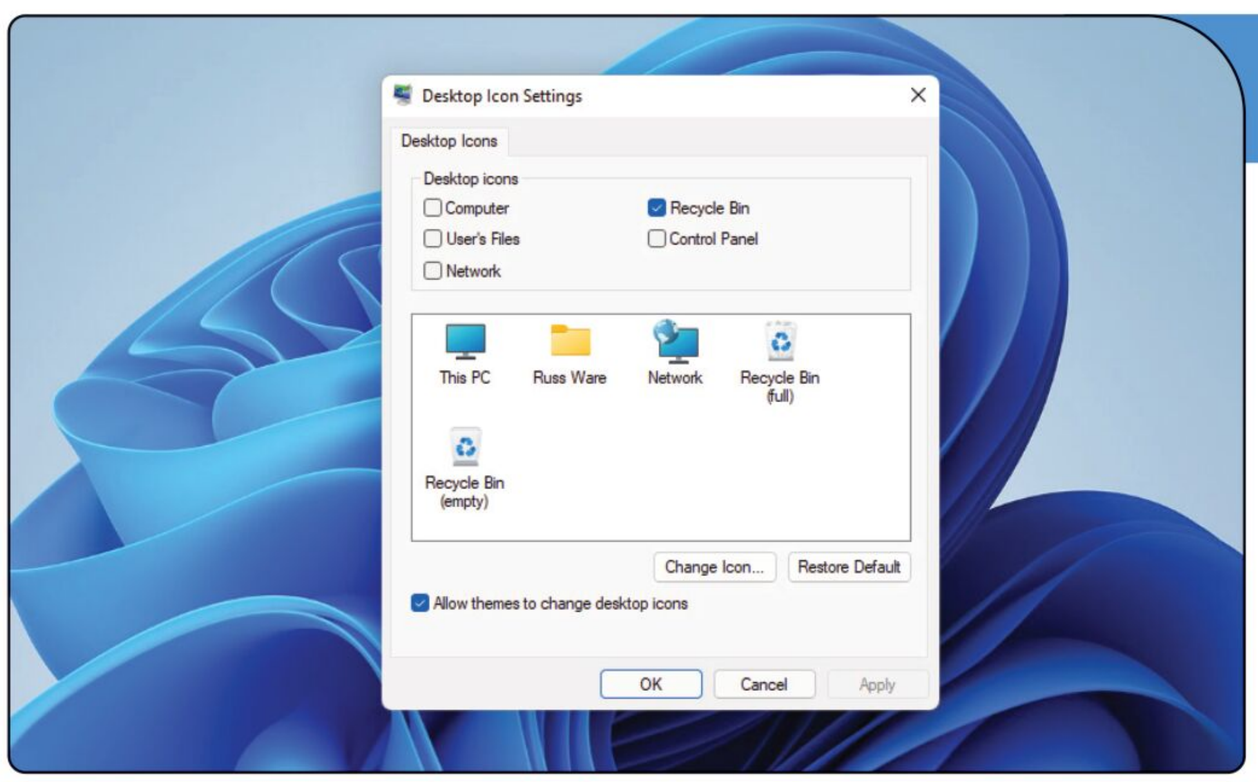
At the bottom of the themes settings page are a few more links, taking you directly to desktop icon settings and high/low contrast themes. Desktop icon settings are separate to the themes, so if you change these, they will remain even if you then go back and choose a new theme.

Change Your Desktop Icons



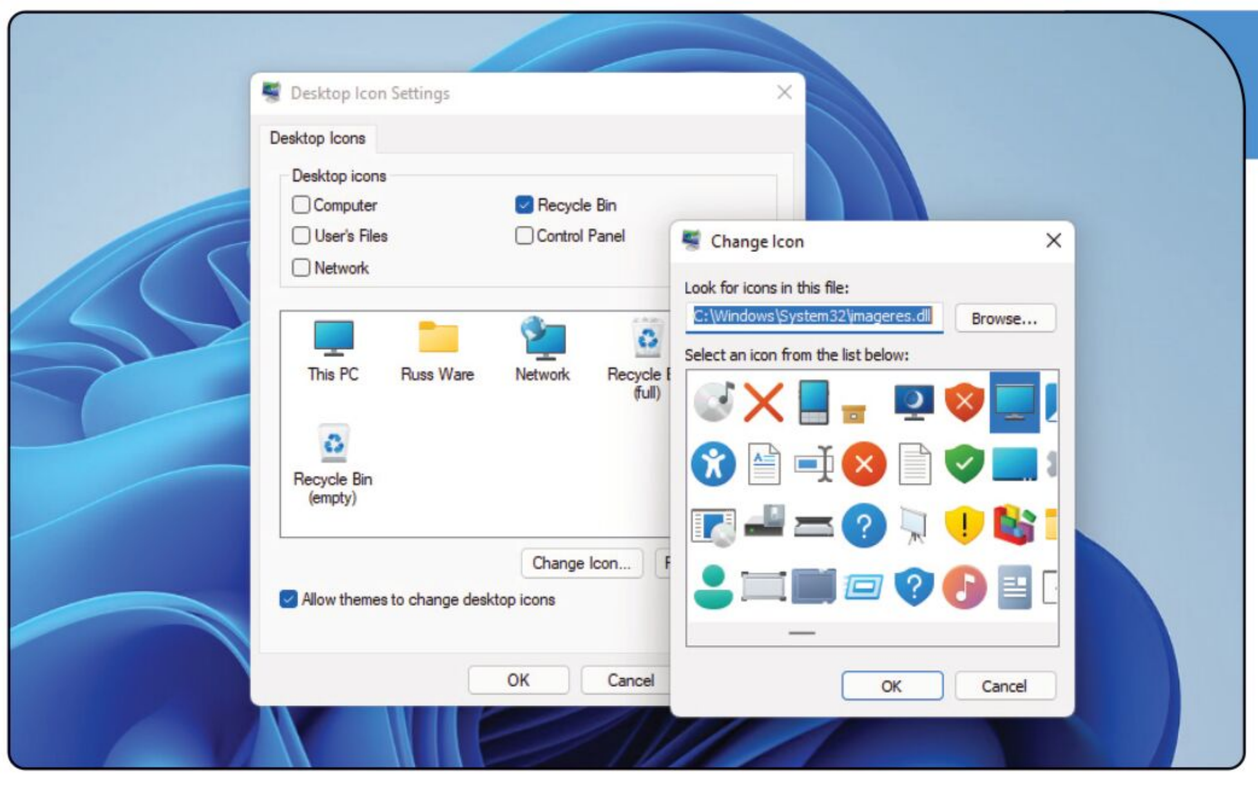
Step 1

Open the Personalisation screen of the Settings menu and select Themes from the Sidebar menu. You now need to look for the Related Settings option. In the Related Settings section, click on the link to Desktop icon settings.



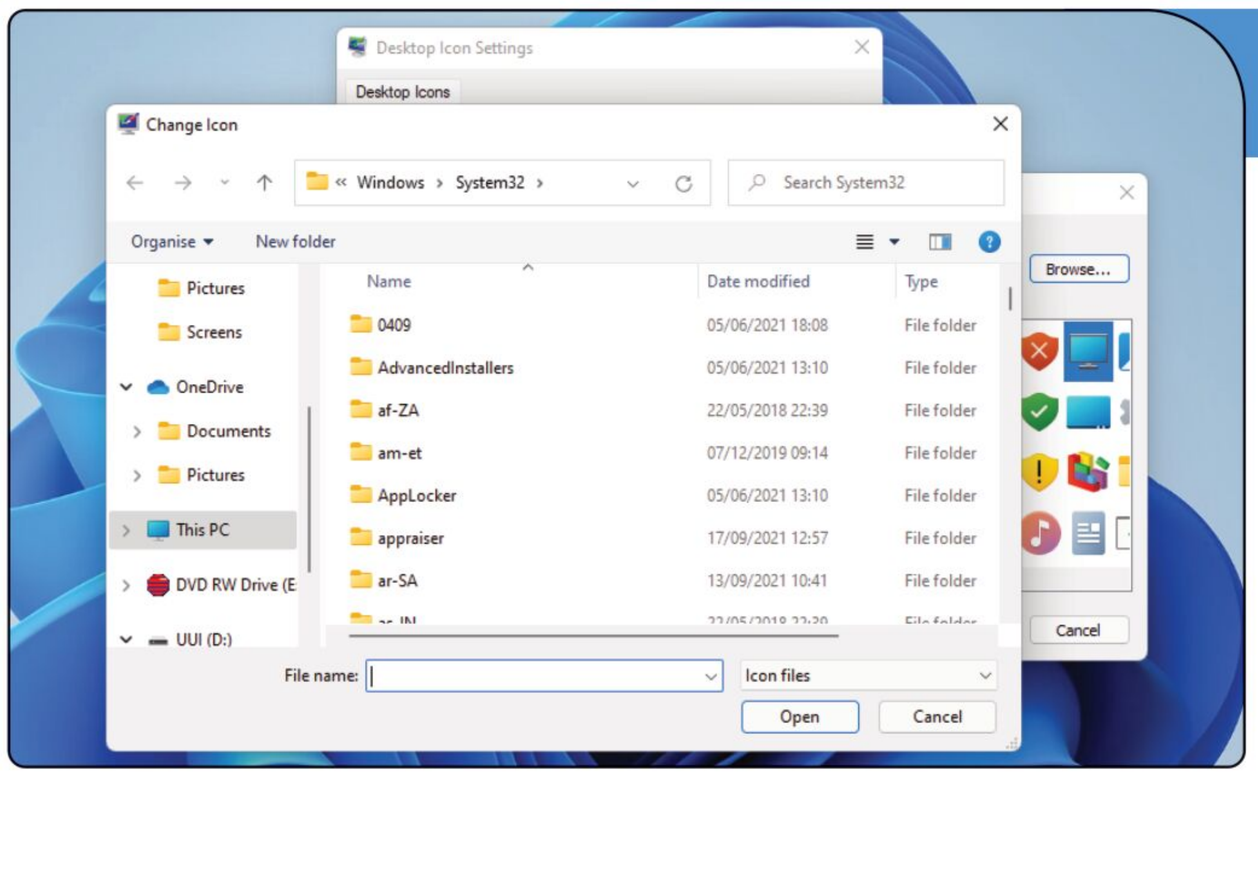
Step 2

The window that now opens lets you choose which default icons appear on your desktop. The Recycle Bin is just about essential but the others, including Computer, Users Files, Network and Control Panel icons are optional.



Step 3

If you wish to do so, it is possible to choose different icons for these system tools and you can even download custom icons online. To change the appearance of the desktop icons, click on the icon you want to change and then click the Change Icon button.



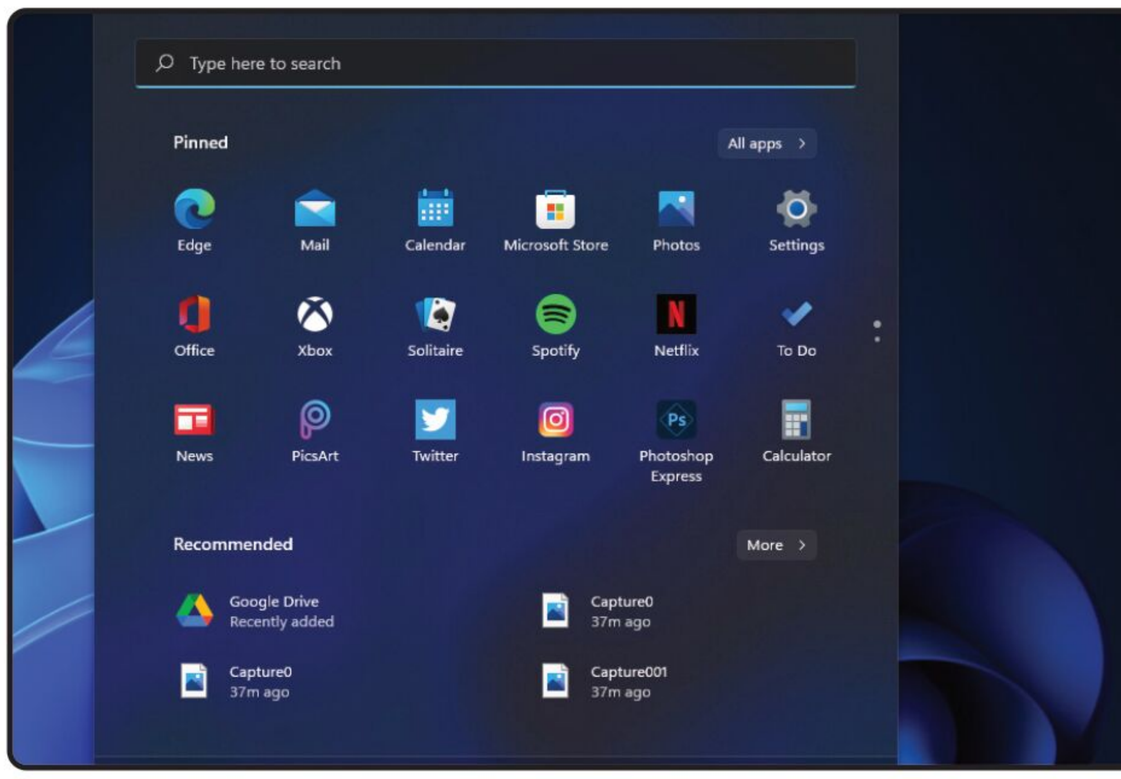
Step 4

The icon chooser window that appears will look very familiar to veteran Windows users, since it's essentially unchanged from Windows 98. Scroll through the gallery until you find an icon you like or use the Browse button to navigate to any icon pack you've downloaded.

Keyboard Shortcuts

Basic Keyboard Shortcuts

Ctrl+C - Copy the selected item
Ctrl+X - Cut the selected item
Ctrl+V - Paste the selected item
Ctrl+Z - Undo an action
Alt+Tab - Switch between open apps
Alt+F4 - Close an active item, or exit an app
Shift+Delete - Delete item without moving to Recycle Bin
Ctrl+Shift+Esc - Open the Task Manager



Windows Key Shortcuts

Windows Key - Open Start menu
Windows key + A - Open Quick Settings panel
Windows key + S - Open Search
Windows key + C - Open Teams Chat
Windows key + Tab - Open Task view

Windows key + I - Open Windows 11 Settings
Windows key + W - Open Widgets panel
Windows key + E - Open File Explorer
Windows key + R - Open the Run app
Windows key + V - Open the Clipboard

Windows key + G - Open the Xbox Game Bar
Windows key + N - Open Notifications panel
Windows key + X - Open a system context menu
Windows key + U - Open Accessibility settings
Windows key + L - Lock your PC or switch accounts

Windows key + H - Open Voice typing control
Windows key + T - Cycle through apps on the Taskbar
Windows key + comma - Peek at the desktop
Windows key + D - Display and hide the desktop
Windows key + Ctrl + D - Add a virtual desktop

Windows key + Ctrl + Right Arrow - Switch to virtual desktop on the right
Windows key + Ctrl + Left Arrow - Switch to virtual desktop on the left
Windows key + Ctrl + F4 - Close the virtual desktop you're using
Windows key + Home - Minimise all but the active desktop window
Windows key + Up arrow - Stretch the desktop window to the top and bottom of the screen
Windows key + Down arrow - Restore desktop windows vertically, maintaining width

Keyboard shortcuts are a useful way to speed up navigating your way around Windows 11, especially if you are using a laptop with a touchpad. There are literally hundreds available, but here are some of the most useful keyboard shortcuts for everyday use.

Windows key + plus or minus - Zoom in or out using Magnifier
Windows key + Esc - Exit Magnifier

Windows Snap Shortcuts

Windows key + Up Arrow - Maximise current window
Windows key + Down Arrow - Restores window size
Windows key + Left Arrow - Snaps current window to the left
Windows key + Right Arrow - Snaps current window to the right
Windows key + 2 Arrow Keys - Snaps current window into one corner

Taskbar Shortcuts

Shift + click a taskbar button - Open an app or quickly open another instance of an app
Ctrl + Shift + click a taskbar button - Open an app as an administrator
Shift + right-click a taskbar button - Show the window menu for the app
Shift + right-click a grouped taskbar button - Show the window menu for the group
Ctrl + click a grouped taskbar button - Cycle through the windows of the group

Typing Shortcuts

Ctrl + C - Copy the selected item
Ctrl + D - Delete the selected item and move it to the Recycle Bin
Ctrl + R - Refresh the active window
Ctrl + V - Paste the selected item
Ctrl + S - Save document
Ctrl + Y - Redo an action
Ctrl + Z - Undo an action
Ctrl + Right arrow - Move the cursor to the beginning of the next word
Ctrl + Left arrow - Move the cursor to the beginning of the previous word
Ctrl + Down arrow - Move the cursor to the beginning of the next paragraph
Ctrl + Up arrow - Move the cursor to the beginning of the previous paragraph
Ctrl + Shift with an arrow key - Select a block of text

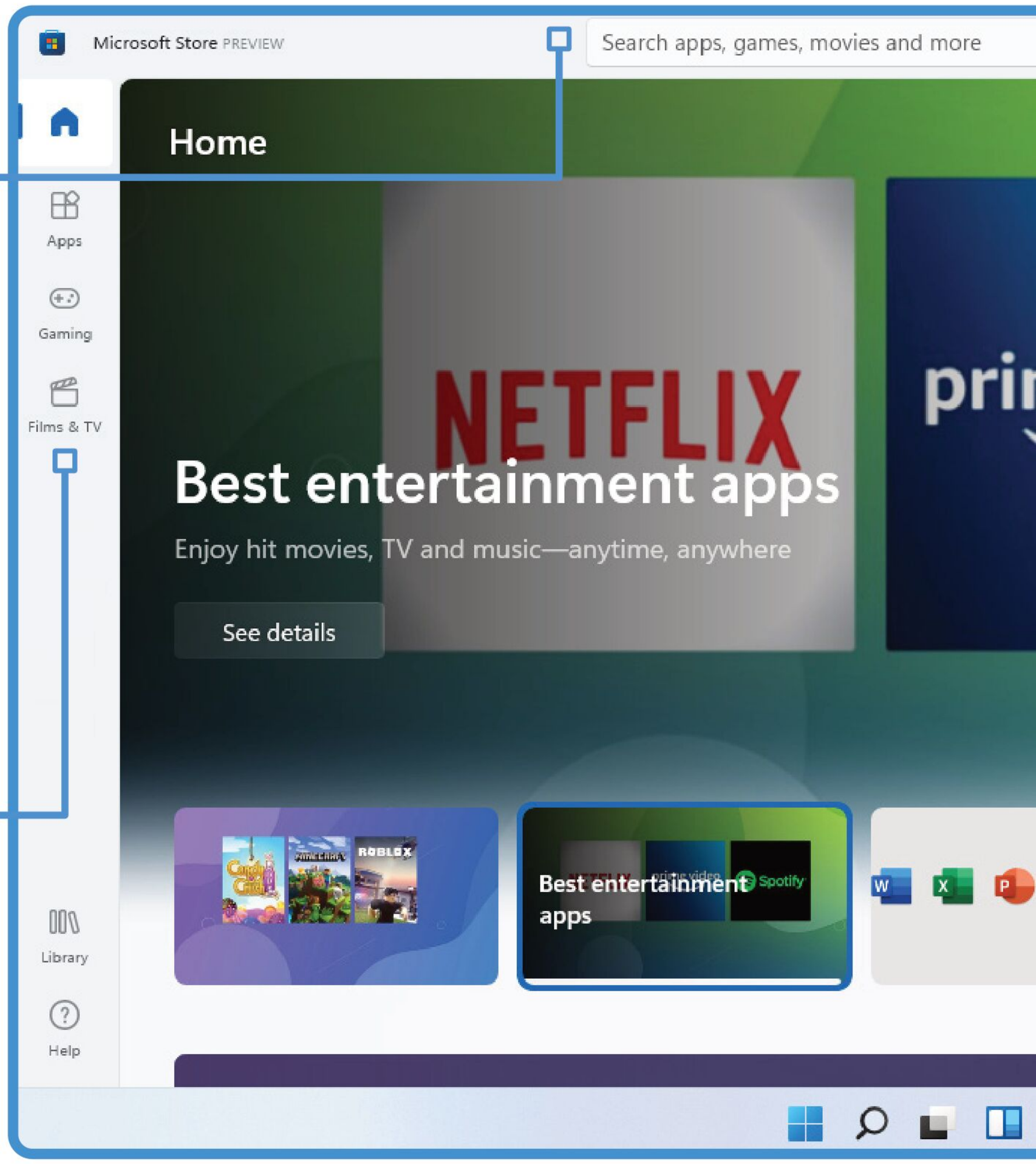
Explore the Microsoft Store

Store Search

You can use the main search tool to search for apps, games, music and films in the Windows Store (store results will have the store icon next to them in the results list). Alternatively, you can search just inside the store by using this search bar.

Category Tabs

Just as with other online app stores, the Microsoft Store features several different download categories. These include Apps, Gaming and Film & TV. Each category has its own Home screen, which displays collections of Most Popular, Top Free and Trending content.



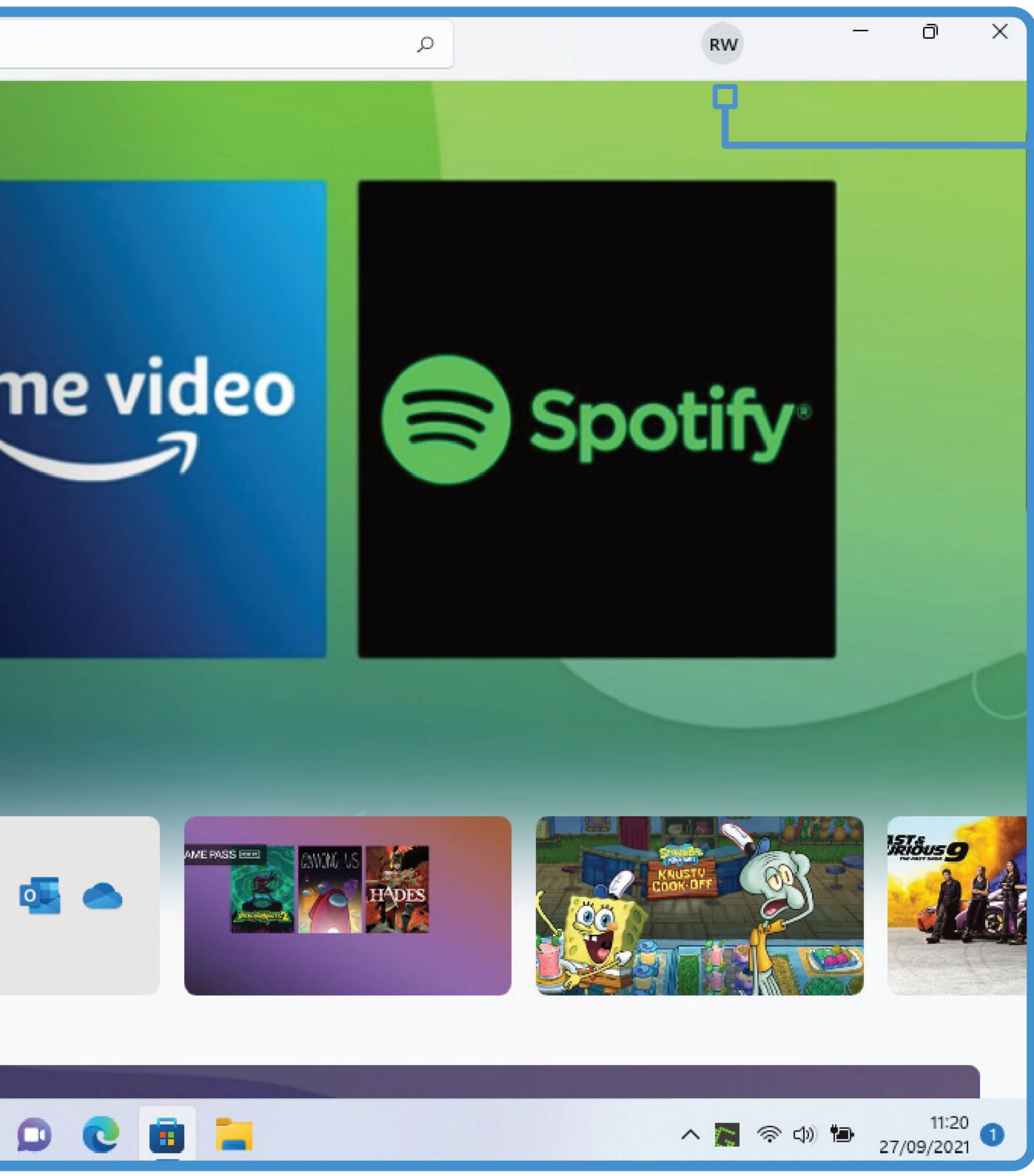
Library

If there is an update or new download available for any app you currently have installed on your computer, a notification will appear here. The number shows how many updates/app downloads are waiting. Click the button and select the required action (update, retry, etc.).

