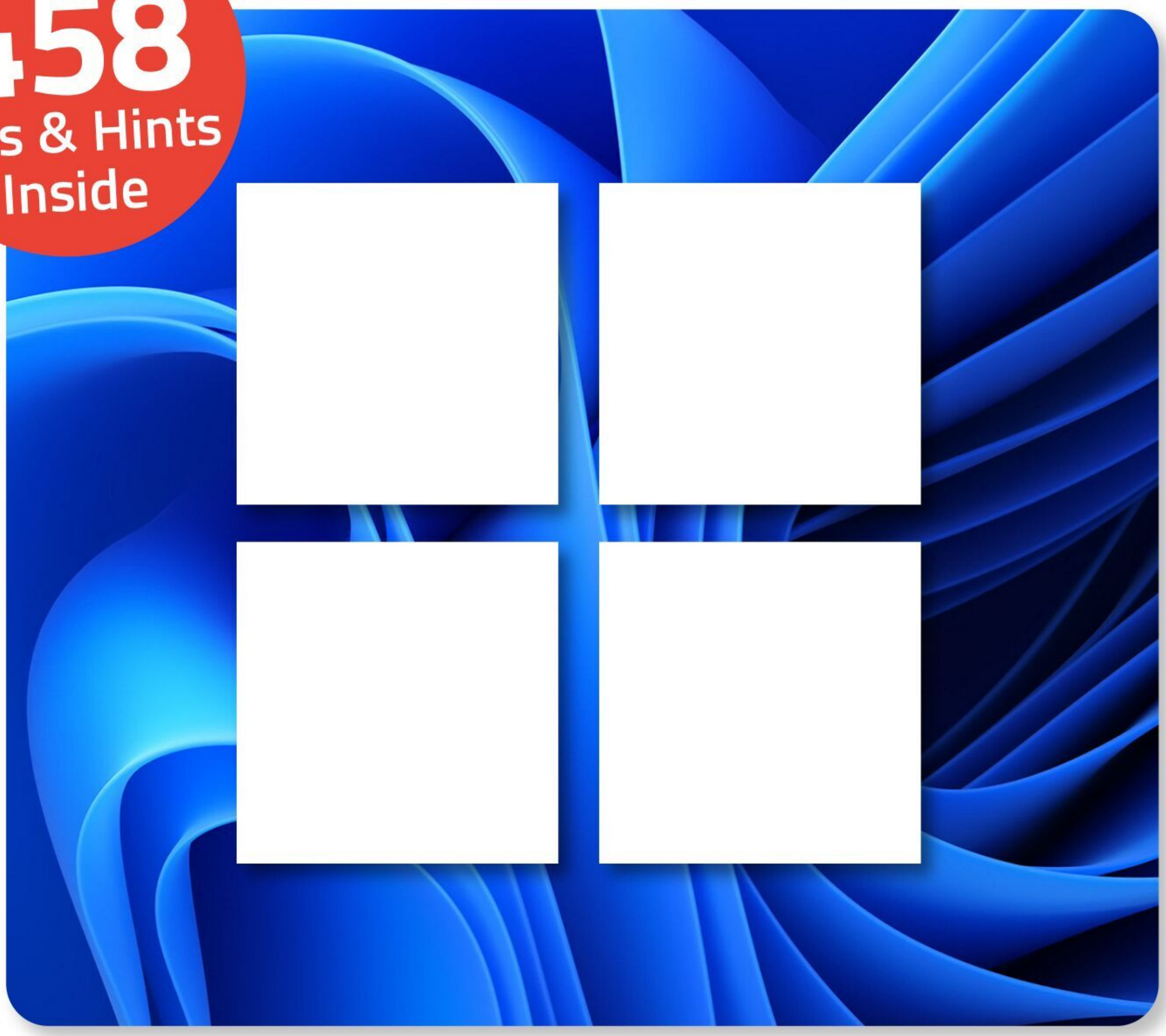
April 2022 Update

Windows 11

For Beginners

All you need to get started with Microsoft's Windows 11

Over 458 Tips & Hints Inside



- Jargon-free Tips & Advice
- Step-by-step Tutorials
- Clear Full Colour Guides

Windows 11
For Beginners

Starting something new can be daunting. Learning a skill or mastering a new piece of hardware is tough. Even tougher if you have no-one at hand to help. Conversely as the complexity of our consumer technology increases, the size of the requisite instruction manual decreases or in some cases it simply disappears. At numerous times in our lives we have all been “beginners”, there is no shame in that fact and rightly so. How many times have you asked aloud, “What does this button do?”. “Why doesn’t that work?”. “What do you mean it doesn’t do that?”. “HELP!”. At the start of any new journey or adventure we are all beginners but fortunately for you we are here to stand beside you at every stage.

Over this extensive series of titles we will be looking in great depth at the latest consumer electronics, software, hobbies and trends out of the box! We will guide you step-by-step through using all aspects of the technology that you may have been previously apprehensive at attempting. Let our expert guide help you build your technology understanding and skills, taking you from a novice to a confident and experienced user.

Over the page our journey begins. We would wish you luck but we’re sure with our support you won’t need it.

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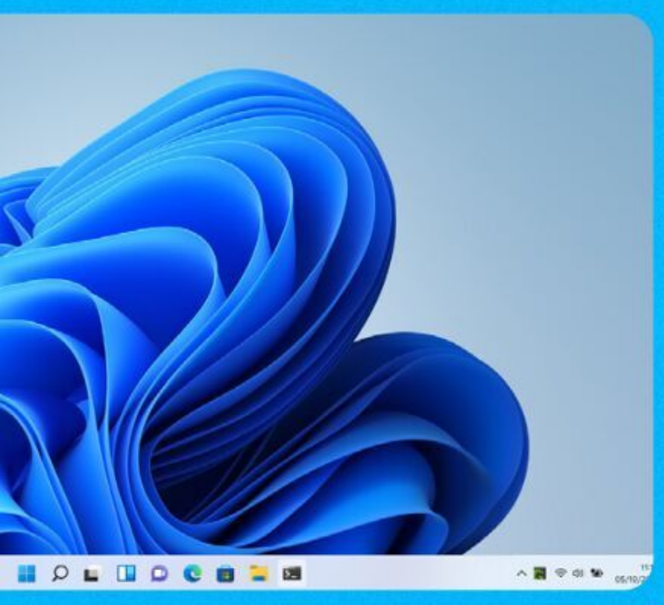
What's New in Windows 11?

Windows 11 is the newest version of Microsoft's client operating system. Despite the claims that Windows would be the final version, June 24th 2021 had the Redmond company present us with the new flagship OS.

Windows 11

As from October 5th 2021, Windows 11 has been available to freely upgrade from previous versions of Windows 10. As the new OS sprang to life on desktops and laptops around the globe, the user could be forgiven for thinking that they'd somehow managed to download and install a forgotten version of macOS. With the new Taskbar launcher, situated in the centre of the desktop, a bright and responsive UI, and revamped elements, Windows 11 does appear, on the surface at least, to be very Mac-like. Which isn't really a bad thing.



Feature Updates

To further the Apple-esque feel, Microsoft has also declared that Windows 11 would be getting yearly OS updates similar to that of Apple – Windows 10 received two feature updates per year. There's an added modern Mac-like feature that's been added to Windows 11, too: the ability to run Android apps natively through the new Microsoft Store and Amazon Appstore. Just as with newer versions of macOS being able to execute iOS and iPad apps.

More Streamlined

Overall, Windows 11 is hailed as the start of a new era. It feels modern, it's easy to use, and has ben designed to help streamline productivity in a post-COVID world of working from home; helping you be more creative and collaborative. So let's see what you can expect from this bold new operating system from Microsoft.

What's New

The Start Menu, or new Taskbar, is the most stand-out feature of Windows 11. Where once the Taskbar and included apps swept from the bottom-left of the desktop, beginning with the Windows Start button, it now spreads from the bottom-centre of the screen. This is designed to feel less cluttered, and more organised, making it cleaner and more efficient in use. It may seem like a small change, but it's one that has been greatly received by the majority of the userbase.

Great for gaming

Gaming is something that Microsoft has finally managed to accept as being an integral part of Windows. Windows 10's gaming experience wasn't great, and was often frowned upon by gamers. But with Windows 11 gamers can now take advantage of the likes of DirectStorage, which allows for much quicker load times on M.2 SSDs. The Xbox Game Pass is also included with Windows 11, giving you access to over one hundred Xbox games. There's even an auto HDR toggle, to help makes games that take advantage of it look even better than before.

Snap Groups

The ability to Snap open windows to different areas of the desktop isn't new, but Windows 11 has streamlined the process and makes for multitasking across multiple apps a more efficient experience. Snap Groups allow you to store several Snap Layouts, enabling you to quickly access your favourite saved layouts via the Taskbar

Widgets are Back

Widgets have made an impressive return to the Windows ecosystem, when first featured on Windows Vista. They offer an impressive mix of personalisation, enabling you to keep track of the weather, news, traffic, and all those important calendar events.

Go Team!

Microsoft's Teams app is now built-in to Windows 11, and it's on the Start Taskbar by default too. If being in lockdown taught us one thing, it's how important the likes of Teams have been to help keep things moving and keeping in touch with work, friends and family.

Improved Performance

The Desktop experience is now more customisable. You can personalise the size of the apps, better manage Virtual Desktops, and make everything work a little better than before. This level of customisation greatly improves performance in the long term, so you'll find tasks from previous versions of Windows taking a little less time with Windows 11.

Windows Terminal

There's the Windows Terminal app included by default. This app is a powerful addition that combines the Windows PowerShell, a command prompt, and Azure Cloud Shell all within the same terminal window. You don't need to open separate apps to use these command-line applications. It has tabs. And when you open a new tab, you can choose your command-line application.

More in Store

Finally, the Windows Store has had an overhaul and includes more public and retail apps, as well as a redesigned interface to help you find what you want quicker, and get it installed on your system.

Tip of the Iceberg

These are just some of the main highlights to Windows 11. Throughout this book you'll discover more elements to the operating system, and how to use them to your best advantage. Windows 11 may be new, but that doesn't mean you have to be a newbie.

Read on, and let's see what else Windows 11 has to offer.

Updating to Windows 11

Microsoft's latest version of Windows hit the update servers on October 5th 2021, but it seemed many computers were still waiting for the go-ahead from their Windows Update screens, if you are one of them we can help you. Here's how to step up the process.

If you're still on Windows 10, and waiting patiently for your update screen to display the exciting 'Ready to update Windows 11' notification, then this is the guide for you. Rather than tweaking with the update settings, or delving into the murky depths of the command prompt, there's an easier way to get the ball rolling and get you on and working with Windows 11.

Before You Leap

Before we go about running the update process, it's worth checking that your system can actually run Windows 11. Many of us have already been down this route, and have discovered that we need to apply a few elements prior to installing the newest OS from Microsoft.

TPM 2.0

TPM stands for Trusted Platform Module, and its task is to protect data through authentication, perform platform integrity, utilise disk encryption, and store passwords and certificates. In short, it's an extra layer of hardware protection to help stop your PC from being compromised or to stop many forms of malware from infecting the core components of your computer.

Now that you know what TPM is, you can begin to understand Microsoft's insistence of it being present before even allowing Windows 11 to be installed. Windows is, by quite a margin, the most popular operating system in the world, and as such it's the main target for malware and many other very unpleasant things out there in the wild world. By using TPM, Microsoft is under the opinion that it's making things a little more difficult for any hackers and creators of malware. It is, however, totally possible to bypass the TPM requirements.

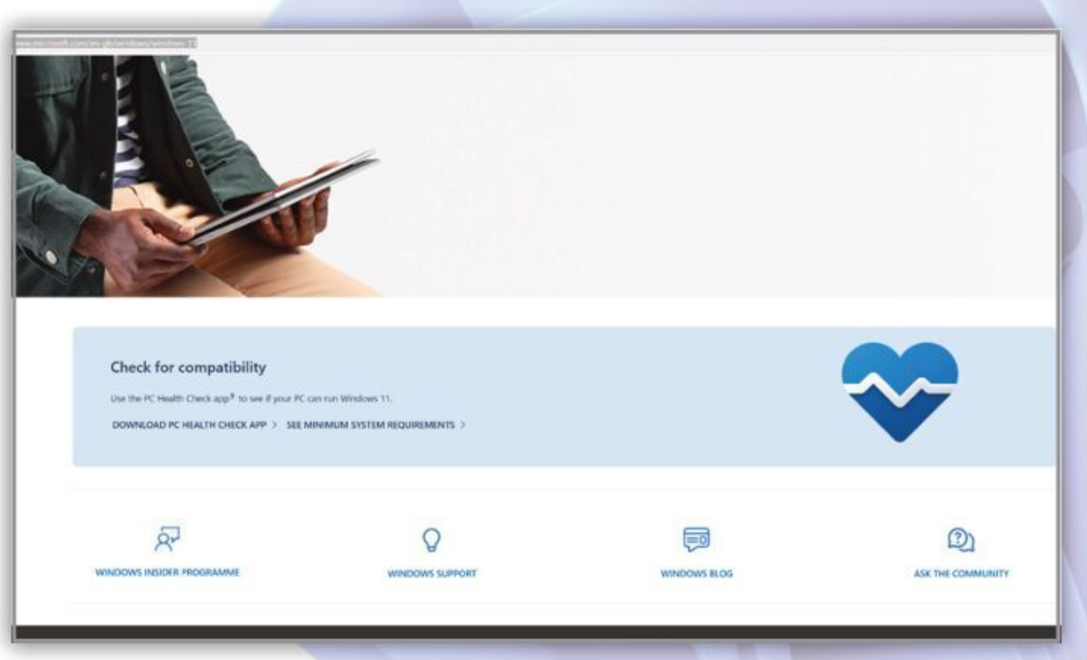
Anyway, in general, if your computer is reasonably up to date, or roughly less than four years old, then there's a good chance that you have a TPM present in your system. For some systems, TPM comes in the form of an actual module that physically plugs into a socket on your motherboard, for most computers, though, TPM is offered via the processor.

What you will need to do is drop into your BIOS, this can normally be done by tapping either the Del or F2 keys when you first power up your computer (before it starts to boot into Windows). Naturally, different motherboard manufacturers offer different keypresses, so you'll need to check with your manual.

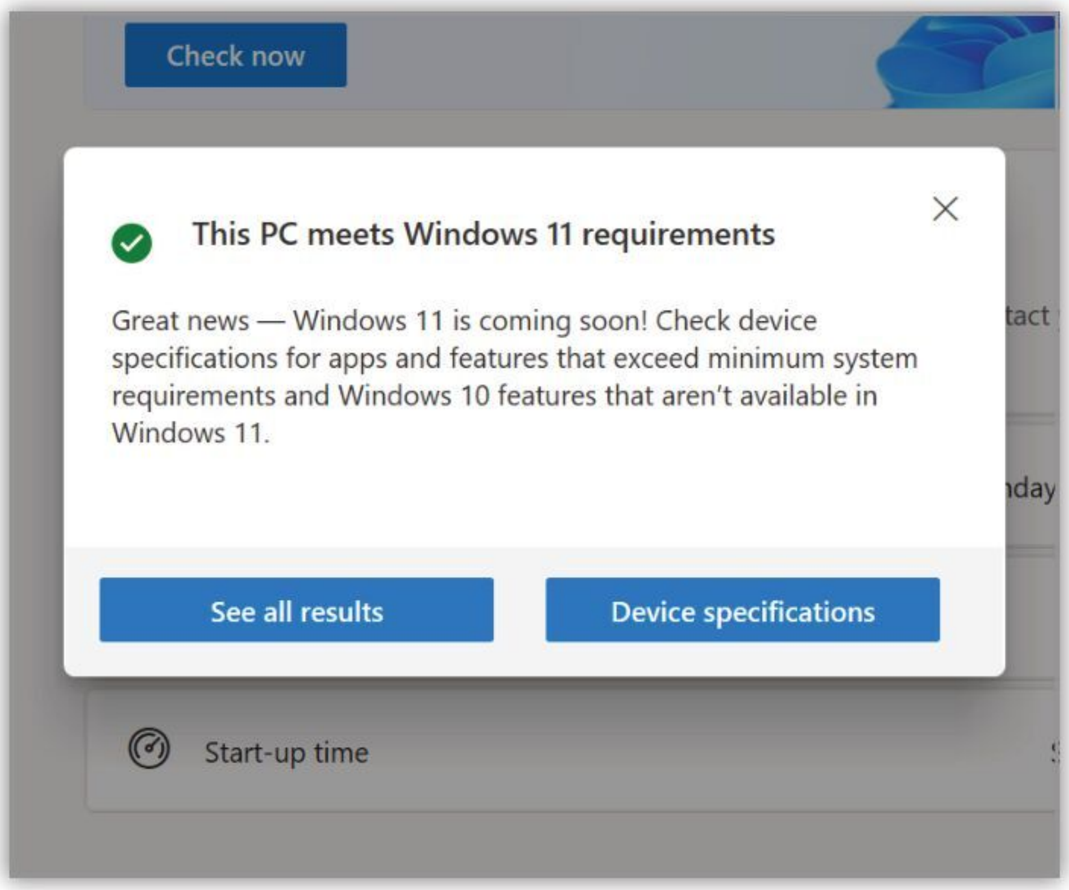
When in the BIOS, look for Settings > Security > Trusted Computing. If you've got an AMD processor, you may also have to look for AMD CPU fTPM. Enable both, if available, save the settings and reboot the computer before your prodeed.

These entries will differ from one motherboard to the next, as previously mentioned. You may need to Google your motherboard make and model number, together with the words 'enable TPM', to see how to specifically enable it for you.

Once enabled, and rebooted into Windows 10, go to https://www.microsoft.com/en-gb/windows/windows-11, and scroll to the bottom of the page and click on the Download PC Health Check App button to start the download process.



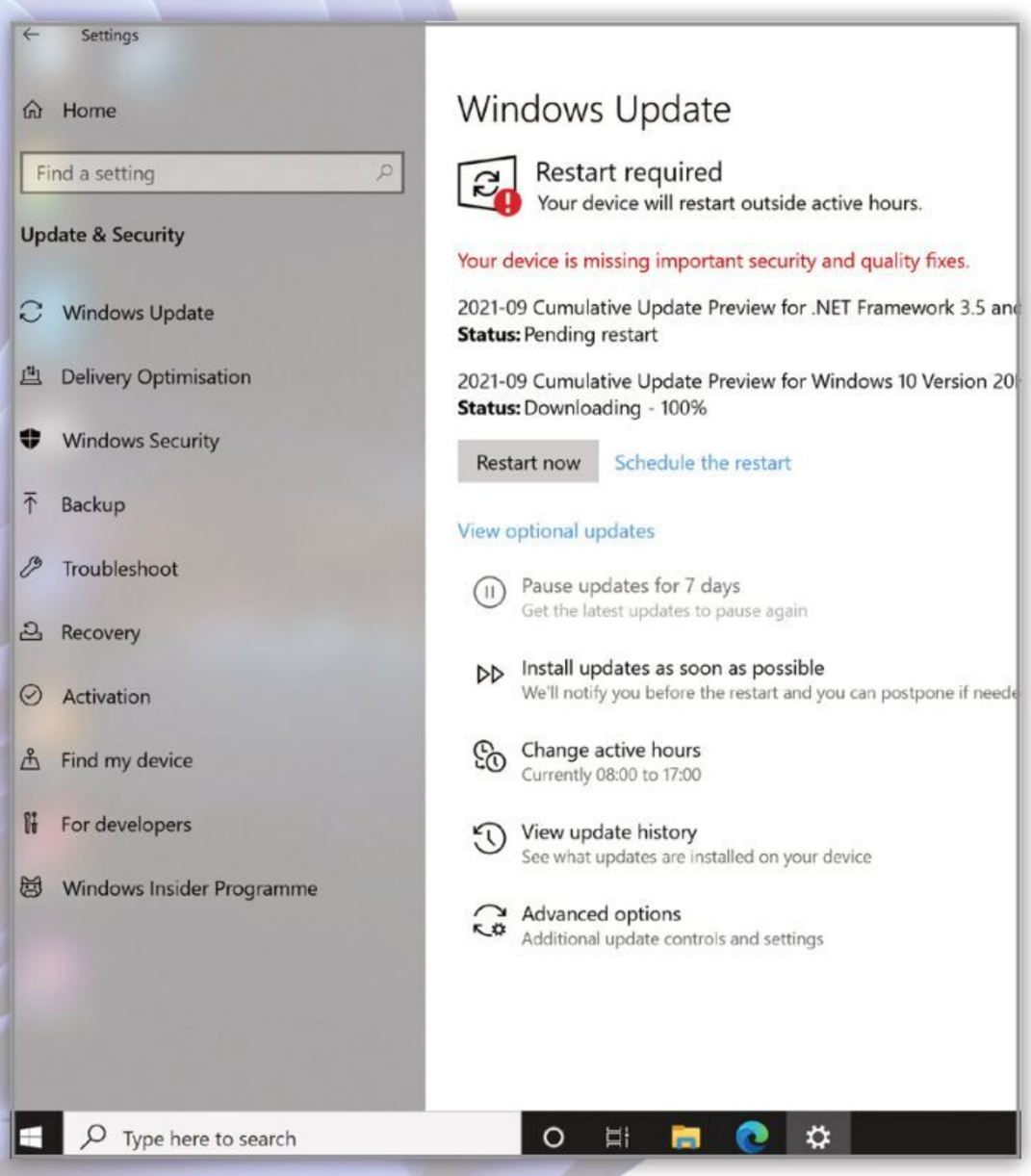
Once it's downloaded, double-click to install it. When installed, run the Health Check App, and look for the Check now button in the Introduction Windows 11 section. Click it, and you'll be given a report as to whether your computer can run Windows 11 or not. If not, you're told where it's failed and you can look up what to do next and remedy the situation.



Windows 11 Installation Assistant

To force the update to Windows 11, providing your computer can handle it, you'll need to run the Windows 11 Installation Assistant. This is a separate app that enables Windows 10 users, who have a valid Windows license, to update their computers to the latest version of Windows 11.

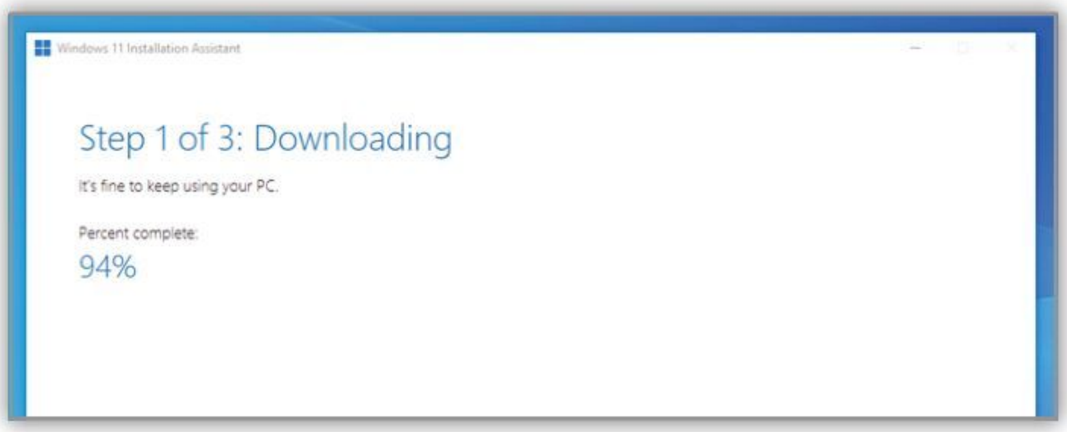
You'll need to ensure that you have at least version 2004 of Windows 10 before you begin. It's worth going to the Windows Update section in the Settings and checking for the latest updates.



If all is well, head on over to https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/software-download/windows11, and locate the Windows 11 Installation Assistant section. Click on the Download Now button, to save the app to your computer.

Locate the app on your computer, and double-click it to begin the Windows 11 installation process. If everything is as it should be, you'll be presented with an Install Windows 11 window. Click on the Accept and Install button to continue the process.

Next, the app will download the necessary file and perform the forced installation of Windows 11. This could be anywhere between 20 minutes to nearly an hour – depending on the speed of your computer, connection to the Internet and so on.



It's a three-step process, and the final step will have you reboot the computer. You'll then need to go through a Welcome process, and once that's done, the Windows 11 desktop will load; retaining all your files, desktop settings etc.

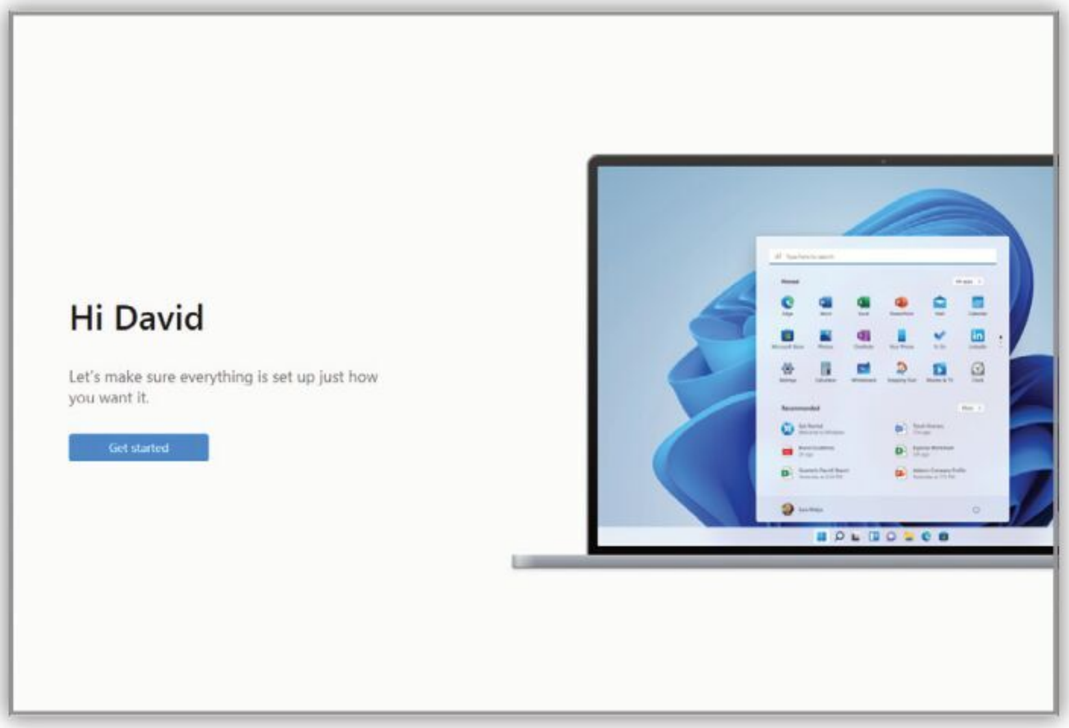
Windows 11 - Getting Started

Microsoft has greatly improved its initial Windows setup routine with intuitive guides. Where once you were simply delivered onto the desktop and left to your own devices, now Windows 11 ensures you can comfortably hit the ground running.

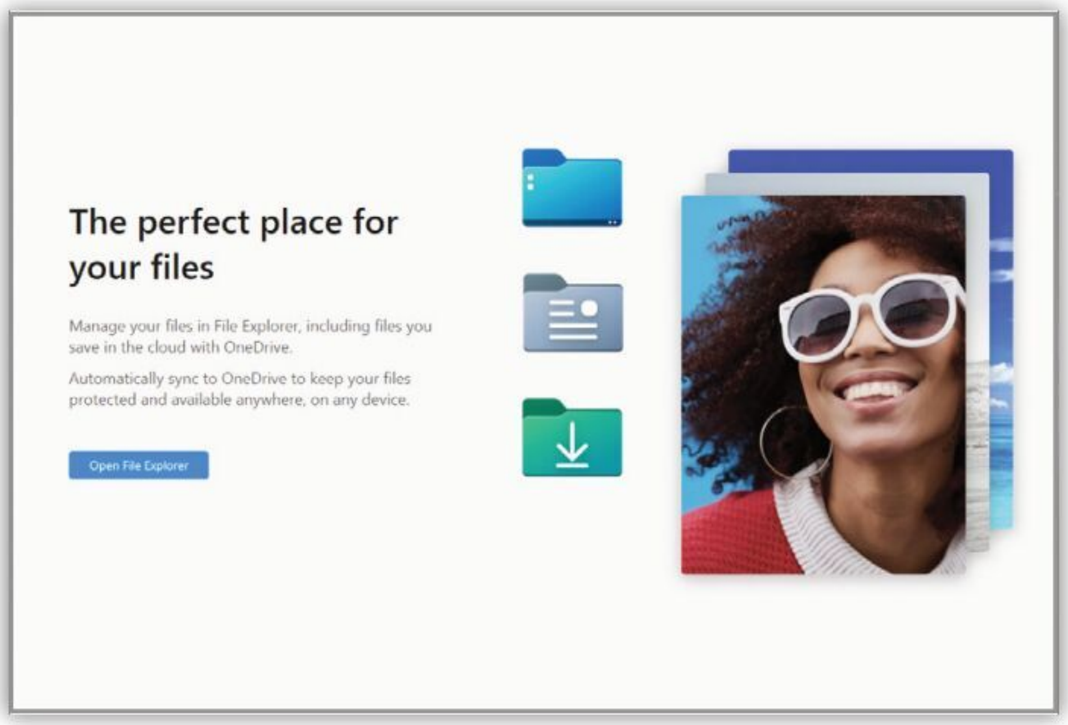
Hello Windows 11

One of the first tasks to complete when you boot into Windows 11, is to run through the Getting Started guide. Here's how it works.

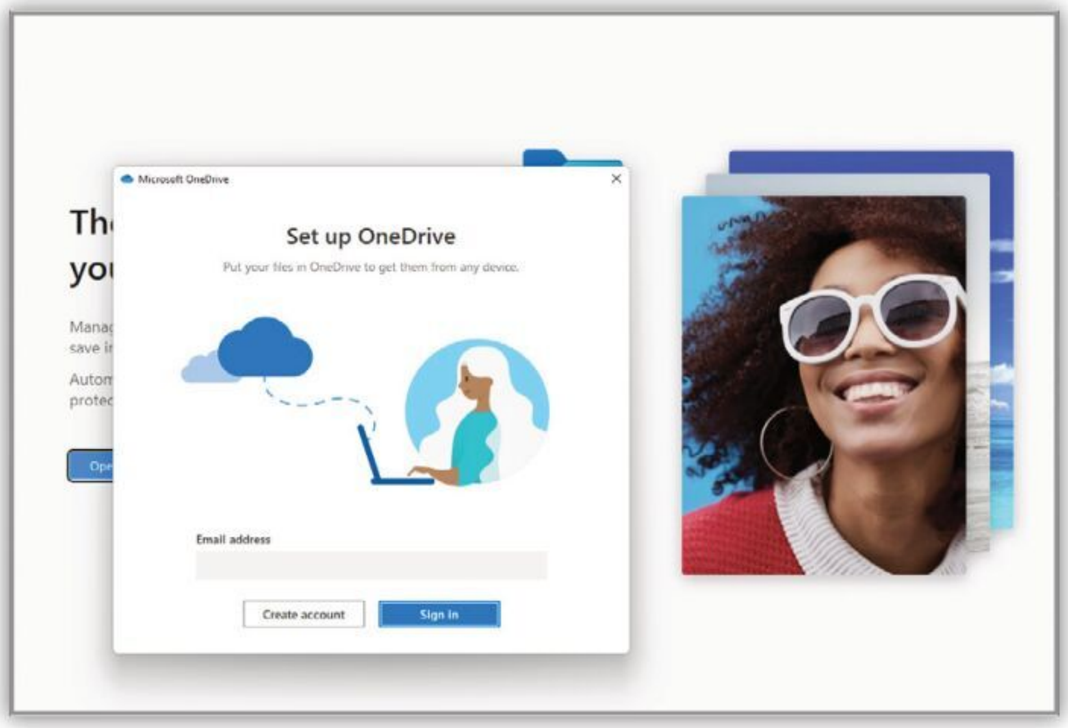
Step 1 You'll find the Getting Started guide in the Start menu, when you click the Windows logo button on the taskbar. It's a welcome to Windows setup wizard, and makes sure you're ready to use your files, and get access to your work quickly and effectively. Once it has opened, click the Get Started button to continue to the next step.



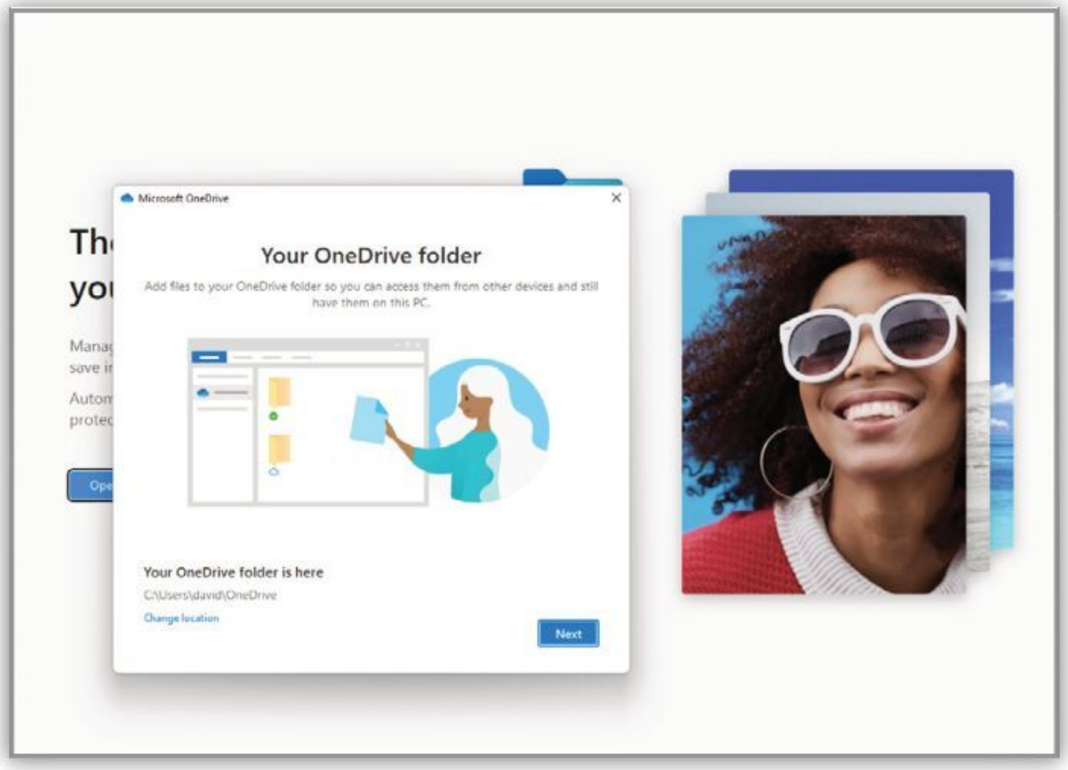
Step 2 Microsoft's use of OneDrive for both business and personal data has become one of the cornerstones of the company's services. OneDrive offers a secure space to store your data, which will always be available no matter what happens to your computer. Click on the Open File Explorer button to begin your OneDrive setup and login.



Step 3 If you already have a OneDrive, or Microsoft, account, then click on the Sign In button to enter your details and link your OneDrive with the account on the Windows 11 PC you're currently setting up. If you don't have a OneDrive account, click the Create Account button and then follow the on-screen instructions.

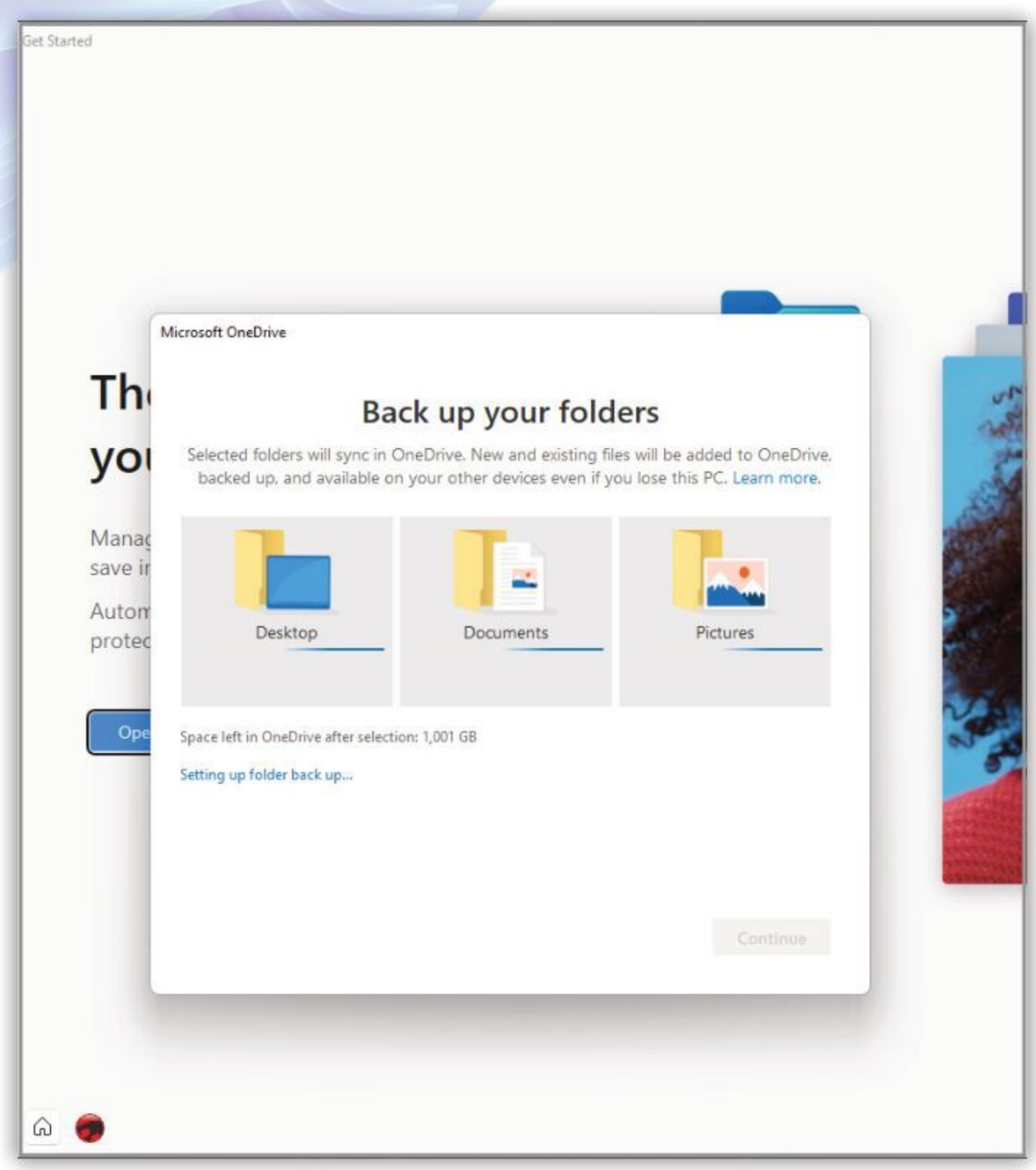


Step 4 When you've completed the setup and logged into OneDrive, a special folder within your user account on the PC will be setup. This folder allows you to interact in real-time with the OneDrive cloud service, so any files created in the folder will be automatically uploaded to OneDrive; and vice versa.

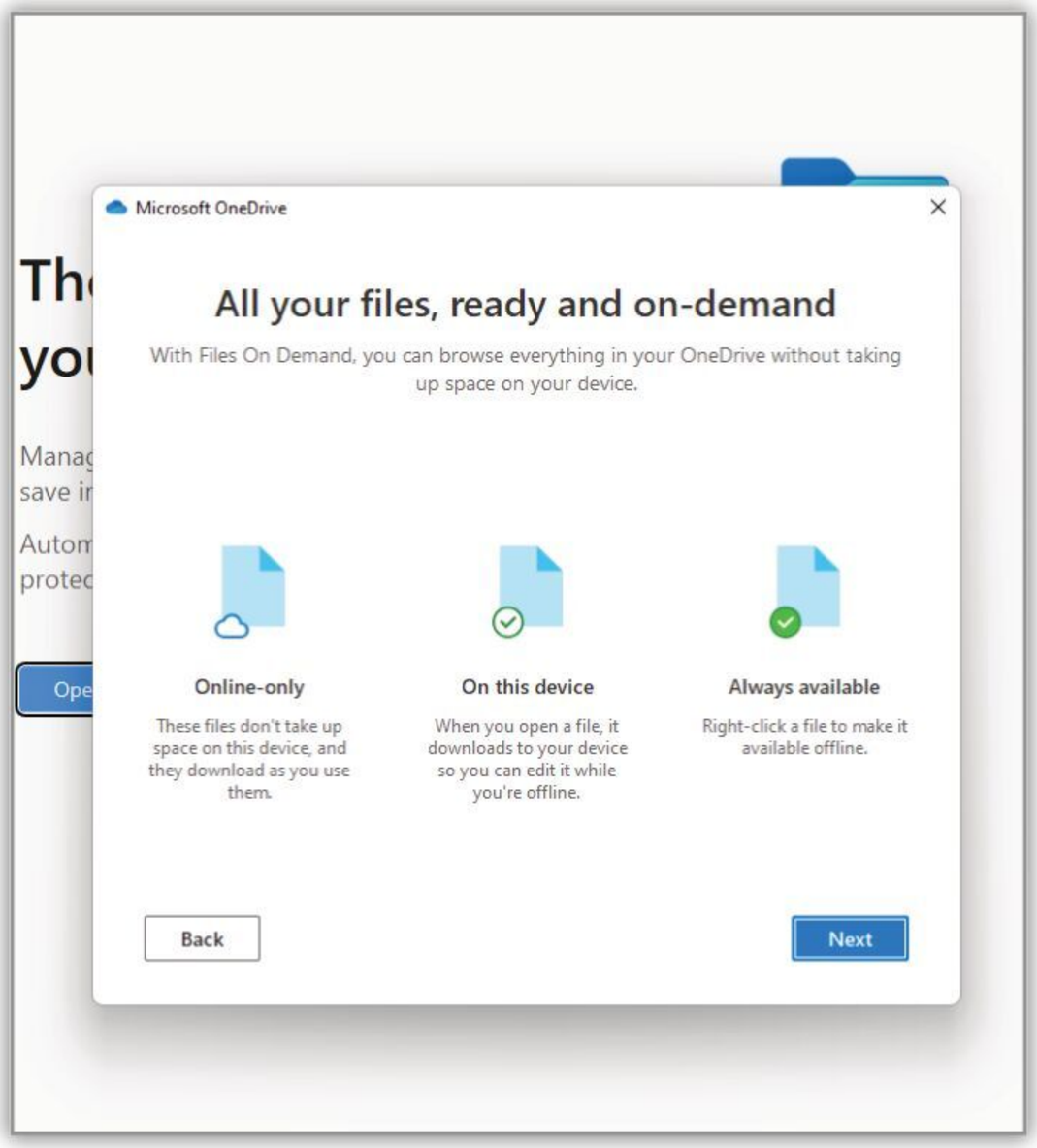


Windows 11 - Getting Started

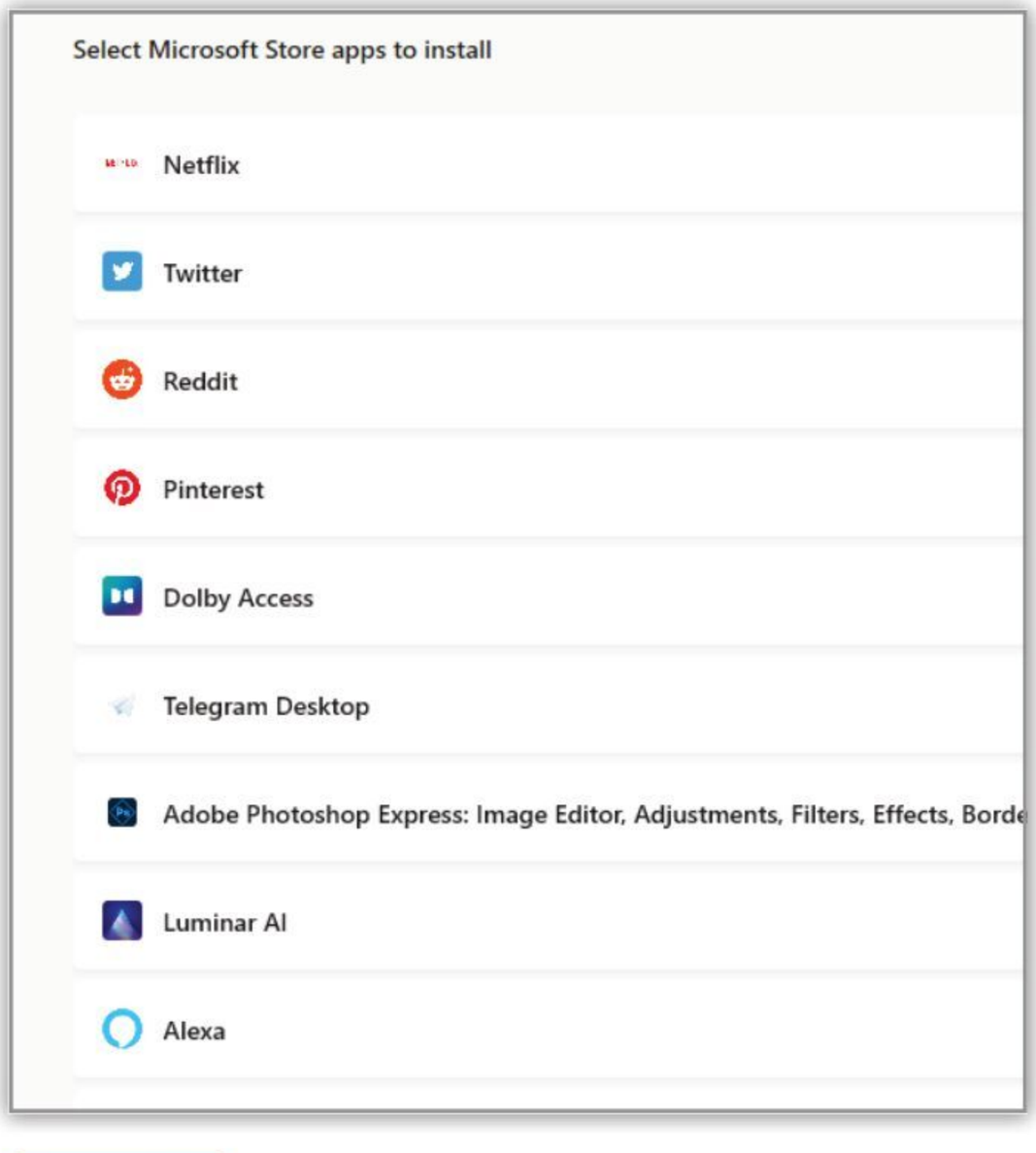
Step 5 OneDrive will also setup an automated service that will backup any files and folders that you store on the Desktop, in your Documents folder, and in your Pictures folder. Click on the 'Setting up folder back up' link to add more folders to backup, or deselect any you don't want to.



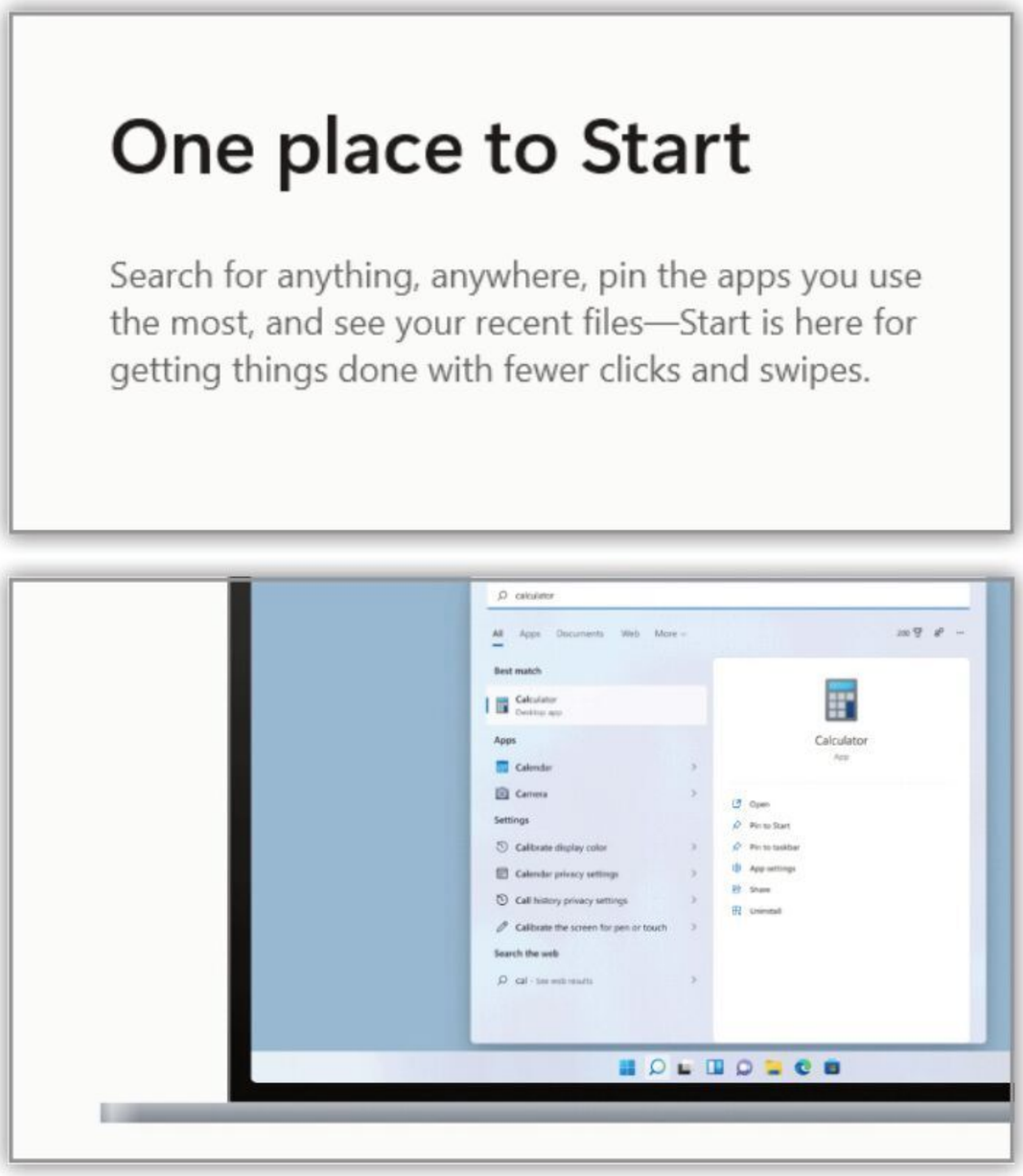
Step 6 The service will help reduce the amount of space taken up on the PC, or other Windows 11 devices you're using, by utilising Files On Demand. This is an automatic setup that will let you view and edit files on OneDrive without downloading them locally. You can, however, opt to makes files and folder Always Available.



Step 7 The next step in the Getting Started process has you viewing and selecting any of the popular apps that are currently available for Windows 11. Naturally, you can install these apps via the Windows Store at a later date, but having them to begin with can reduce the amount of time you spend setting up the computer.

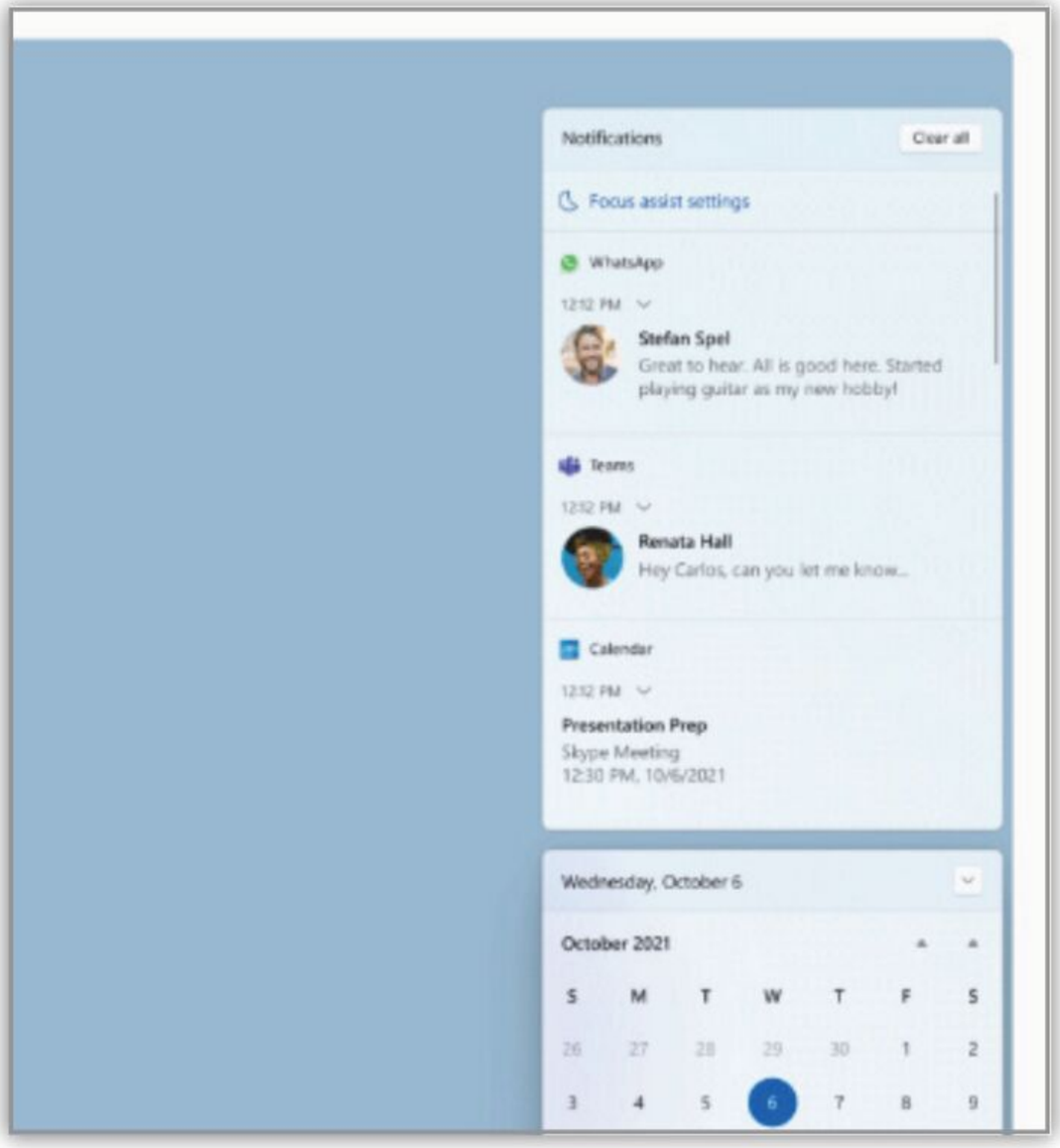


Step 8 An interesting element to the Getting Started setup are the informational sections; such as this one. It details the new Search app that's located on the taskbar. It also highlights the new Start launch taskbar, and shows how easy it is to use, and pin any Apps to.

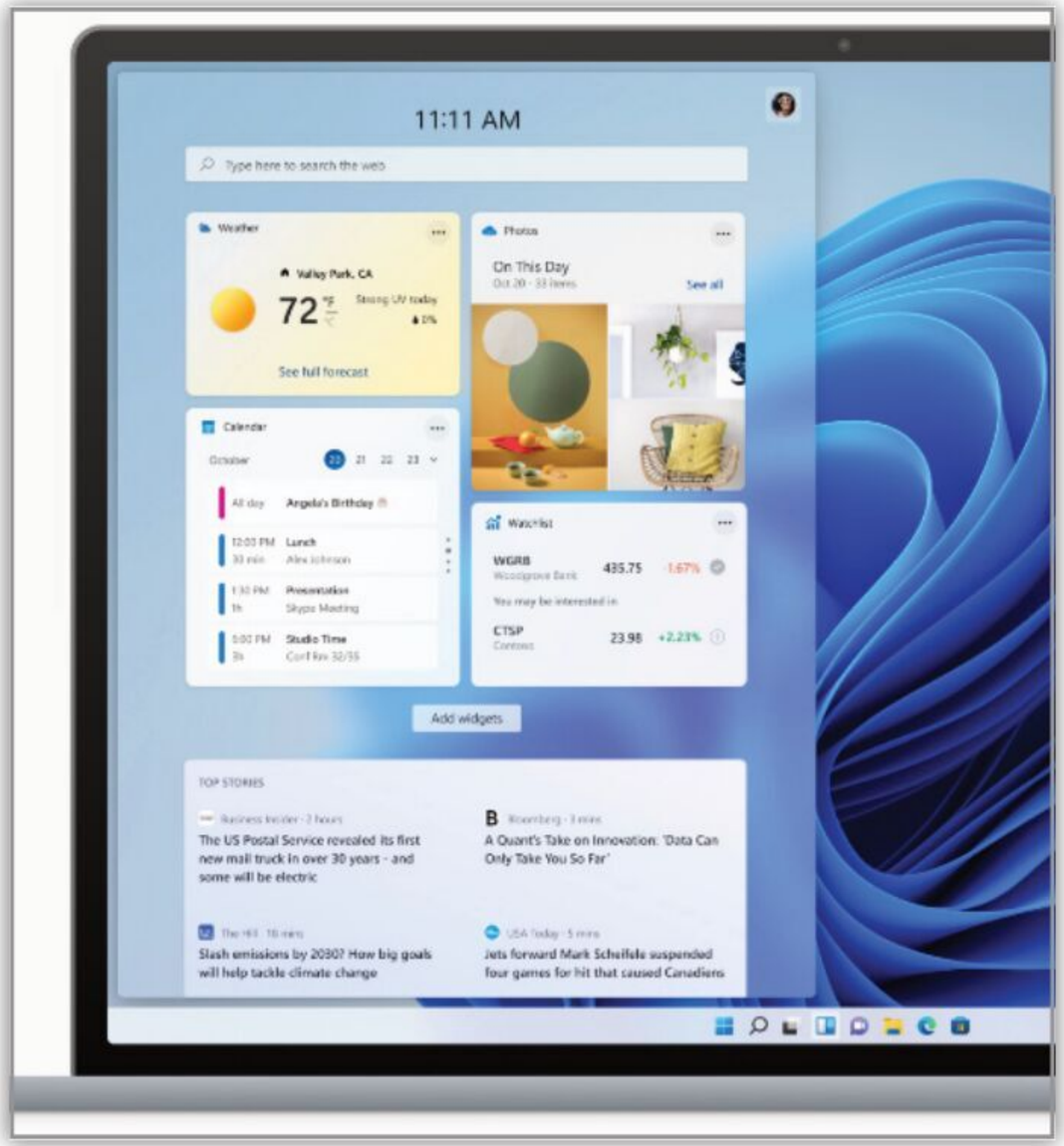


Windows 11 - Getting Started continued...

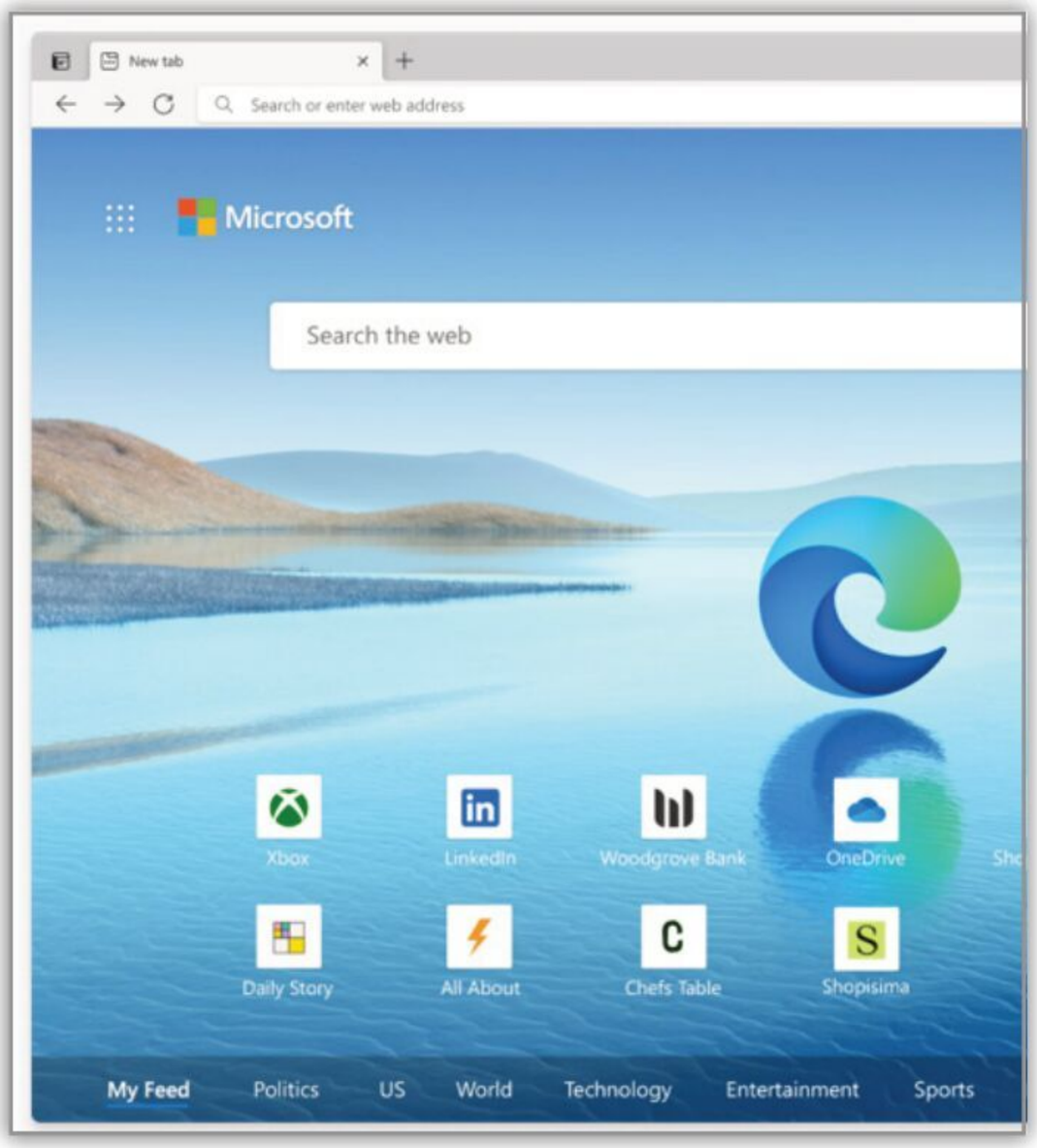
Step 9 The Focus Assist setting is designed to help you choose the notifications you'd like to see and hear, without the distractions of those you don't. Any notification that's not set in the Priority list of apps, will be added to the Notification area without disturbing your workflow. Click the Open focus assist settings button for further information.