Apps

Once you have found the app or game you want to install, click on the icon to open the app info screen. This screen displays the average app score, user reviews and similar app suggestions; as well as a list of features and updates. Click the Free, Buy or Try button to install the software.

The new Microsoft Store has loads to help you stay in touch and get things done; plus more games and entertainment than ever before - many of them free! In Windows 11, it even contains Android apps you can use directly on your PC.



Store Settings

Click the small Account icon here to see the store settings option. Here you will find details of the Microsoft account currently being used, along with several sliders used to control things like automatic app updates. You can also control who can install new apps on your PC.

Store Offers

Periodically, the Windows Store will feature offers for its users. This could be a free 30 day trial, or other download offers. Click on the link to read more about the offer and then follow the instructions to take advantage of it.

Featured Content

The Featured Apps slider will display those apps or games that are trending or have been particularly popular. This display is constantly updated, and is a good way of finding out what other Windows 11 users are using and playing.

Apps & Games

Periodically, the Windows Store will feature offers for its users. This could be a free 30 day trial, or other download offers. Click on the link to read more about the offer and then follow the instructions to take advantage of it.

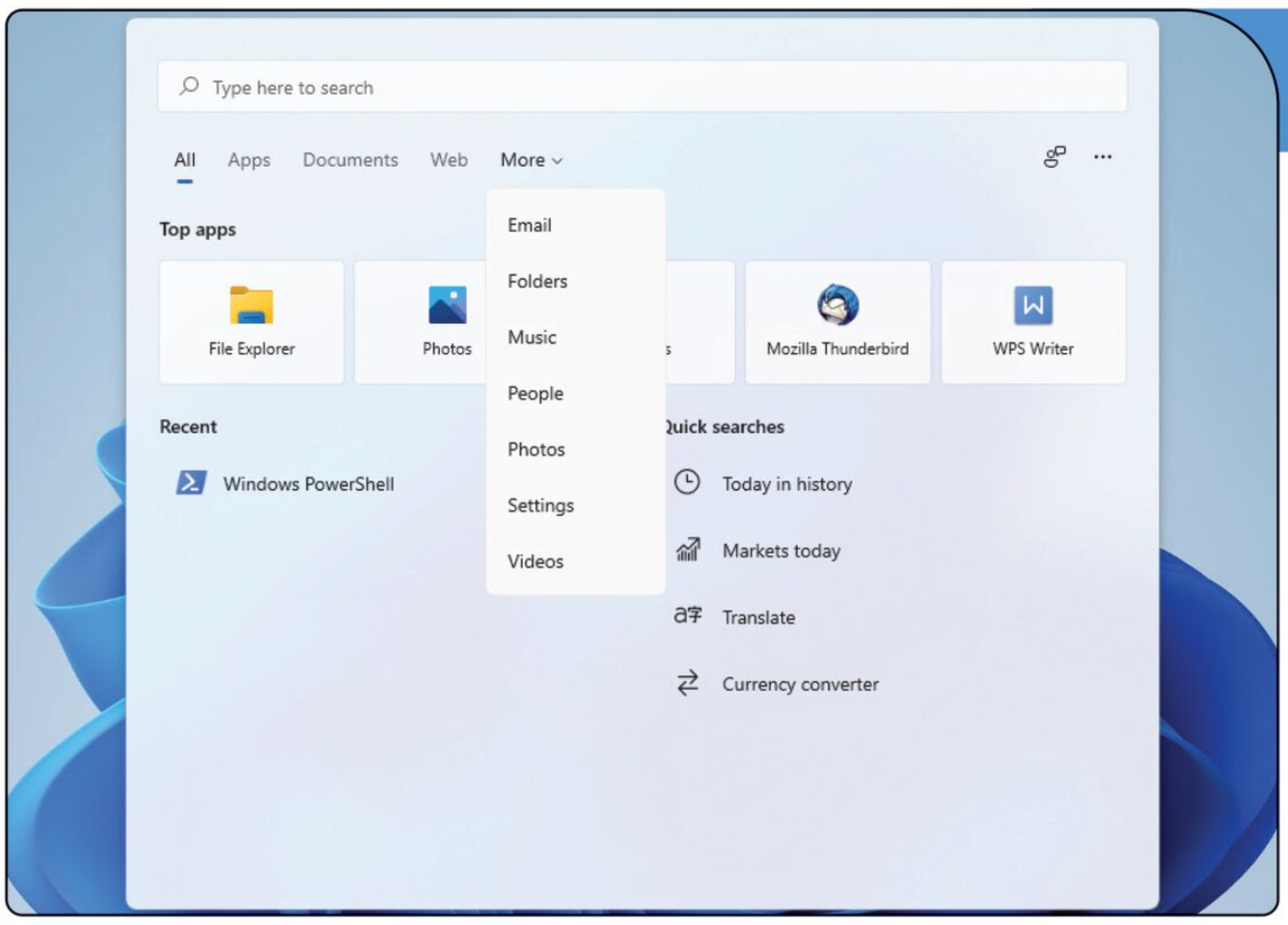
Search in Windows 11

Until you begin to use it, it's difficult to explain just how much better Search is in Windows 11. Microsoft have done a lot to try to match the search functions on offer in rival operating systems such as Apple's macOS, and the results can be seen in the new search feature.

A Better Way to Search

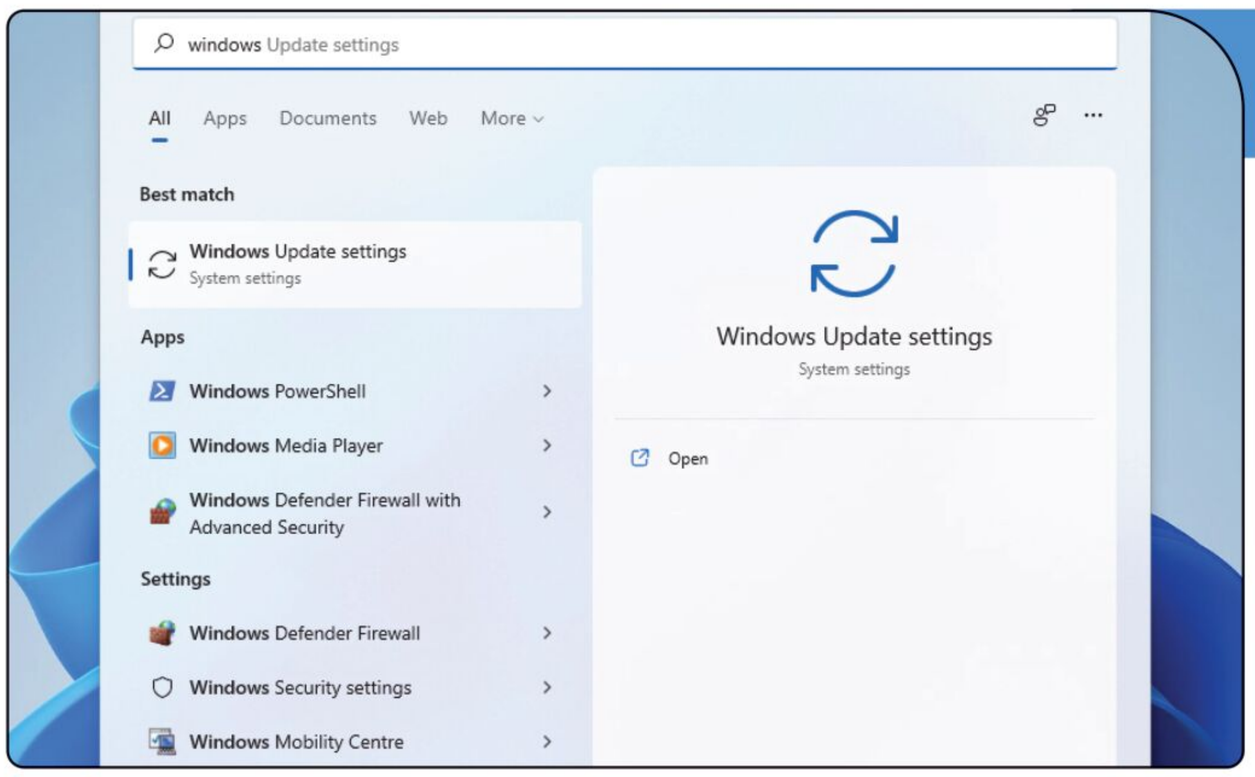
Step 1

If you need to search for anything on your Windows 11 PC, the taskbar search tool is now the place to do it. The search field in the taskbar from Windows 10 is no longer there. You can also access search through the Start menu, or by pressing Windows key + S on your keyboard.



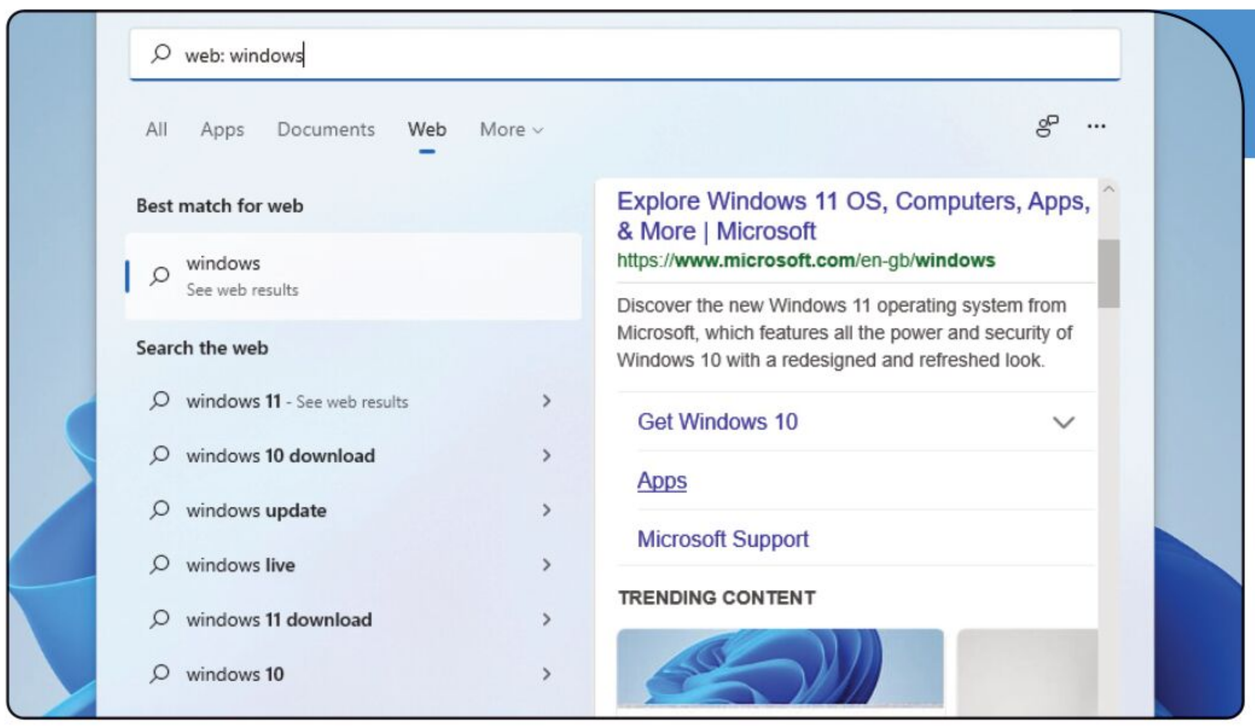
Step 2

In addition to files and folders, you can search for web results and apps. When you first click in the search box you will see three tabs along the bottom that let you choose what to search for; but even if you don't click one of these, the search function is smart enough to return results from all.



Step 3

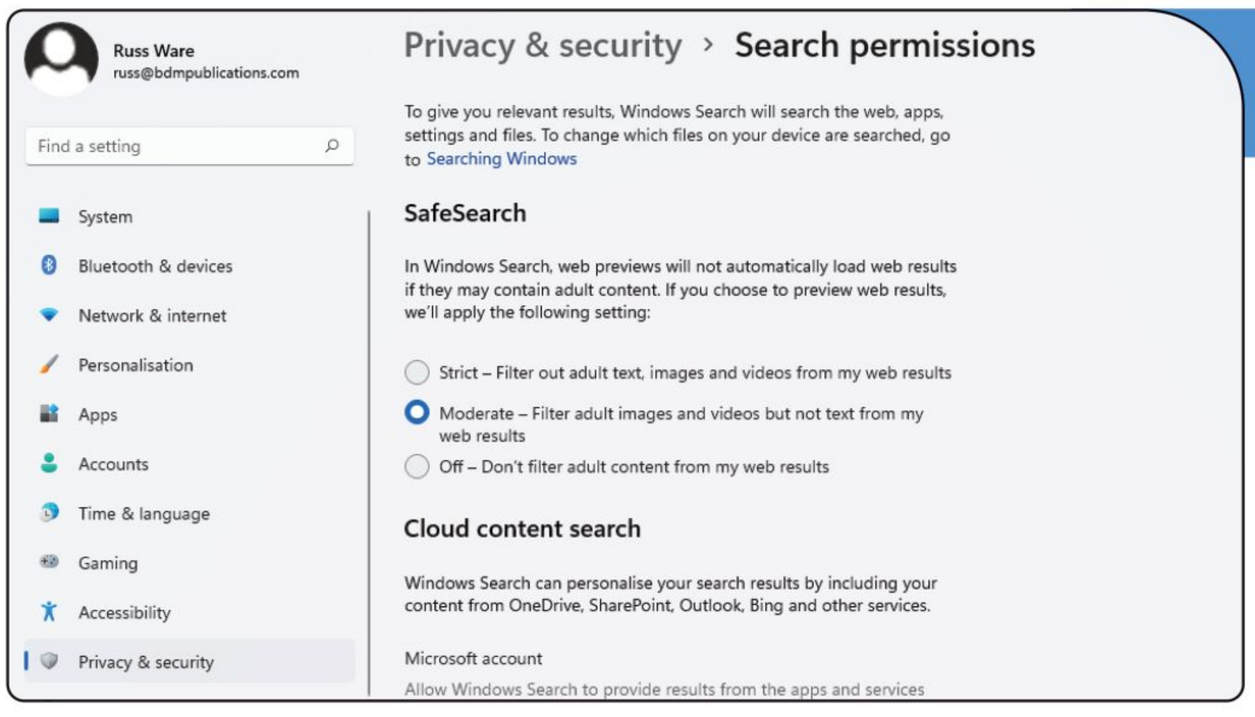
Search results are displayed in sections (best match, apps, folders, etc.) so that you know what you are looking at. Apps will be displayed with their icon next to them. Folders will have a folder icon and images will be shown as small thumbnails, within the search results panel.



Step 4

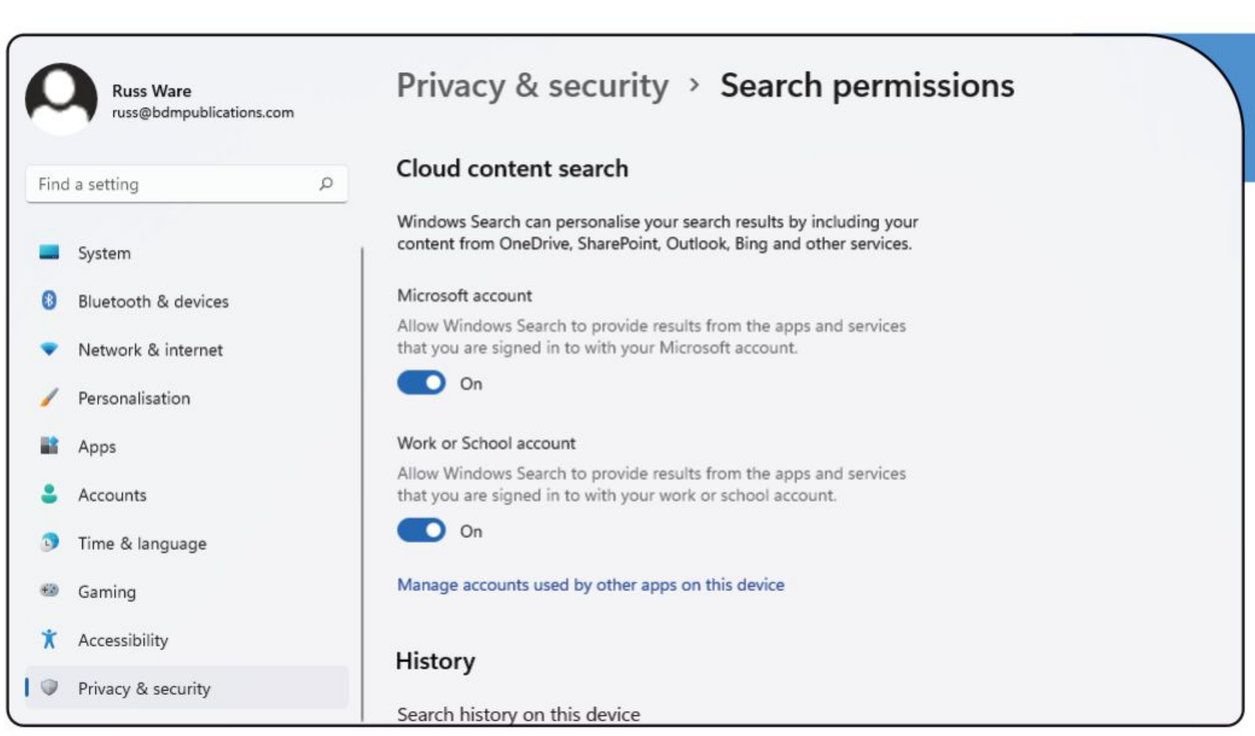
You can further filter the results that have appeared after you search by clicking on the titles of the results section in the panel. This lets you filter various results, even music or video. Suggested search results can be previewed by clicking the right-facing arrow next to them.

Search Settings and Tools



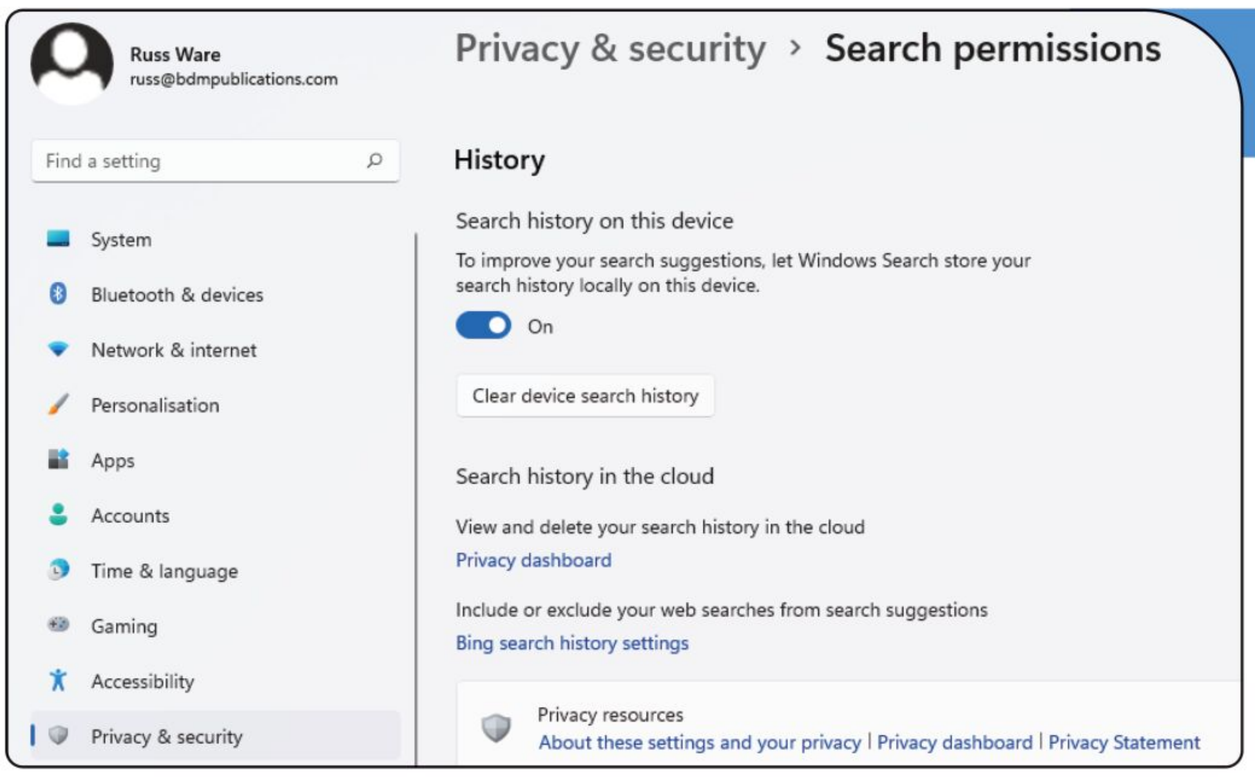
Safe Search

Sometimes web search results may show content that is not suitable for the younger audience, which is the reason Cortana also offers search filters. Go to Settings > Cortana > Permissions and History, and under SafeSearch, select the search filter that is most appropriate for you.



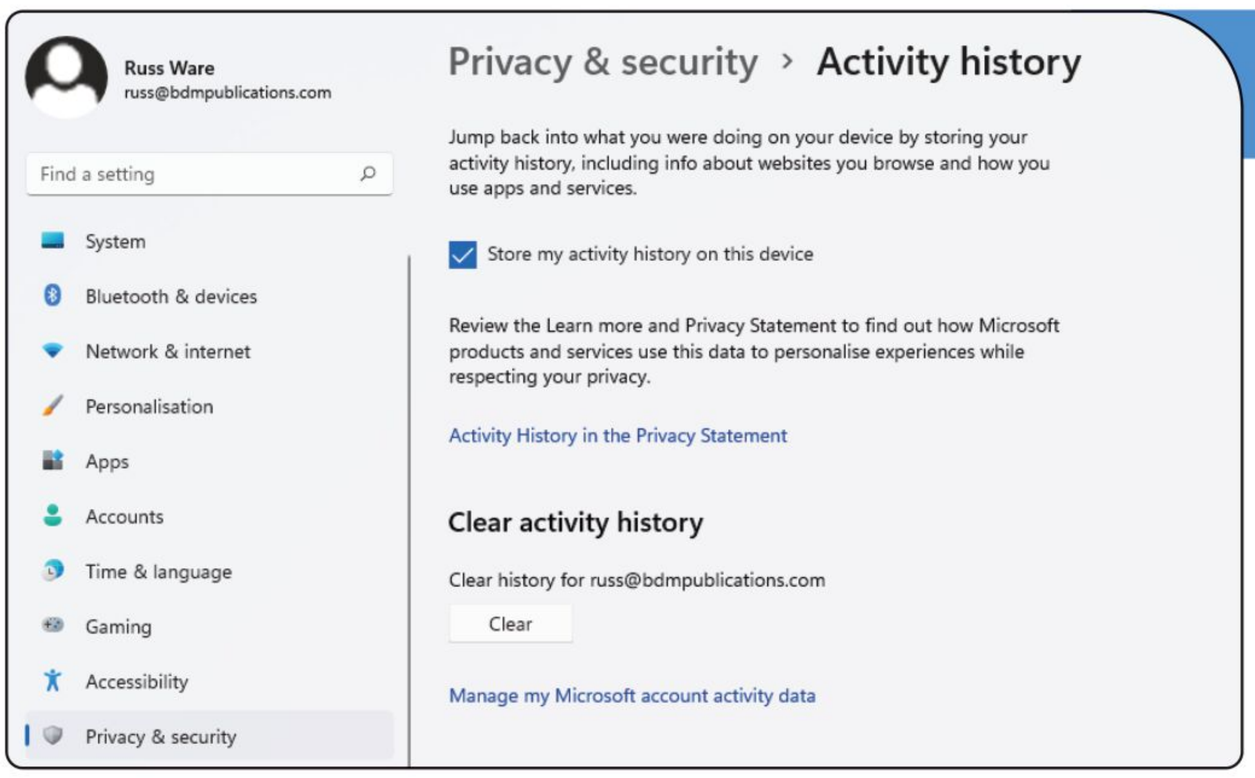
Cloud Search

Cloud search is an option introduced in Windows 10, which allows you to suppress cloud content on search results. Under Cloud Search, you will see a toggle that says Windows Cloud Search. This option manages whether Cortana shows cloud content in Windows Search.



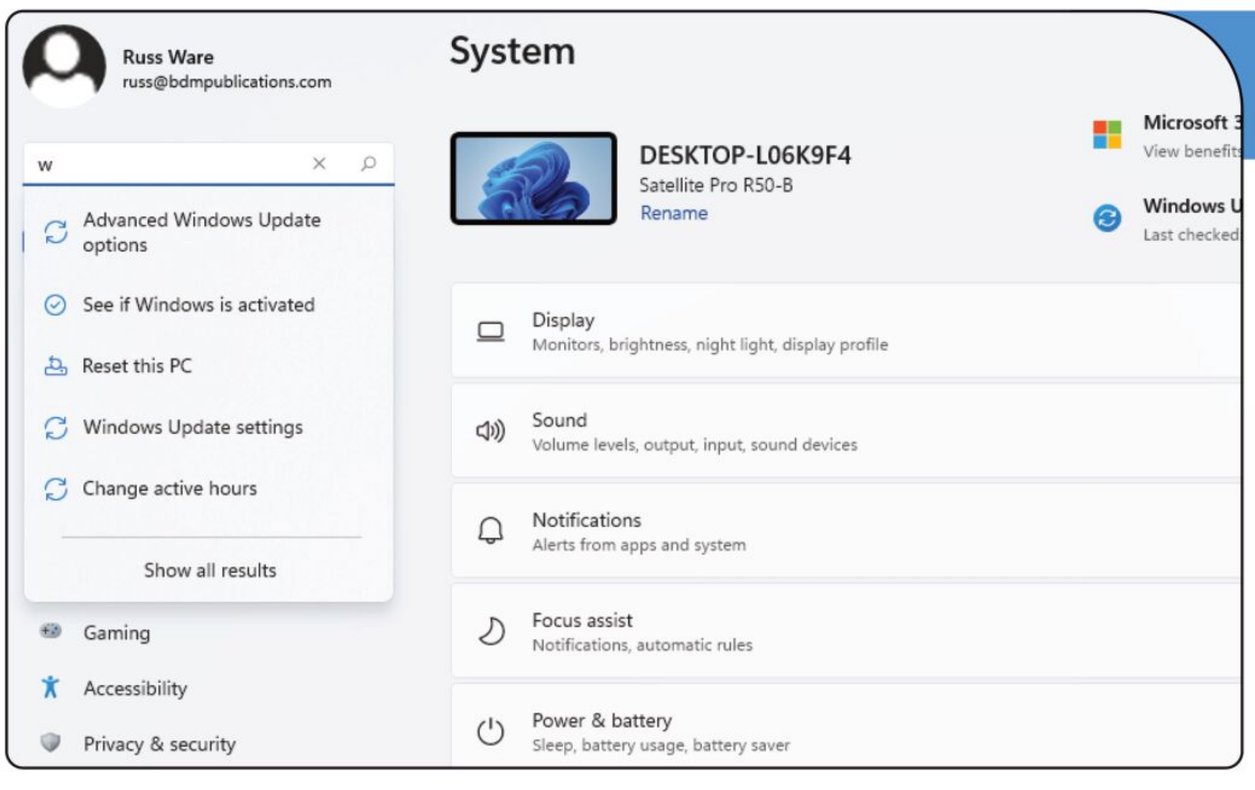
Device History

This setting allows for the improvement of on-device search results, whether you are using an app, settings or another search from any signed on device. If you prefer that Windows does not record the on-device search history, you can switch this option off in Settings > Permissions & History.



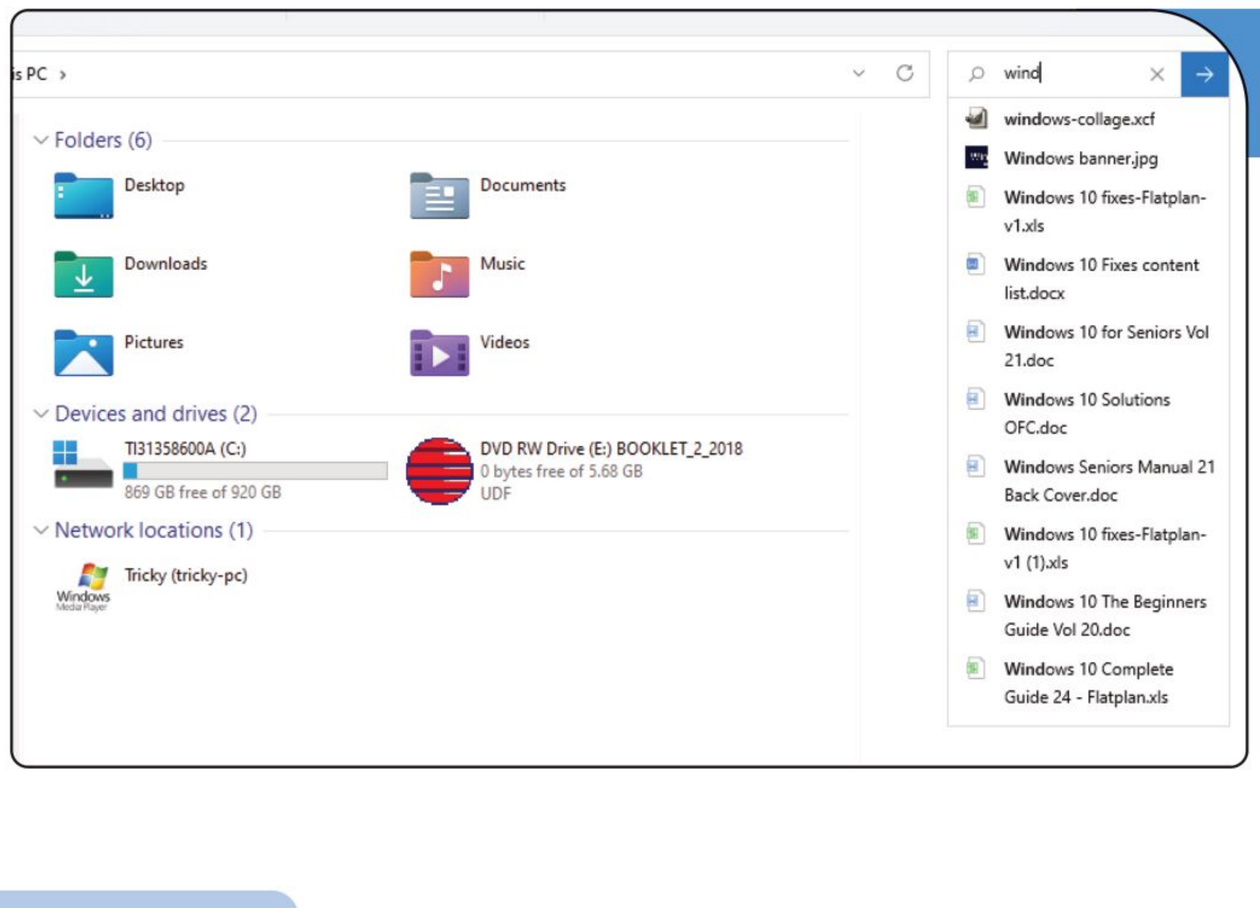
Search History

Search History can help to provide better search results. It can also be turned off, just like the Device History. Head in to Settings > Permissions & History and use the toggle to turn it off. If you click Search History Settings a browser window opens showing the history.



File Explorer

You can always search for files and folders in File Explorer as you could in previous versions of Windows. With the new taskbar search you won't need to use this as often as you did, but it's still there if you need it. We don't find it as quick as the taskbar search, though.



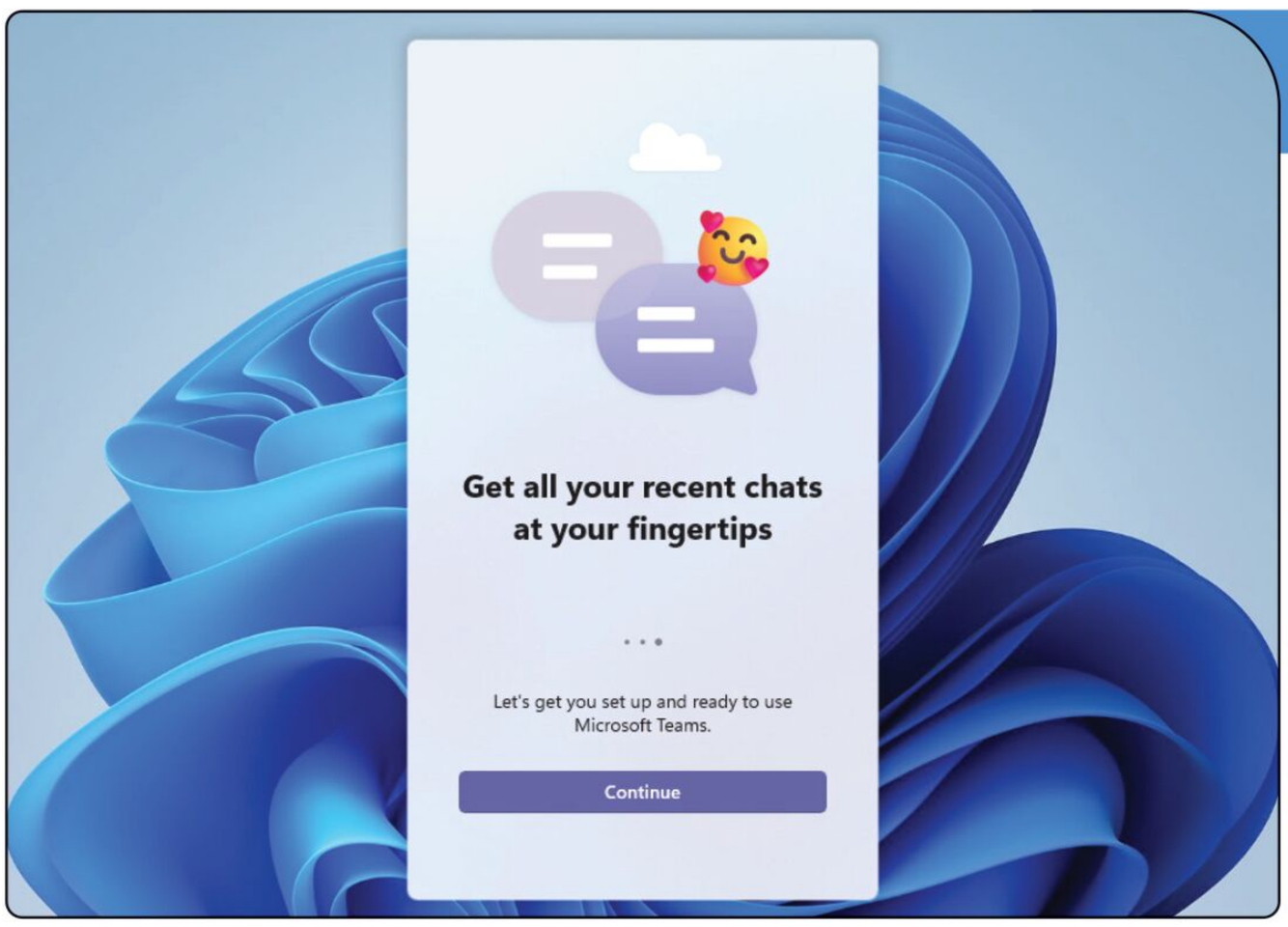
Settings

Windows 11 allows you to search for settings from within the Settings app. Open the app and you will see the search box right at the top, underneath the window title. Possible results are displayed as you type, just like a normal search, but the results will only be from settings, nowhere else.

Using Teams Chat

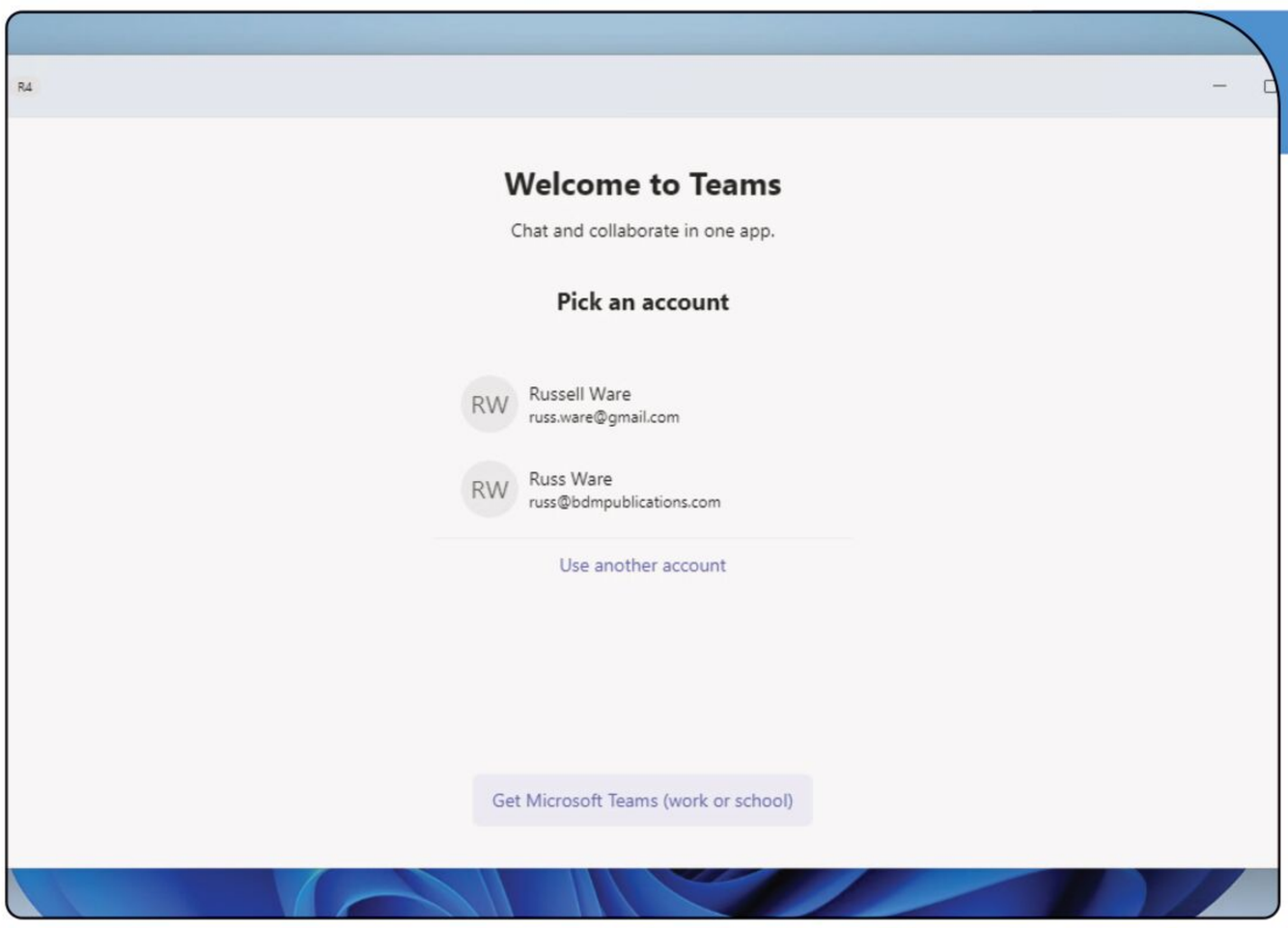
Online meetings are a big thing, so Microsoft Teams in Windows 11 makes perfect sense. You'll need to have a Microsoft Teams account already set up to use the chat and video meeting tools, but once you have, remote working becomes a whole lot easier.

Setting Up the Teams App



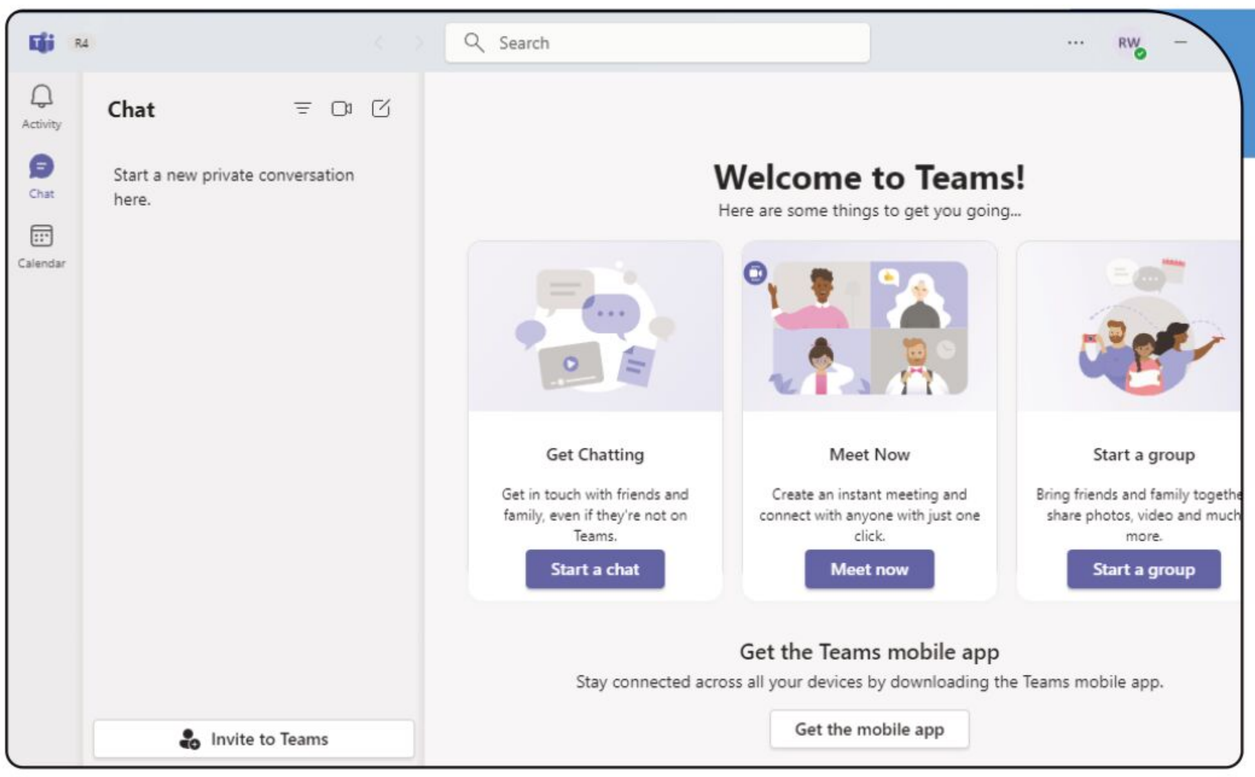
Step 1

Click the Teams Chat icon in the taskbar, or open the Teams app in the main apps list. If your Microsoft account email matches the one you use when setting up your Teams account, the app should automatically detect it, and log you in to the app after a few moments.



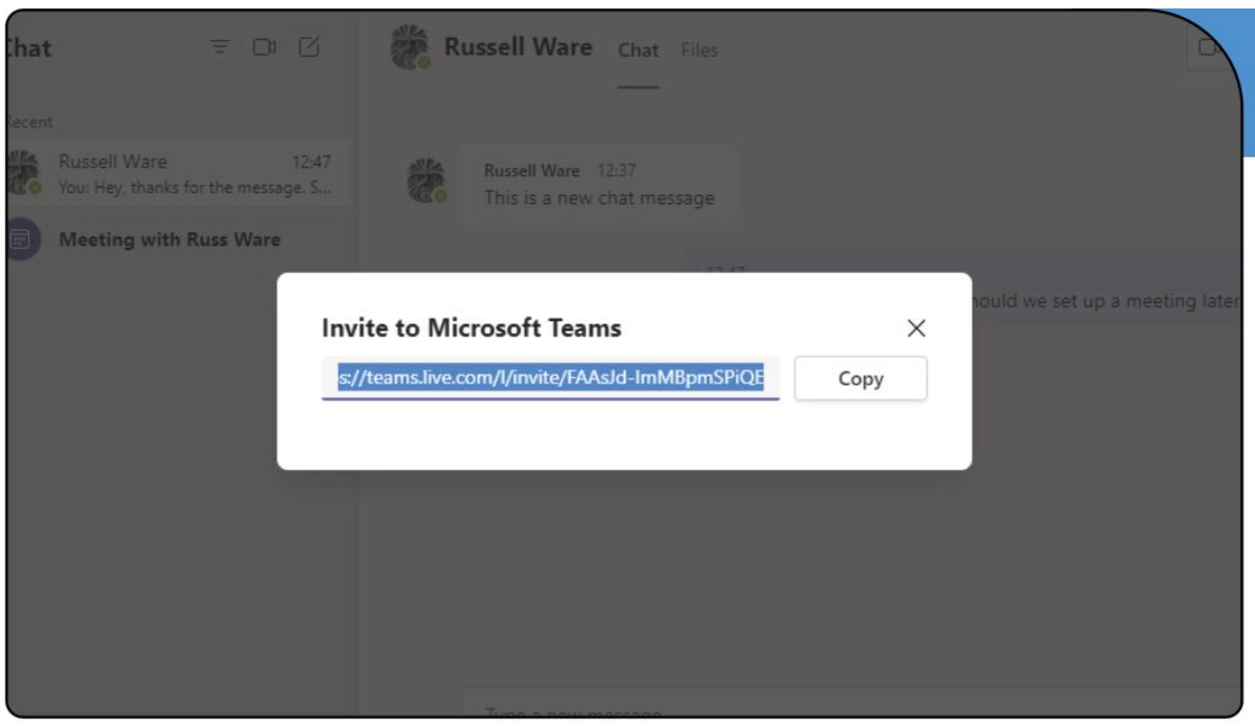
Step 2

If the app doesn't recognise your email address, it will open the Teams login screen. Here you can choose an account to sign in to (if any are displayed), or you can pick another account. If you have yet to set up an account, you can use the link at the bottom and set one up in the browser.



Step 3

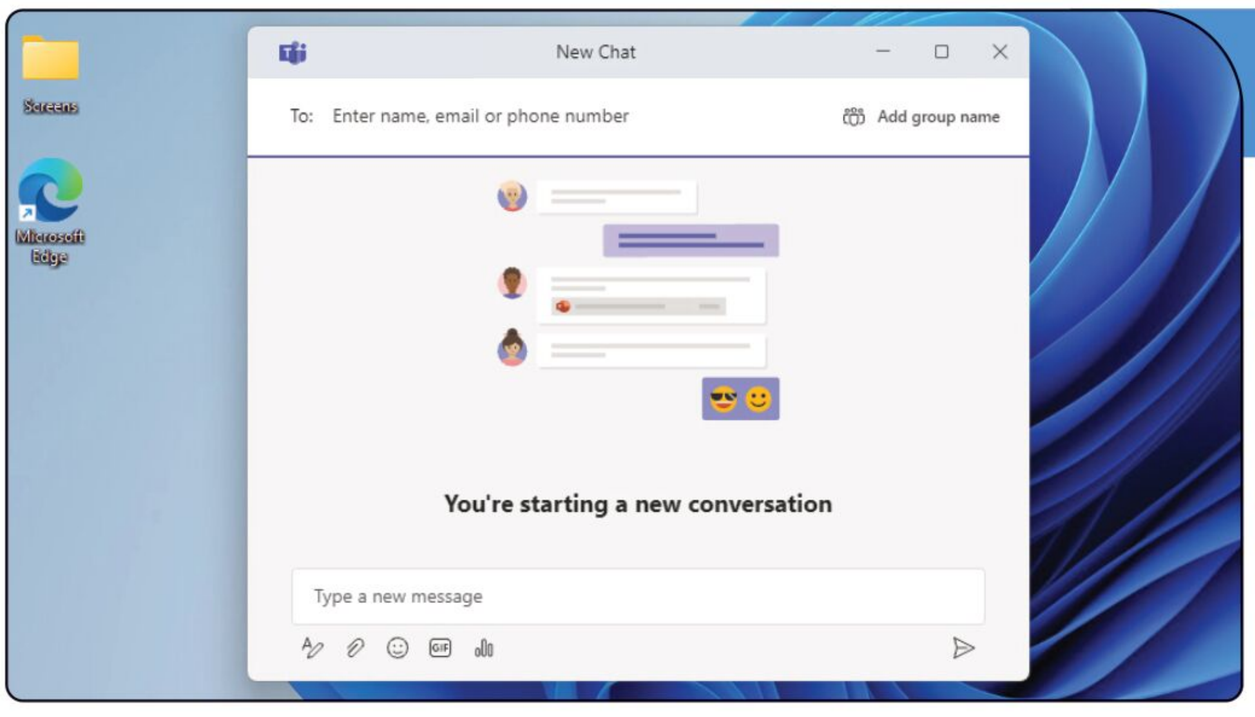
Once signed in to your Teams account, the main app window will open. If you automatically signed in by clicking the Chat icon (step 1), you can access the Teams app by clicking the "Open Microsoft Teams" link at the bottom of the chat pop-up window on the taskbar.