Step 11 Widgets are a resurfacing technology from the Windows Vista days; only now they work a lot better. This panel of the Getting Started setup shows you how to access your Widgets, and how to explore what's available. The widget window scrolls in from the left of the screen, slightly raised above the taskbar.



Step 10 Microsoft Edge has seen some dramatic improvements over the years, so much so that it's now regarded as one of the most secure, and fastest browsers available. Of course, if you prefer to use Chrome, Firefox or another browser, then you're free to do so. Edge, however, is built on Chrome technologies, so it might be worth giving it a go.

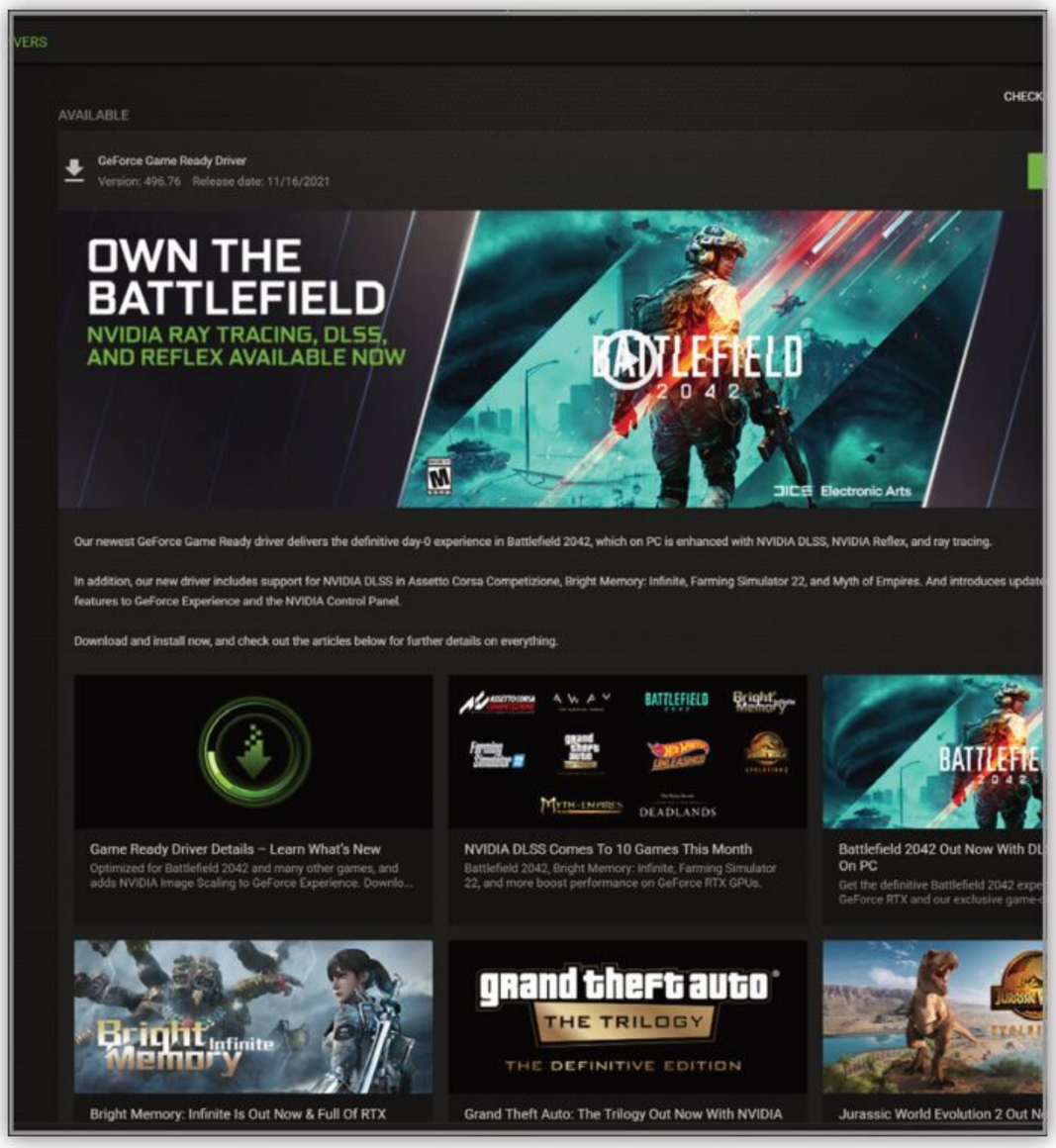


Step 12 Linking your Android phone with Windows is a function that appeared in the early years of Windows 10. Since then it has improved significantly, and you can easily setup and configure the interface from this panel in the Getting Started guide. Simply click the, Link your Android button to begin the connection process.

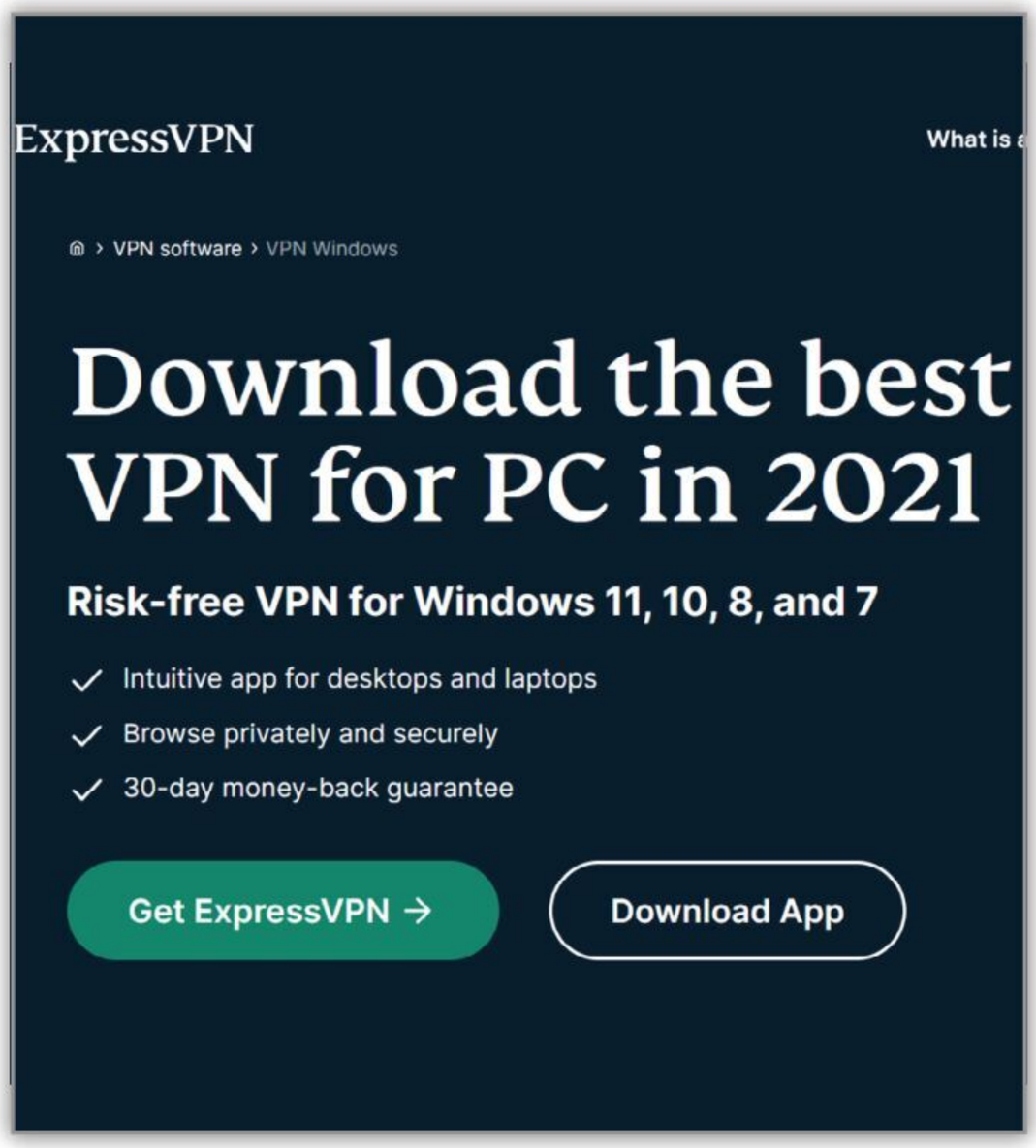
Step 13 The new Chat icon in the taskbar is an element of Microsoft Teams. Teams has proved its worth in gold during lockdown, and has now been included by default in Windows 11. It's cross-platform, and easy to setup and use. Just click on the Chat button in the taskbar to begin the setup process.

Step 14 That's the Getting Started guide complete. You'll now have a fully setup and working OneDrive with active folders, sorted out your notifications, launched and begun to use the Edge browser, and connected your Android phone. Before you do get started, we suggest you try the following.

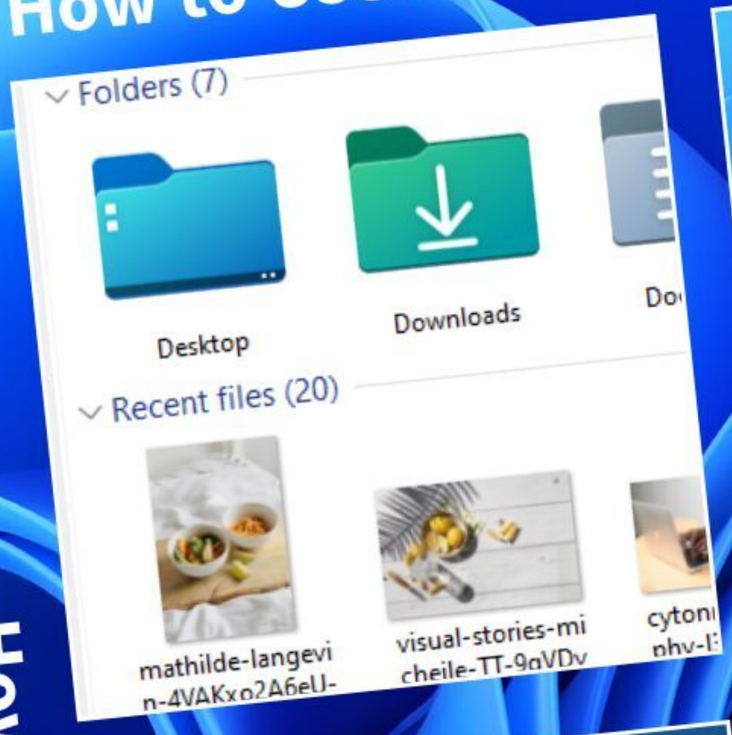
Step 15 Now would be a good opportunity to check that any specific hardware drivers are updated to Windows 11. To do this depends greatly on the type of hardware. For example, Nvidia GPUs will use the Nvidia GeForce Experience. Simply click to open the hardware setup client, and follow the on-screen instruction to apply the update(s).

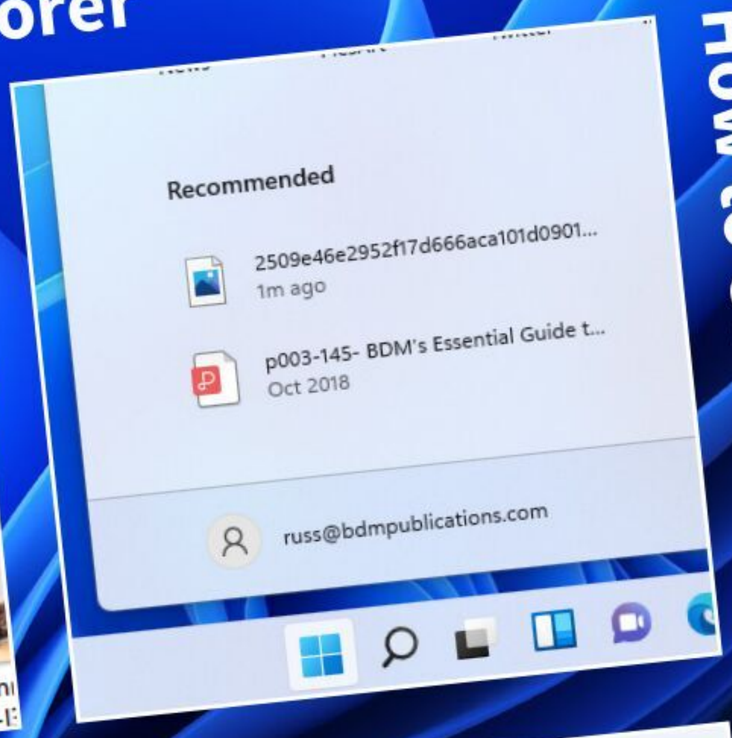


Step 16 If you have any older software, it's worth taking a moment to test that it still behaves the way you expect it to under Windows 11. If not, then look the software up online, see if there's an update to Windows 11, or contact the developers directly to ask for guidance relating to the specific software itself.

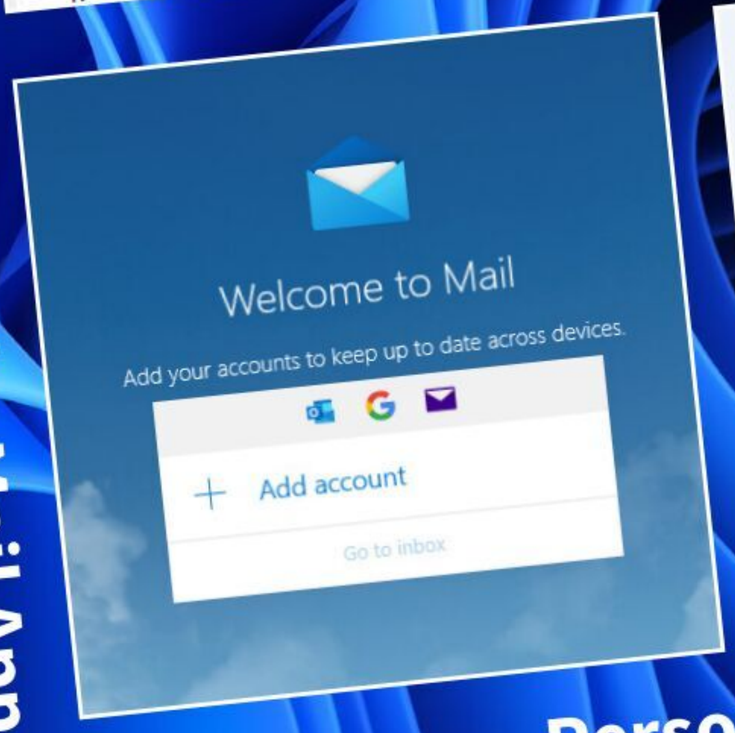


How to Use File Explorer





How to Use the Start Menu



How to Use the Mail App

Personalising Windows 11

Windows 11 Essentials

Windows 11 looks a lot different to previous versions of the operating system. There's a new taskbar, Start menu, Microsoft Store, file menus, search and much more. It's all ground-breaking stuff, and you'll need to be familiar with the basics before you can begin dive into more technical territory.

Read on, and discover Windows 11 essentials.

Windows 11 Start Screen

The Windows 11 desktop user interface (UI) is a radical change from what we're used to with previous versions of Windows. The main differences are the new taskbar, Notifications and Widgets.

1 Widgets

The Widgets snap in from the left of the desktop when you move your mouse over to the edge of the screen. You'll notice that the Widget window is slightly raised, this is to avoid it clashing with the taskbar; to help keep the desktop clutter-free. You can also open them by pressing the Windows Key + W on your keyboard.

2 Search

You can use the Search field to look for more specific Widgets, and add them to your desktop for a more personalised desktop environment. Note that new Widgets are being added to Windows 11 almost on a daily basis. Keep an eye out, to see if the one you've always wanted makes an appearance.

3 Taskbar

The new Windows 11 taskbar expands out from the centre of the desktop now. The Windows Start button still works in the same way, displaying installed apps and offering access to the OS settings.

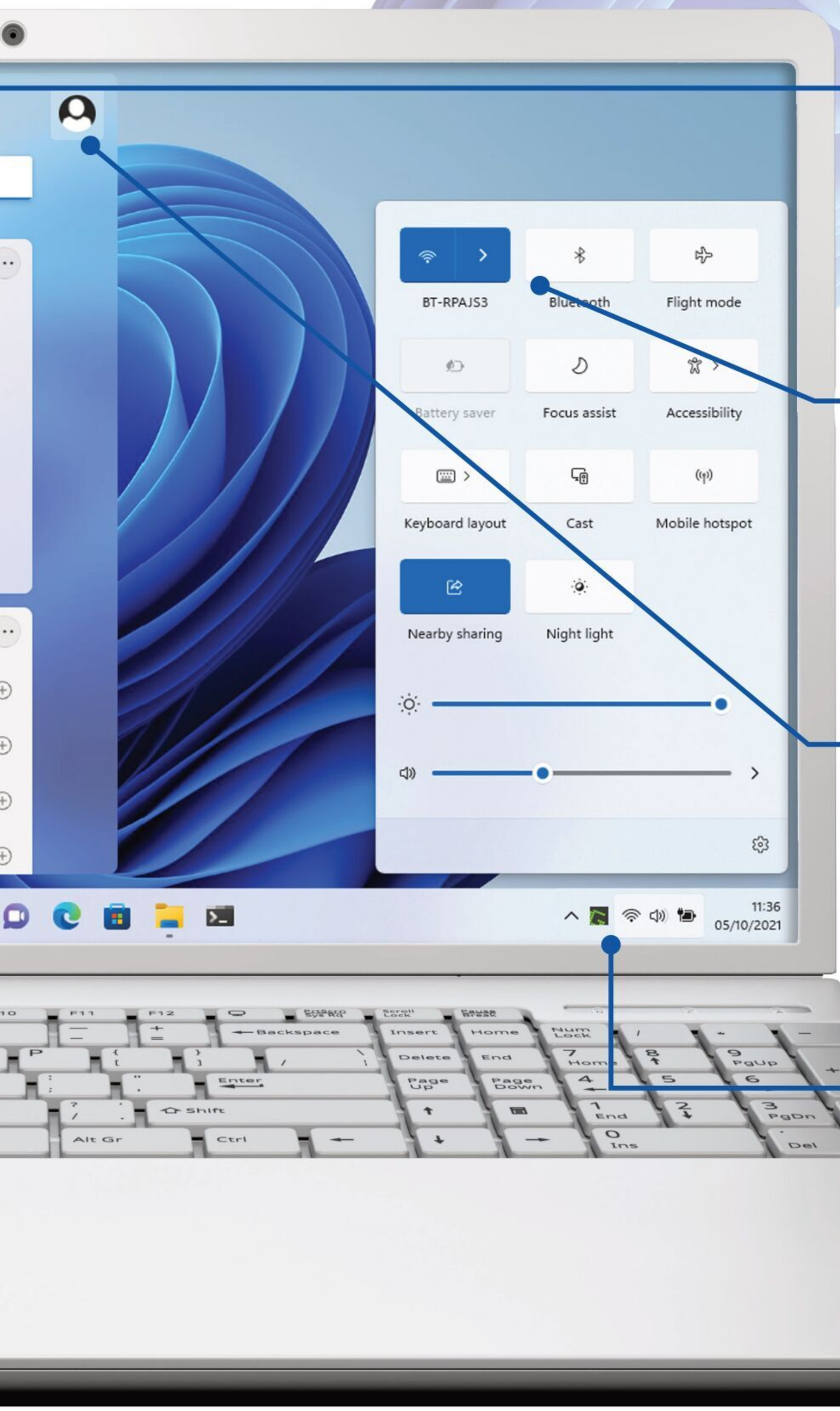
4 Search

The Search function within Windows 11 is greatly improved, and easier to find what you're looking for. Whether it's a document on your computer, or something online, you can find it here.

Windows 11 Start Screen

Then and Now

We've come a long way since the early days of Windows version 1.0. Through ups and downs, Windows has evolved to become the most used desktop operating system in the world. Over 35 years have passed since Windows 1.0 has released, let's see what the next 35 hold for Microsoft's OS.



5 Default Display

The default Widgets display the latest sporting news, the current weather, entertainment and the state of Stocks and Shares. These can be dragged and dropped to different locations, changed or even removed completely.

6 Desktop

As with all previous versions of Windows, the Desktop can be personalised and configured how you like. Its new look is brighter, with cleaner edges and better resolution than before, to help ease eye-strain and keep you focused.

7 Profile

Your Microsoft or local Windows 11 profile image will be displayed here. By clicking it, you'll be able to access further settings relating to many aspects of the core operating system, as well as specific settings to do with the Widgets feature.

8 Notifications

The Notification Centre and the taskbar are now combined. Click the set of icons that represent Wi-Fi, battery and so on, and the screen will expand upward to reveal more settings. In here you'll find access to the important elements of the computer. Notifications will be displayed next to the date; as and when they're needed. This allows you to focus more on what you're doing without unnecessary distractions.

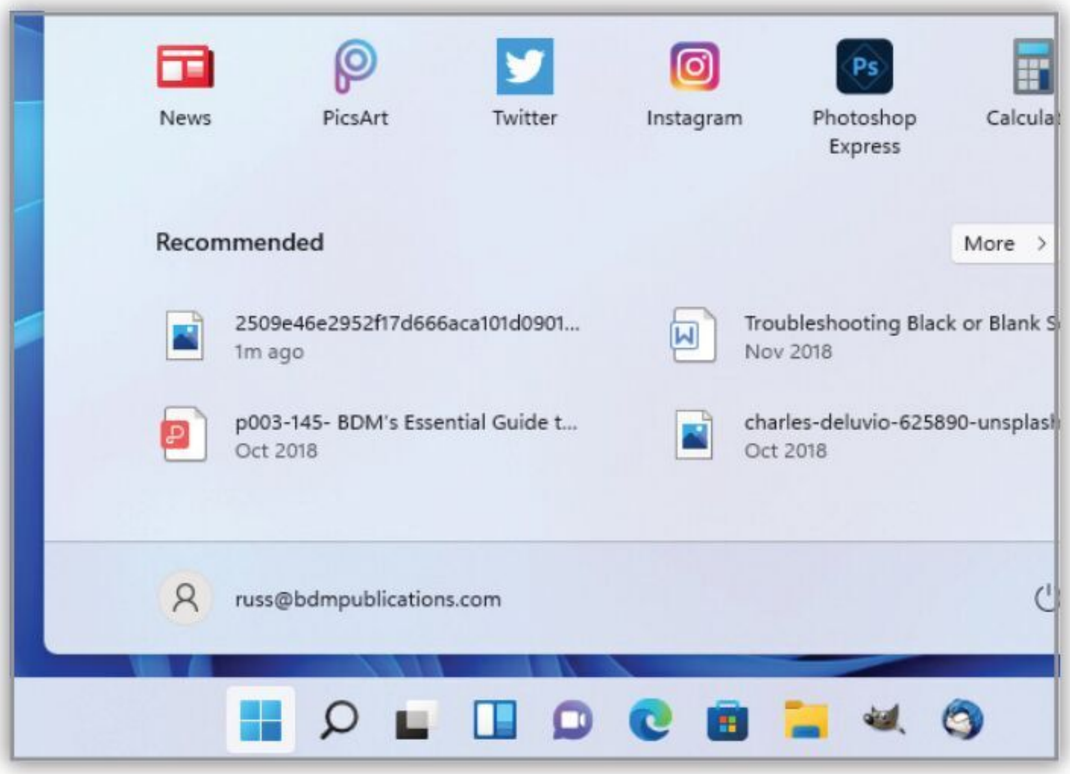
How to Use the Start Menu

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

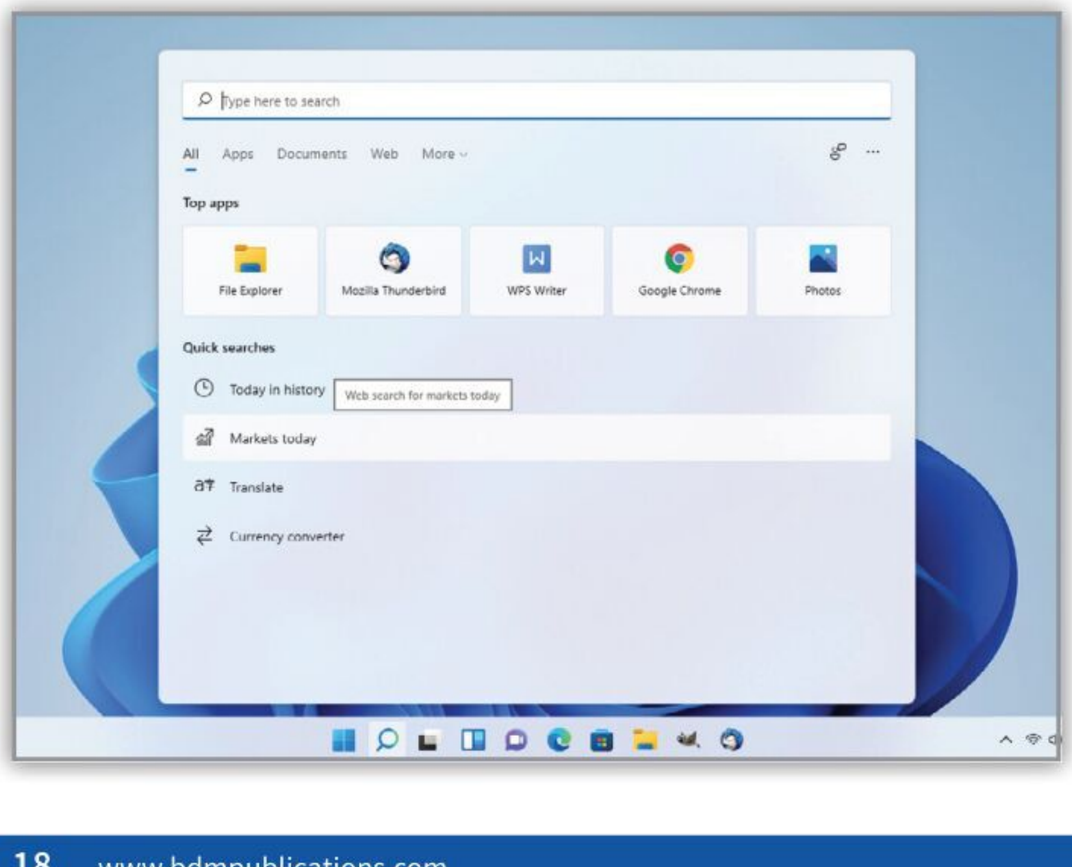
Get to Grips with Start

If you have used Windows 10, the Start menu shouldn't hold too many surprises for you, but it is still a good idea to familiarise yourself with its features.

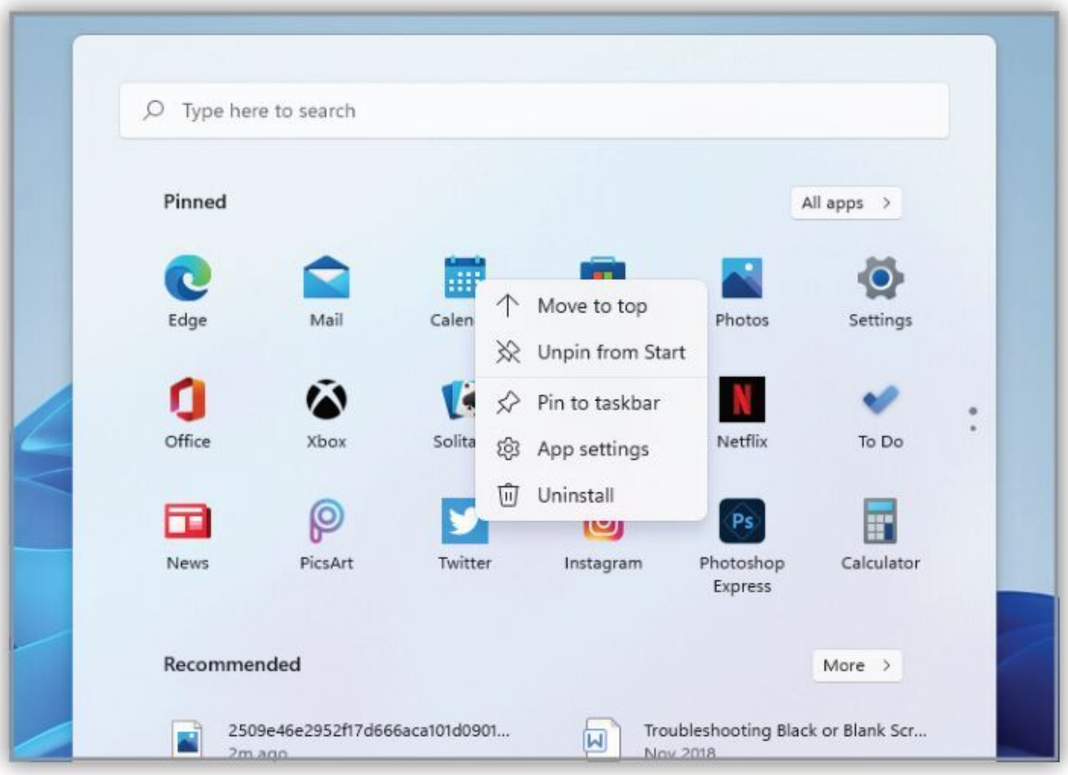
Step 1 The completely redesigned Start menu is opened by clicking on the Windows icon in the taskbar, or by pressing the Windows Key on your keyboard. It opens above the taskbar icons, floating in the middle of the screen. It will appear over the top of any open windows.