Step 4

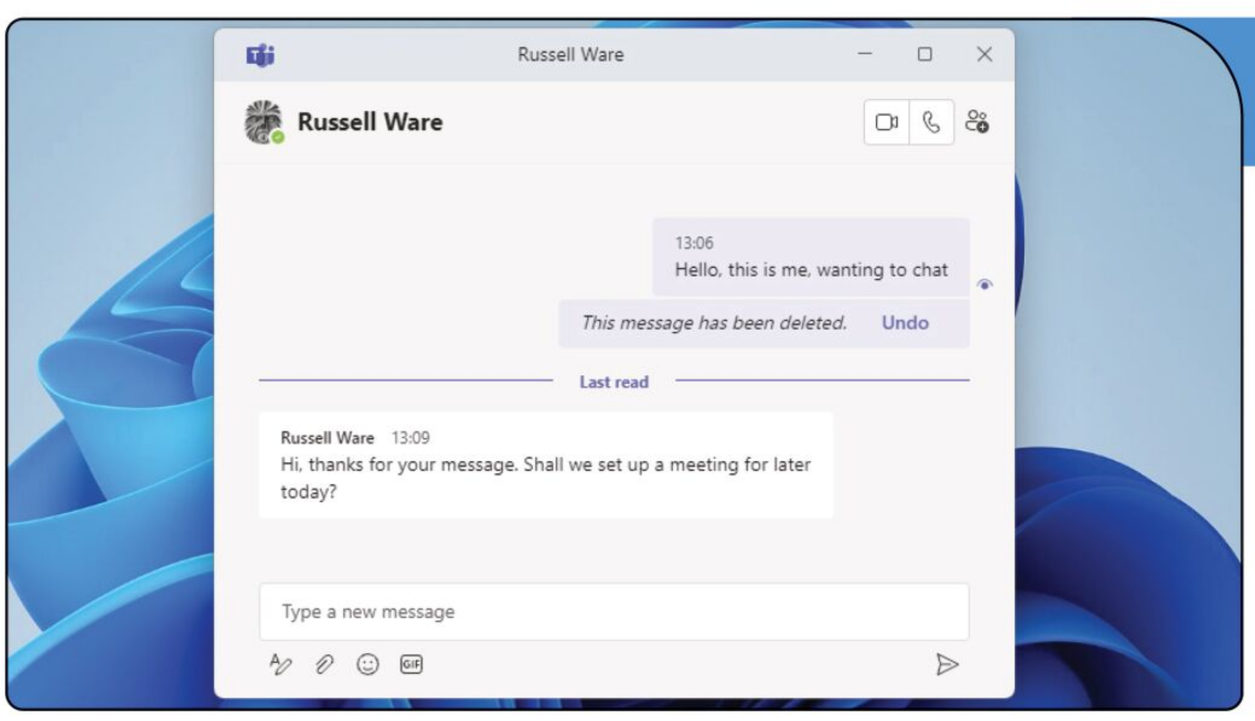
You can invite people to Teams using the button on the left sidebar. Clicking this will create a link that you can send to anyone you want to join Teams. You can invite people to chat by clicking the "Start a chat" button, then entering a name (if in your contacts), email address (anyone) or phone number.

Meet and Chat in Teams



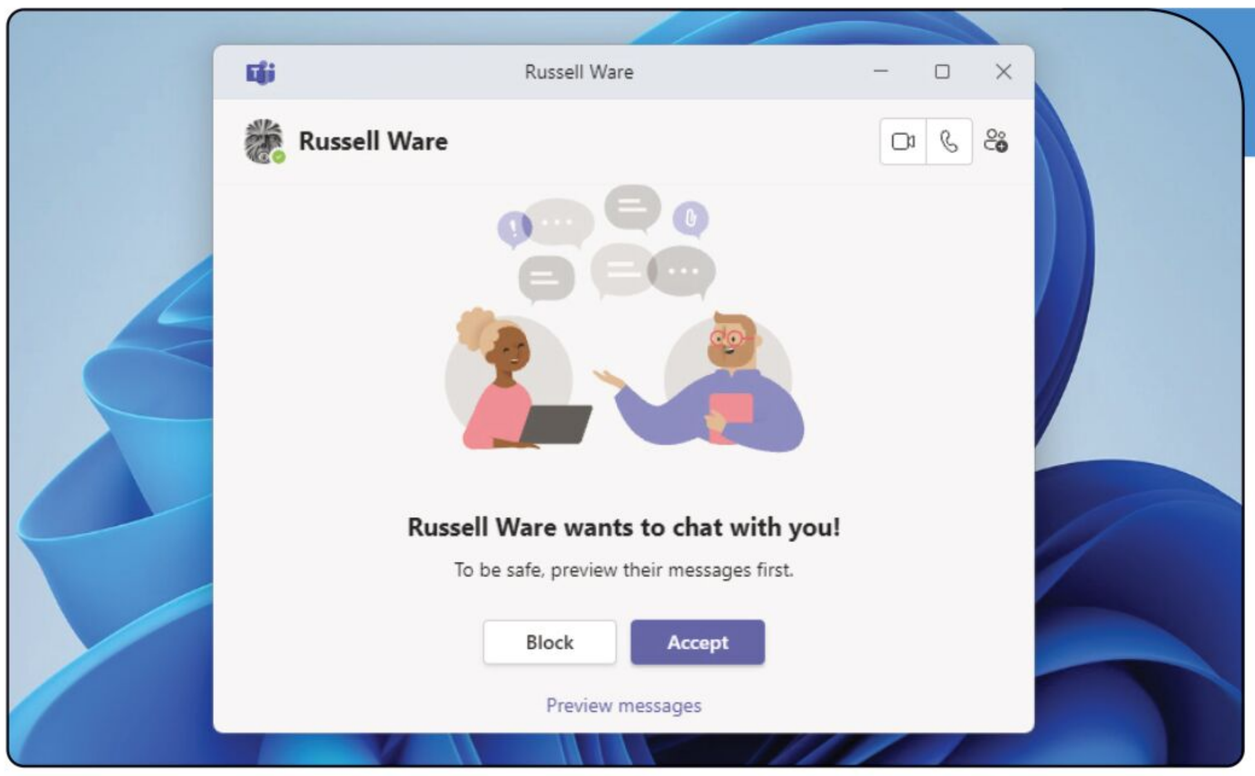
Step 1

To begin a chat, click the Teams Chat icon in the taskbar. From the pop-up window, click on the Chat button. In the new window that opens, enter a contact name, email address or phone number. Type your message and that person will receive a notification telling them you want to start a chat.



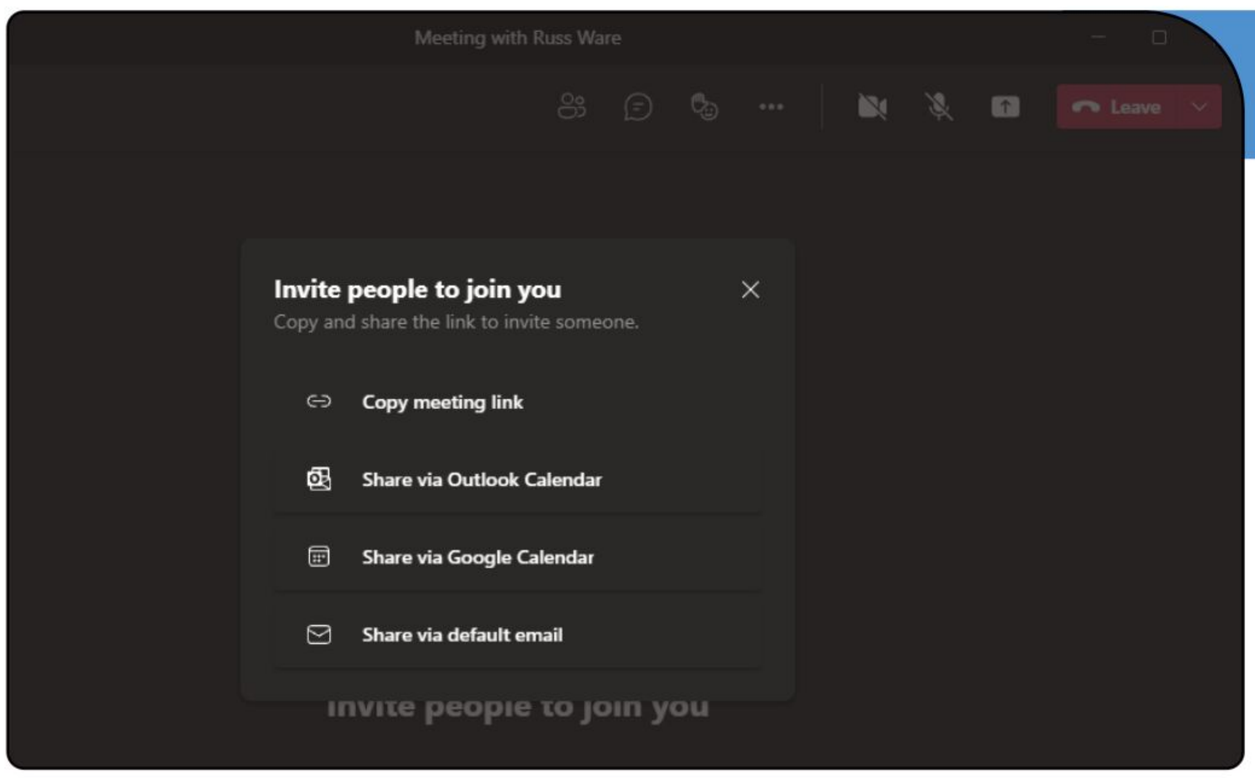
Step 2

Your messages, and the replies, are shown in the conversation window. You can attach and send files via the chat by clicking the paper clip icon. If you want to switch from a text chat to an audio or video call, click either of the buttons at the top-right of the chat window.



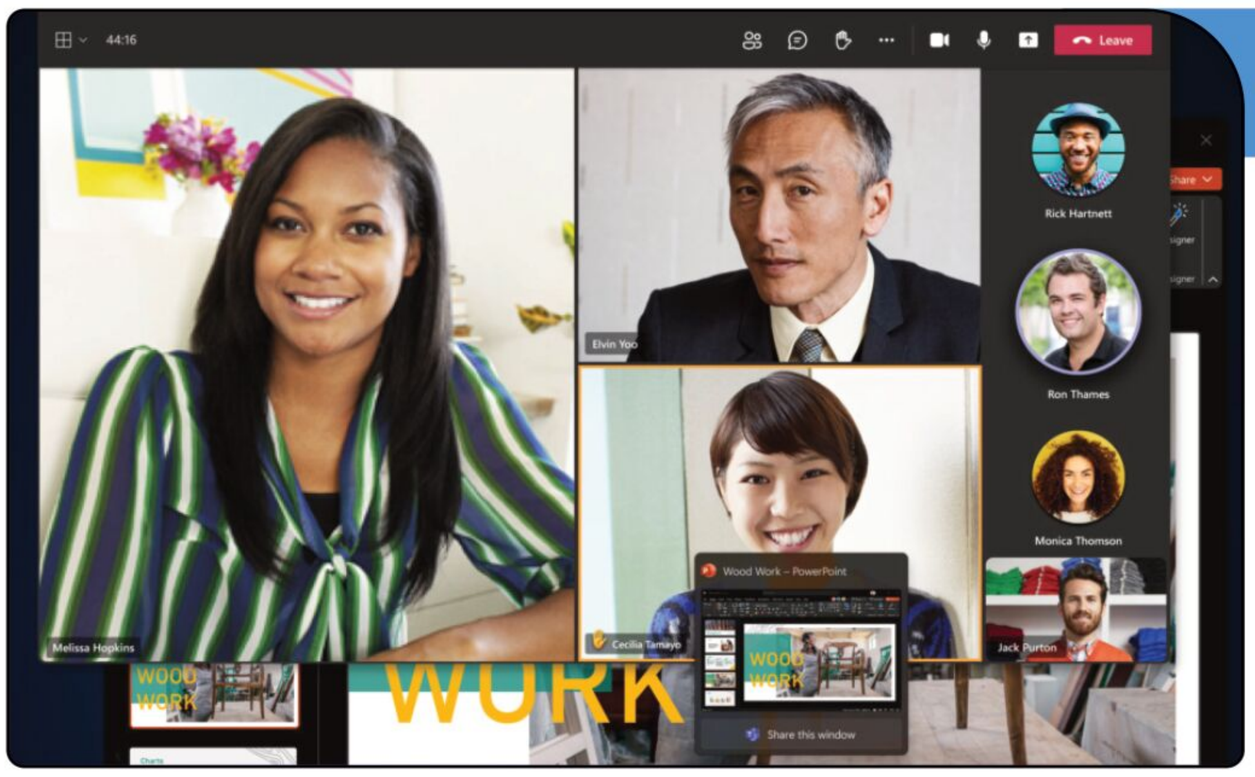
Step 3

If you receive a chat request, you will see a notification in the main Notification center (Action center), and a badge will appear on the chat icon in the taskbar. You can choose to accept or reject the chat request. If you accept, the message will appear and you can start chatting.



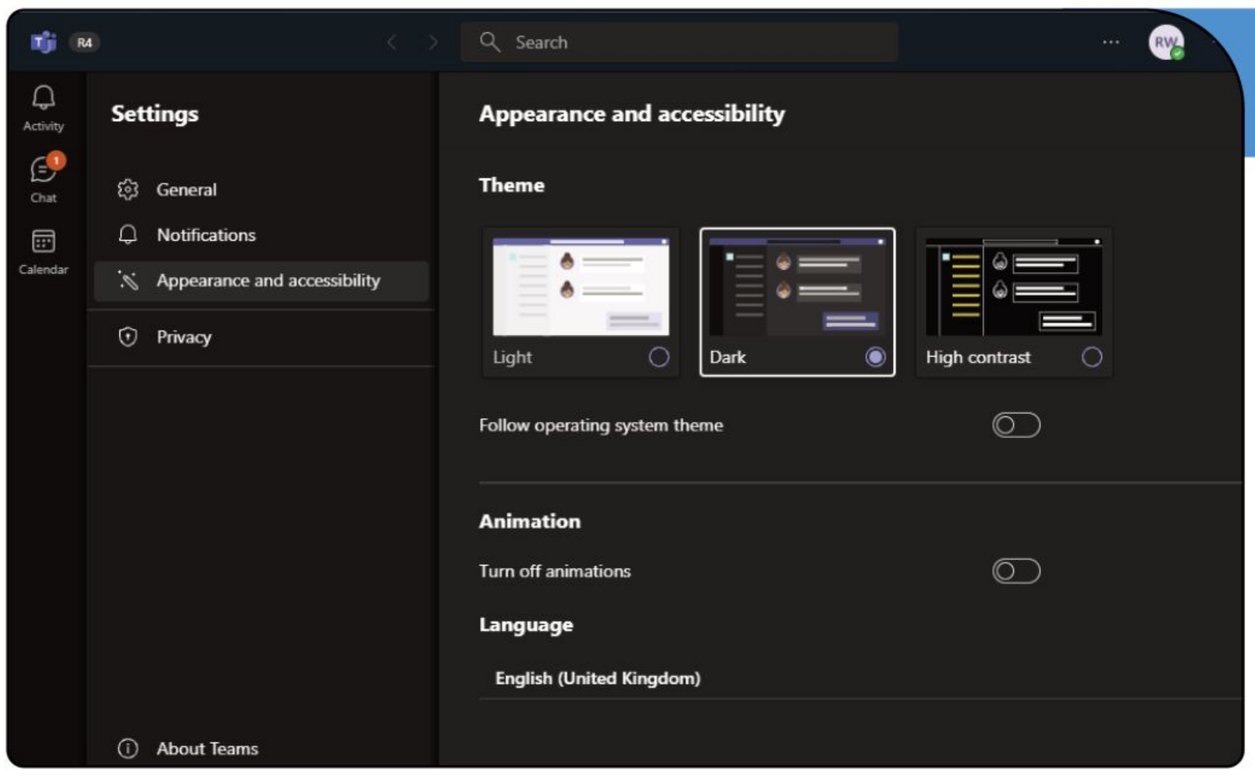
Step 4

To start a meeting, click the Meet button. Give your meeting a name, and you will then be shown several ways to invite people. These include a link you can send, via Outlook Calendar, Google calendar or email. Once shared, you can start the meeting and wait for others to join.



Step 5

Once you are in the meeting you have controls to enable/disable the microphone, enable/disable the camera or set a background blur, etc. To leave a meeting, you just have to click the red Hang up button. If the meeting host ends the meeting, you will automatically be hung up from everyone.



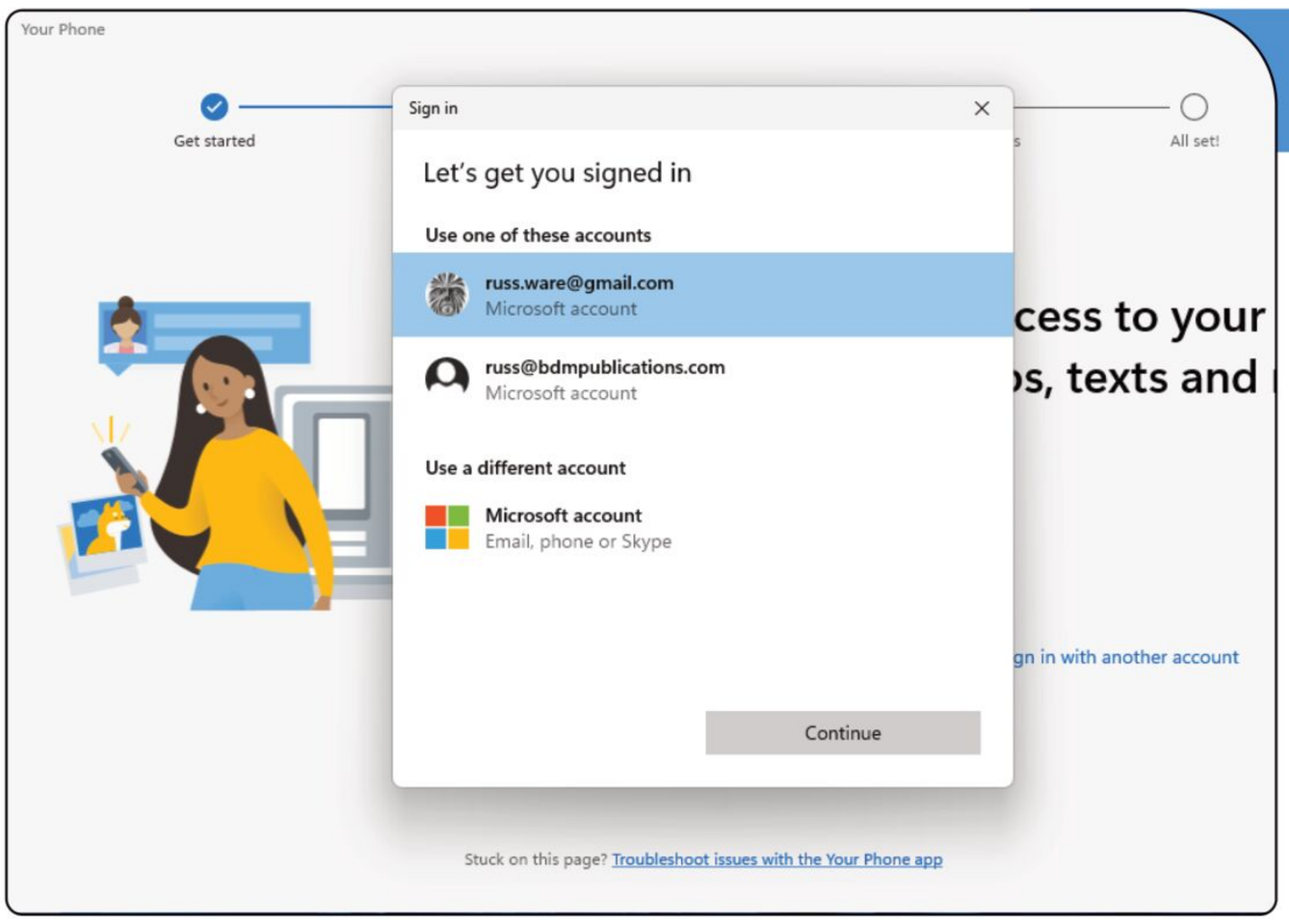
Step 6

You can change the look of the Teams app and Teams Chat in the app settings. Under Appearance & Accessibility, choose from light, dark or high contrast themes. You can also choose to turn off animations, select the app language and change how you are notified of new chats and meetings.

Connect Your Phone and PC

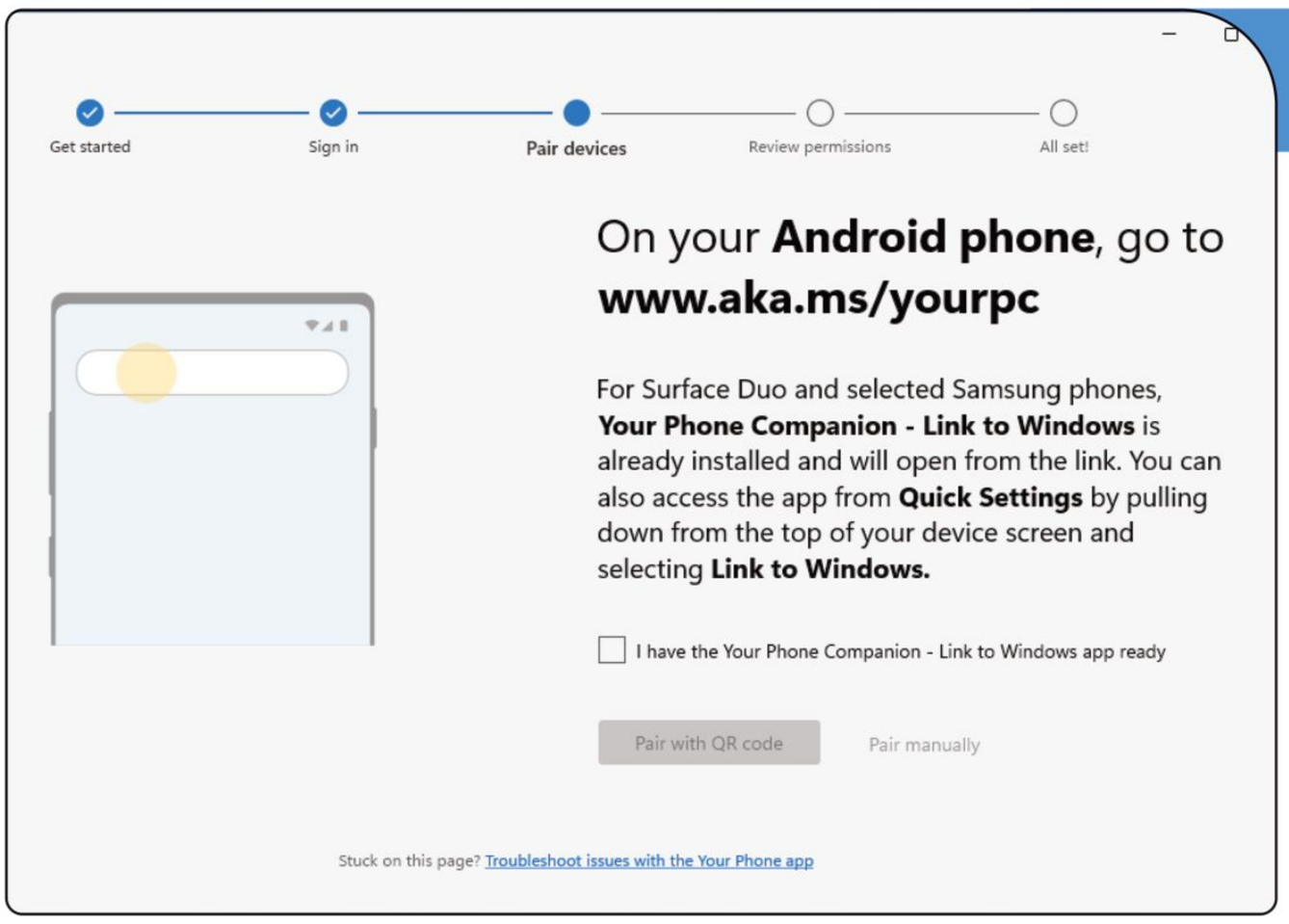
You can connect an Android phone to both your Microsoft account and Windows 11, allowing you to view the photos on your phone from the comfort of your desktop, and even view call and SMS details on your computer as they arrive on your phone.

Using the Your Phone App



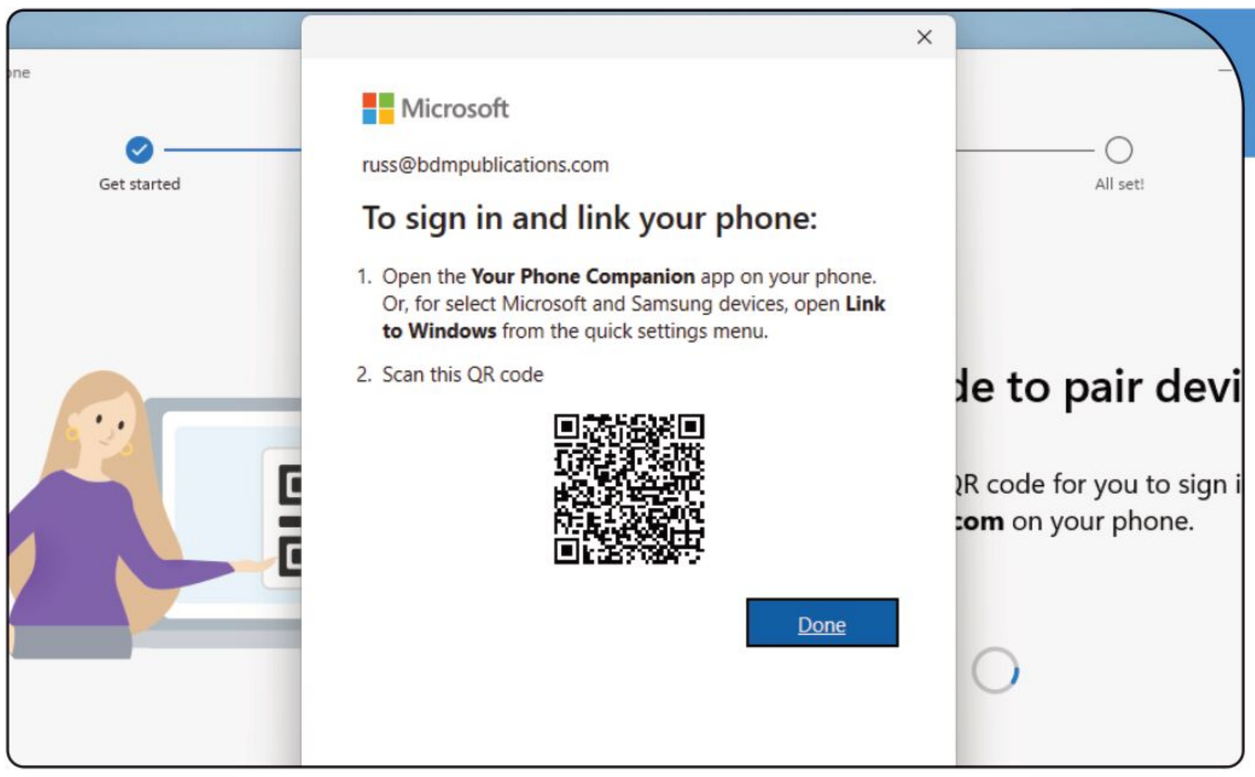
Step 1

Open the main app list from the Start menu and look for "Your Phone". Click the app and then click the "Get Started" button on the screen that opens. You will need to sign in with the same Microsoft account on both the PC and the companion app on your phone. Select/ sign in to that account next.



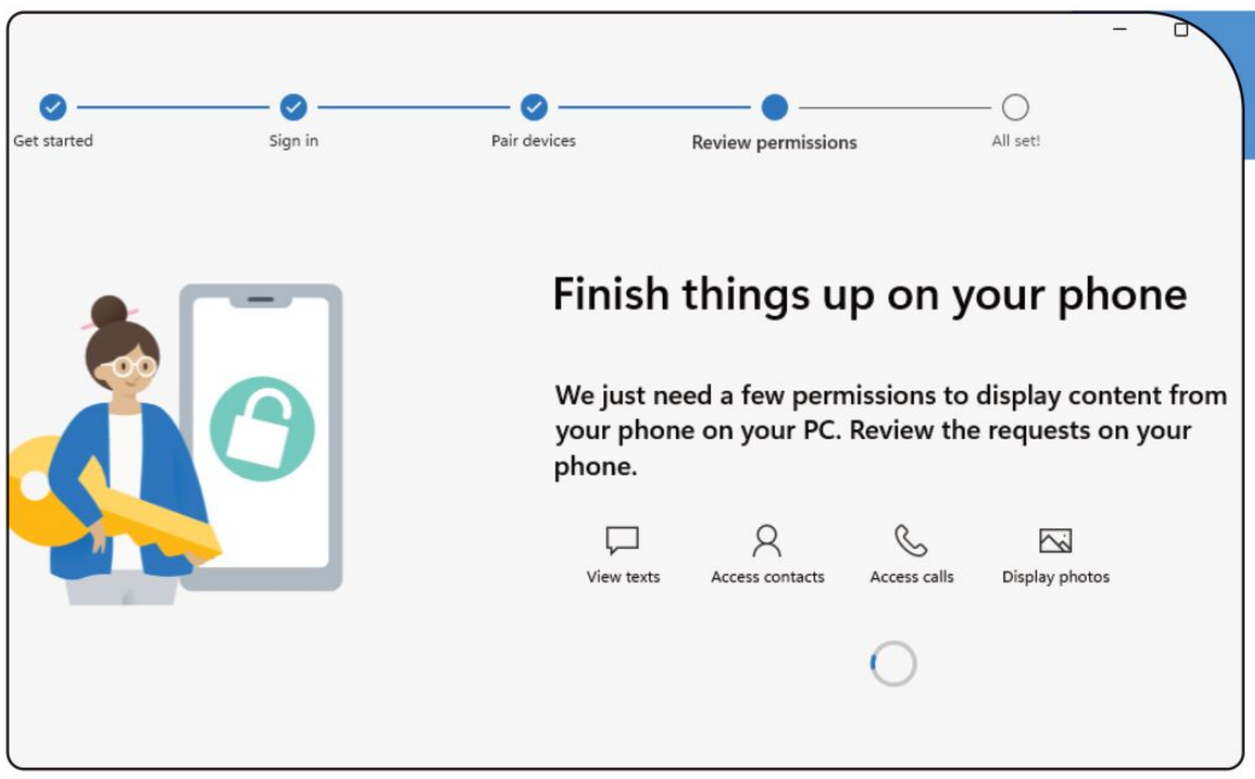
Step 2

On your Android phone, open a browser window and go to www.aka.ms/yourpc. You may already have an app installed that can link to windows called Your Phone Companion (on Samsung, open the Quick settings and look for "Link to Windows"). If so, open the app and follow the instructions.



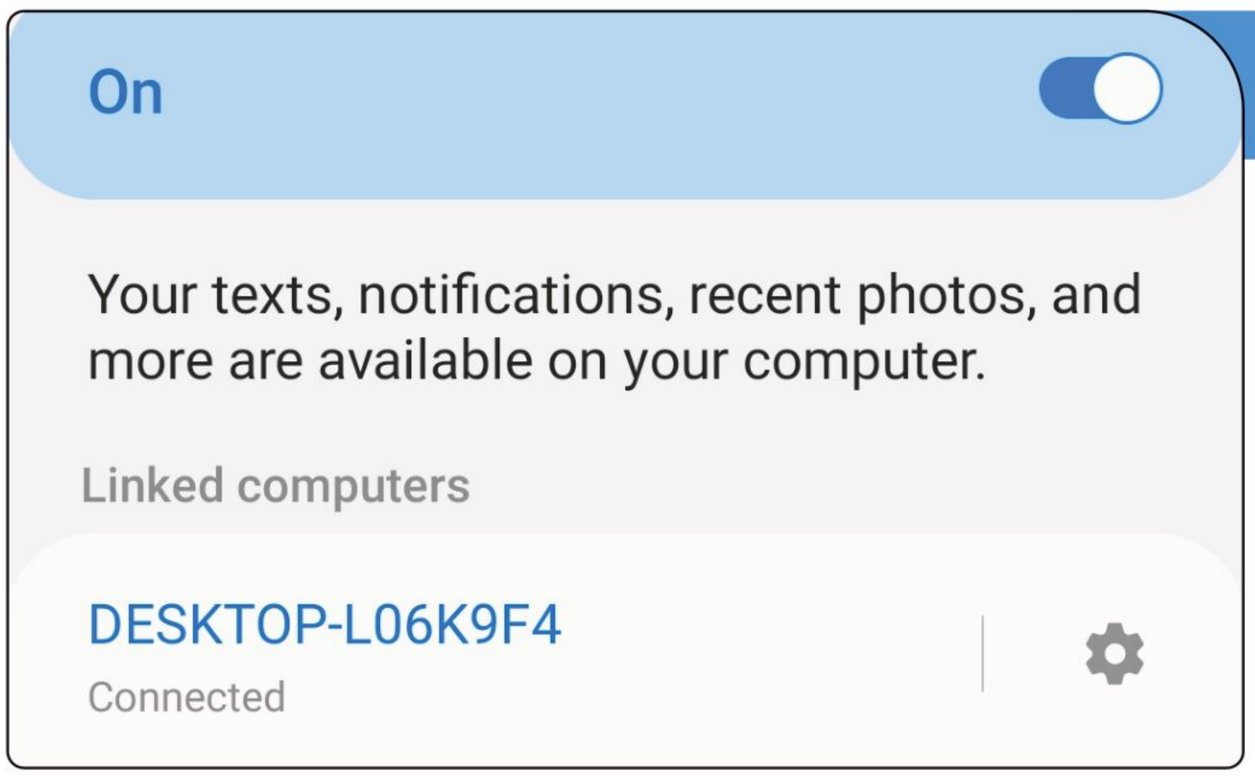
Step 3

When asked, click "Pair with QR code" in the Your Phone app on your computer. A QR code will be created and appear on screen. On your phone, click Continue and a QR code reader screen will open. Use this to read the QR code on your computer screen. After a few seconds the two devices should link.



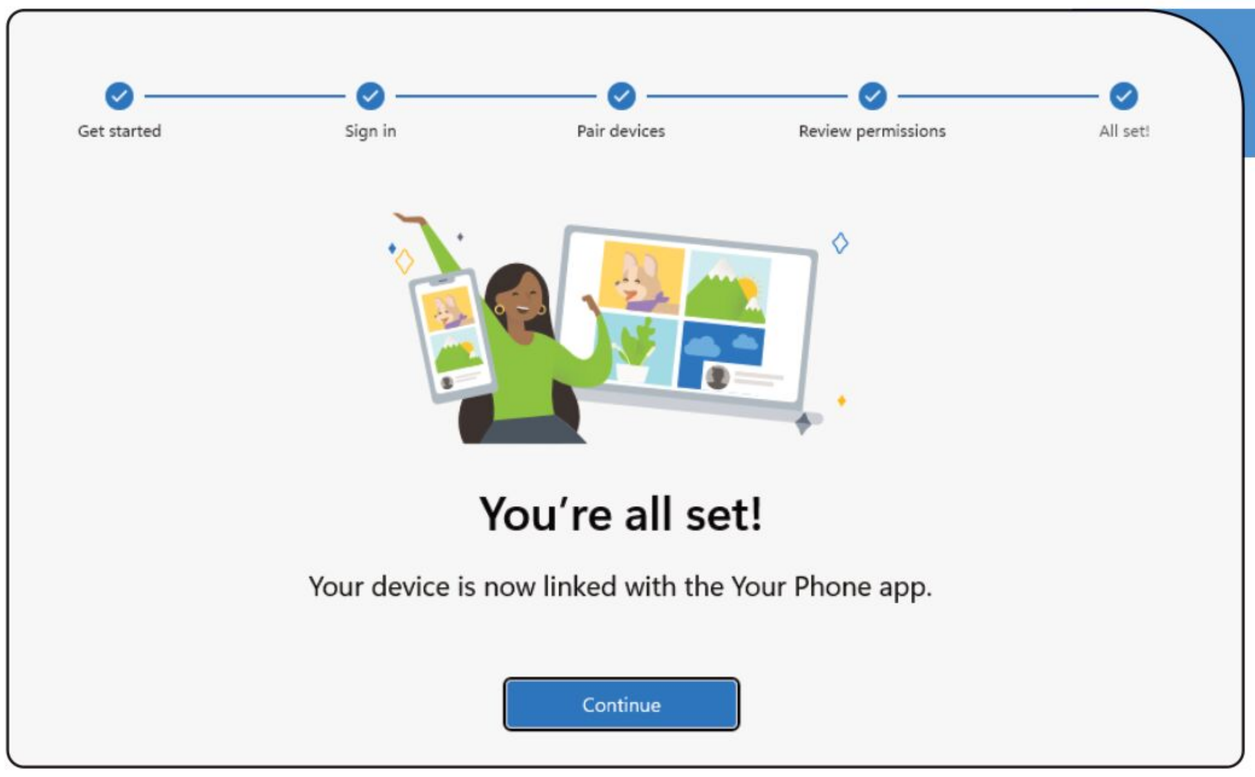
Step 4

You will need to give the app permission to access certain things on your phone. These include contacts, calls, photos and media, and SMS messages. You can refuse any of these individual permissions and the Your phone app will still work, just without access to that feature.



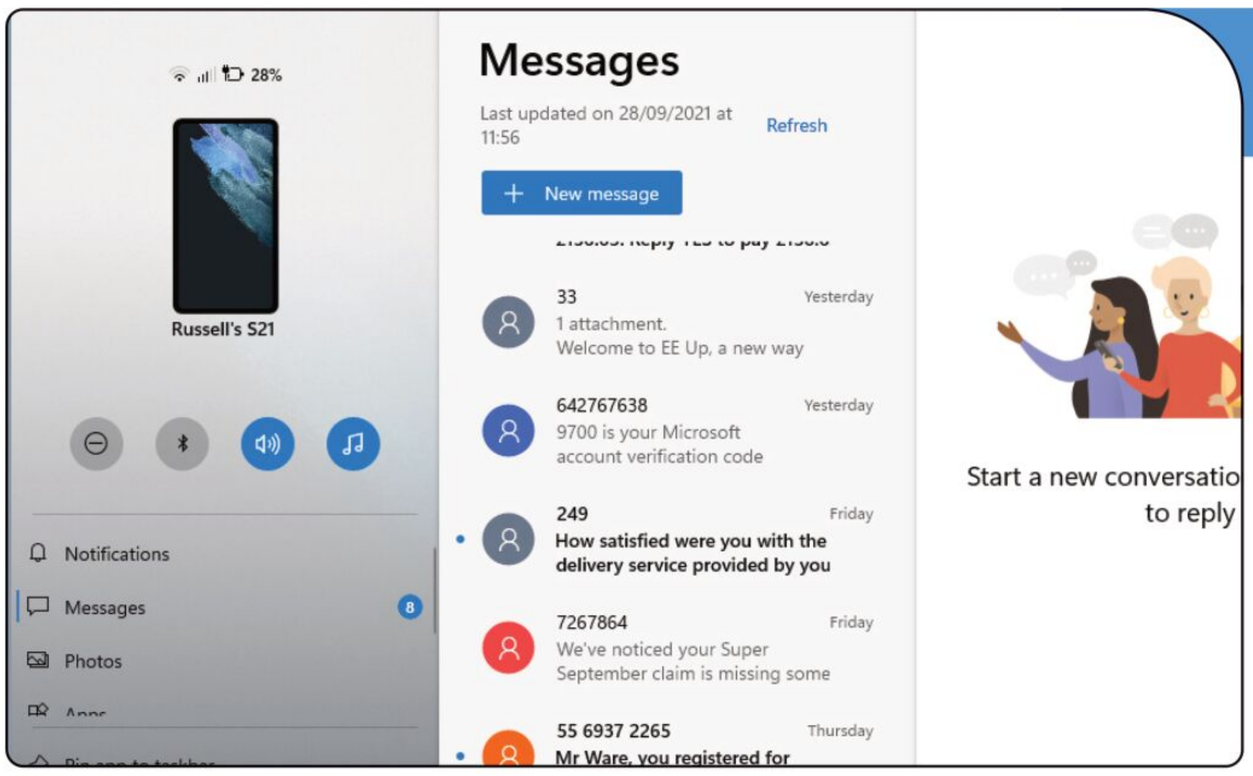
Step 5

If all is successful, you should now see your phone displayed in the Your Phone app on your computer. There is a new screen displayed on your phone, this shows the settings for the Microsoft companion app, alongside which Windows 11 computer it is connected.



Step 6

Now it's time to start using the Your Mobile app. In the left-hand sidebar are several different sections. These include Photos, Messages, Notifications and Apps. Some of these need to be set up further to begin using them, follow the on-screen instructions to do so.

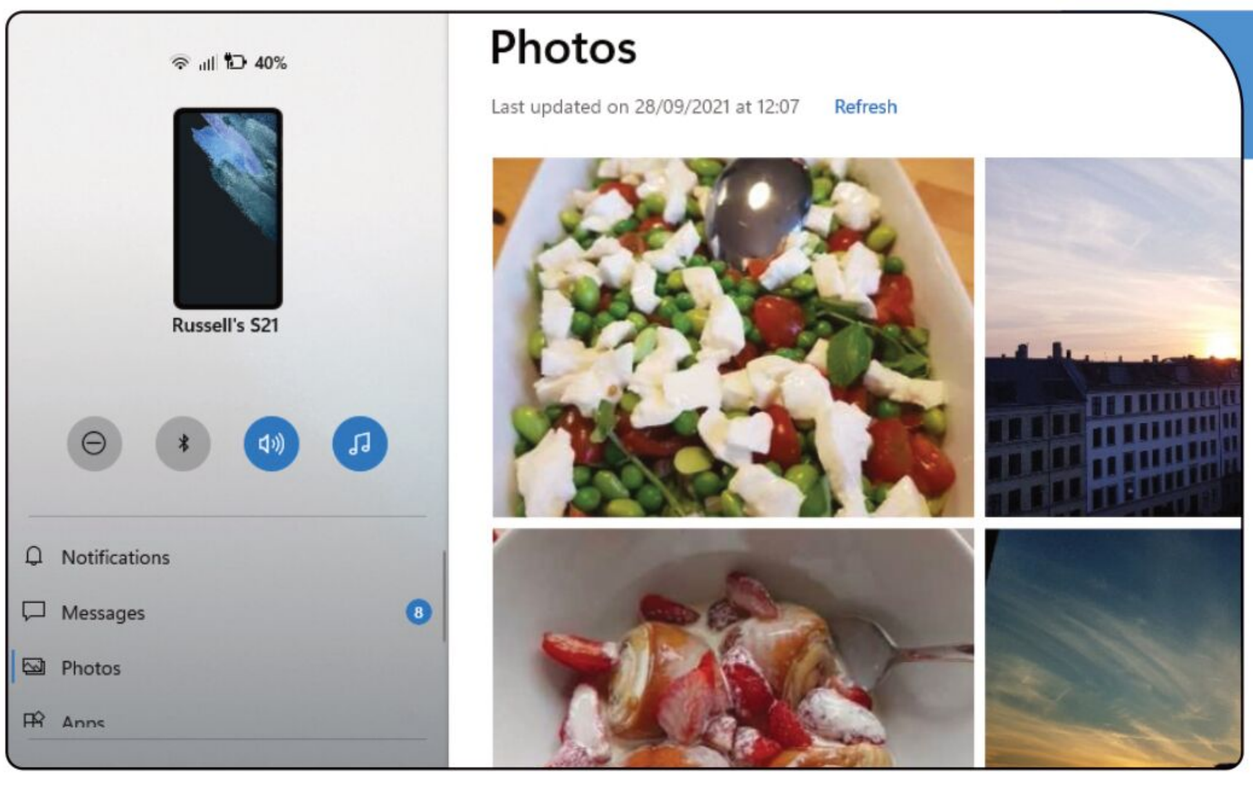


Step 7

Click on Messages first. When asked, send a notification to your phone to ask permission to access messages (if already given, this opens the messages list). Your phone messages are now displayed, and you can click on any to read and reply. You can also create new messages from your PC.

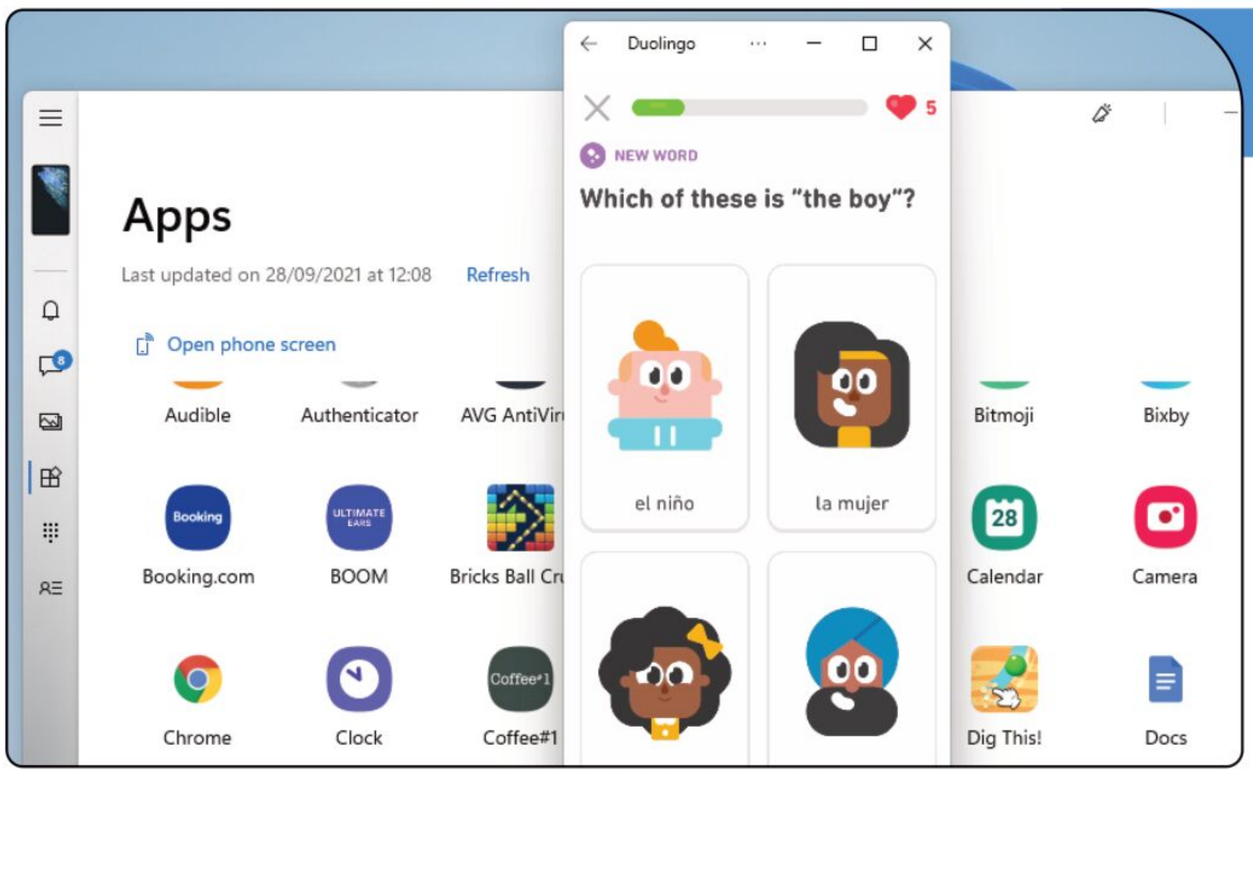
Step 8

If you want to be able to see notifications from your phone on your PC screen, you need to click on Notifications and then click "Get Started". Again, you need to allow this on your phone settings. Phone notifications will pop up on your PC screen in the same place as other notifications.



Step 9

To view photos stored on your phone from the comfort of your PC, click the Photos section. Allow access as before, and then wait while the view refreshes. You can open them in the Photos app by clicking on them. You can now also delete photos on your phone from the PC app.



Step 10

You can open apps that are on your phone, on your computer. Click the apps section, then click on an app icon in the list. You will need to give permission on your phone to cast to the Windows app, but once done, the app will open on your computer screen in a phone screen shaped window.