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.



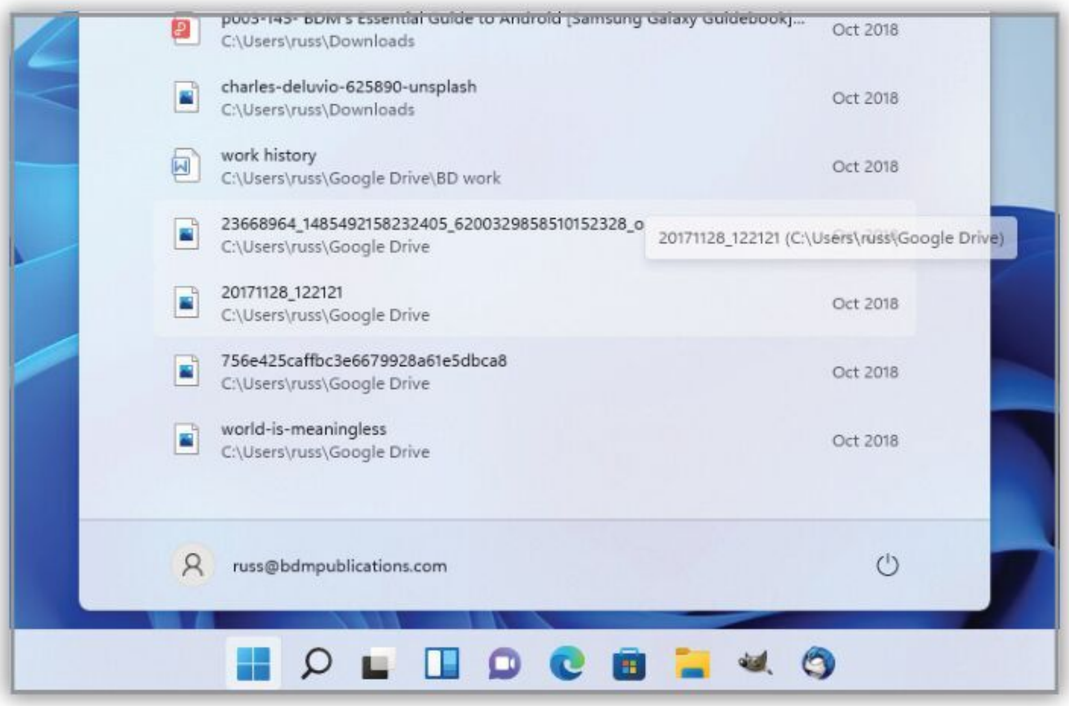
Step 3 If the app you want to open is shown, click the icon to open it. If not, you can click the "All Apps" button to open the full, scrollable list of apps. You can change the apps that appear here by right-clicking on the icon and choosing "Unpin/Pin to Start" from the action menu.



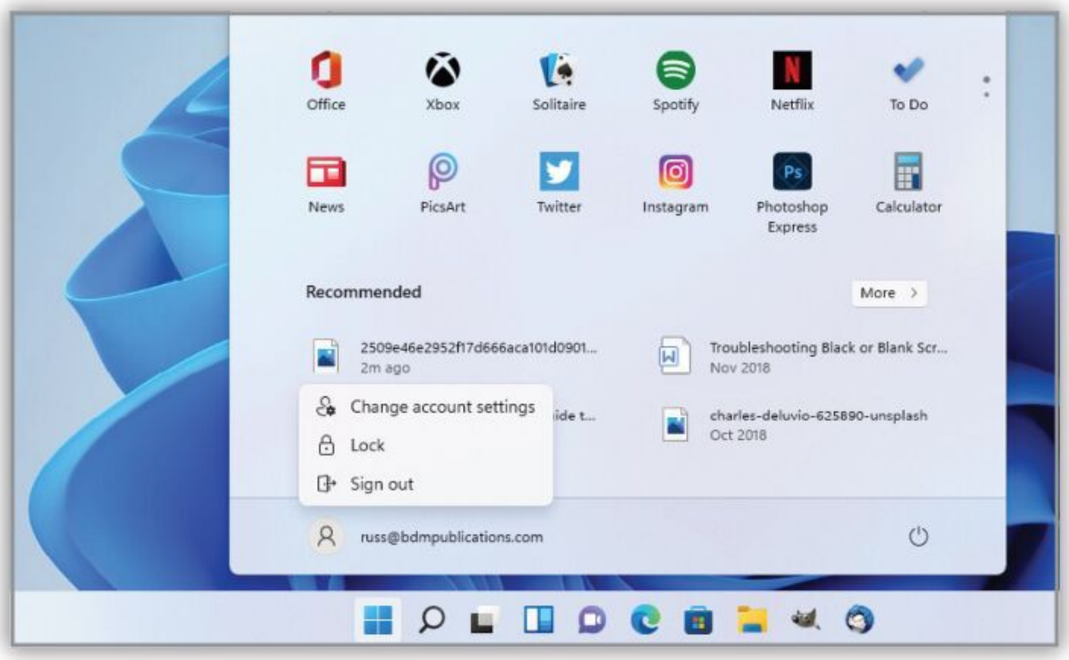
Step 4 In the app menu, apps are sorted alphabetically, except for a Most Used section at the top. If you click the title of that section (or any other section heading), a letter grid will appear, allowing you to quickly skip to a specific section of the apps list.

How to Use the Start Menu

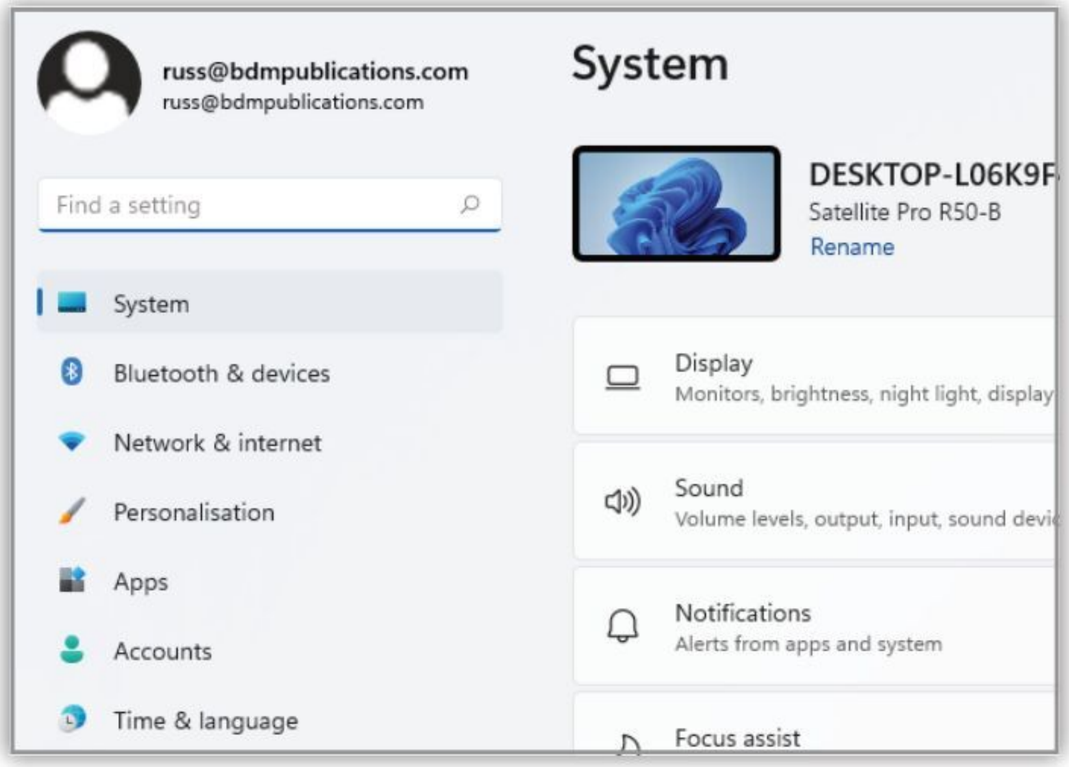
Step 5 The Recommended section shows files that have been recently opened, or that have been opened frequently. Click on any icon to open the file in whatever app/ program it is associated with. Click the “More” button to the right to open a larger list of files.



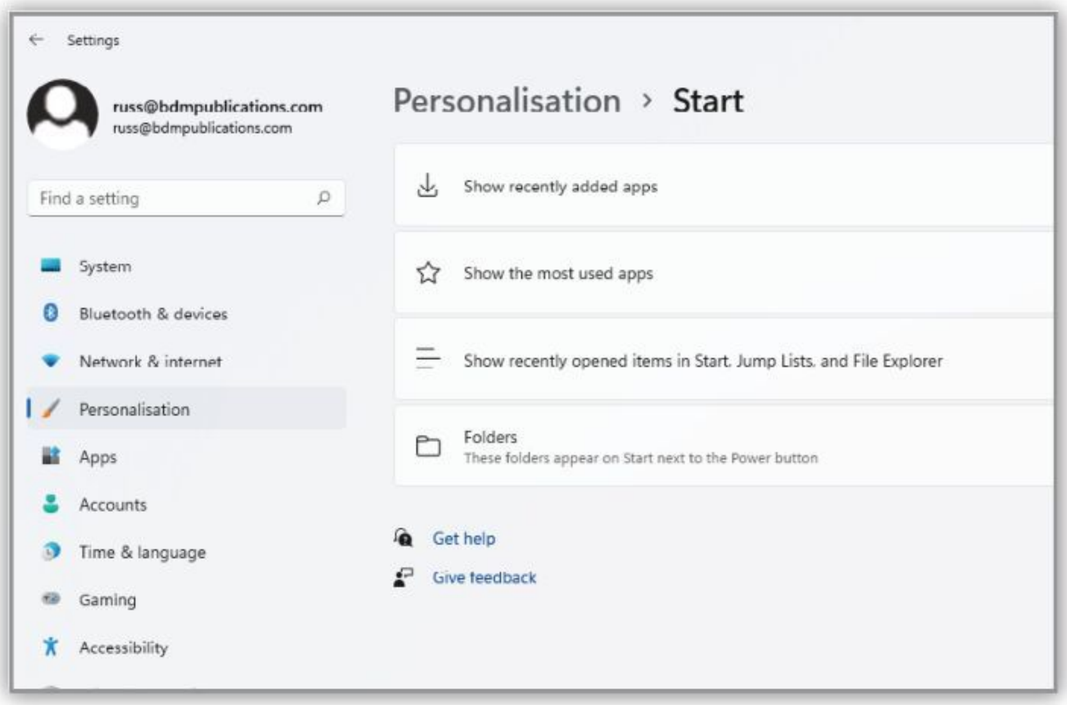
Step 6 The bottom section contains a link to the Microsoft Account menu. Click this to change account settings, lock your computer or sign out of the current account. At the other end of the section is the power button. Click this and choose from the available power options.



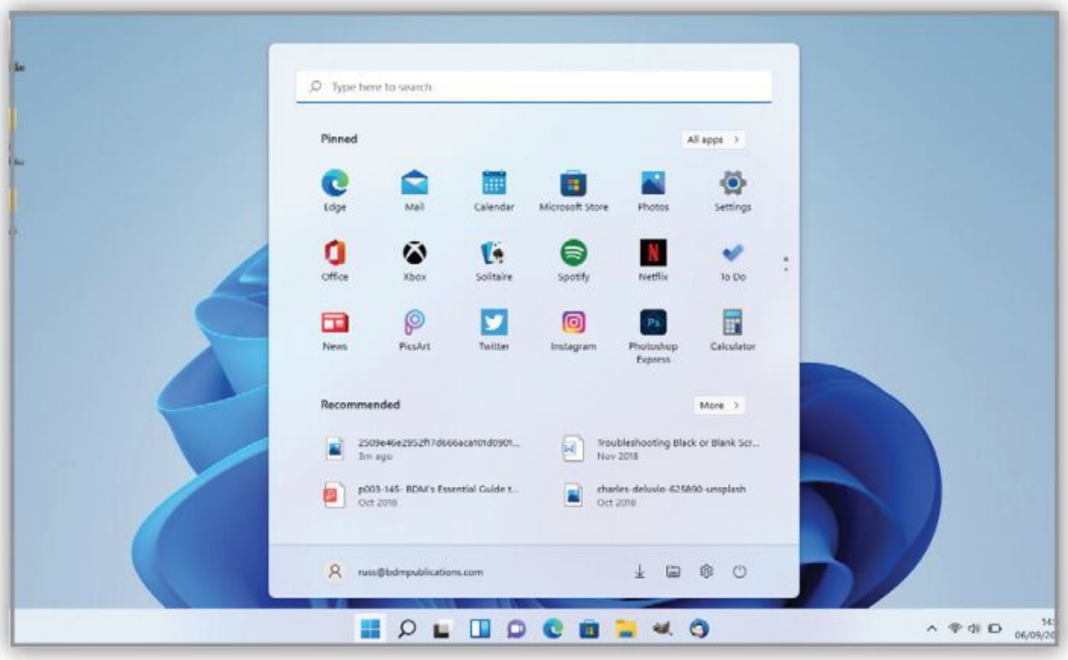
Step 7 It is also possible to display your most used apps and a selection of folders in the Start menu. To enable these features, open the main settings menu (you should see the icon for this in the pinned apps) and click on the Personalisation section. Then choose the Start option.



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.

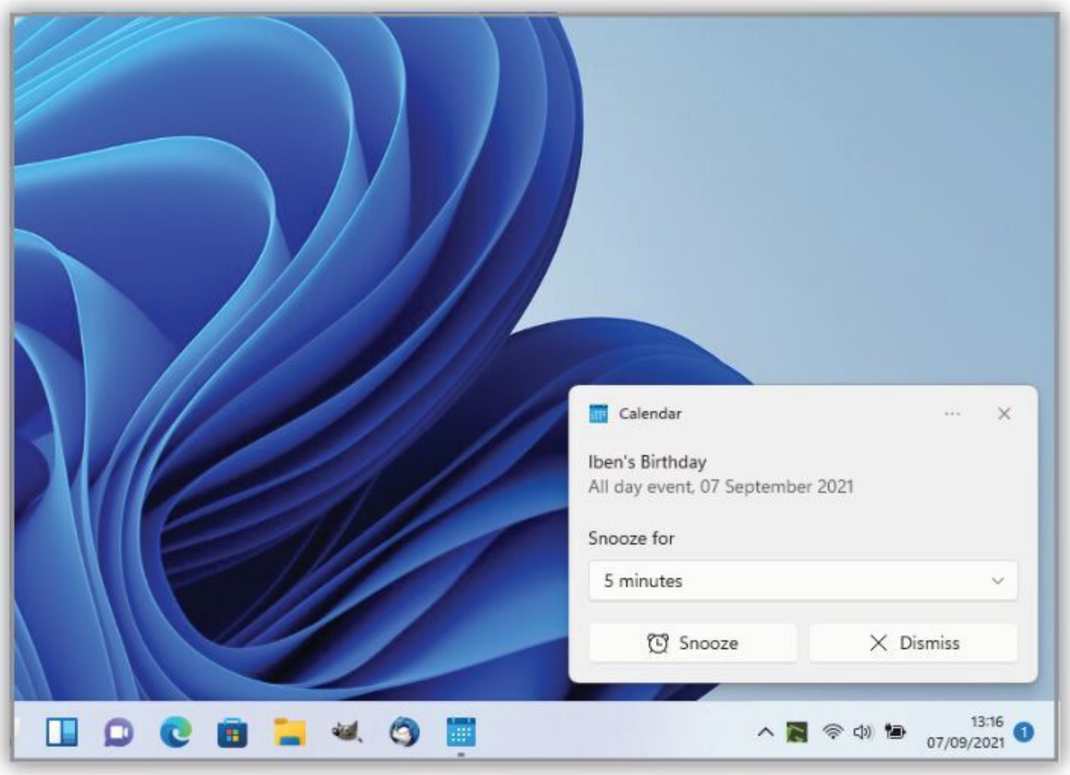
Notifications and Quick Settings

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 works more like the notifications panel on a smartphone or tablet.

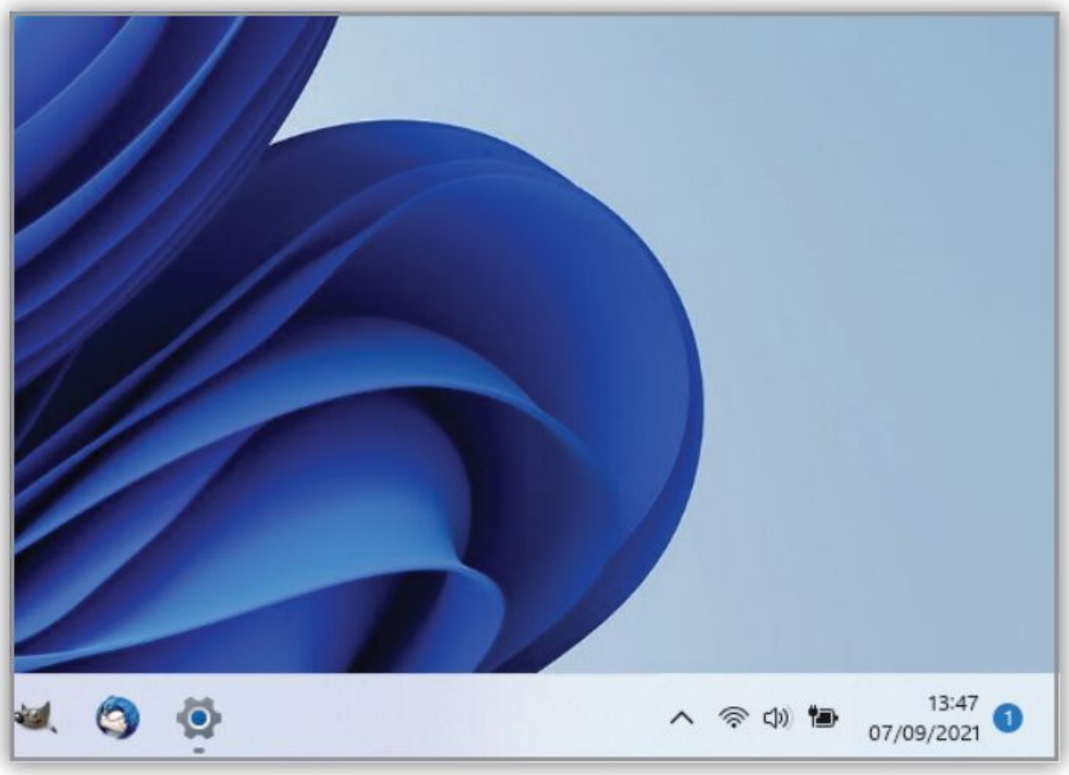
Exploring the Notification Center

The Notification Center is an important and useful element in Windows 11, providing you with access to the calendar as well as notifications and alerts.

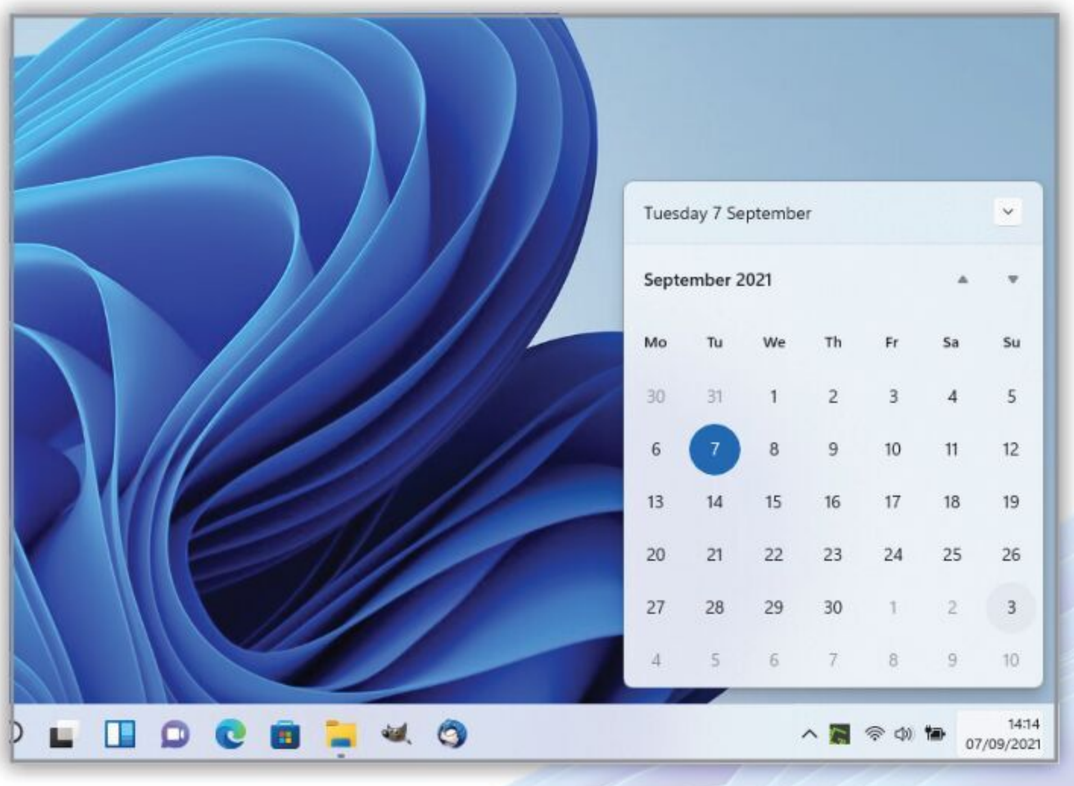
Step 1 New notifications and alerts will pop up at the bottom-right corner of the screen (by default, but you can change the notification settings), disappearing after a few seconds. After the initial pop-up has disappeared, you can view all current notifications by clicking on the time/date in the taskbar.



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.

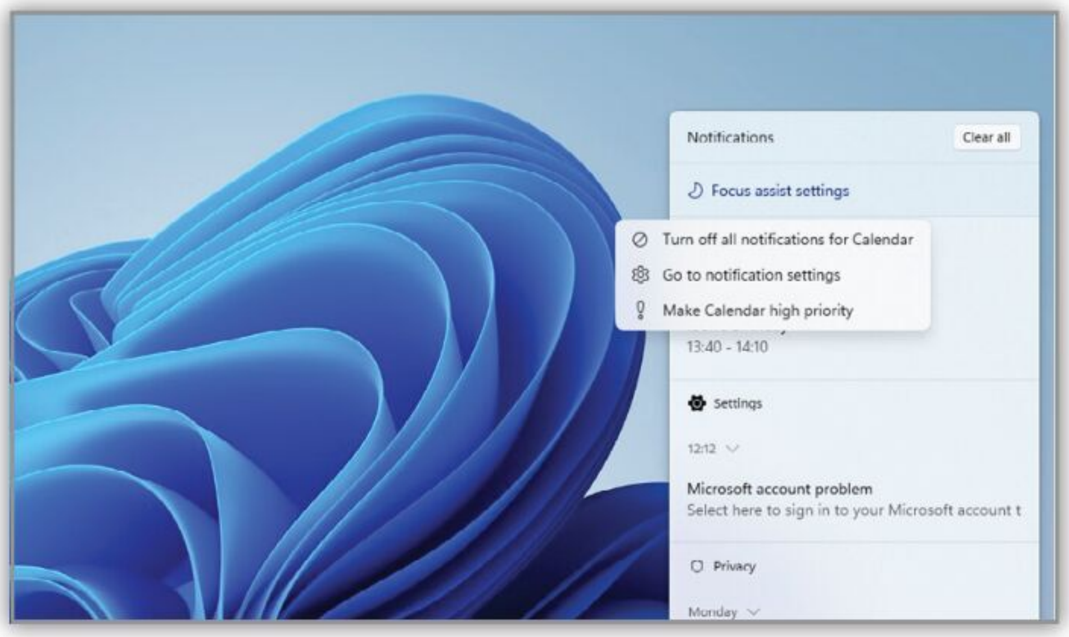


Step 3 Unlike Windows 10, the Notification Center (which was called the Action Center previously) only contains notifications and alerts, not quick settings. It does include the calendar now, which is expanded by clicking the arrow next to the date at the bottom of the notification panel.

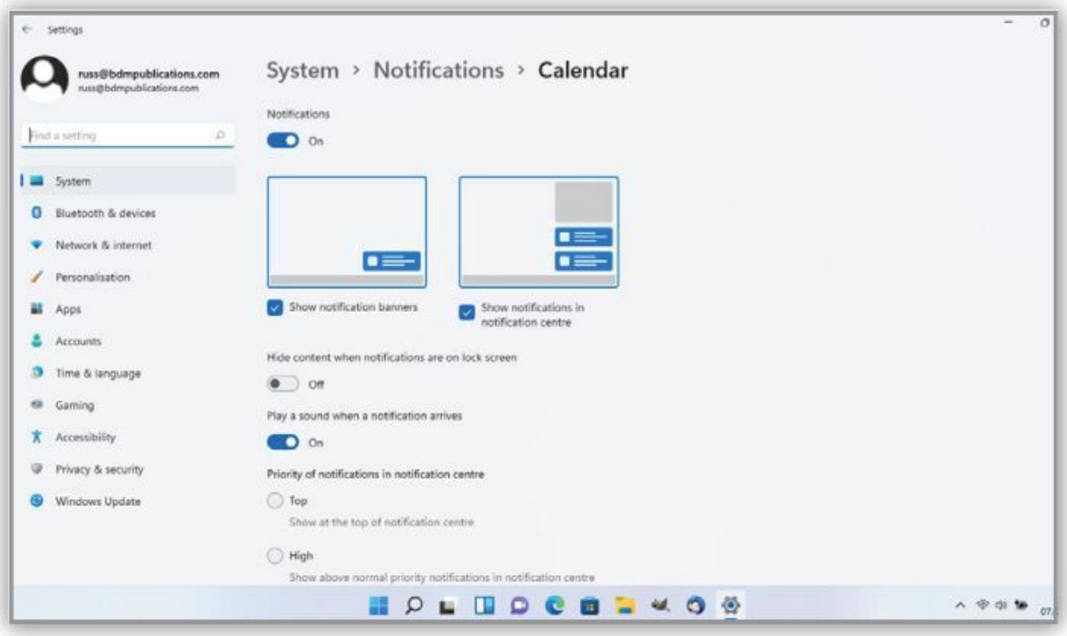


Step 4 Above the calendar section is your notification panel. Notifications can be from the system (Windows updates for example), from your calendar, from apps and even from settings that need to be managed. Notifications are sorted into sections within the notifications panel; based on their type.

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.



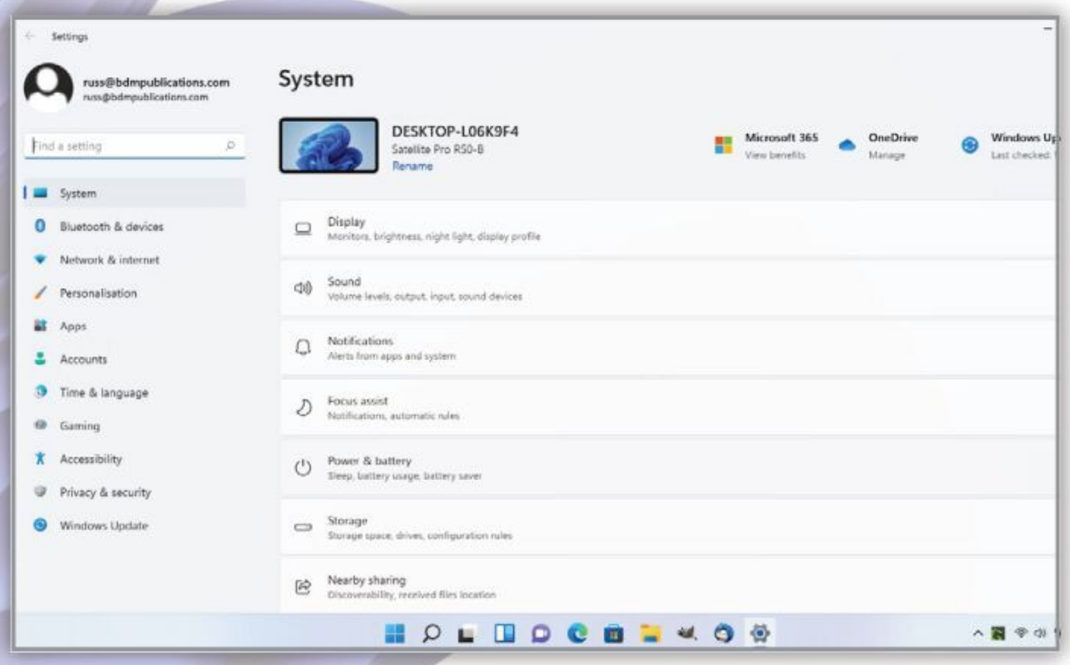
Quick Settings Panel

Unlike in the previous version of Windows, Windows 11 separates the quick settings panel from the Notification Center.

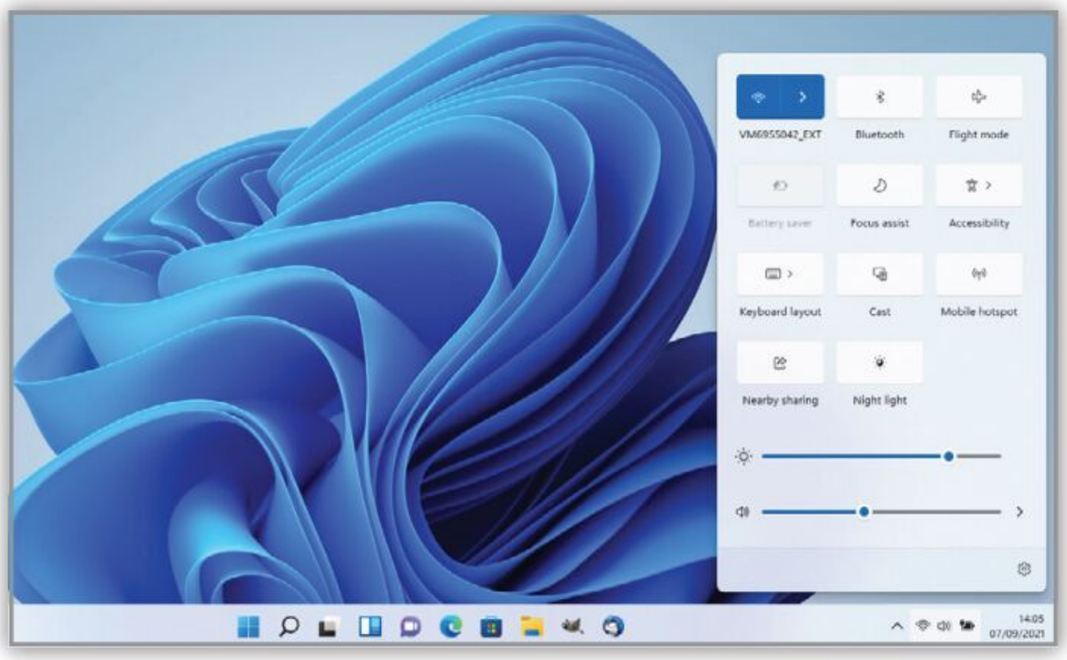
Step 1 To access the quick settings panel in Windows 11, press Windows Key + a. The panel will appear in the same position on screen as the Notification Center. By default the panel contains buttons to quickly enable/disable Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, Flight Mode, Battery Saver (if using a laptop) and Focus Assist.