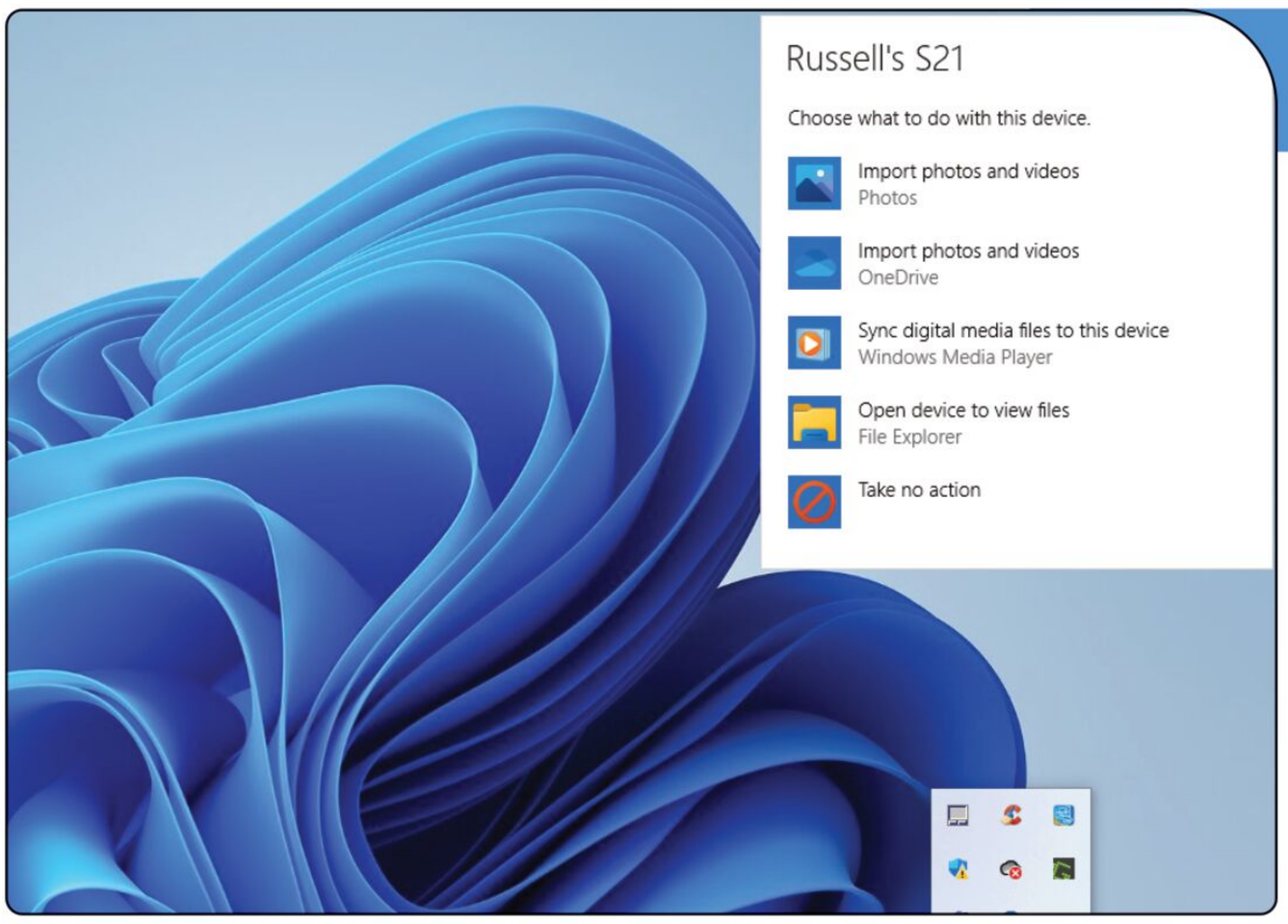
Importing Photos

Importing photos from a digital camera, or phone, is a fairly simple task; but you can encounter problems. Here we take a look at importing photos from your phone, tablet or camera; using different methods and tools already included in Windows 11.

Importing to a Folder

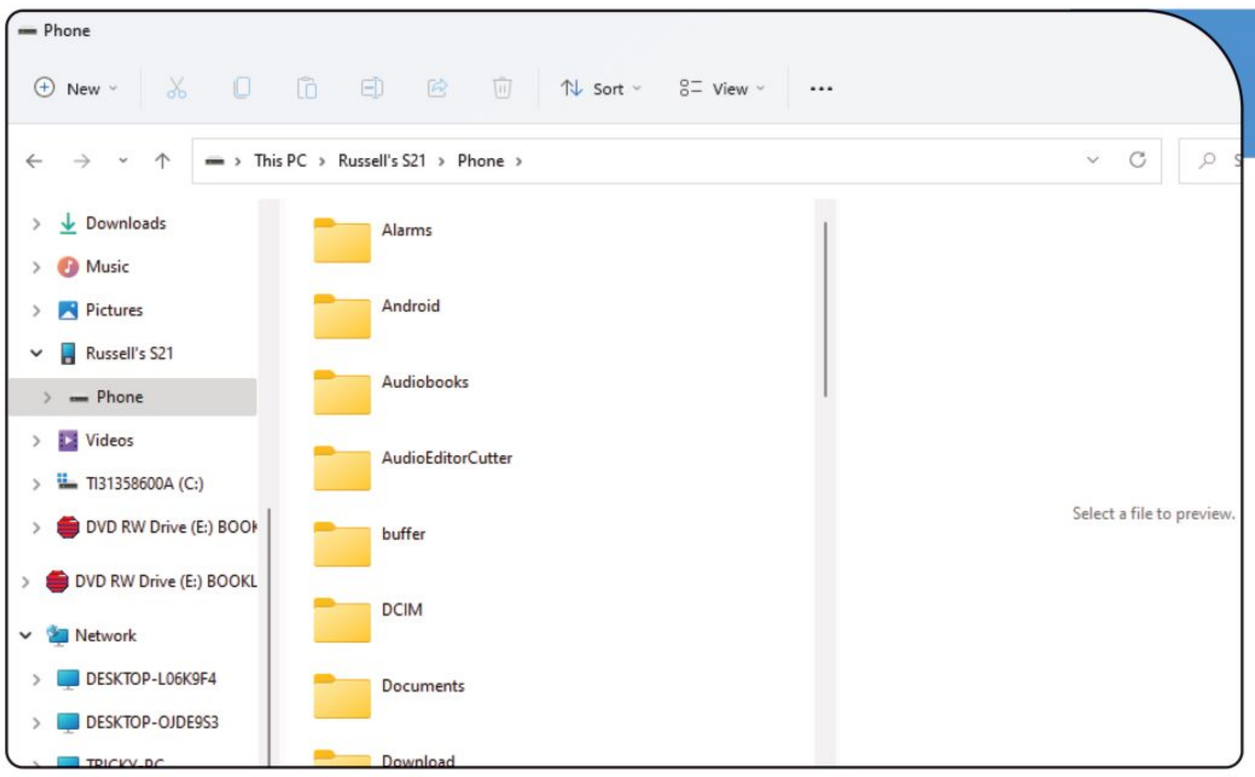
Step 1

The first thing you need to do to import photos directly from a phone or camera is to connect the relevant cable to your PC. In almost all cases, this will be a USB cable of some sort. You will have been supplied a transfer cable with the device you are using. Plug this into a free USB port.



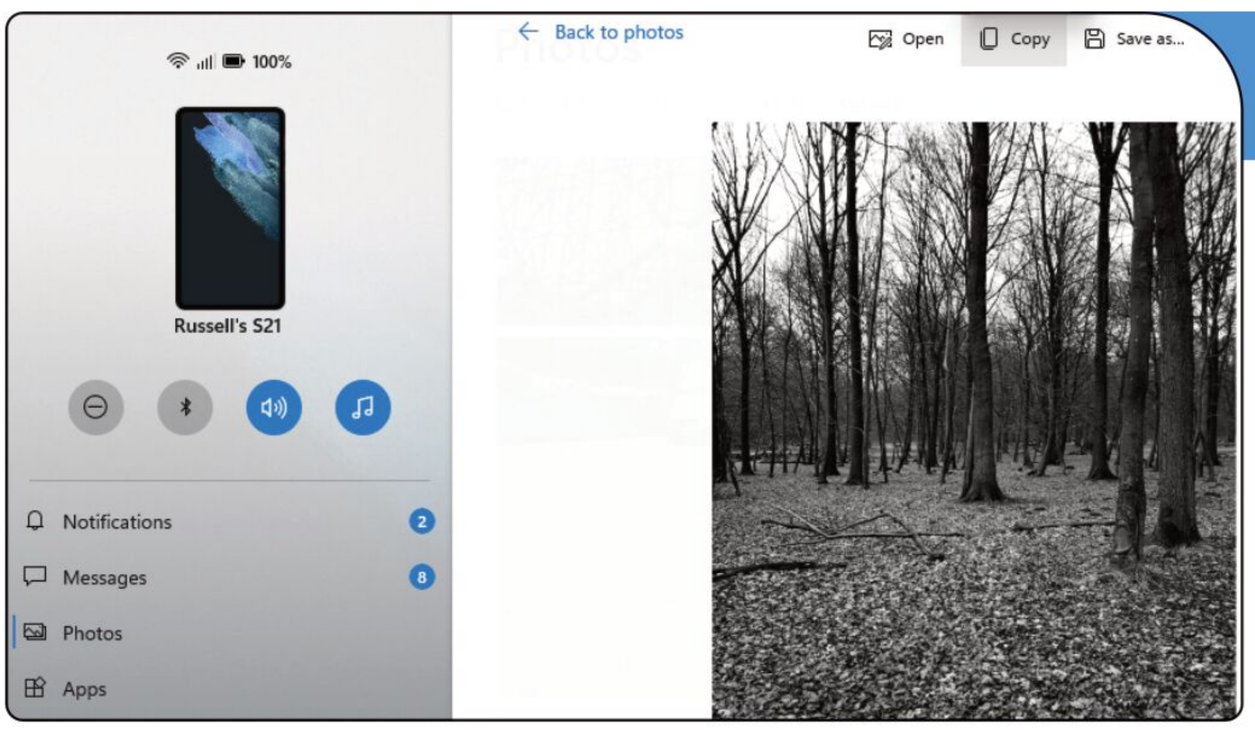
Step 2

Normally, when you first plug a device in to your computer which contains storage of some sort, Windows will ask how you want to handle the files in that storage. Scroll down the list to see 'Open in a Folder'. In some cases, Explorer will open showing the connected device.



Step 3

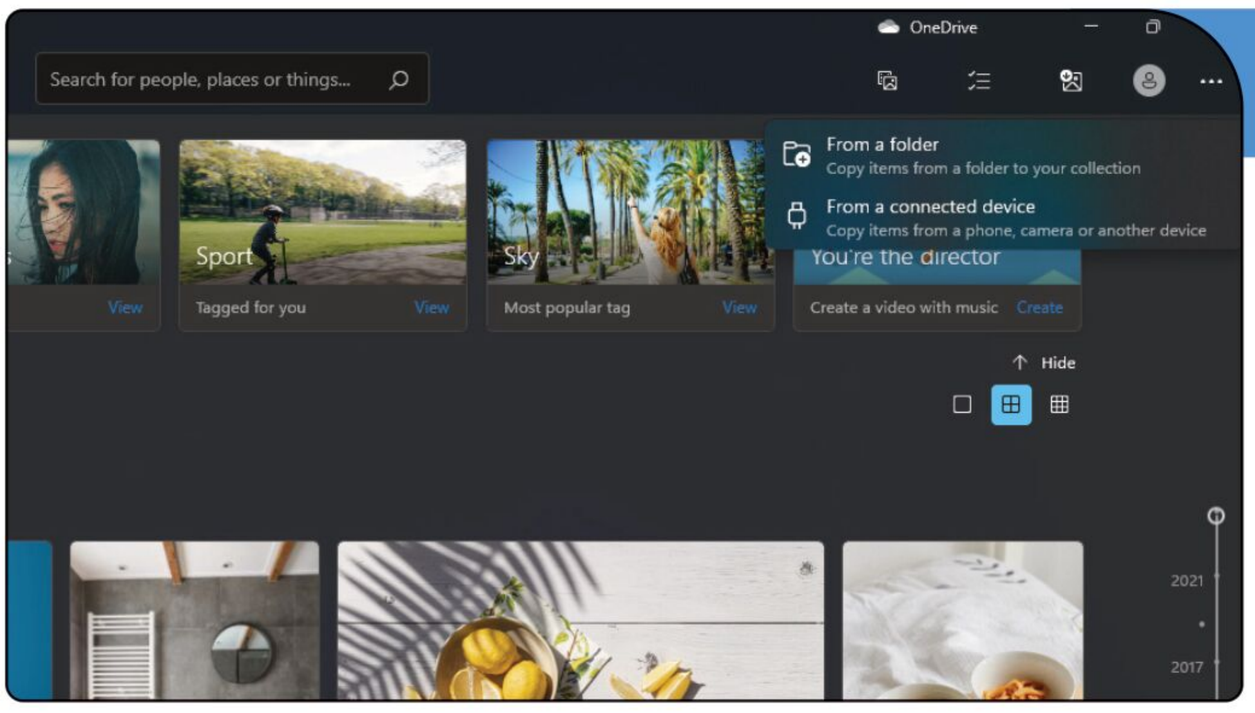
Now click on the device storage, this may be Phone and Card on a smartphone, and navigate to where the photos are stored. This will normally be in a folder called DCIM on your phone or camera. You can now simply cut and paste, or drag and drop, images to a new folder on your PC.



Step 4

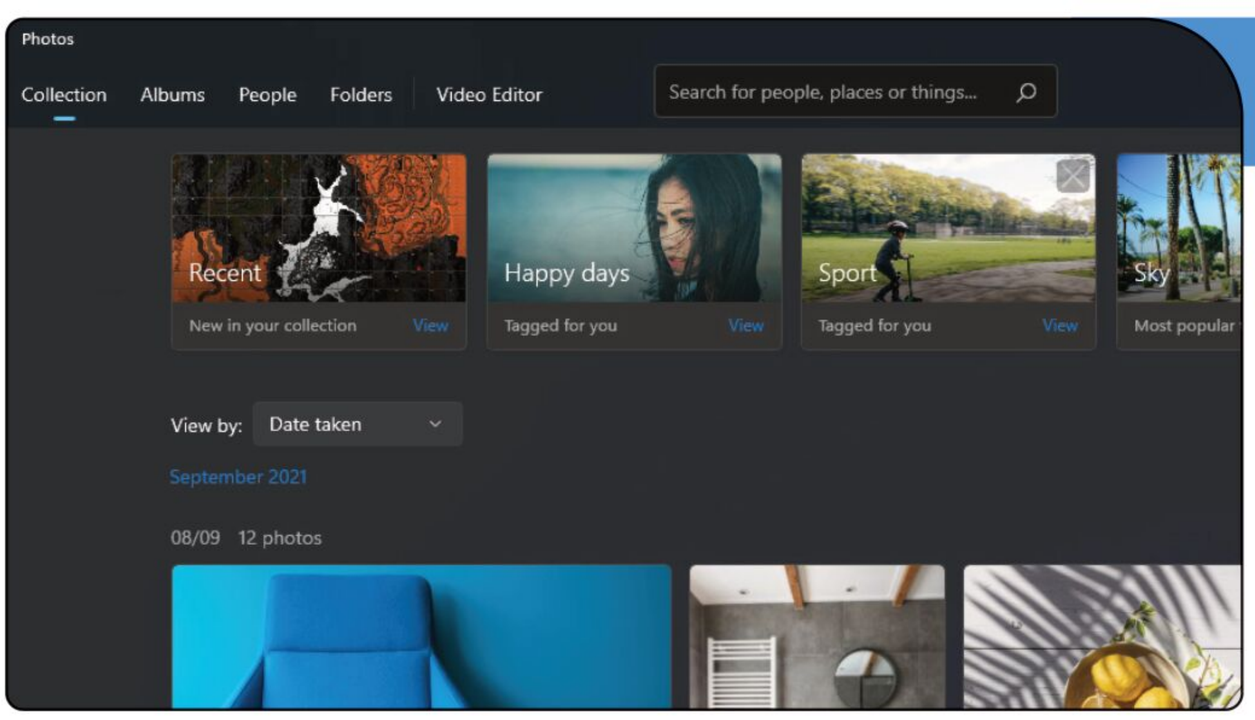
If you have connected your phone and PC using the Your Phone app, you can import images from your phone wirelessly. Simply open the app, click on the Photos tab and then browse to the photos you want to import. You can then choose Save as…, or copy and paste to a folder.

Importing to the Photos App



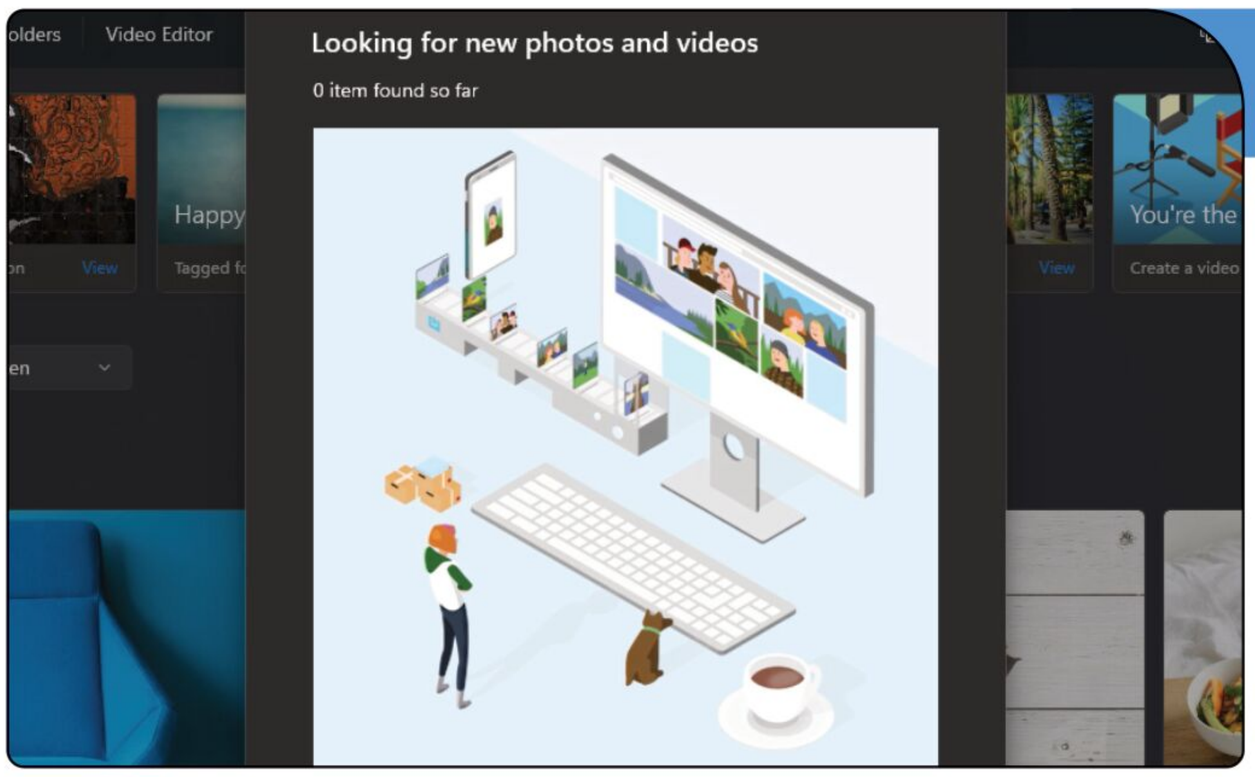
Step 1

Open the Photos app on your Windows 11 PC. Now connect your phone or camera to your computer using the relevant USB cable. If you see the pop-up menu asking how you want to deal with the storage media you just connected, ignore it or click it closed.



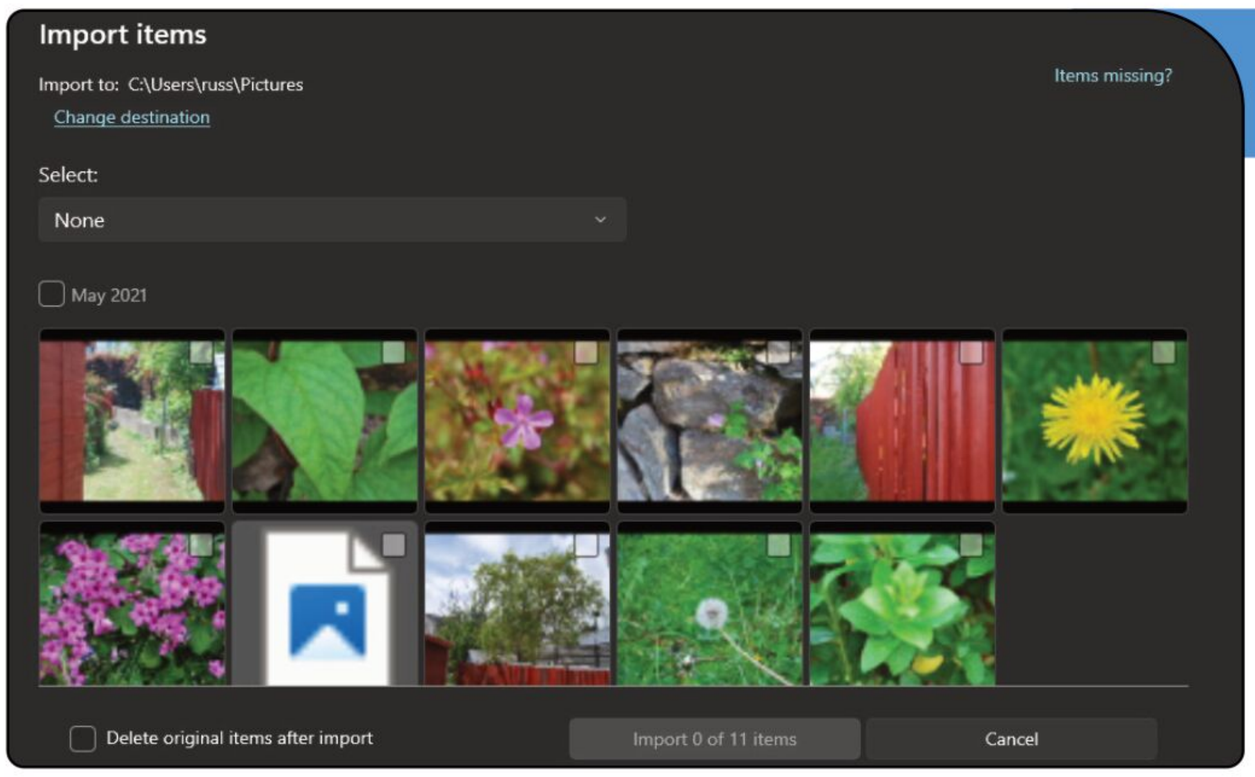
Step 2

The Photos app should have opened up with the Collections screen showing. If not, click the tab at the top to open it now. Along the top of the Collections tab are your controls: Refresh, Select, Slideshow and Import. Import is the only one you need to click at this point.



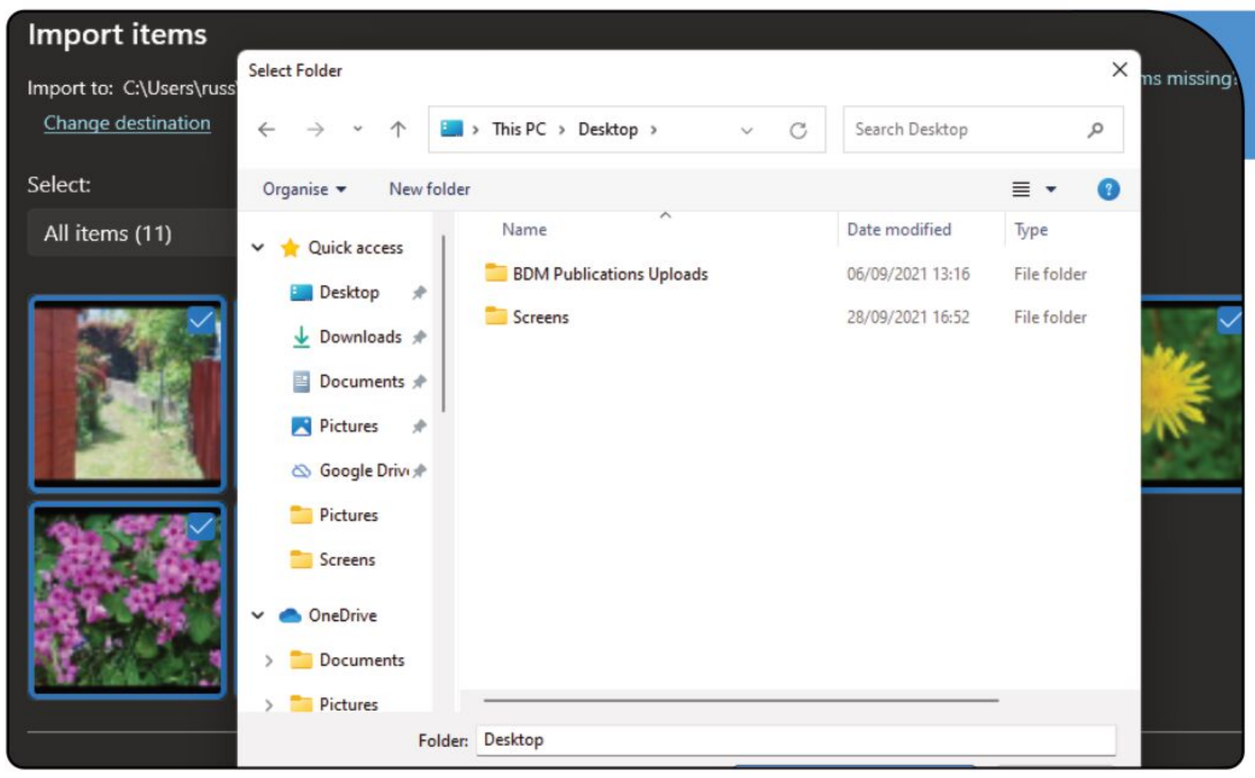
Step 3

The Photos app will now search for photos available to be imported. If your device is not connected properly, or the correct USB drivers are not installed, it will fail to find anything at this point. If you are transferring from a phone or tablet, you may also have to unlock the screen to continue.