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

Mastering the Windows 11 Taskbar

The taskbar has always been more useful than many users realise. In Windows 11 the emphasis has shifted much more towards a simplified, but still powerful, selection of pinned tools/apps.

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.

Search Tool

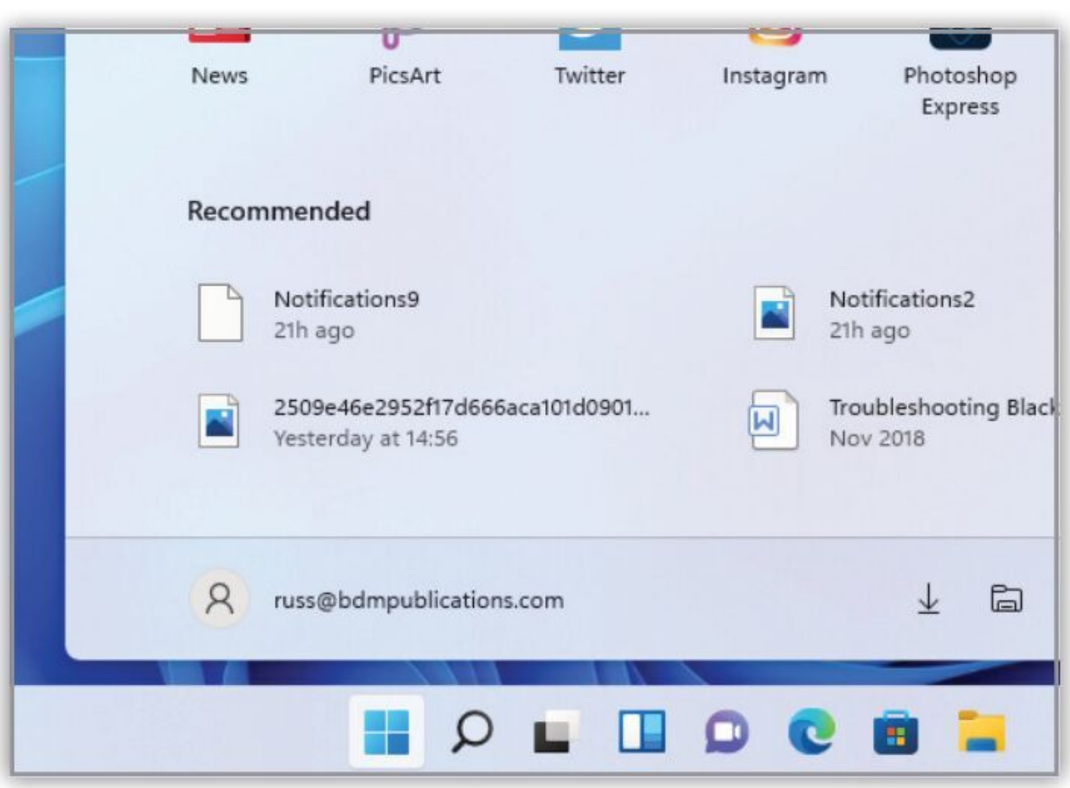
The embedded search field of Windows 10 is gone, replaced by a button (magnifying glass) that opens a new system search panel. This unified search allows you to not only search for things on your computer, but also in OneDrive and for results from websites. As you begin typing, search suggestions appear.

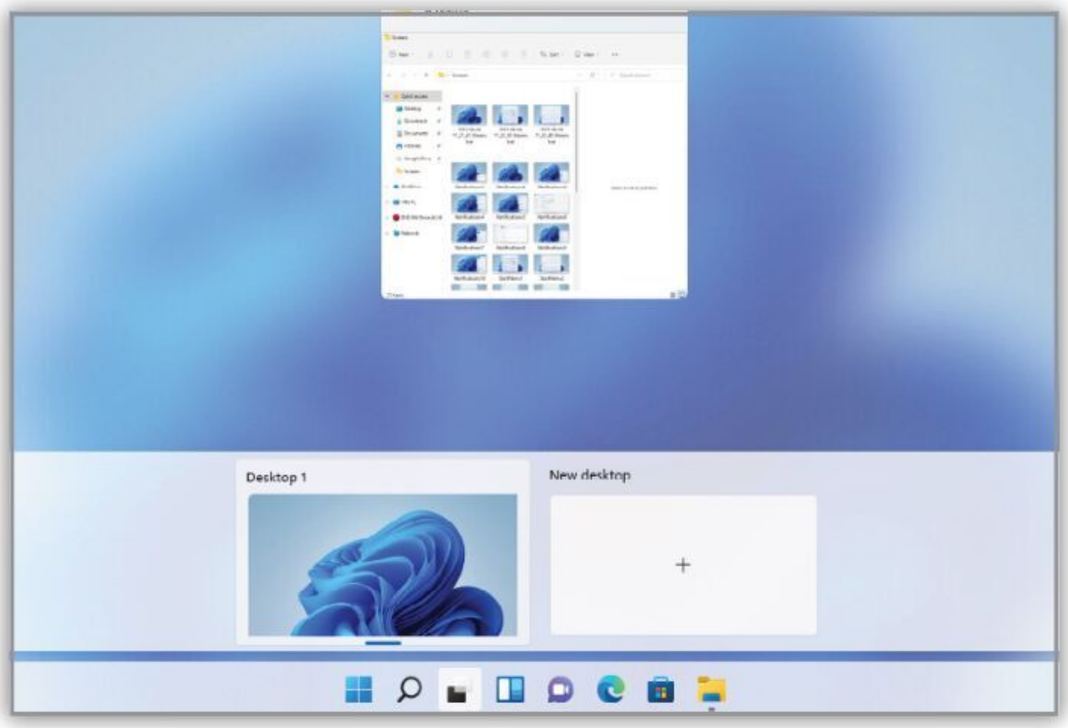
Start Menu

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.

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.





How to Use the Taskbar

Widgets

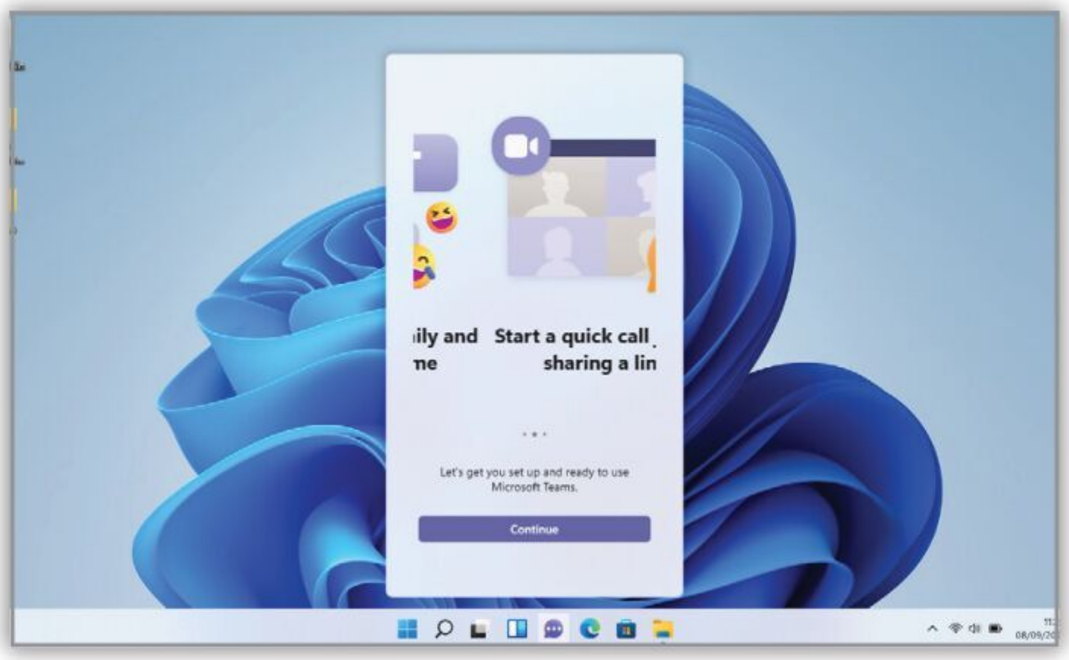
The fourth default button opens the Widget panel, on the left side of the screen. The widget panel can be customised to suit your needs with information such as weather, photos, stock prices, sports results and news stories. As Windows 11 develops, it is likely even more functionality will be added.

Peek

Hovering over any open app icon in the Taskbar brings up a Peek preview of the window. If a movie is playing, for example, 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.

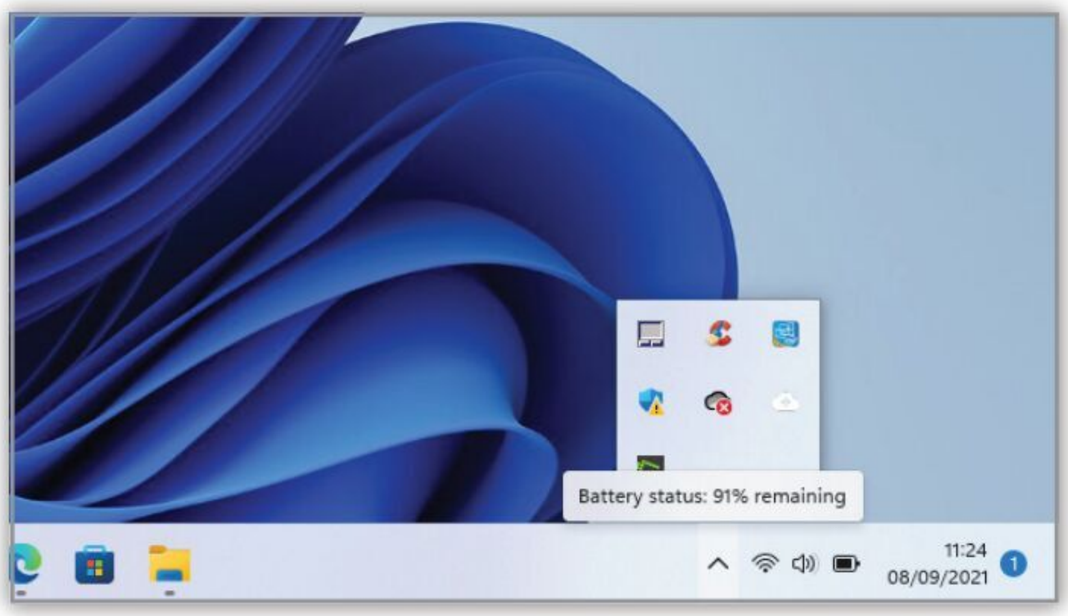
Microsoft Teams

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.



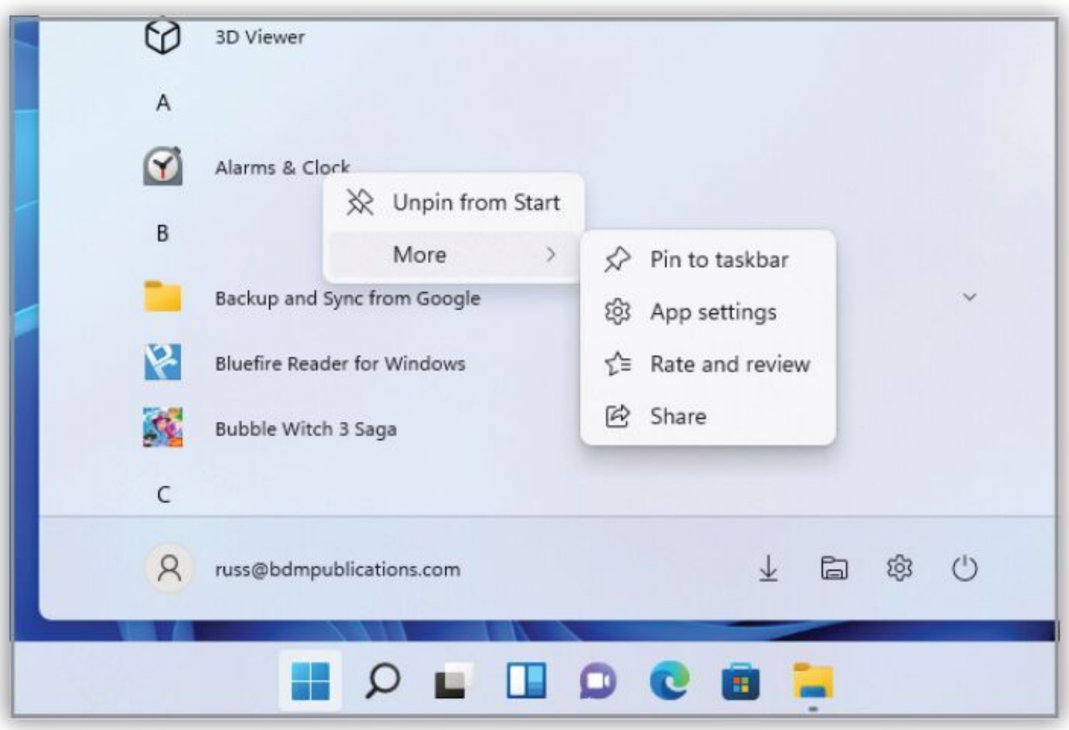
System Tools

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.



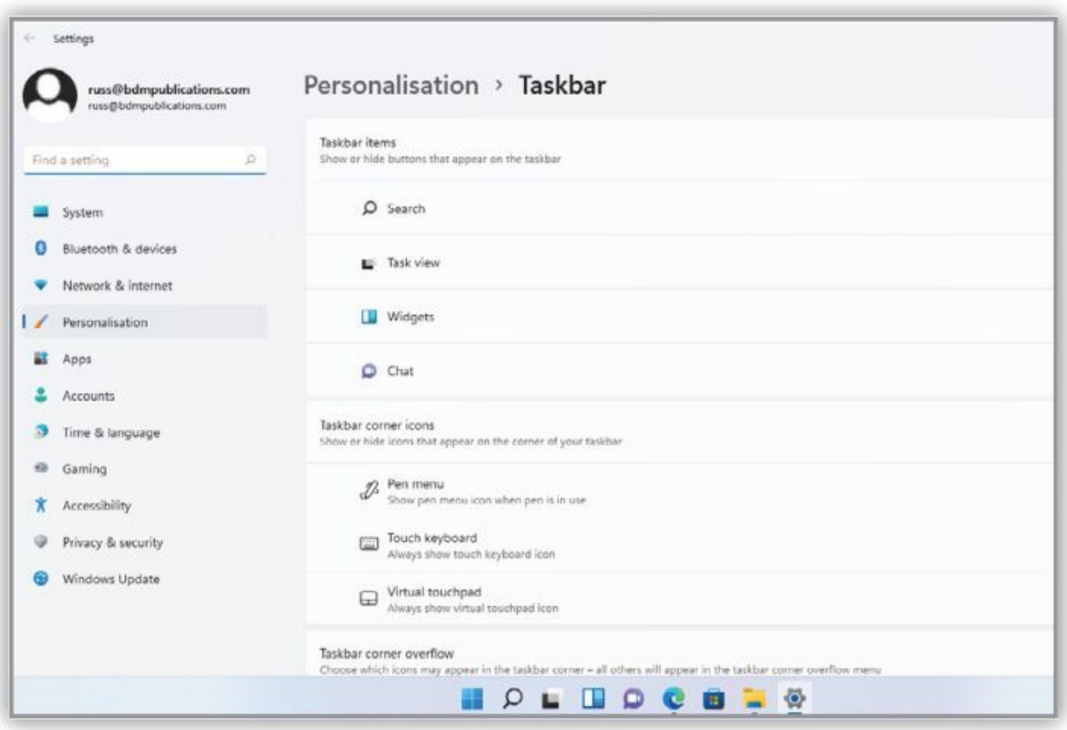
Pinning Apps

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.



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.



Using Task View and Multiple 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.

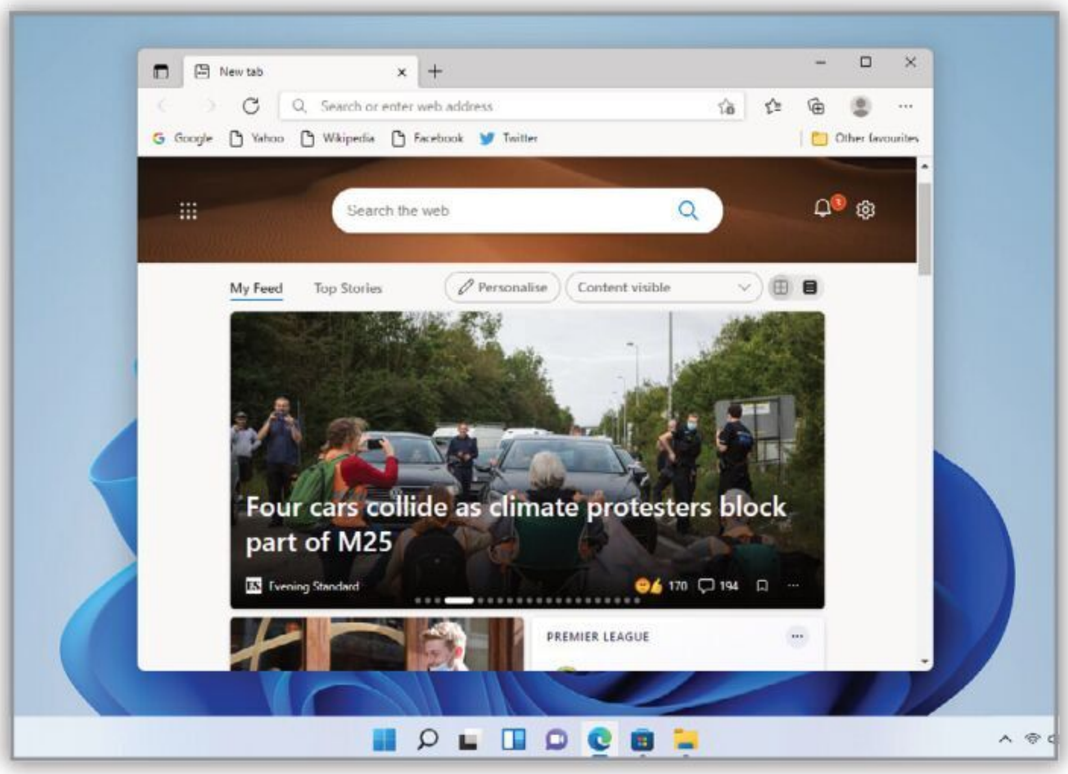
Using Task View

Task View is a quick way to view and manage all of the windows and apps open on your PC at any given moment, even those that are minimised.

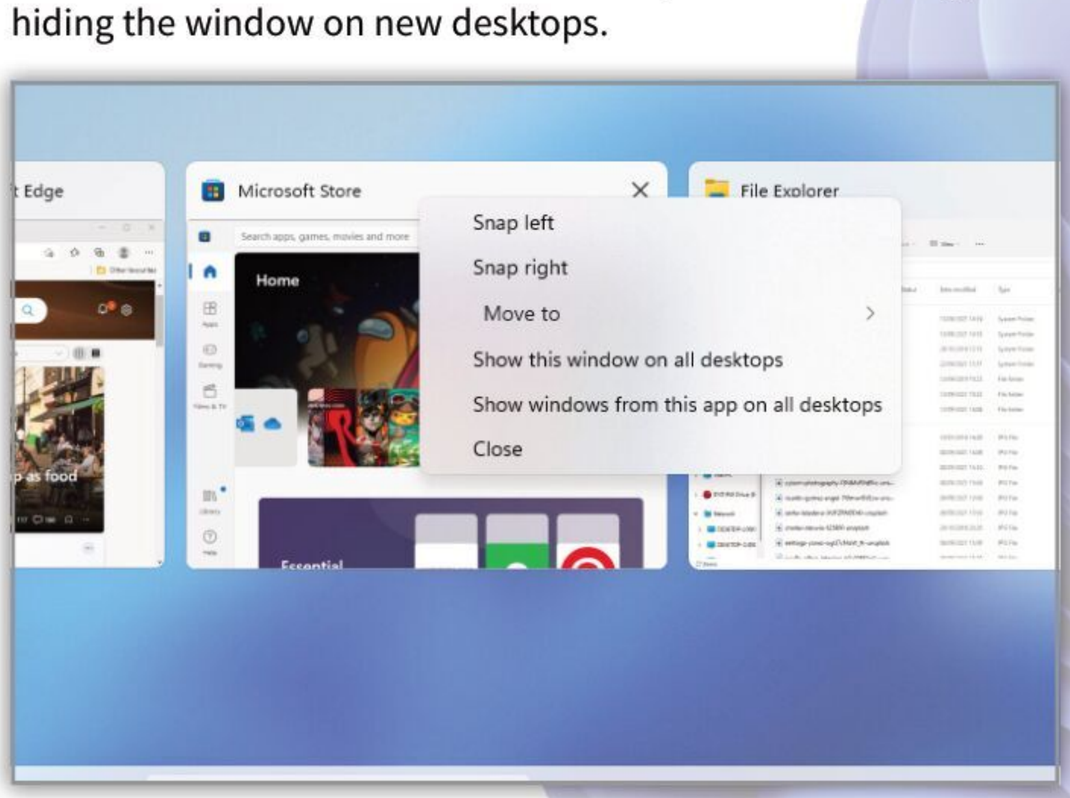
Step 1 Task View is accessed by clicking the third icon in the taskbar; the white square on the black square. The Task View screen is split into two sections: Open tasks and desktops. Any apps or windows you have open, even if they are currently minimised, will be displayed in the open tasks panel.

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.



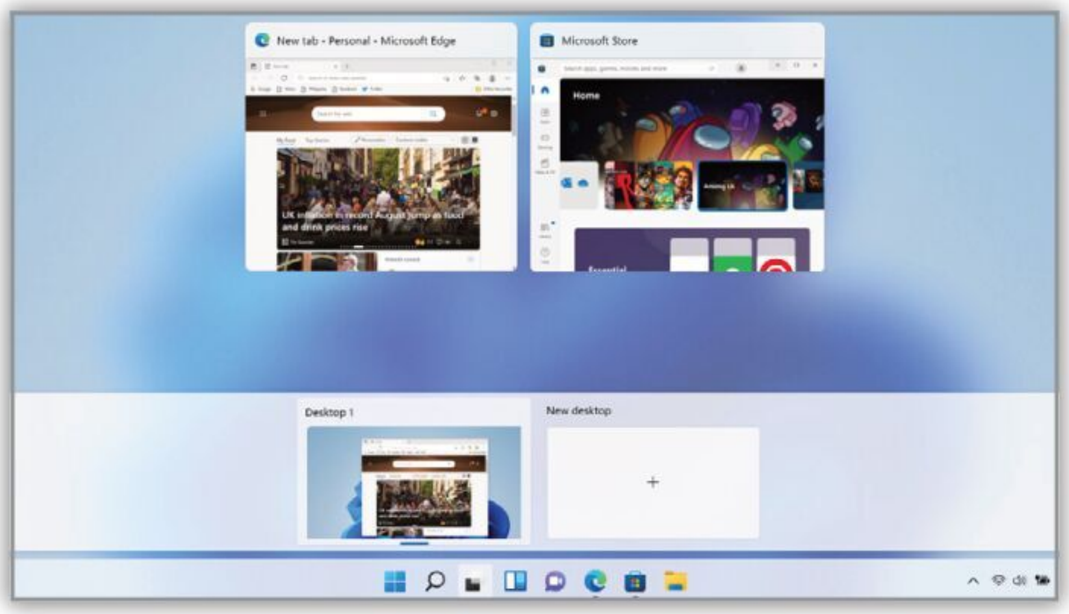
Step 4 If you right-click on one of the windows/apps shown in Task View, you will see several more options. Snap left/right will open the selected window, but "snapped" or positioned to the left or right of the home screen. You will see that there are also several options for showing/hiding the window on new desktops.



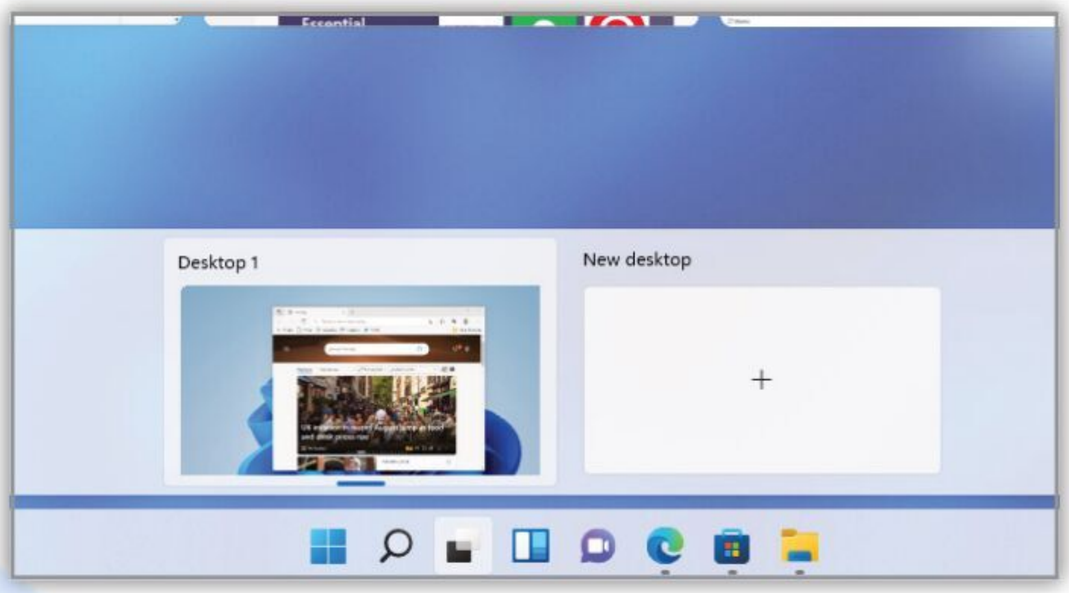
Using Multiple Desktops

Creating multiple desktops is a great way of separating your activities across multiple defined spaces, and helps you concentrate and split your workload.

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.

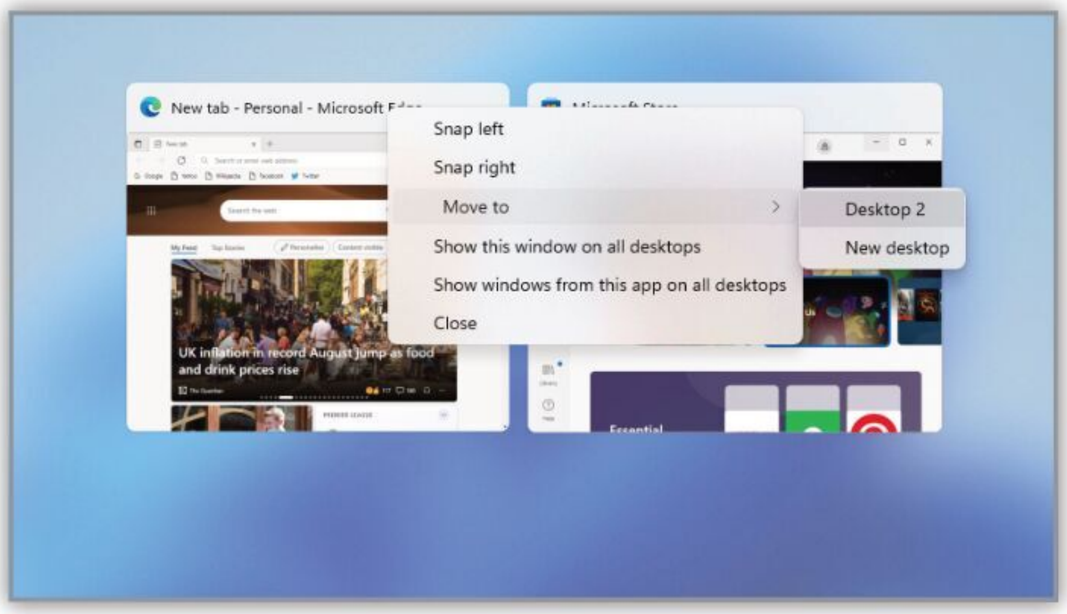


Step 2 Click or tap the New Desktop button at the bottom of the Task View screen and you will see an entirely new and blank desktop. If you had any apps or windows open in the main desktop, they won't be open here. Don't worry, they haven't been closed, they are still open on the other desktop.

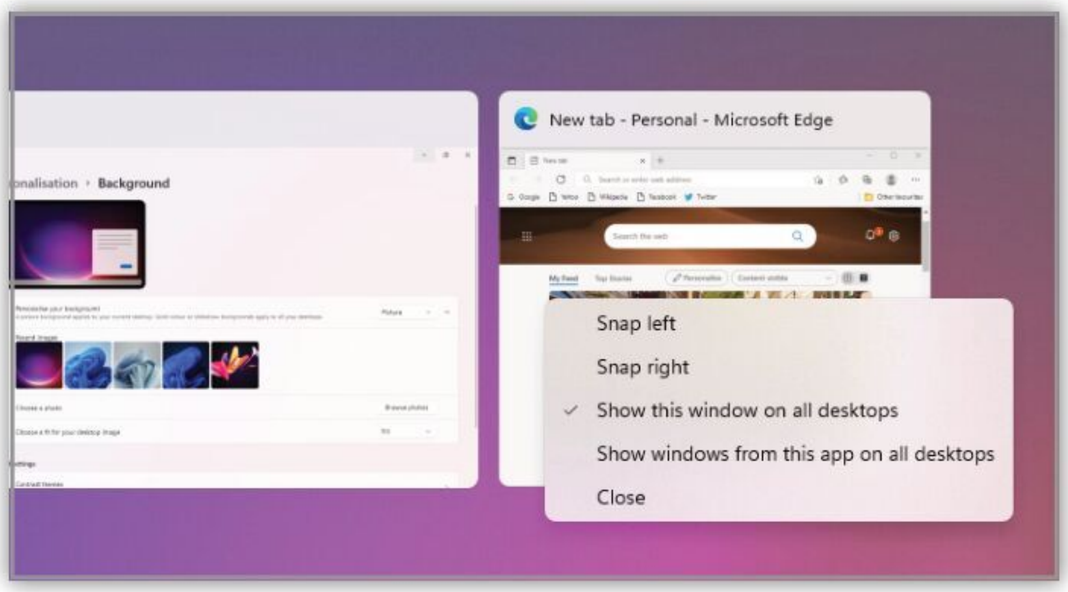


Step 3 With Task View open, right click on one of the desktop previews at the bottom and you can choose a different background wallpaper (making identifying which desktop you are on currently easier), and also you can choose to move a desktop to the left or right, switching which one is the main desktop.