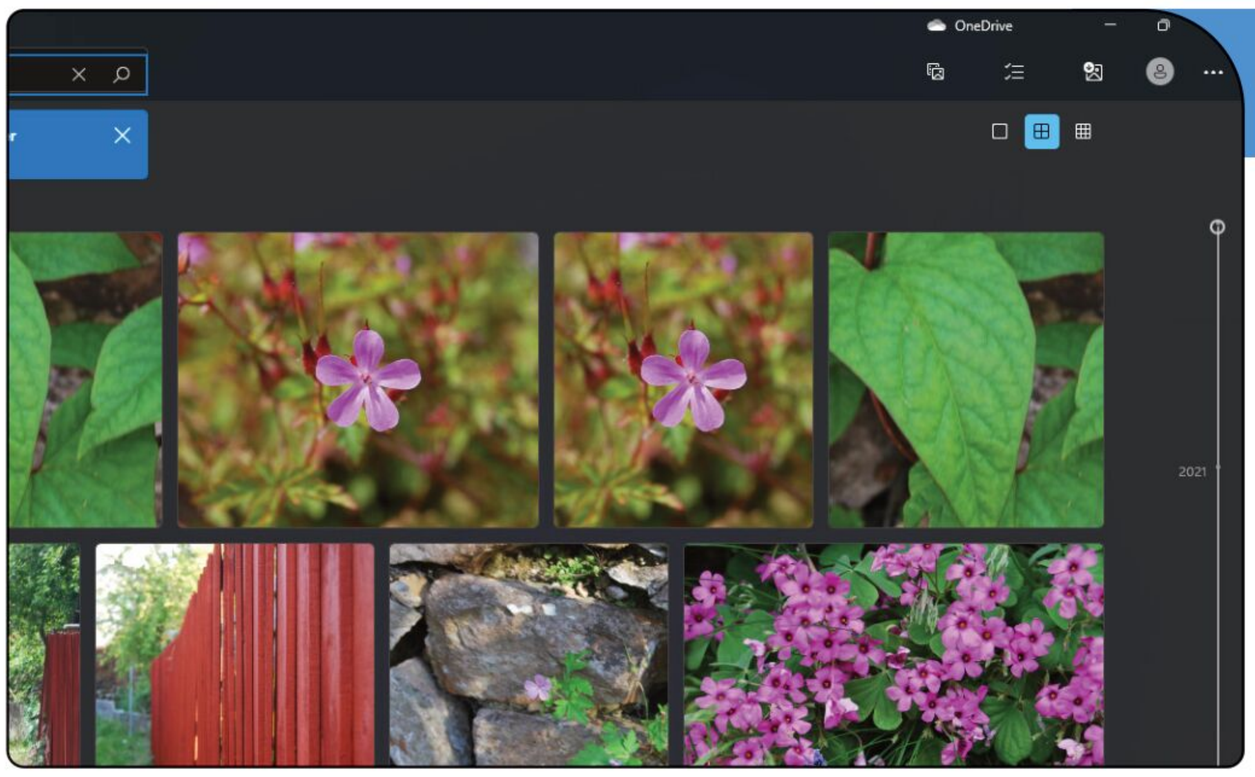
Step 4

By default, every image detected on your device will be selected for importing. If you want to import everything, click Continue. If not, you can use the check boxes on the images to select those you want to import; use the Clear All and Select All buttons as required.



Step 5

You can now choose where the imported photos will be saved. By default, this will probably be somewhere like C:\Users\YourName\Pictures. Click the 'Change where they're imported' link to do just that. You can also choose to import into folders arranged by month or day.



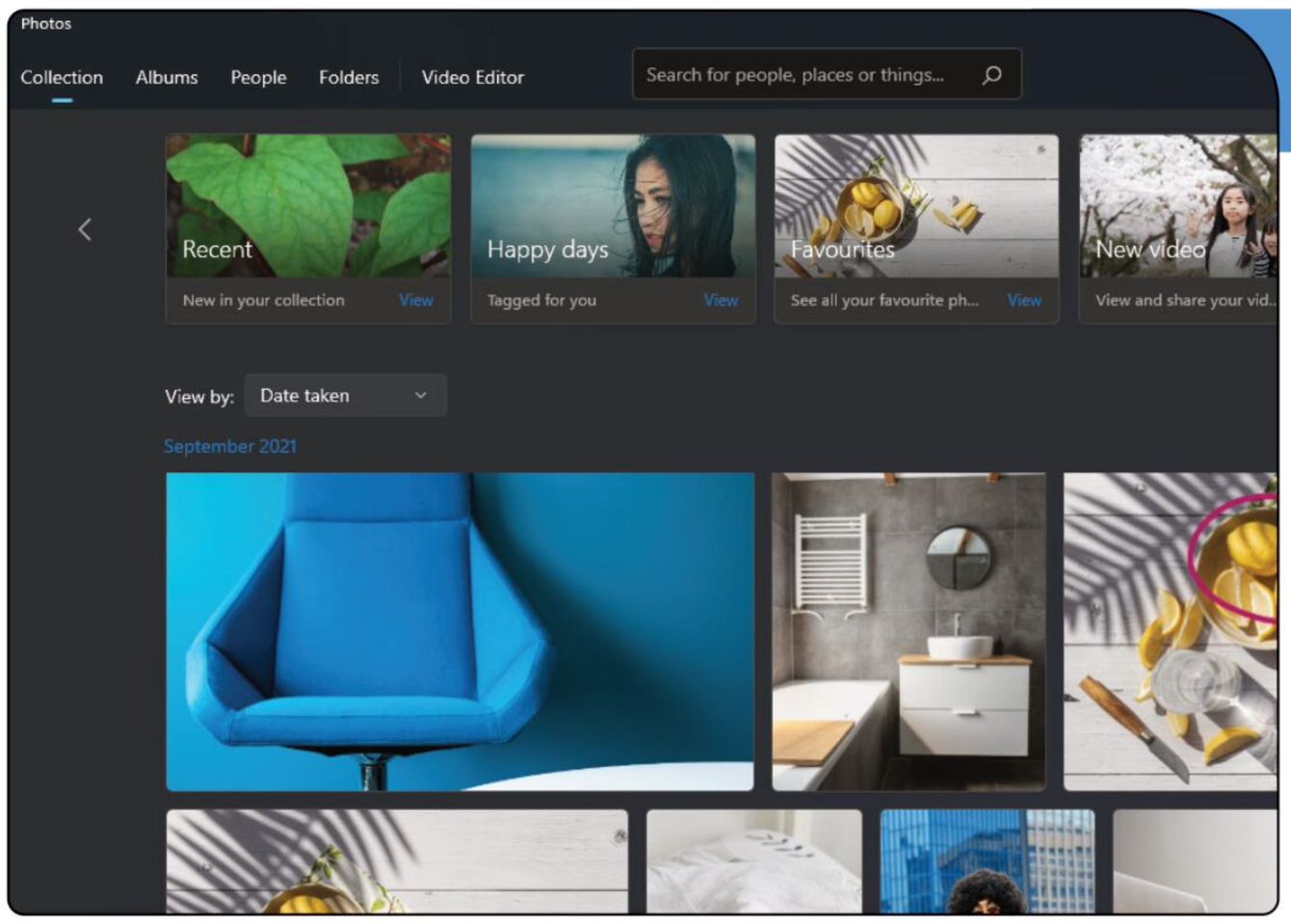
Step 6

Click Import. Your image will now begin to appear in the Photos app window, within the Collections section. An album will also be created called Last Import. Click on one of the images shown to begin editing or enhancing it with the tools Photos offers.

Manage & Edit Your Photos

The Photos app was first introduced in Windows 8, but it wasn't the best experience compared to most third party apps. In Windows 11 it has been improved, with better ways to browse photos and a lot more editing options to make the most of your images.

Managing Your Images

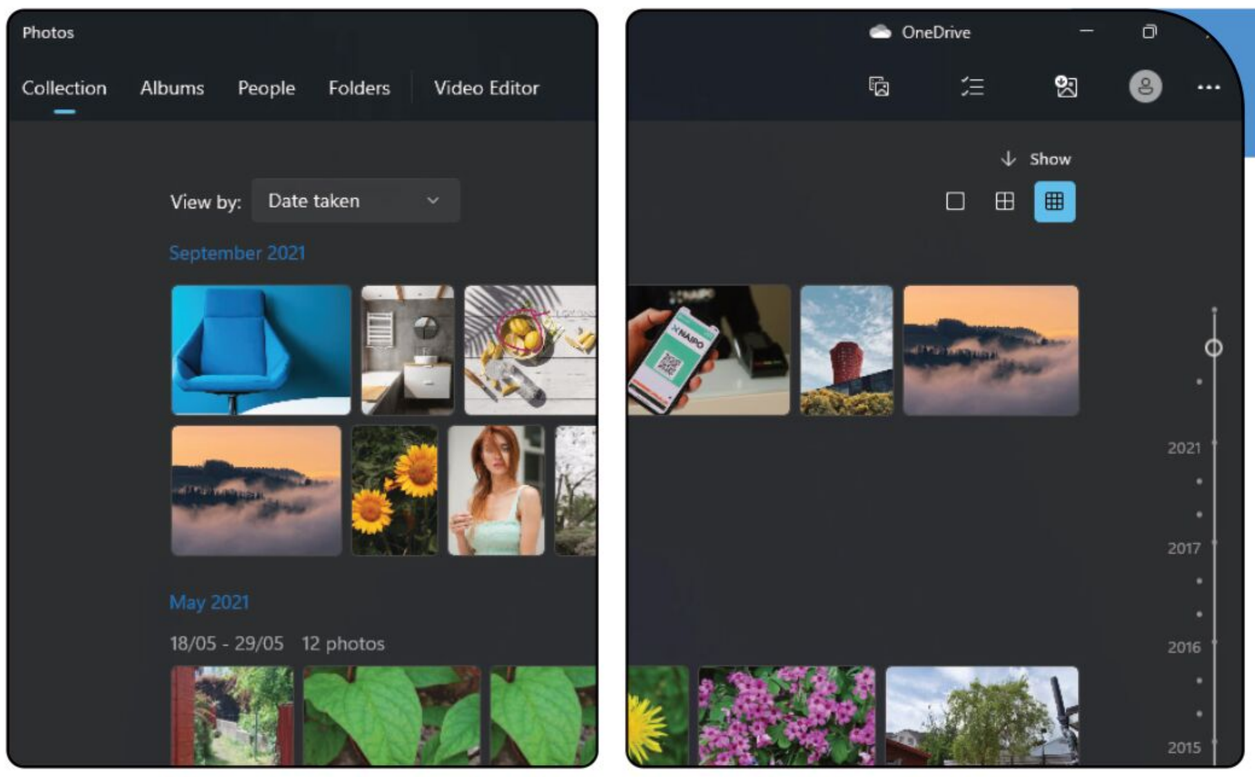


Step 1

Photos shows all of your images in a scrolling timeline of images, called the Collection, with some automatically created collections at the top (this can be hidden using the Hide button). You can click on any image to get a full-window view, with a quick-select bar of images shown along the bottom.

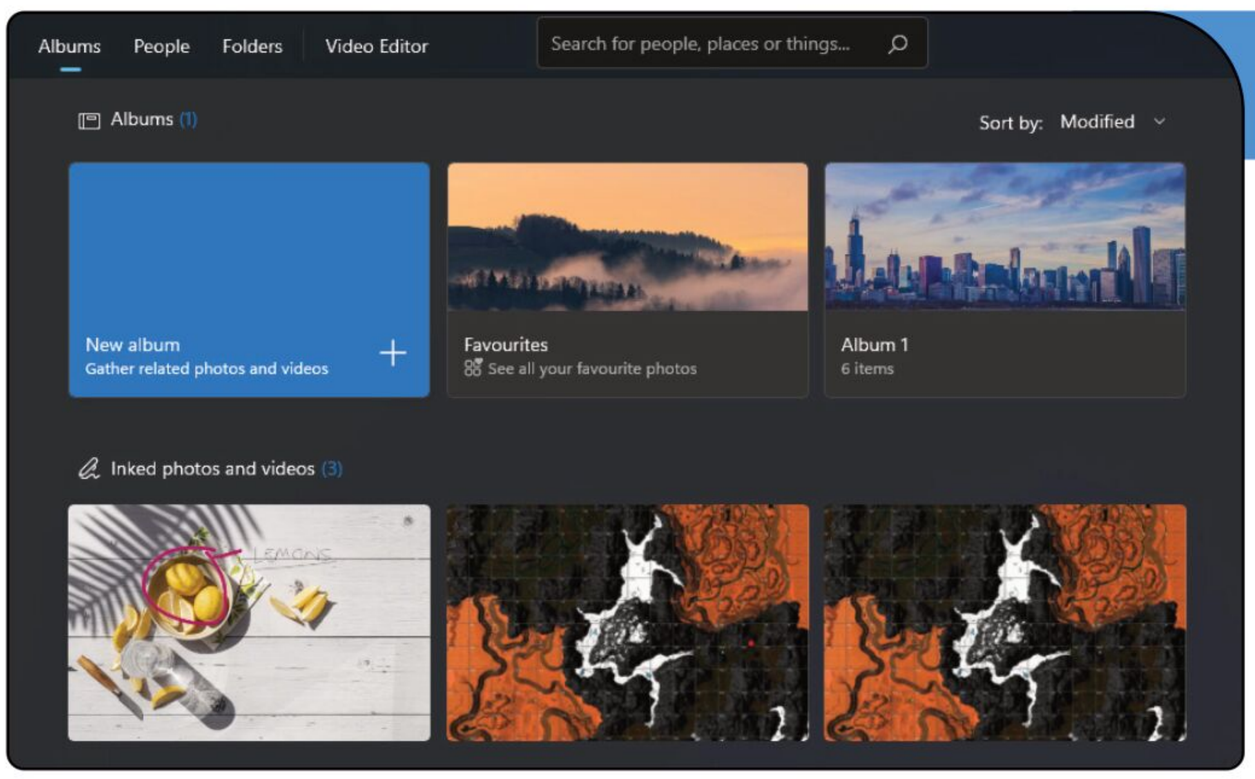
Step 2

Along the top of the full image view is a toolbar. This contains zoom and rotate buttons, an edit image button and draw button, as well as delete, add to favourites, file information, save as, resize and several more. You can click the Back arrow in the top left corner to return to the main image list.



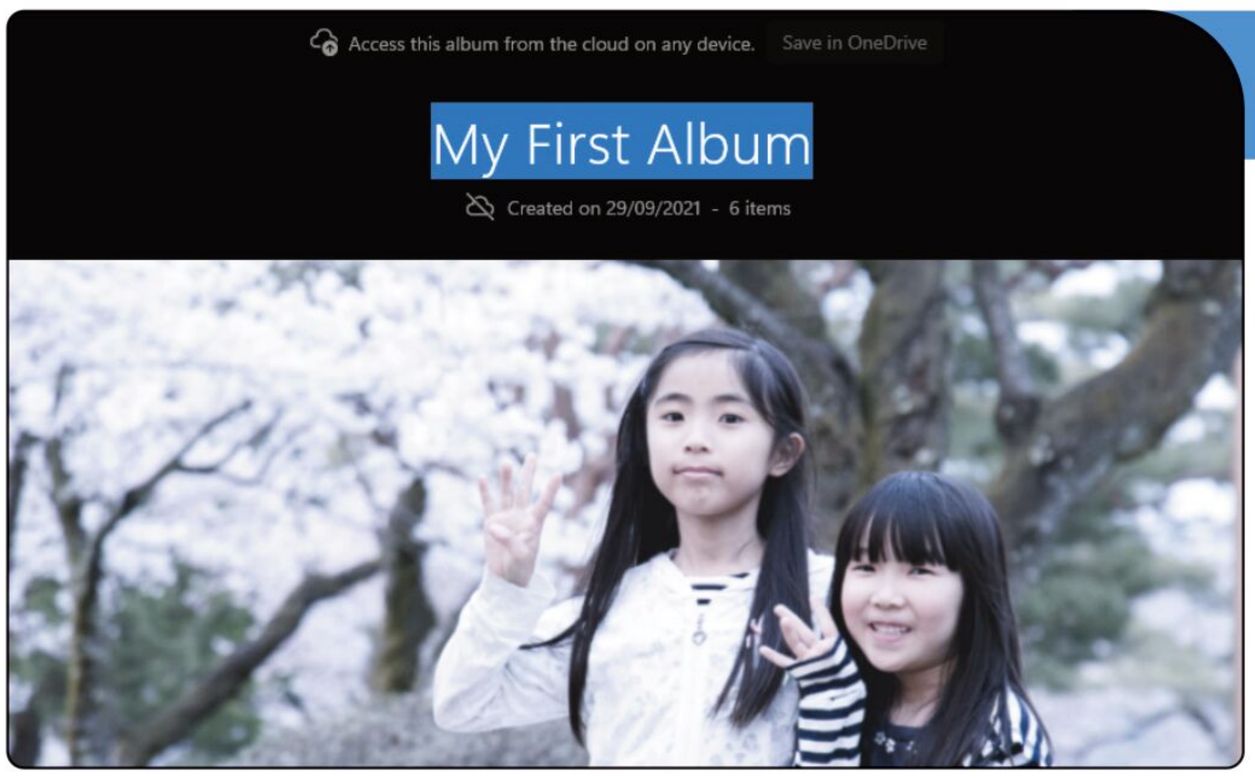
Step 3

You can manage the main image view (Collection) in several ways. The View by menu lets you switch between sorting images by date taken or recently added. On the opposite side of the screen are the view controls, changing between large view, medium view and small thumbnail view.



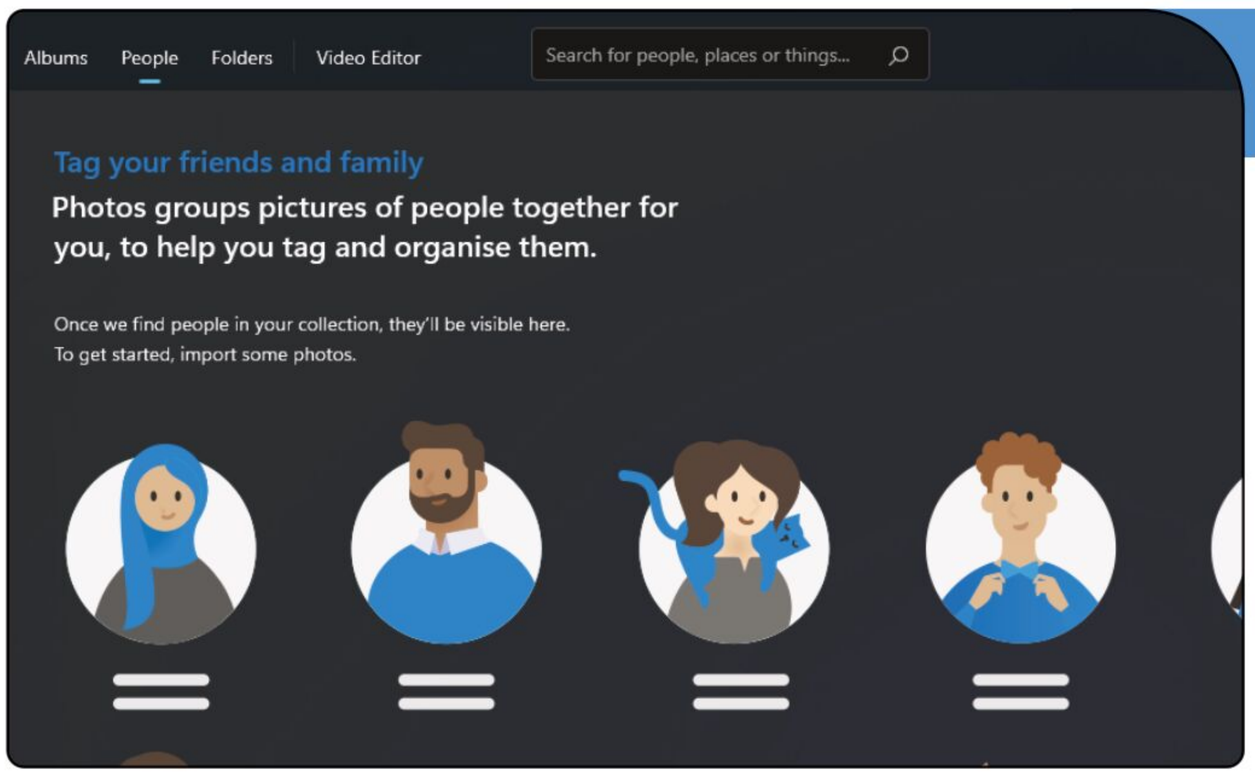
Step 4

Albums, accessed by clicking the tab at the top of the main window, is a partially automated feature that creates groups of photos based on several different criteria. For example, images that have been drawn on with Windows Ink, or images that have been tagged as favourites.



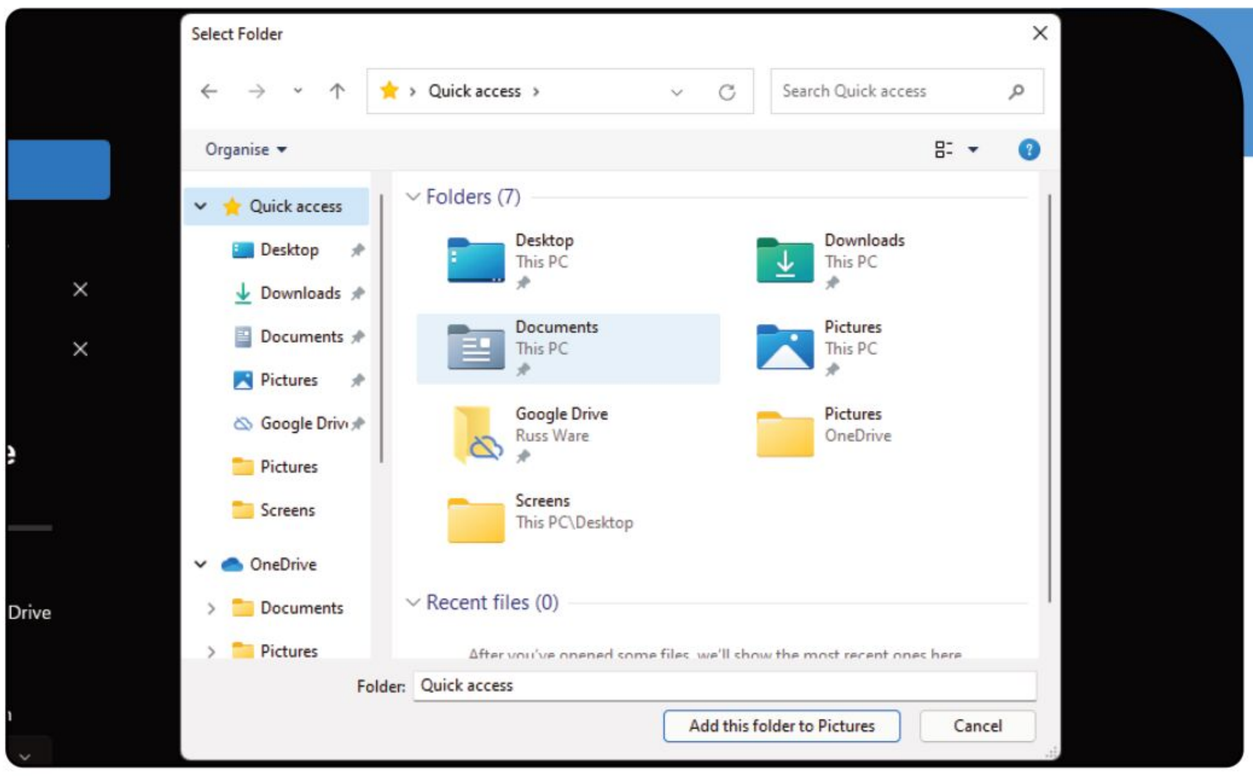
Step 5

You can create your own albums by clicking the “New Album” button. You can then select any images in the Photos app you want to add. With all of the images you want selected, click the Create button and the album will be shown with a slideshow. You can then rename the album.