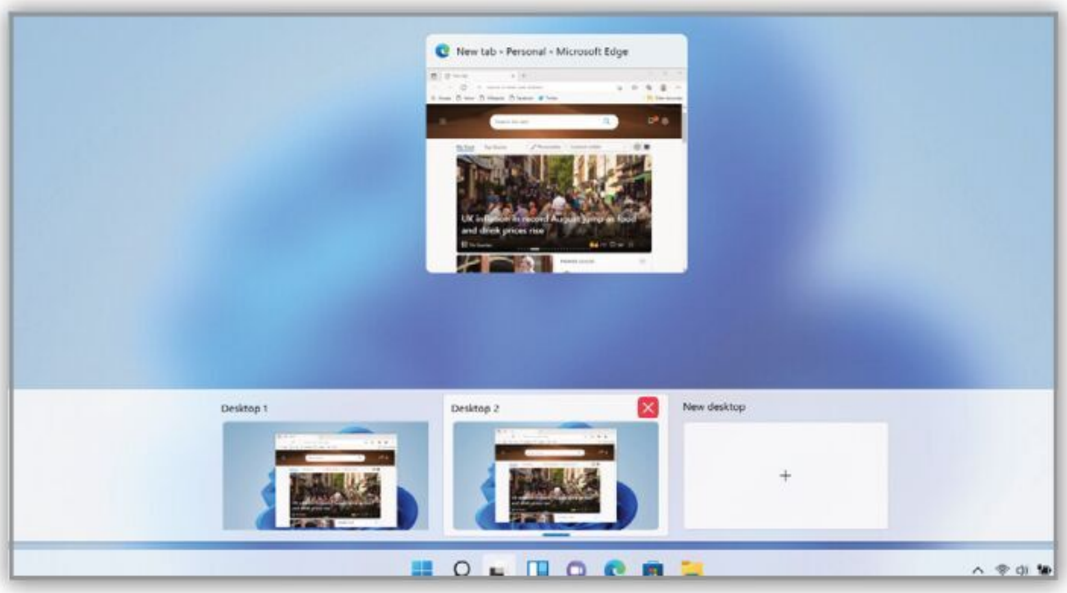
Step 4 You can right-click the apps in Task View to send them to another desktop. You can also drag and drop windows/apps from one desktop to another. If you have an app or window open in one desktop and then try to open it in another, you will just switch to the desktop where it was already open.



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 yourself. It just automatically adds them to the main desktop for you.



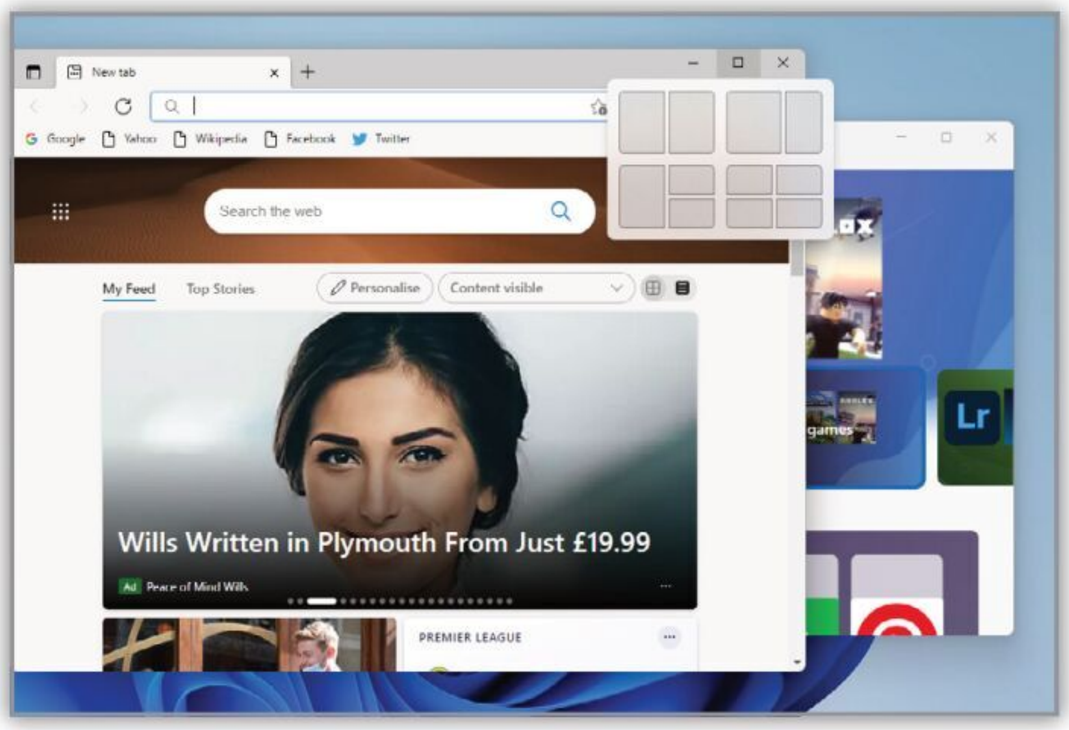
Using Snap Layout and Snap Groups

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.

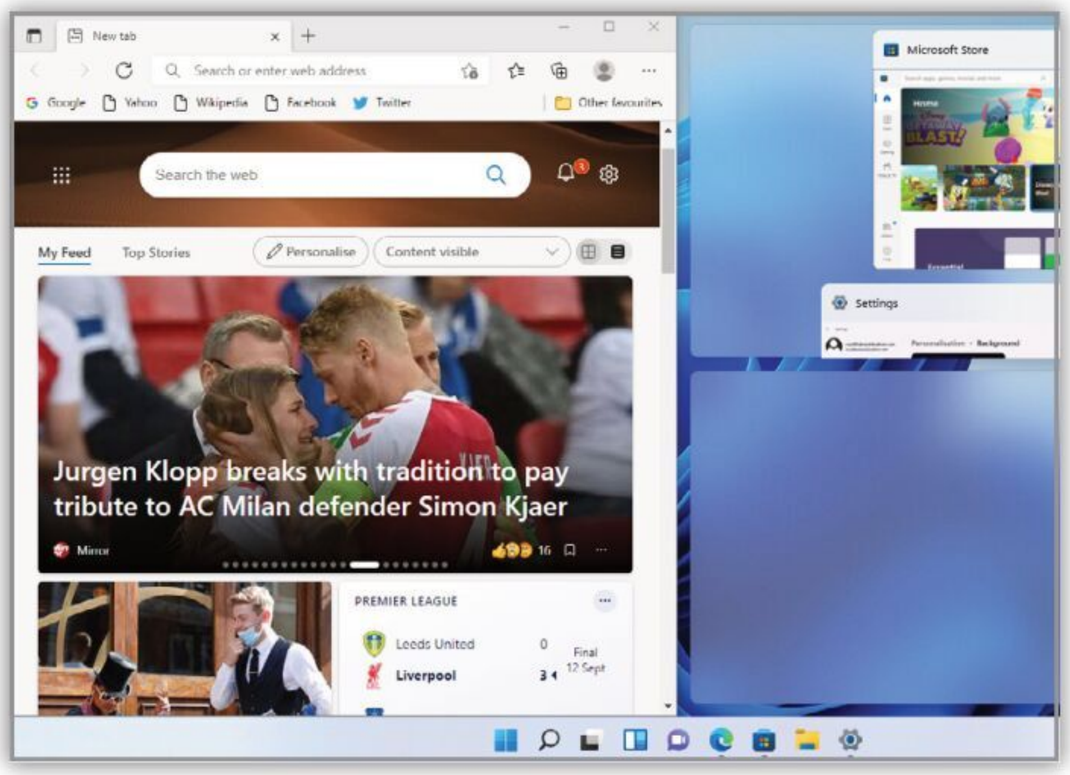
Using Snap Layouts

Snap Layouts are a quick and easy way to organise a busy or cluttered desktop. They are similar to Snap Assist, but are created in a new and different way.

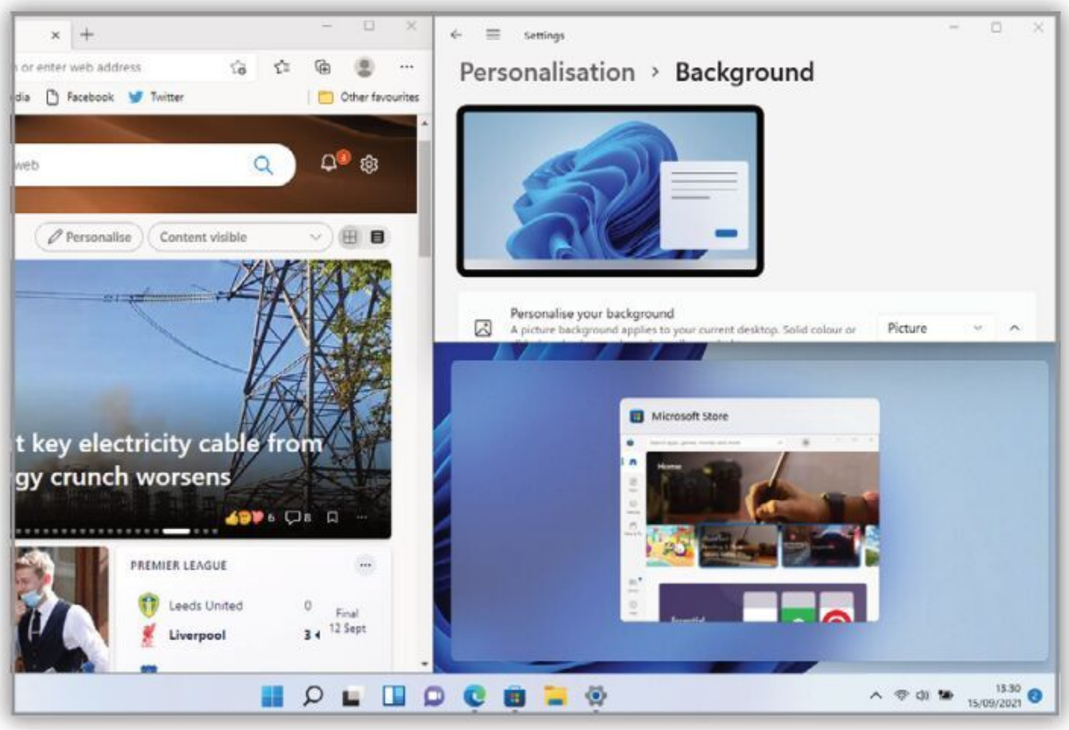
Step 1 Snap Layouts can be created with just one open app or window, but really come into their own when several are open. Move your mouse over the Maximise button (top-right corner) of any open app or window, without clicking. After a second, a brand new menu will pop up, showing the available layouts you can use.



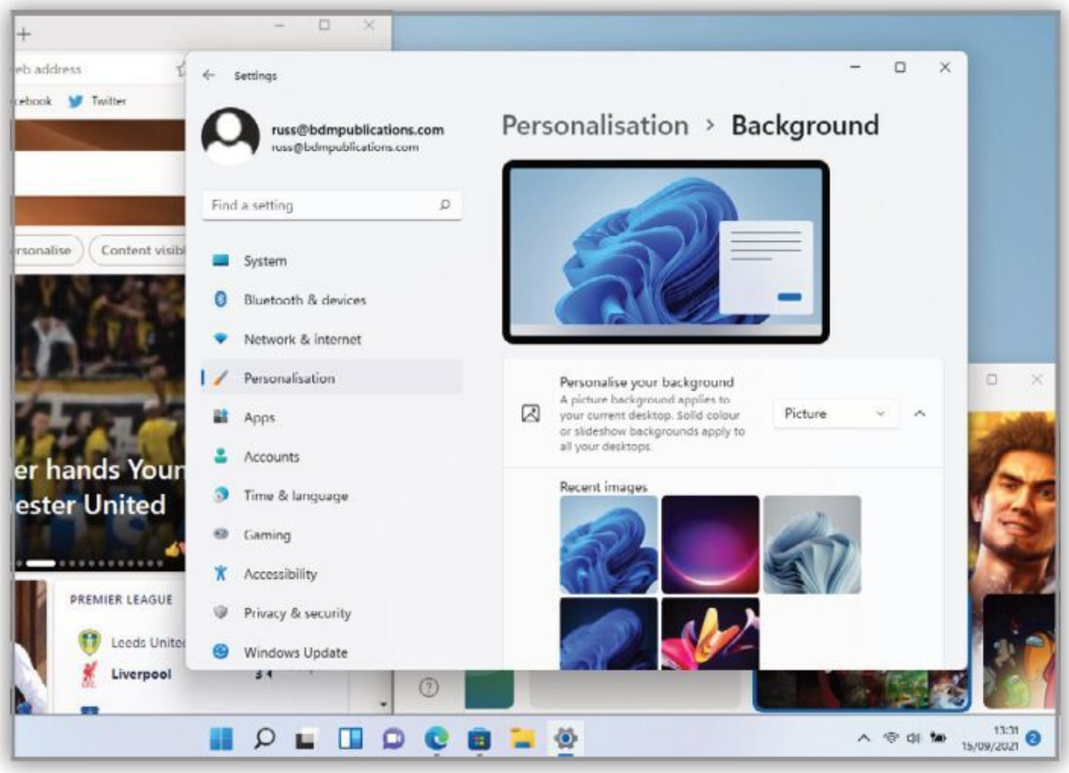
Step 2 There are 4 preset layouts available (at present, although more may be added): 2 equal windows side-by-side, 2 unequal windows side-by-side, 3 windows and 4 equal windows. Click on whichever you want to use, and the window/app you used to open the layout will snap into one of the positions.



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.

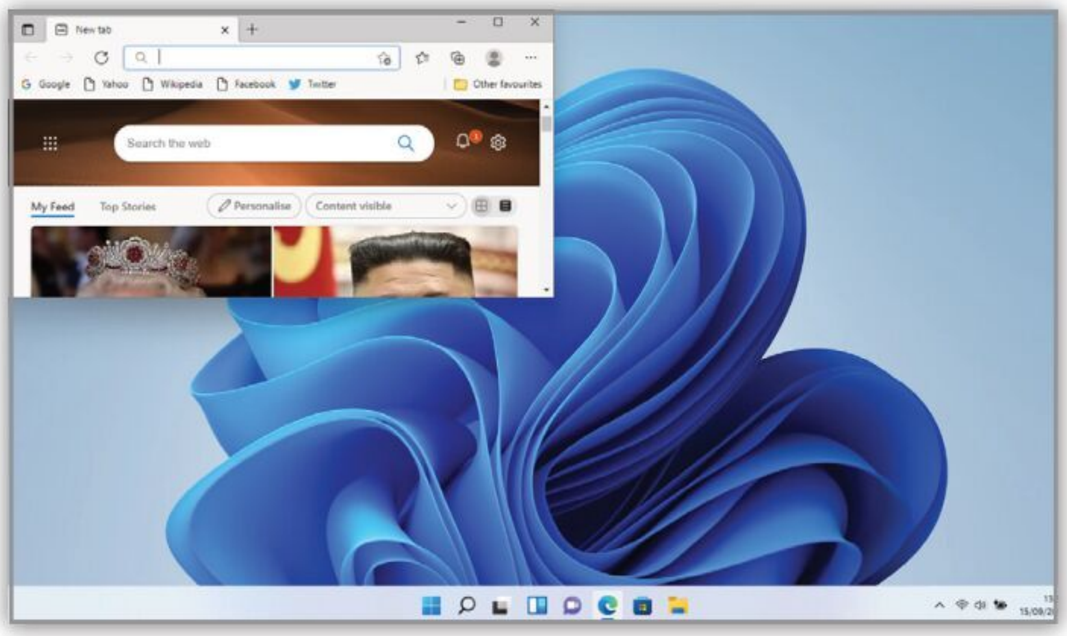


Step 4 If you now try to move a window or app out of the layout, it will switch back to its original dimensions when it unsnaps from the grid. You can create multiple Snap Layouts, each containing different apps/windows. These remain until the windows are closed or removed from the group.



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.

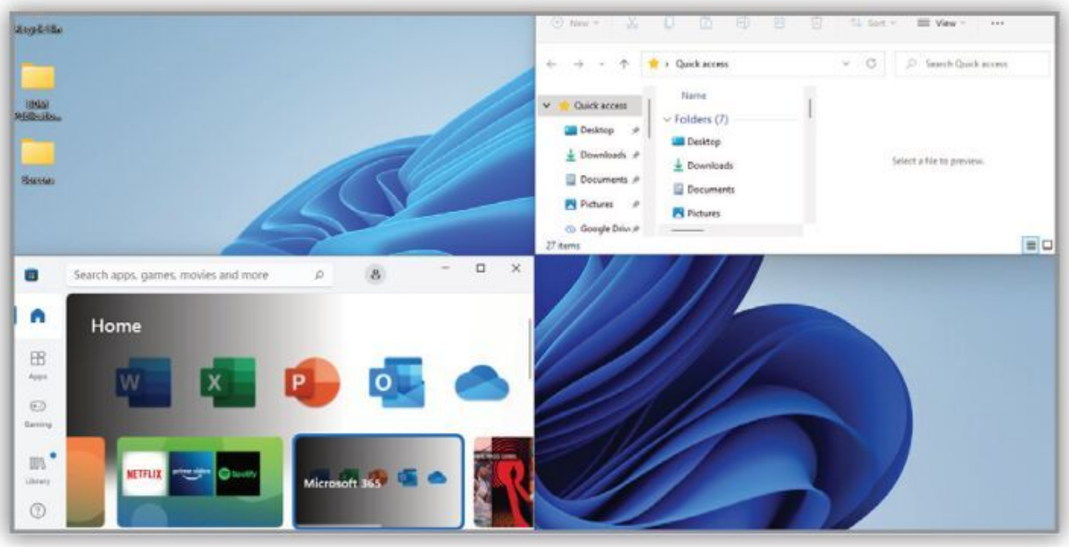
Step 6 You can snap apps and windows into position using a keyboard shortcut as well. Highlight a window and then press Windows Key + one of the arrow keys. Depending on which direction you press, the window will snap left, right, up or down. Combine key presses to snap up and left, for example.



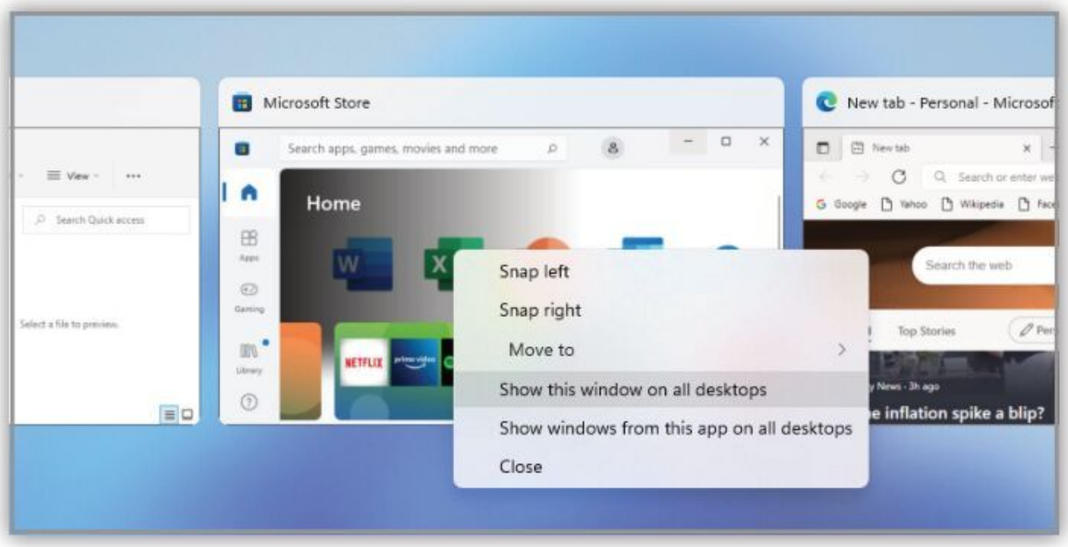
Using Snap Groups

Snap Groups are an extension of Snap Layouts, keeping snapped apps and windows together even when the layout is minimised.

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.

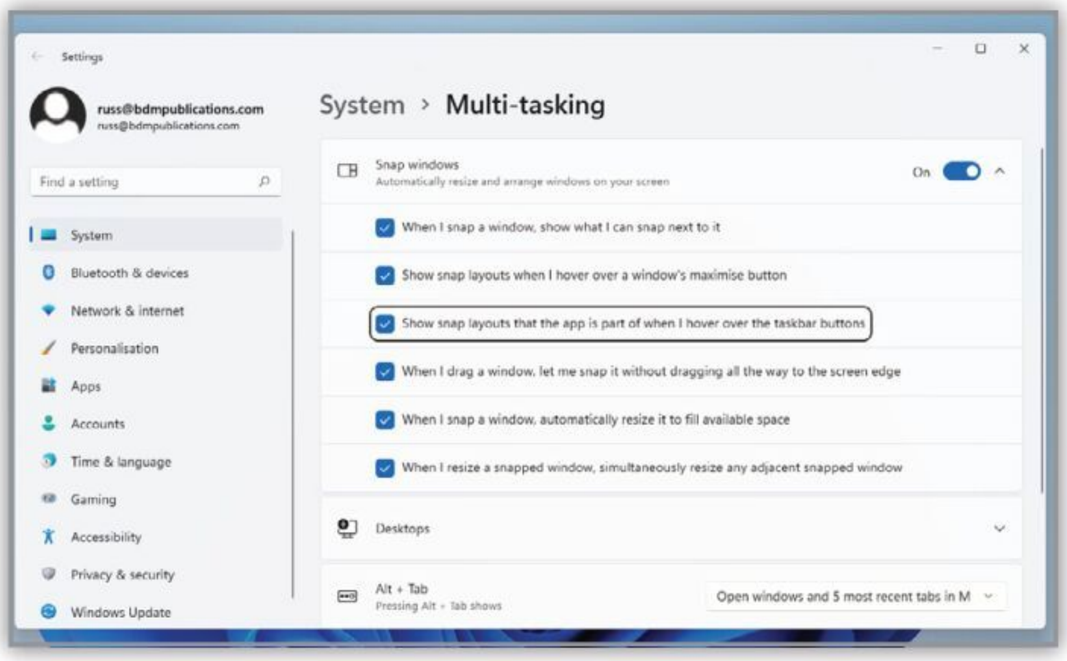


Step 3 If you use multiple desktops, you can move Snap Groups to any of the additional desktop areas. Just open the Task View, and then right click on each of the apps or windows in the group and choose, “Show this window on all desktop”. The group will automatically be recreated on the other desktop.



Step 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 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.



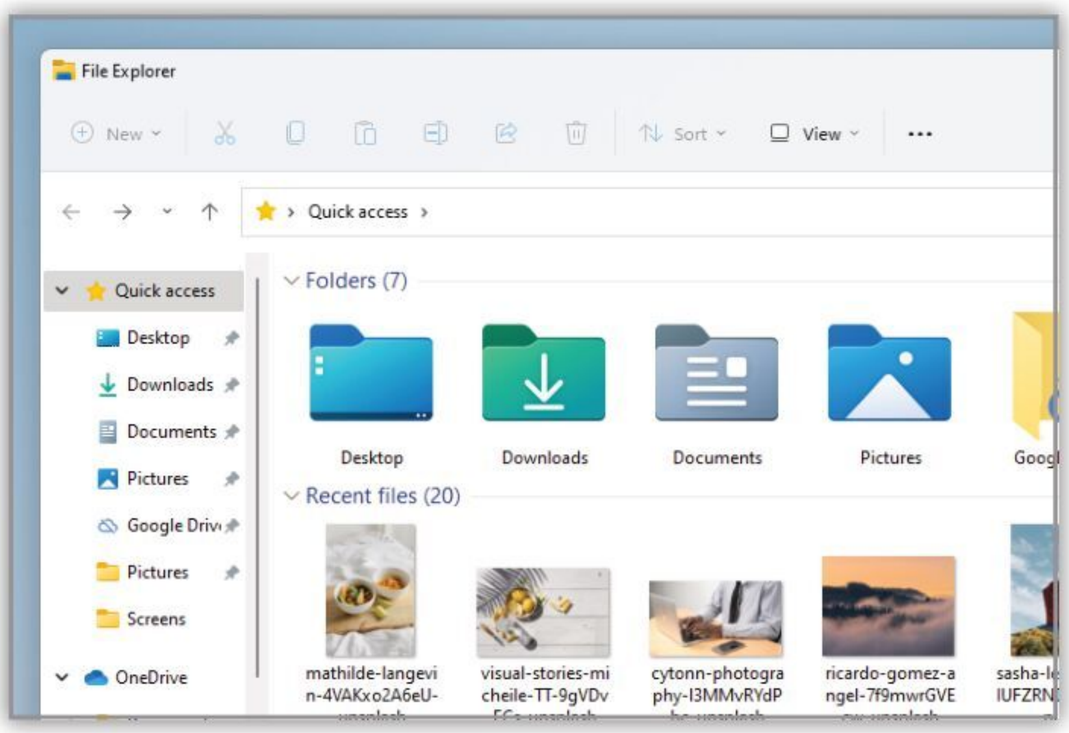
How to Use File Explorer

You can just use the powerful and improved search feature to find files and documents; 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.

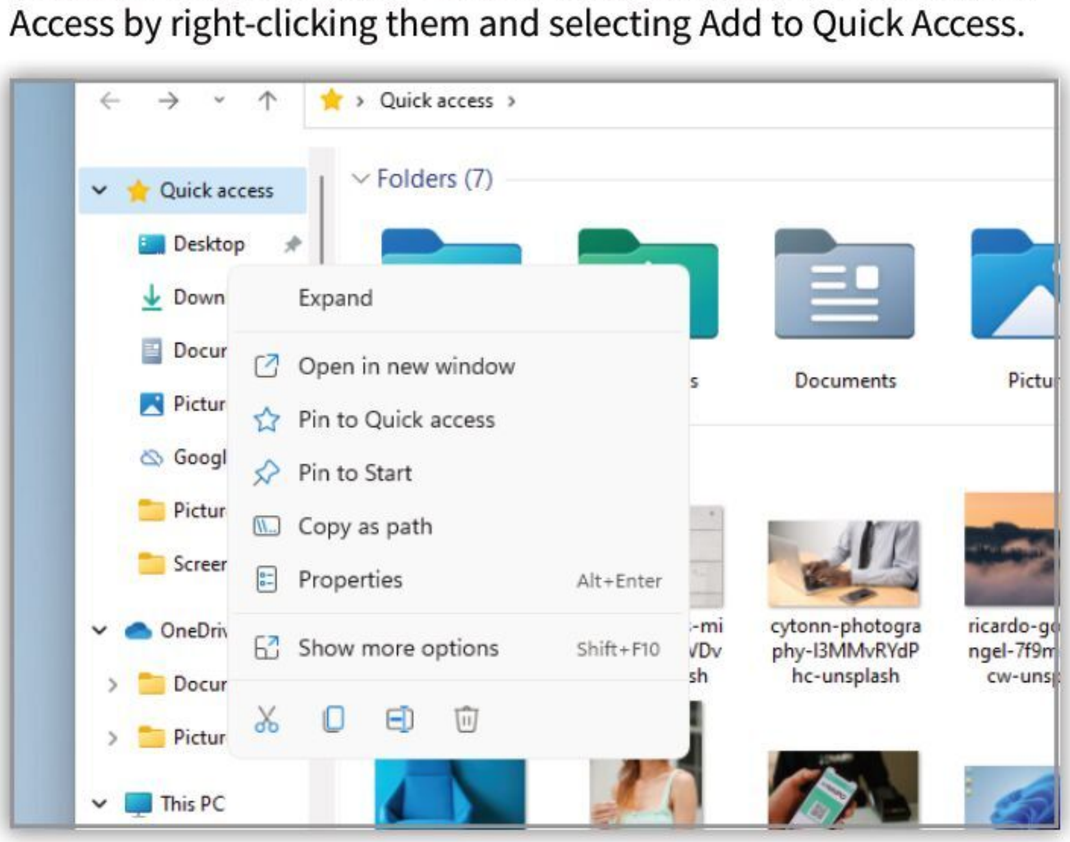
What's New in File Explorer?

File Explorer is a much undervalued part of Windows. And while it hasn't fundamentally changed for several versions of the operating system, Windows 11 has made some changes, which we'll take you through here.

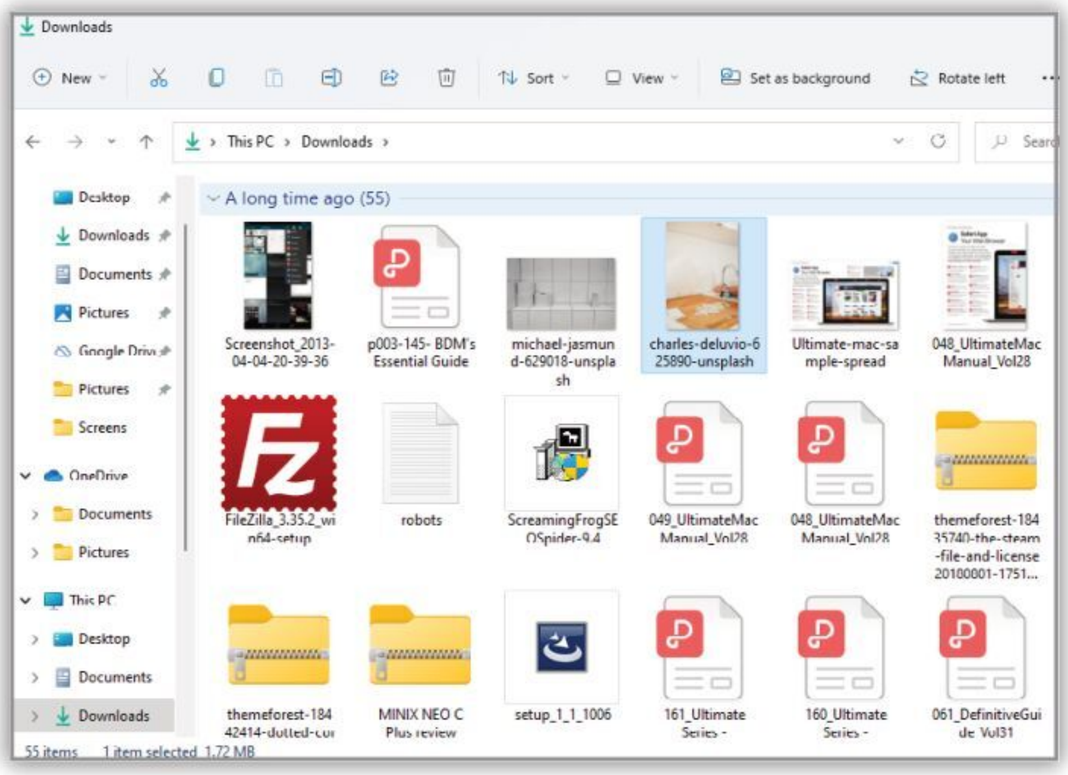
Step 1 The way you browse files in Windows 11 is similar to previous versions of Windows, but File Explorer has been slightly simplified. The main Quick Access window shows you your most frequently used folders (after all, how many of us dip into more than five or ten folders in a day?) and also recent files.