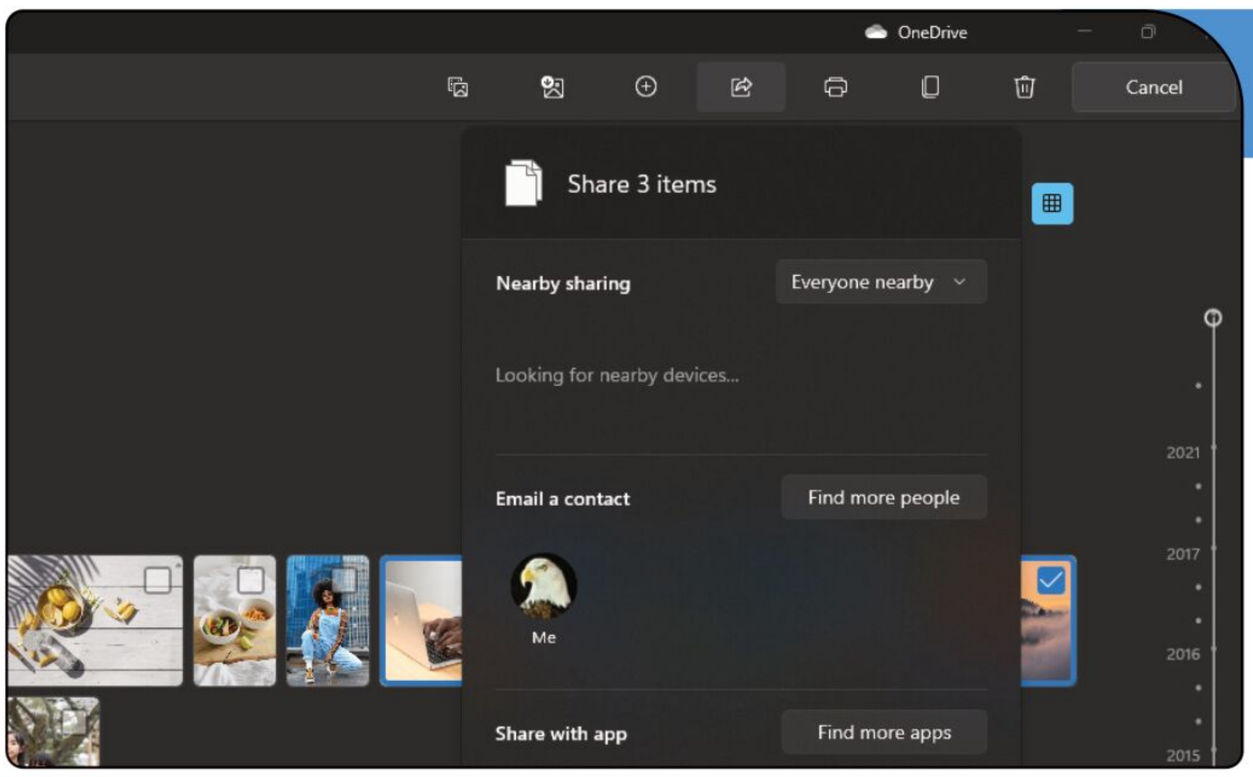
Step 6

The People option is another automatically-created section, that builds collections of images based on facial recognition. As you begin to add photos of people, it will initially pull in any images that include faces, and then begin to sort those images by different people that are recognised.



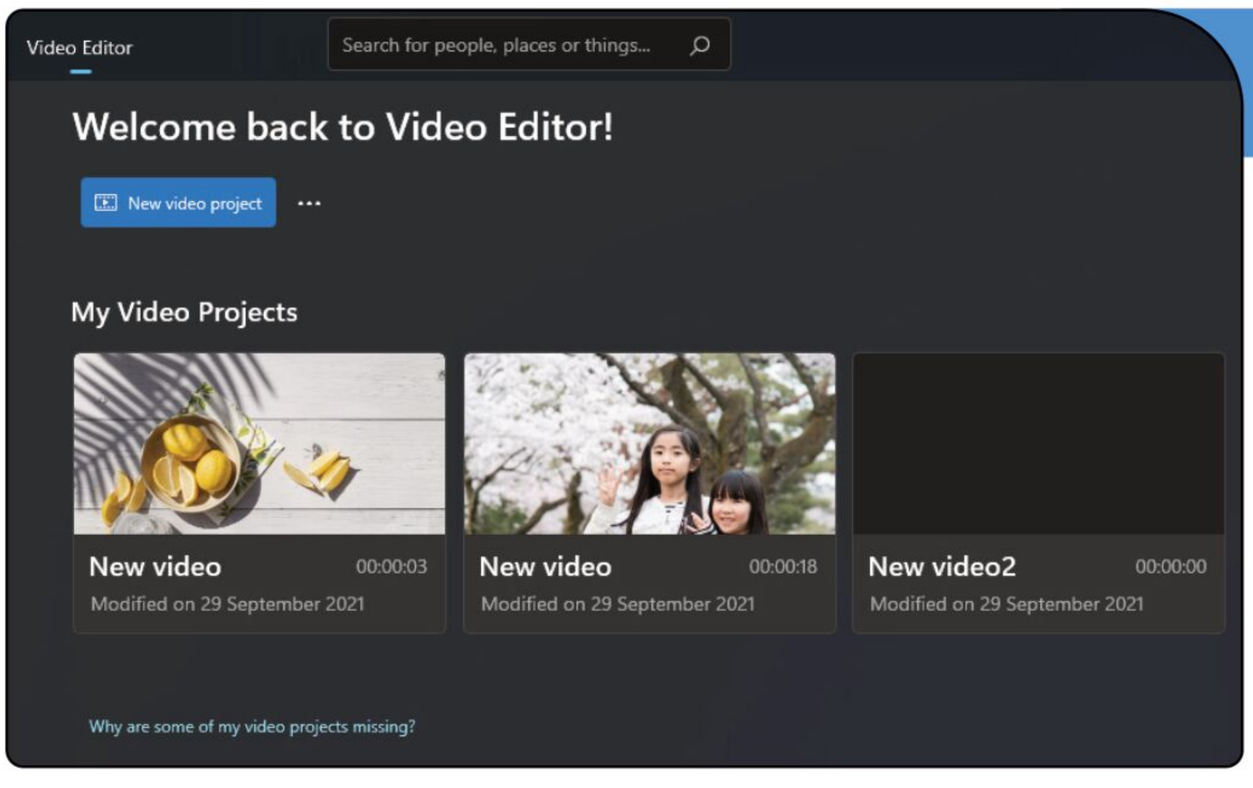
Step 7

You can choose where Photos should look for images in the app Settings. Your own Pictures folder, plus the OneDrive Pictures folder, are automatically included (if you have OneDrive set up), but you can change this if you store your images somewhere else; perhaps on an external hard drive.



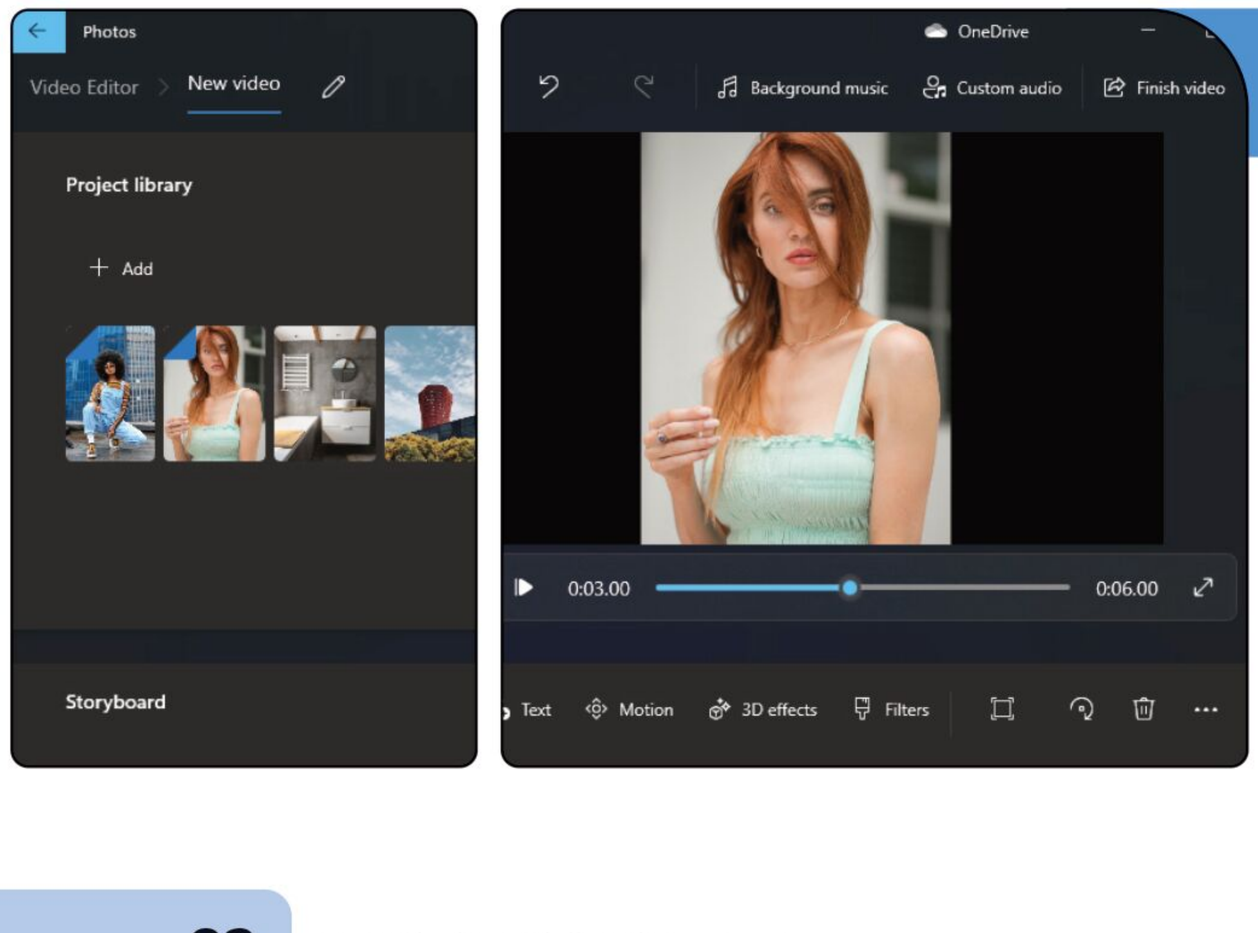
Step 8

The Select feature, found in the menu at the top right, enables you to select individual or multiple images. You'll see the top menu bar changes, and each image has a tick box appear on it. Click them to choose the images you want. You can then use the tools at the top (share, copy, add to and delete, etc.).



Step 9

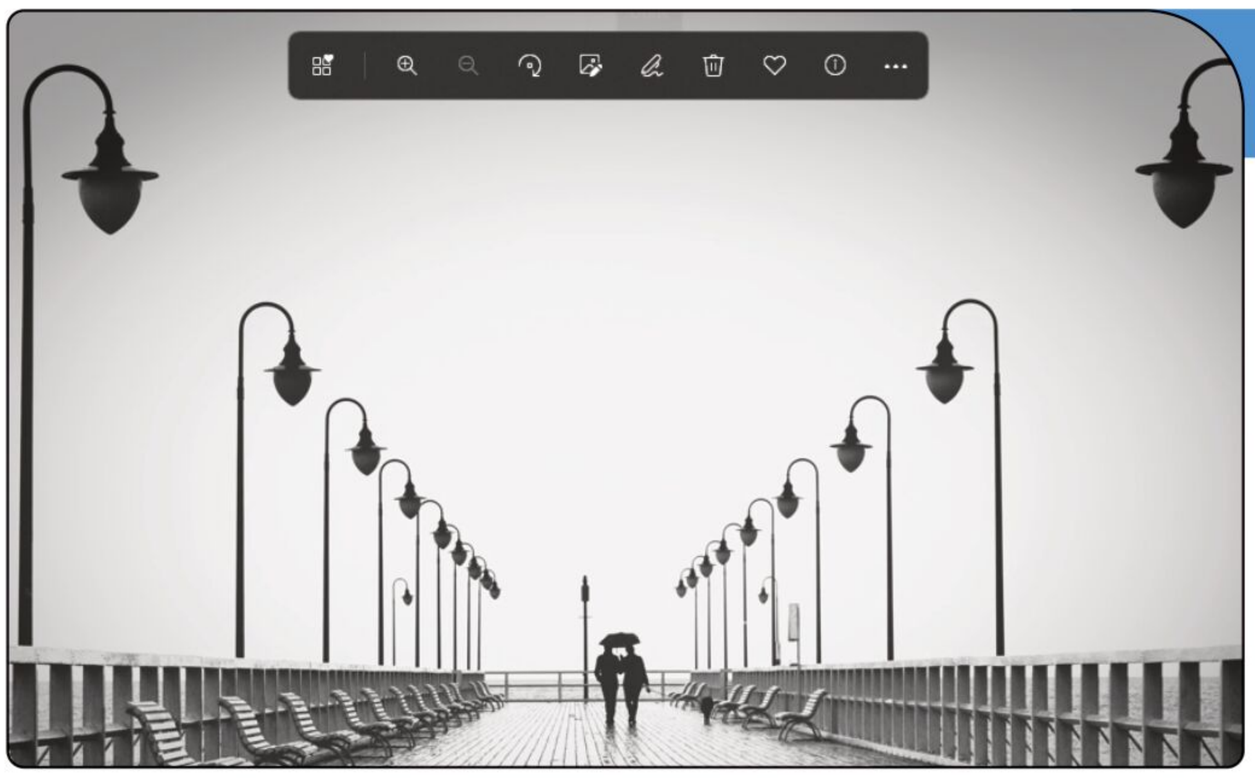
The final option on the Photos home screen is the Video Editor. This allows you to make videos made up of multiple images or video clips in your collections. It isn't the most powerful video editing tool, but it does allow you to create simple videos with music, effects and text overlays.



Step 10

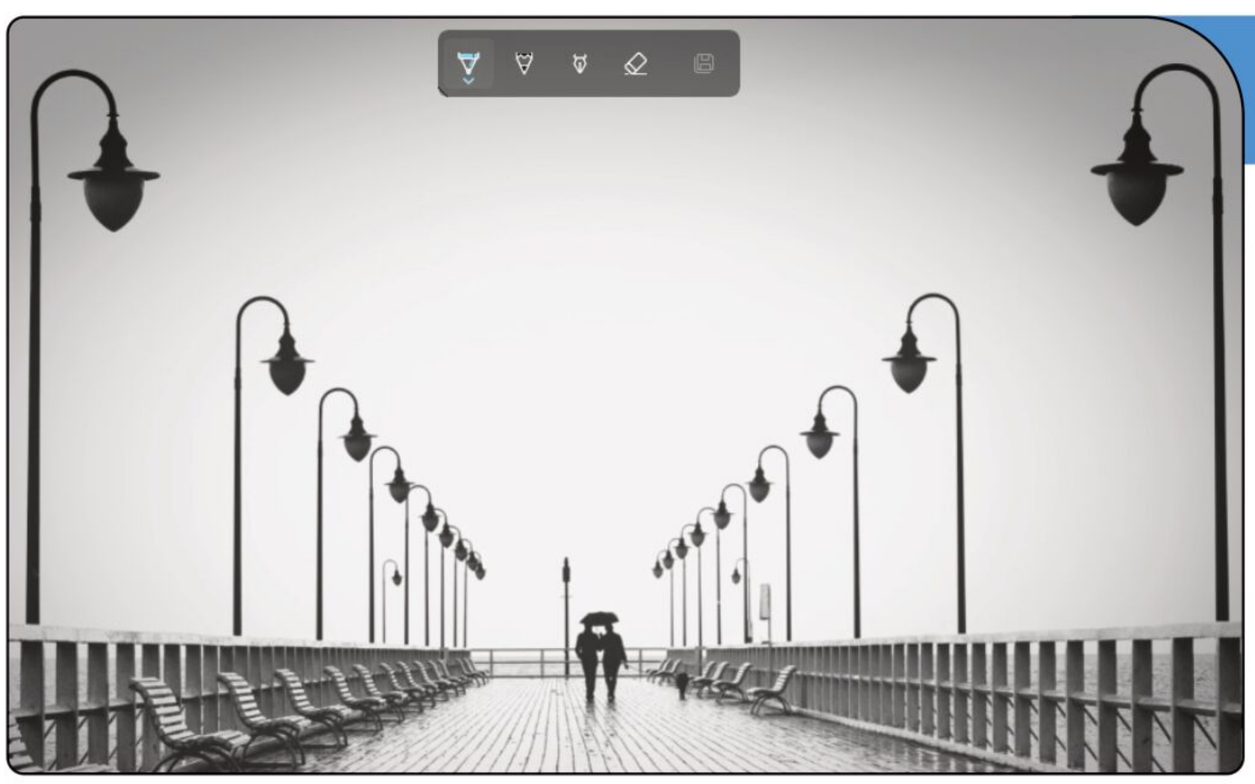
To begin making a video, click "New video project" and name your video. Add images or video using the "+Add" button. Then drag them down into the storyboard. You can then click on each image or video clip and make adjustments to duration, effects, etc. Click "Finish Video" to save it to your computer.

Drawing on Images



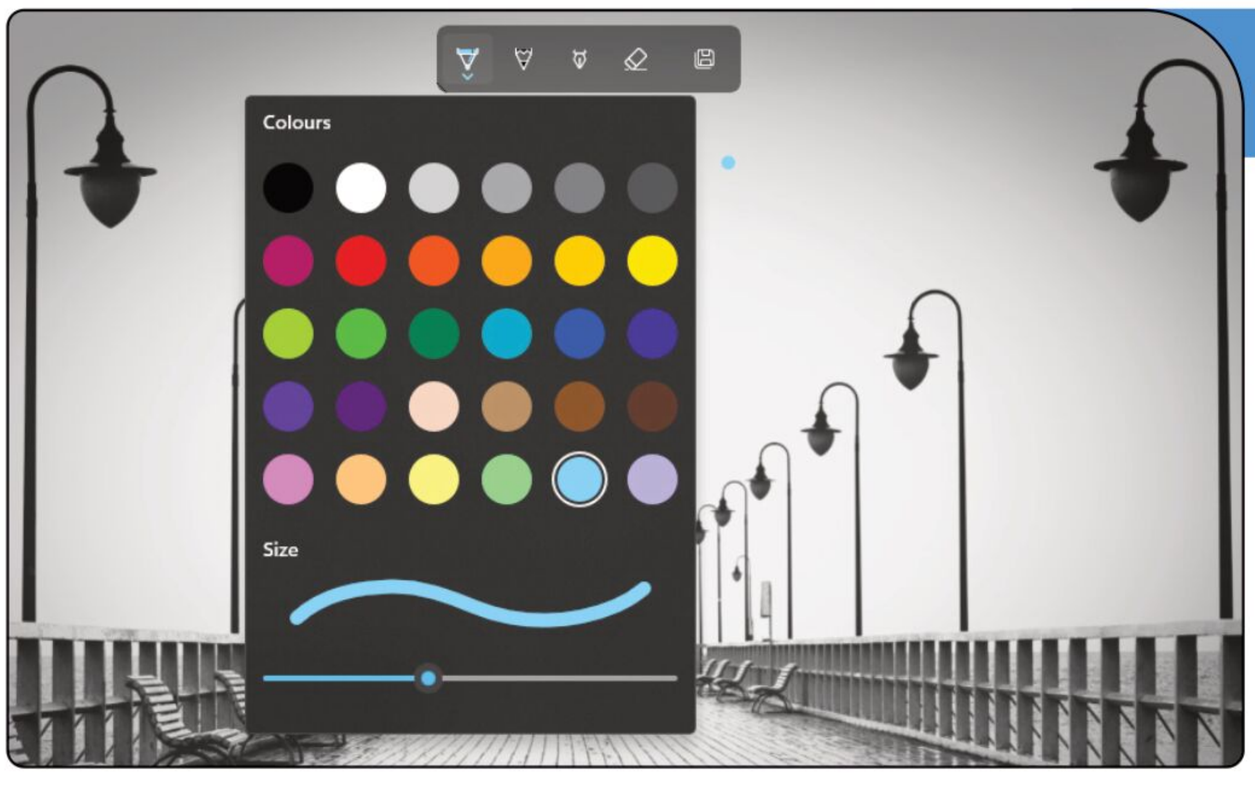
Step 1

Open the Photos app and select your image, or double click an image to open it in Photos if that is the default app. Along the top of the image are several buttons, click the Draw button to begin editing your image. You will see a new set of buttons and controls appear at the top.



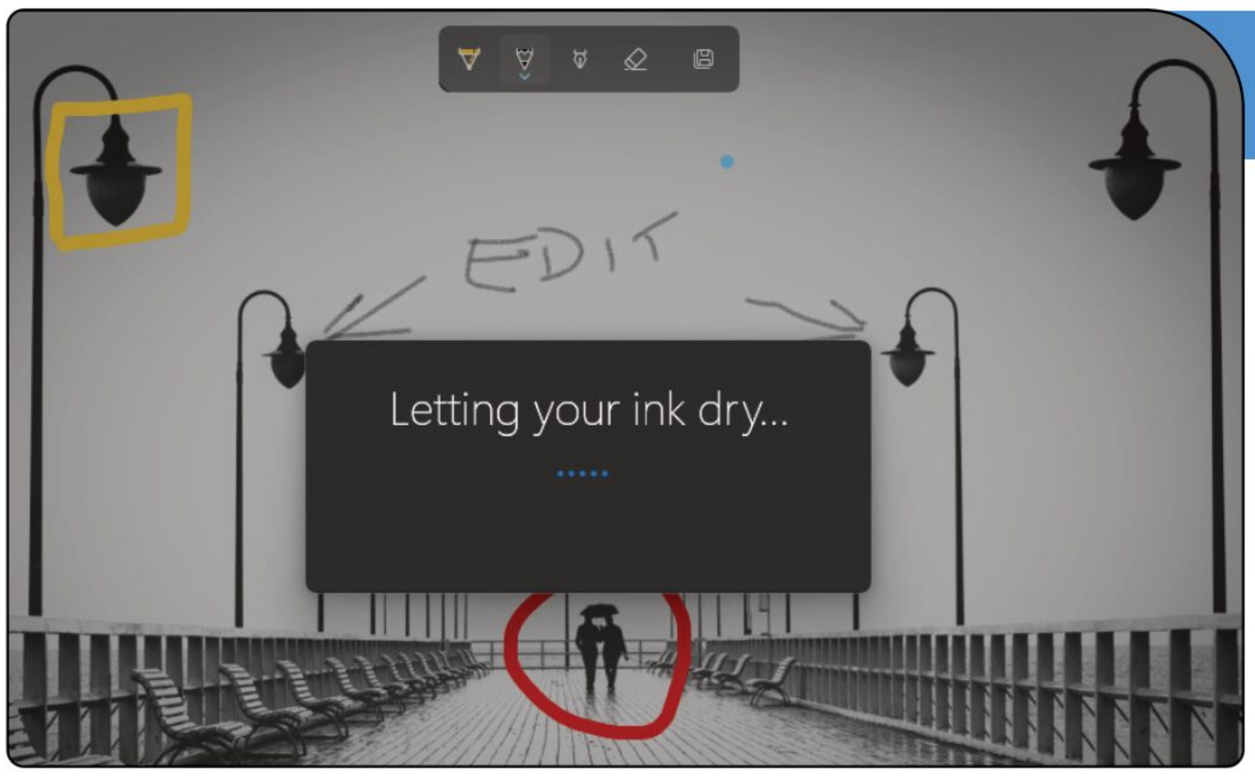
Step 2

These have been somewhat simplified for Windows 11. From left to right, these buttons allow you to draw/write in pen style, pencil style, calligraphy style, erase your ink and save your file. If you click on any button and see a small arrow, click again to open a contextual menu for it.



Step 3

The contextual menus allow you to change the colour and the thickness of the pen or pencil tools. When you have picked a style, colour and size, you can begin to draw or write over the top of your image. The drawing tool in Photos works best with a touchscreen PC or stylus.



Step 4

Once you have completed drawing or writing on your image, you can save it. Your image will automatically be saved with a slightly different file name, so you don't have to worry about overwriting the original. Your inked image will appear in your Collection.