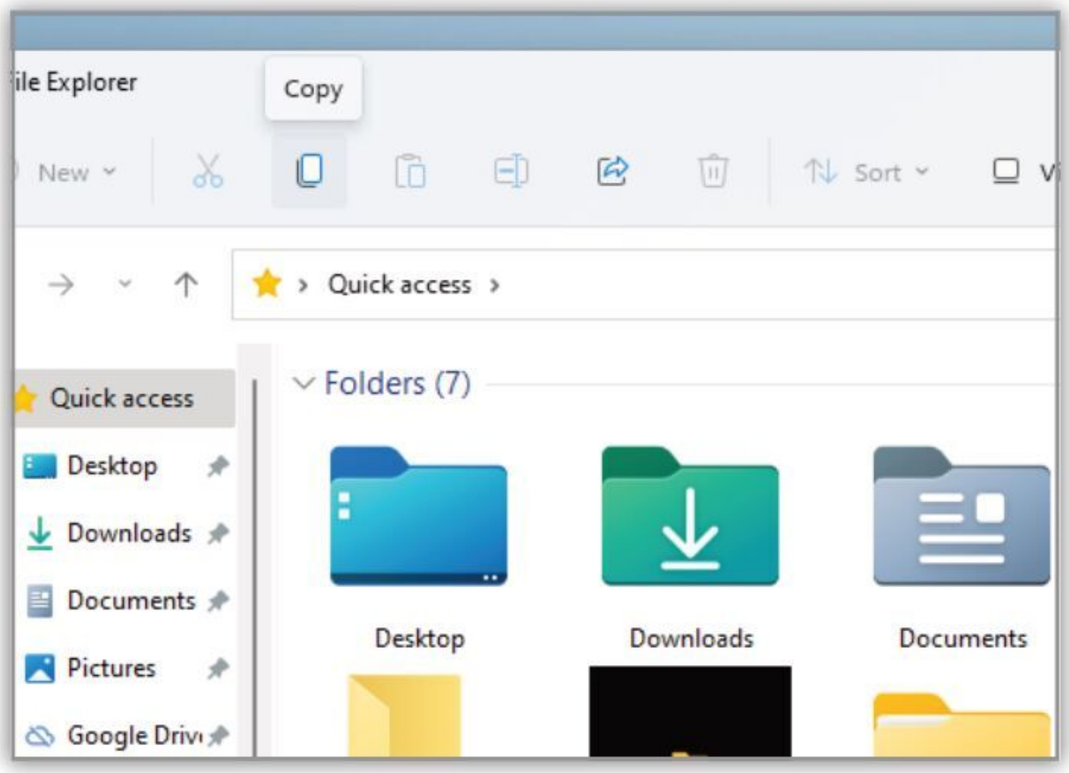
Step 2 The sidebar also works on the same principle, and via a new Quick Access feature you can pin folders or files that you want to stick around. It will also show you Frequent folders too. You can pin things permanently onto Quick Access by right-clicking them and selecting Add to Quick Access.



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.

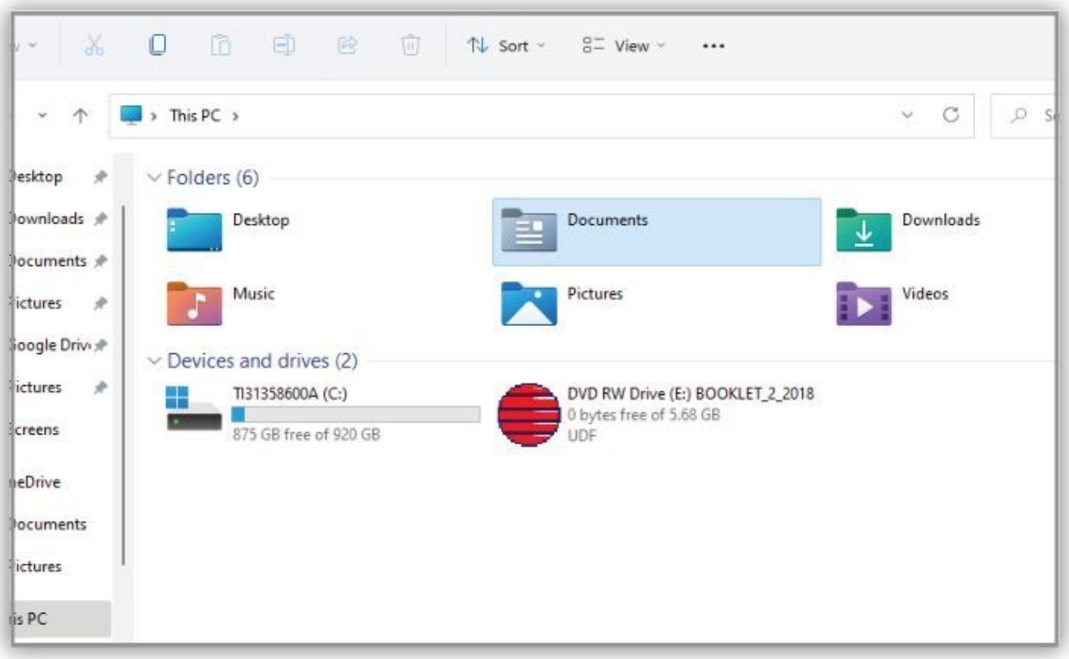


Step 4 The new icons are all fairly self-explanatory if you have used any PC in the past. There are icons for Cut, Copy, Delete, Rename and Share, as well as folder control icons like View and Sort. If you are unsure what any icon does, just hover your pointer over one to see a label pop up.

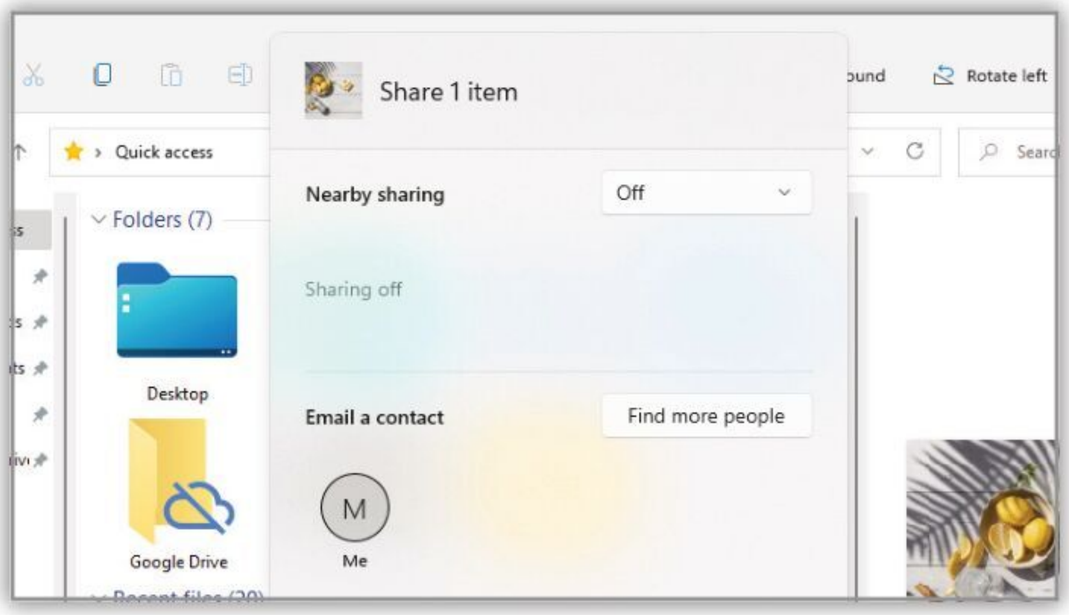


How to Use the File Explorer

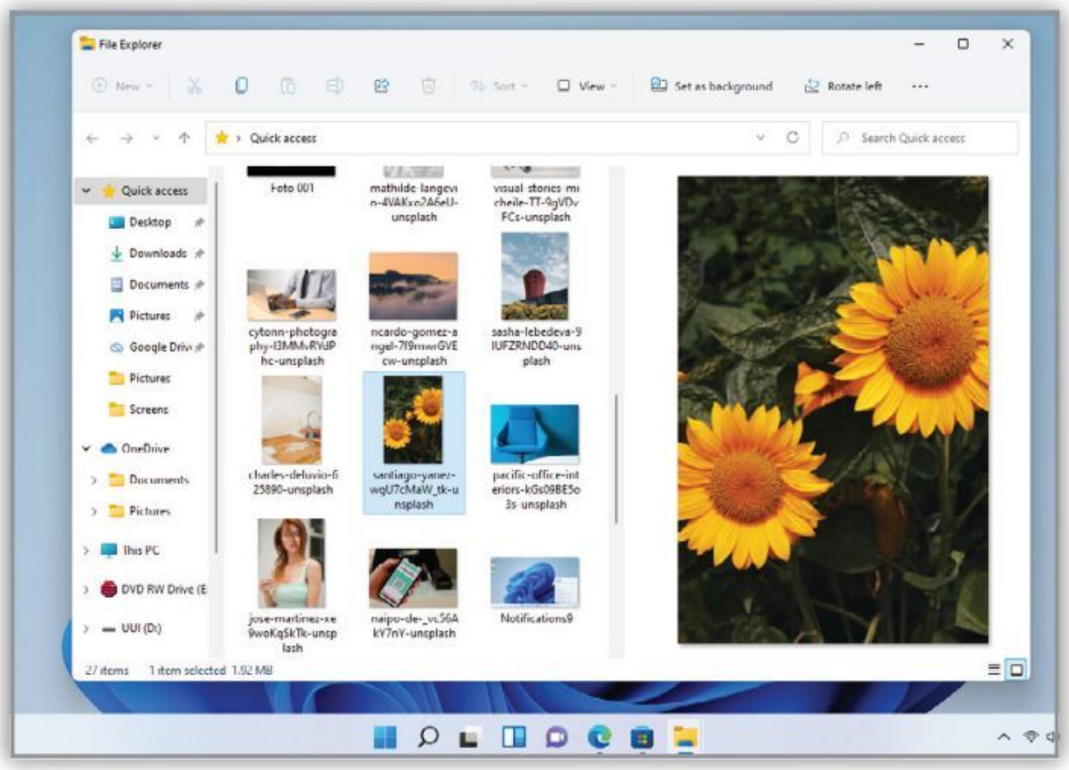
Step 5 The simplification continues on the This PC screen. All of the controls are still there, you just need to click on the More menu (the three dots) in the top bar. This menu is contextual. For example, select a drive such as C: and then click the menu to see options such as “Map network drive” and “Burn to disc”.



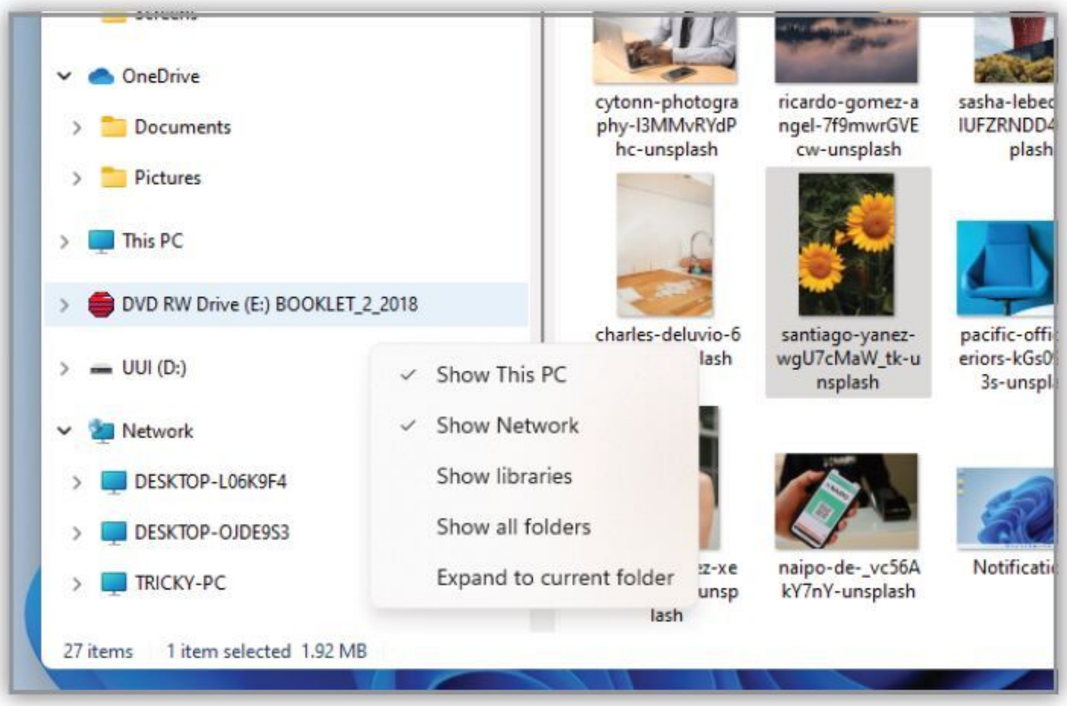
Step 6 Sharing files in File Explorer is again similar to Windows 10. Select one or more files in the window, click the Share button and the share panel will open. The sharing options shown here will vary depending on which apps you have installed and which communication features you have decided to set up.



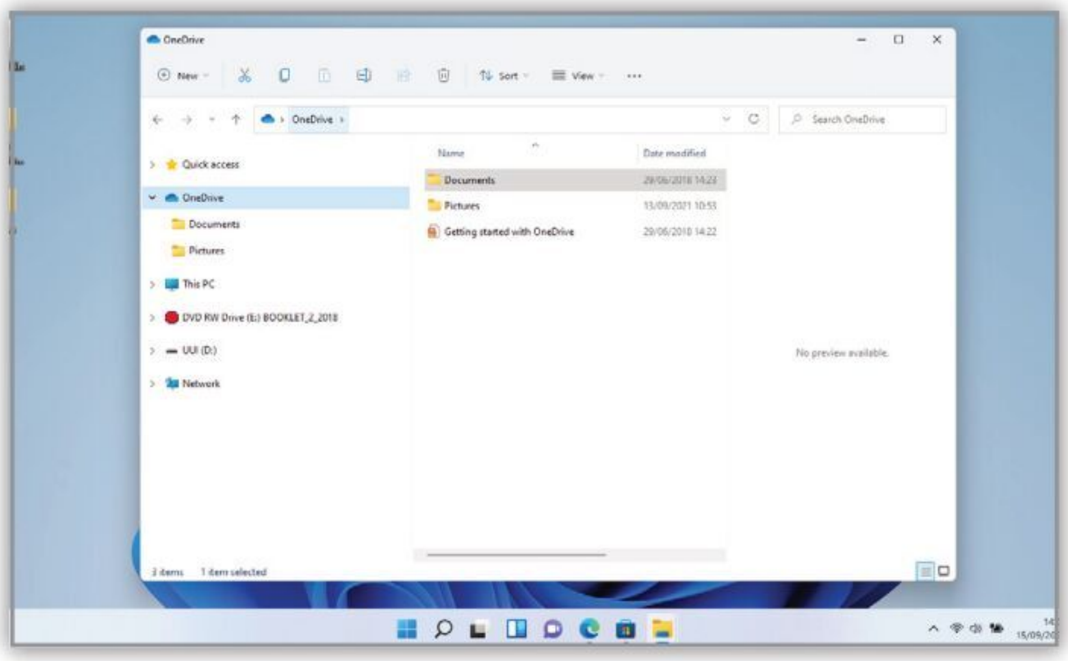
Step 7 When viewing some files, such as photos, in File Explorer, it can be useful to see a larger preview. This feature if turned off by default, but can be enabled at any time. In any folder in File Explorer, click the View tab and then click Show. From the new menu you can choose to see a Preview pane.



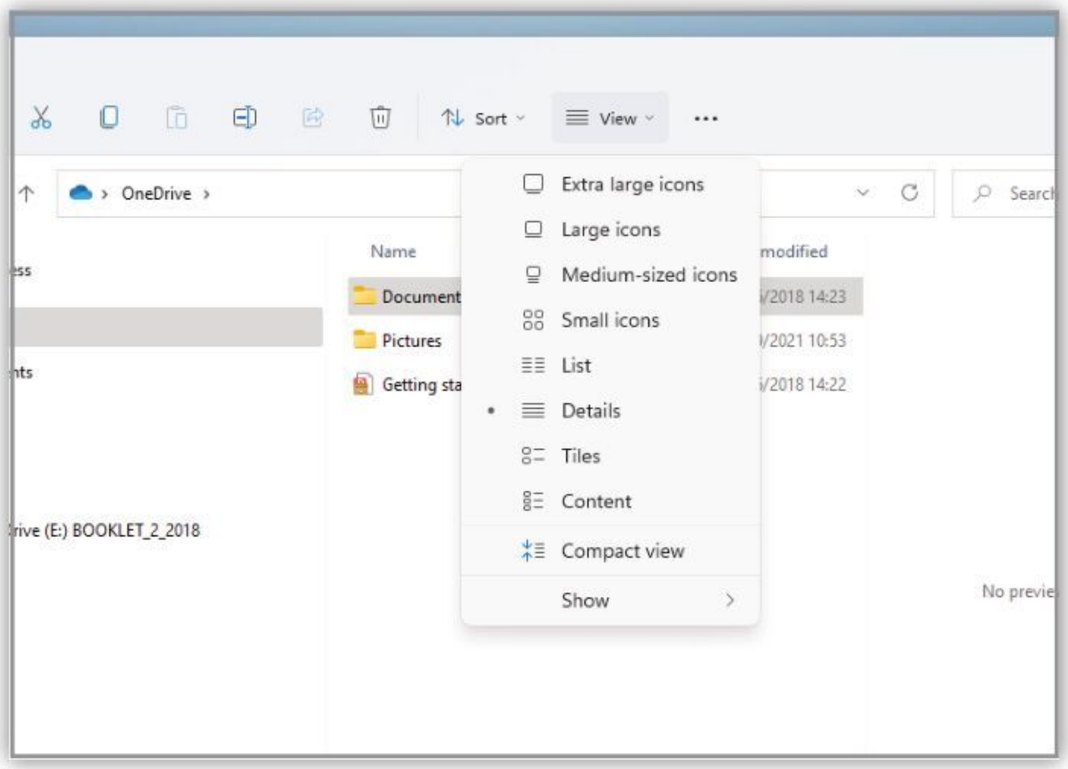
Step 8 You can access just about every folder on your computer, both system and created folders, from the File Explorer. There are several folders in the sidebar that are always shown, including This PC, Network and OneDrive. Right click on the sidebar to add even more useful folders to this area.



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.



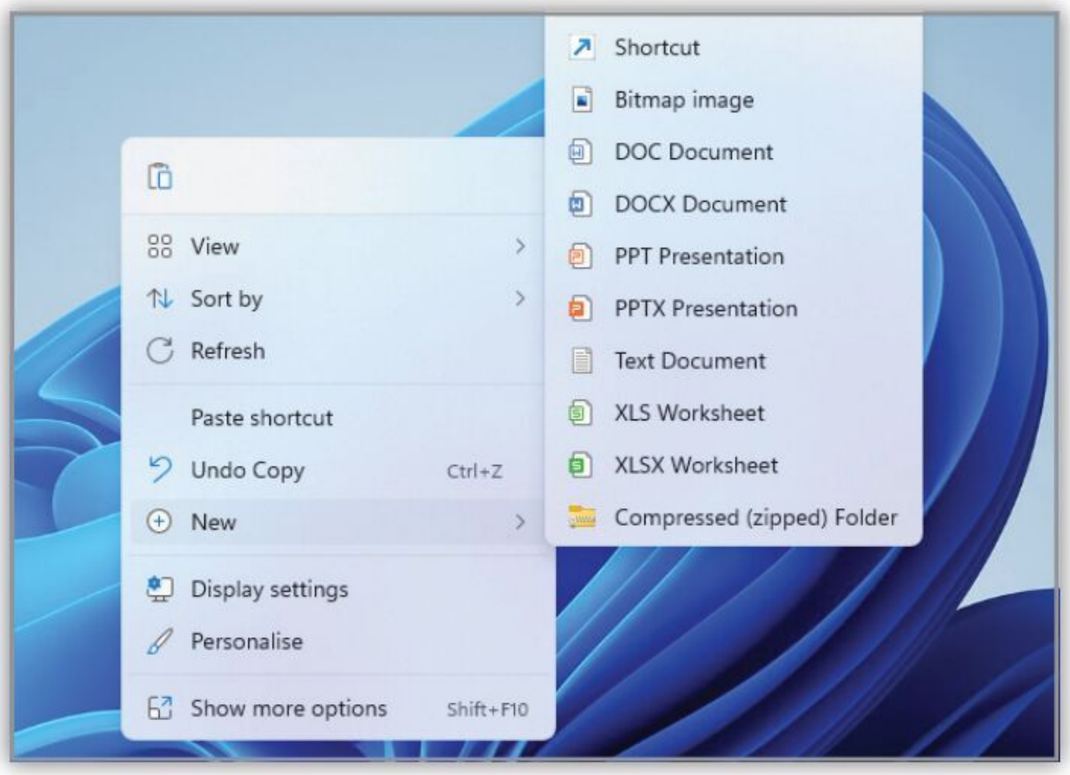
Create and Manage Folders

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.

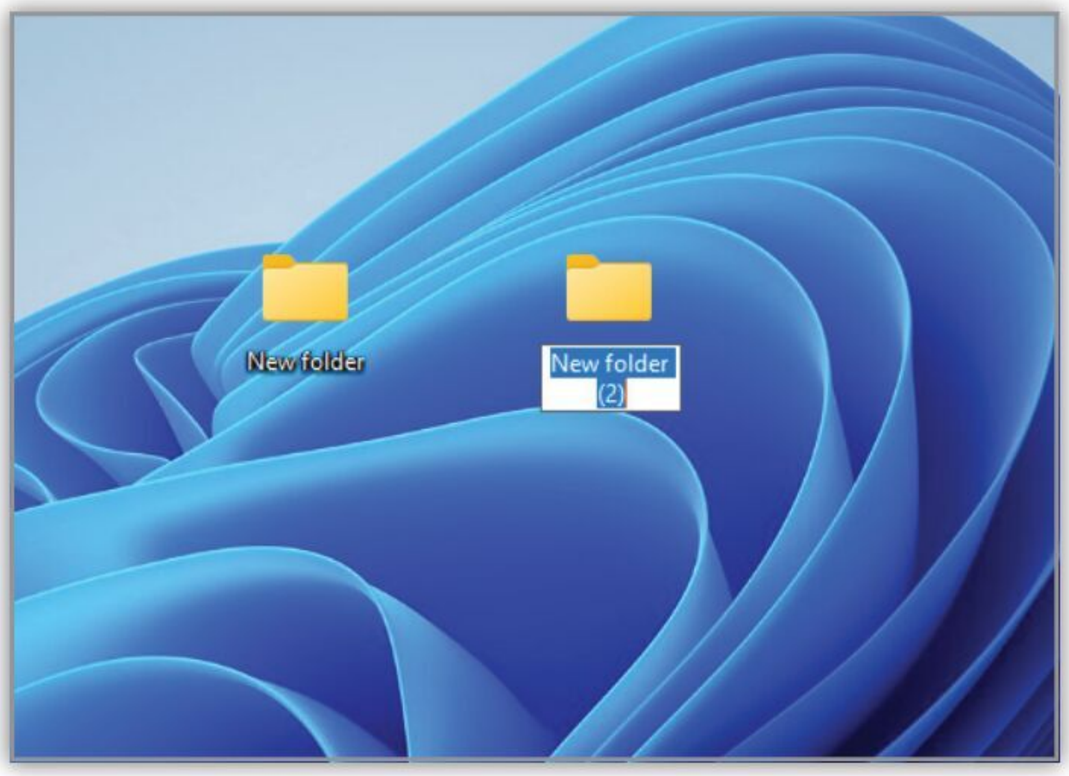
Creating New Folders

It may seem too simple if you are a long time Windows user, but here's a look at how to create new folders on the desktop and within other folders.

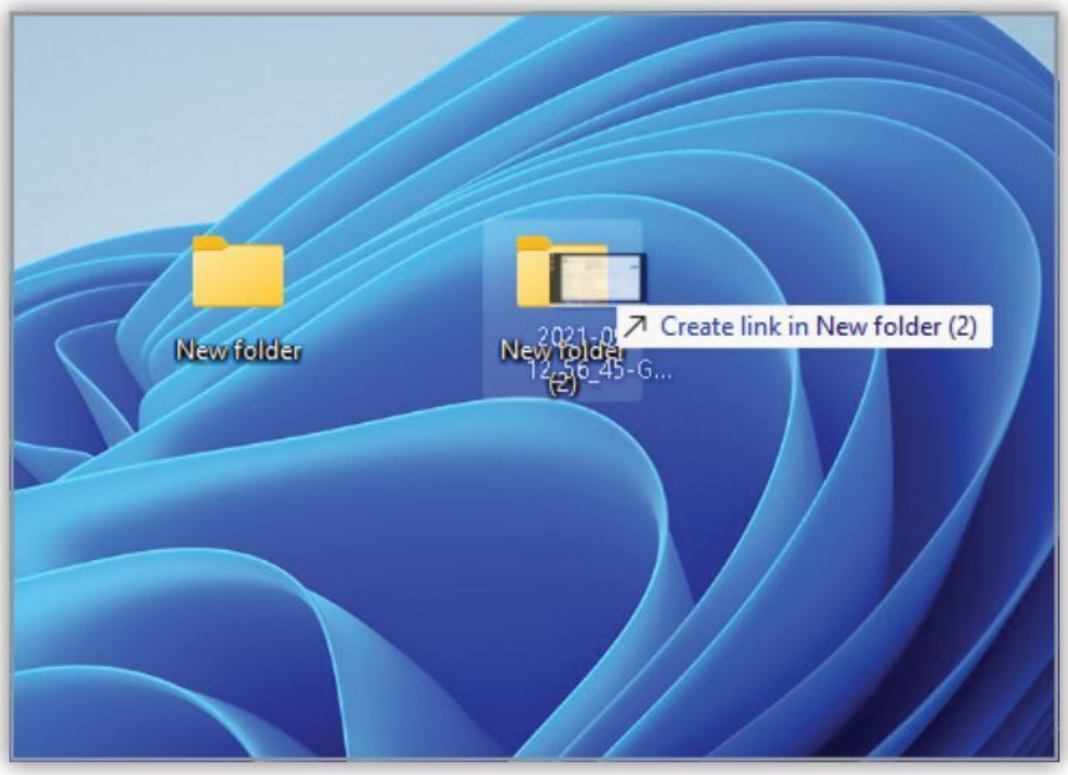
Step 1 On the desktop, right-click and select New folder from the action menu that appears. The familiar yellow folder icon will then appear at that position on the desktop (wherever you clicked), with the name automatically set as 'New folder' but highlighted ready to change.



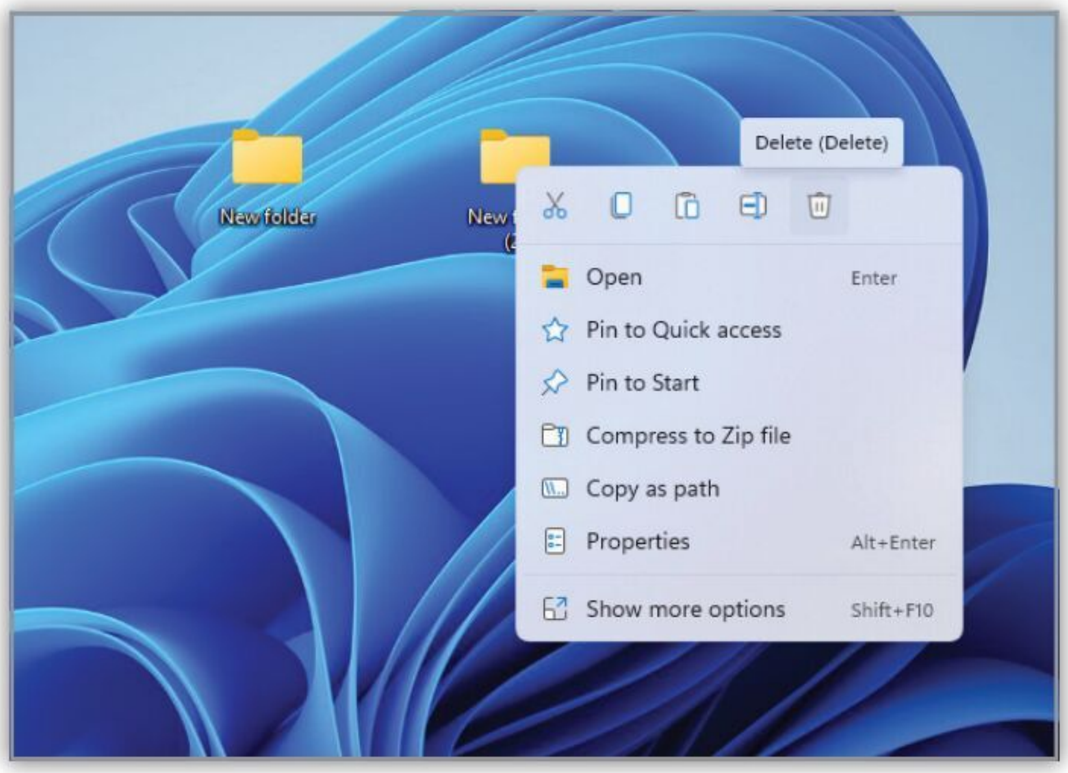
Step 2 You can leave the name as 'New folder' if you wish. If you then create a second folder next to the first, it will automatically be named 'New folder (2)'. You can rename a folder at any time by left-clicking on the title once, or right-clicking and selecting Rename from the menu.



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.



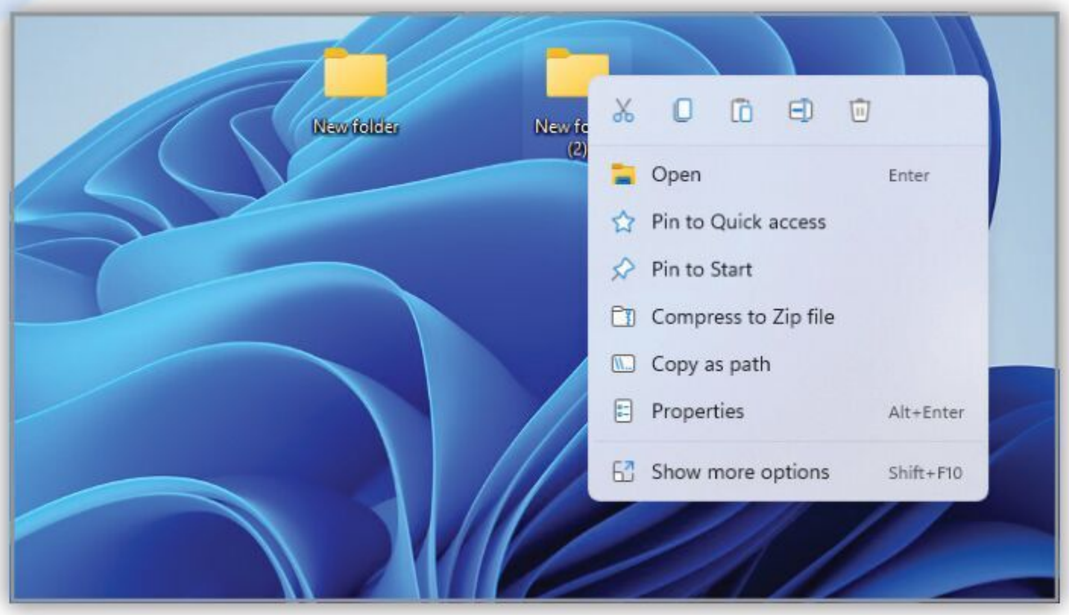
Step 4 To delete a folder, right-click on it and select Delete from the action menu. You can also click and drag the folder to the Recycle Bin icon on your desktop. Anything in the folder will also be placed in the recycle bin. To move folders around the desktop, just click, drag and drop them.



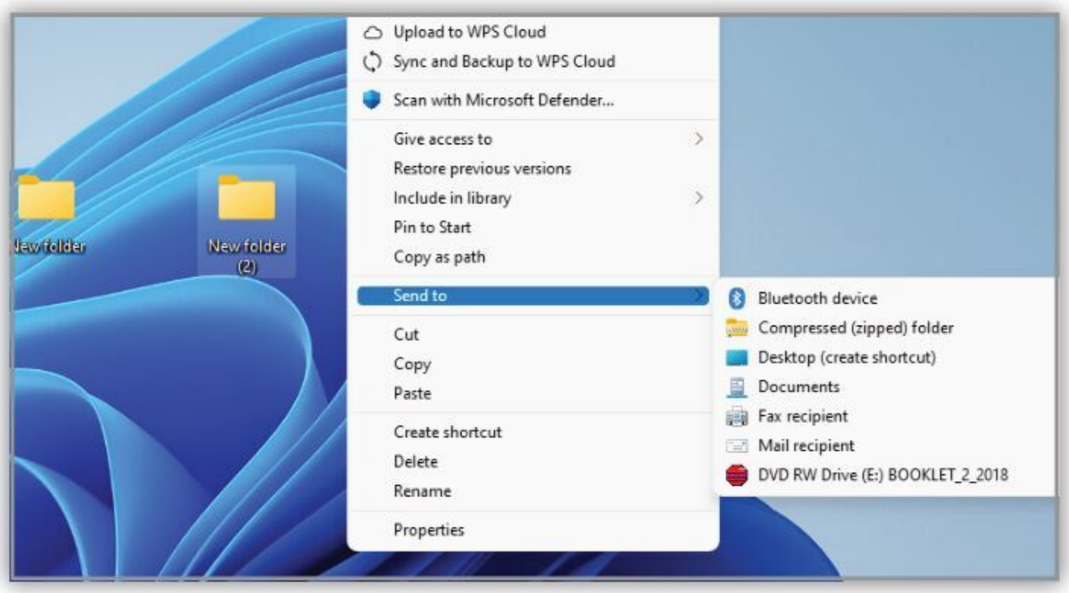
Managing Your Folders

Once created, folders can be adapted and customised in a number of ways. You can even change the default icon used whenever a new folder is added.

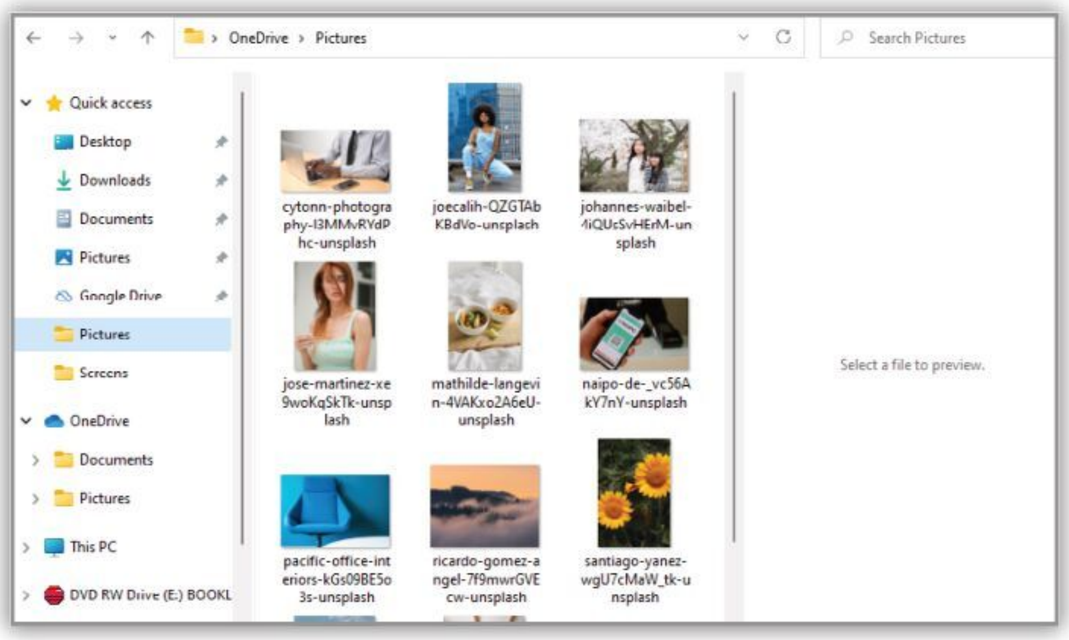
Step 1 You can manage a folder in a number of ways, without even opening it. Right-click on any folder and the action menu appears. The exact options that appear will depend on the apps or software you have installed but can include: scan for viruses, compress, shred, zip and more.



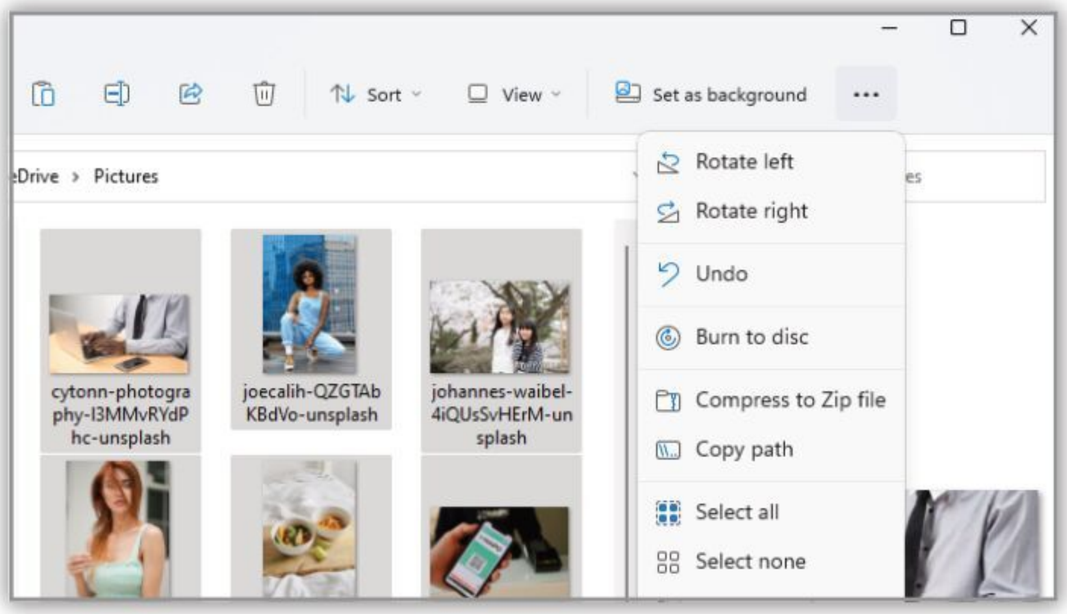
Step 2 The standard (Windows 11) options in the folder action menu include: Pin to Quick Access, Open, Share, Pin to Start, Send To, Cut, Copy, Rename and Delete. Some of these options are shown as new icons along the top of the action menu. You can see more folder options by clicking that option.



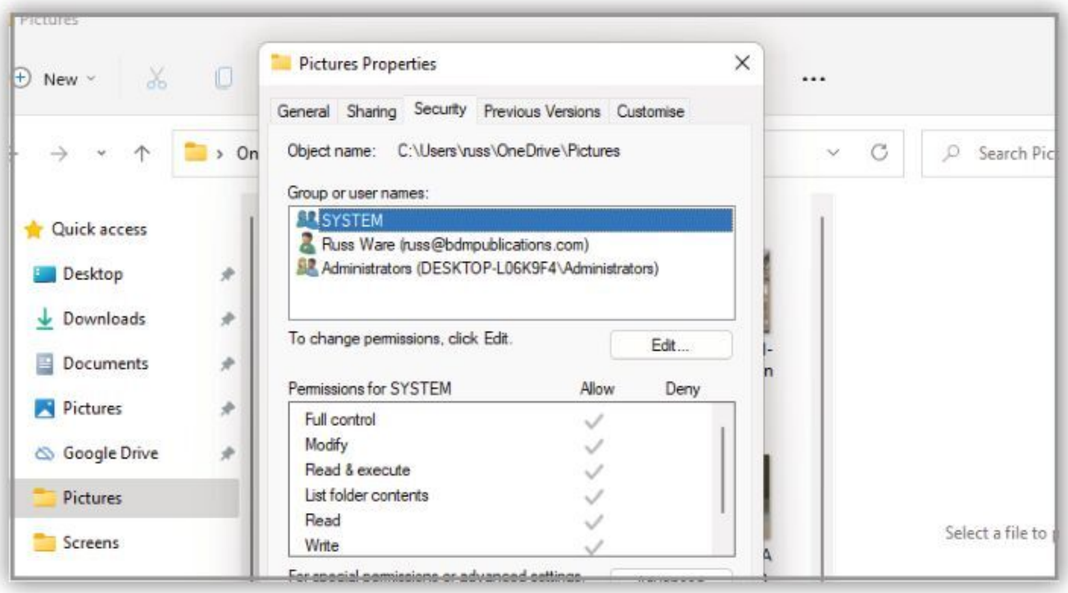
Step 3 Open the folder and a whole range of further options are available along the top of the new window. Again, these are a mix of icons and test options. When you select something in the folder, yet more options will appear, which vary depending on the type of file you selected in the folder.



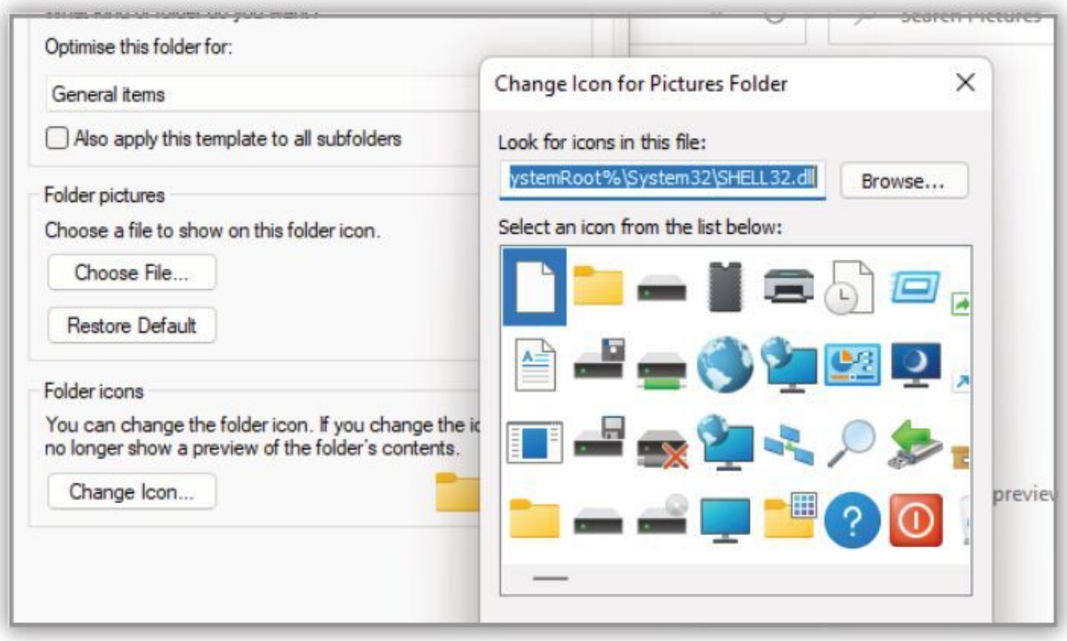
Step 4 Most of these options are self-explanatory, such as copy, paste and select all, but some are a little more confusing. Most casual computer users won't need to use 90 per cent of the options in day-to-day use but it is worth understanding them anyway. Add a few files to the folder and experiment.



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.



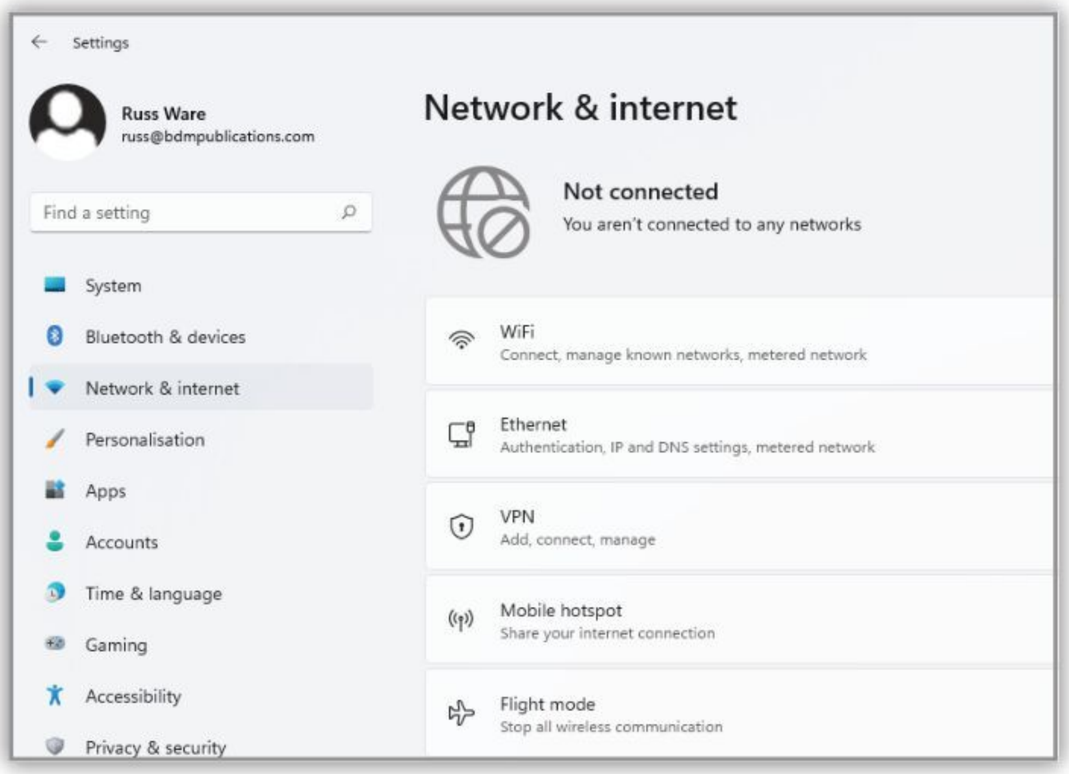
Connecting Your PC to the Internet

Setting an Internet connection is an important step. Windows 11 makes joining and managing networks easy, 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

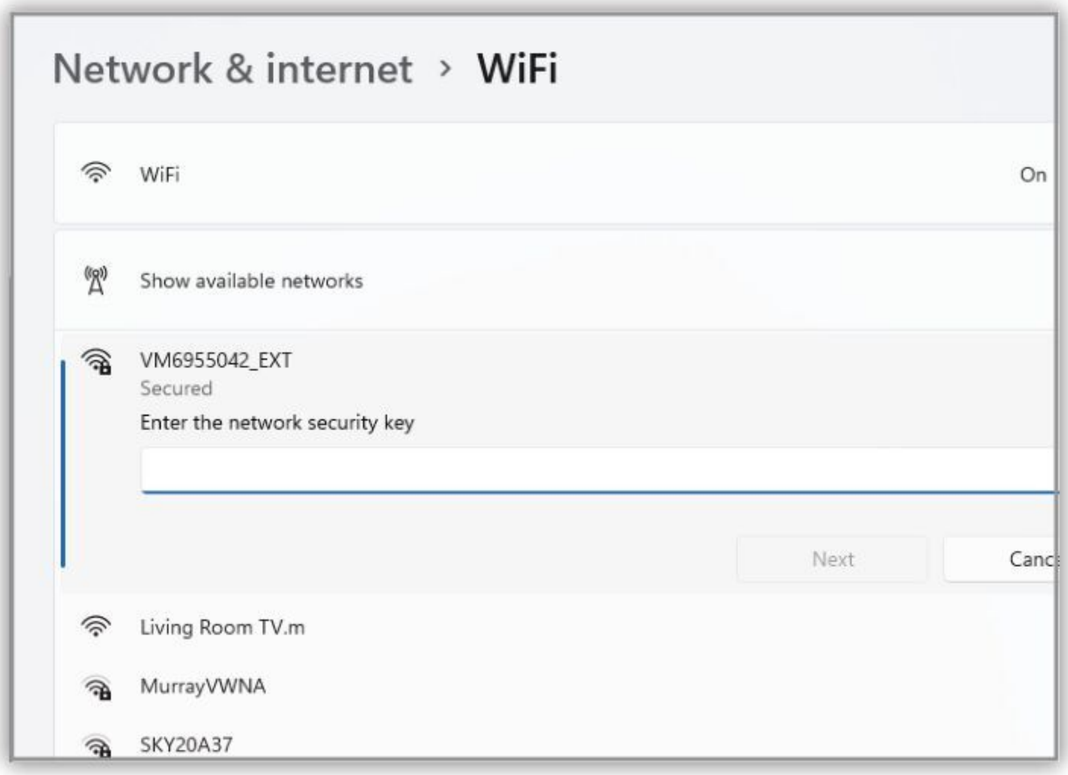
A Wi-Fi network connection is now by far the most common way people connect to the Internet. The process should be fairly familiar to you by now, but if not, here are the exact steps to connect.

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).

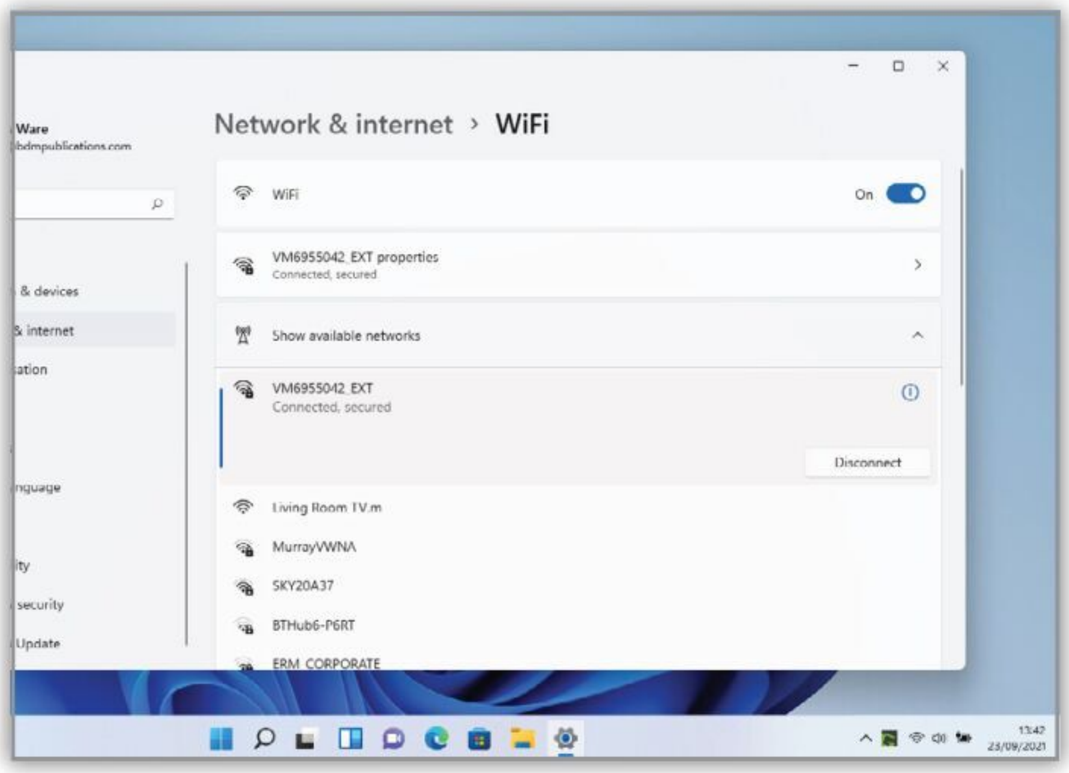


Step 2 Use the slider switch to enable Wi-Fi on your computer. Now click "Show available networks" to see a list of the networks within range of your computer. This may take a few seconds to scan and find the networks. Hopefully you will see the Wi-Fi network you want to connect to.

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.

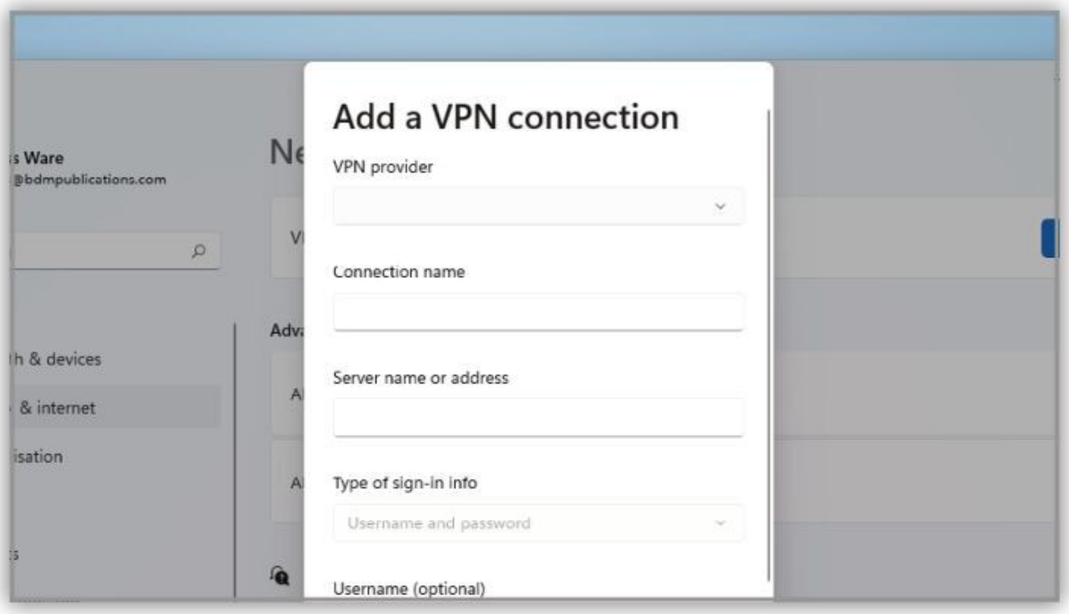


Manage Network Settings

We'll show you how to master your Wi-Fi settings and explain what you need to do if you have a problem connecting to the Internet.

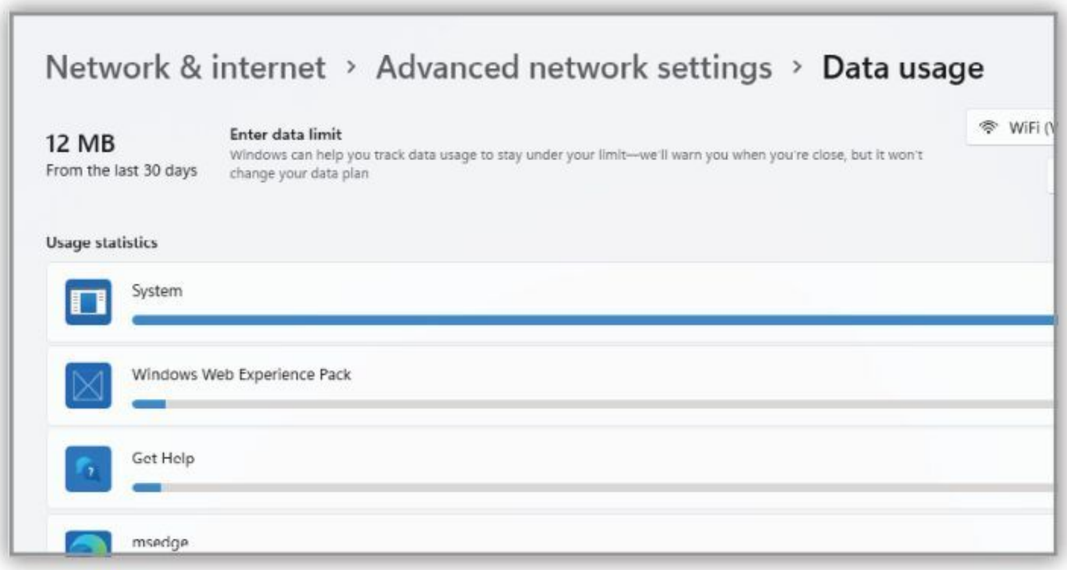
VPN Settings

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.



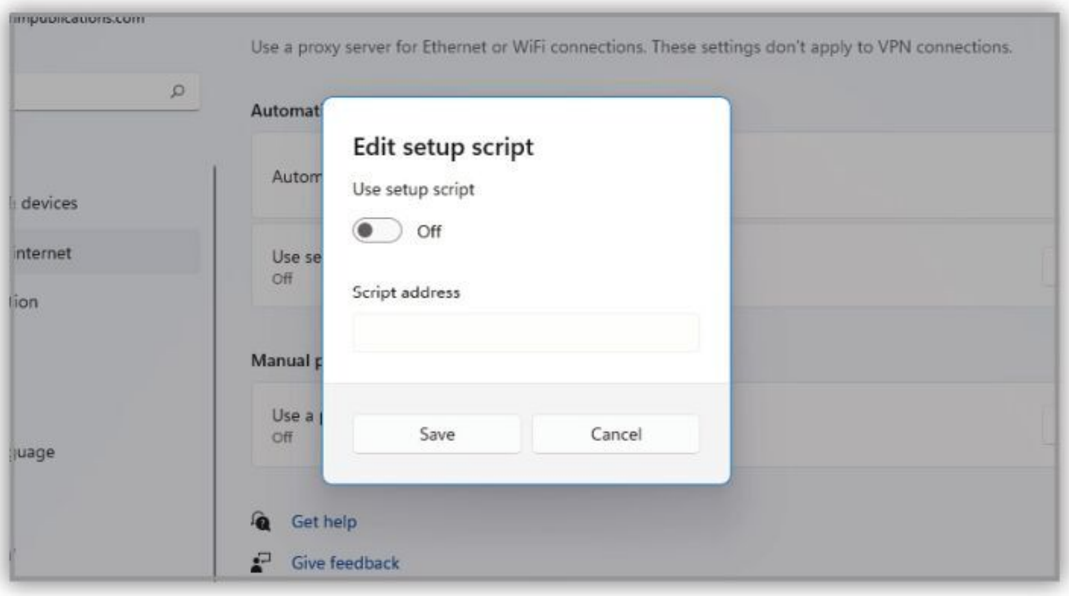
Usage Stats

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.



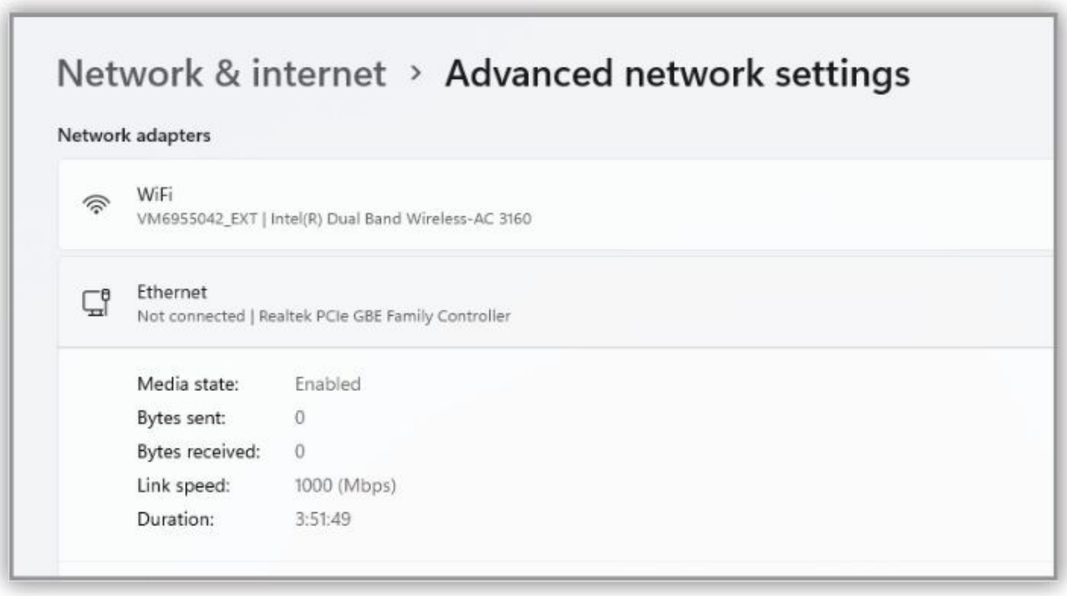
Proxy Settings

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.



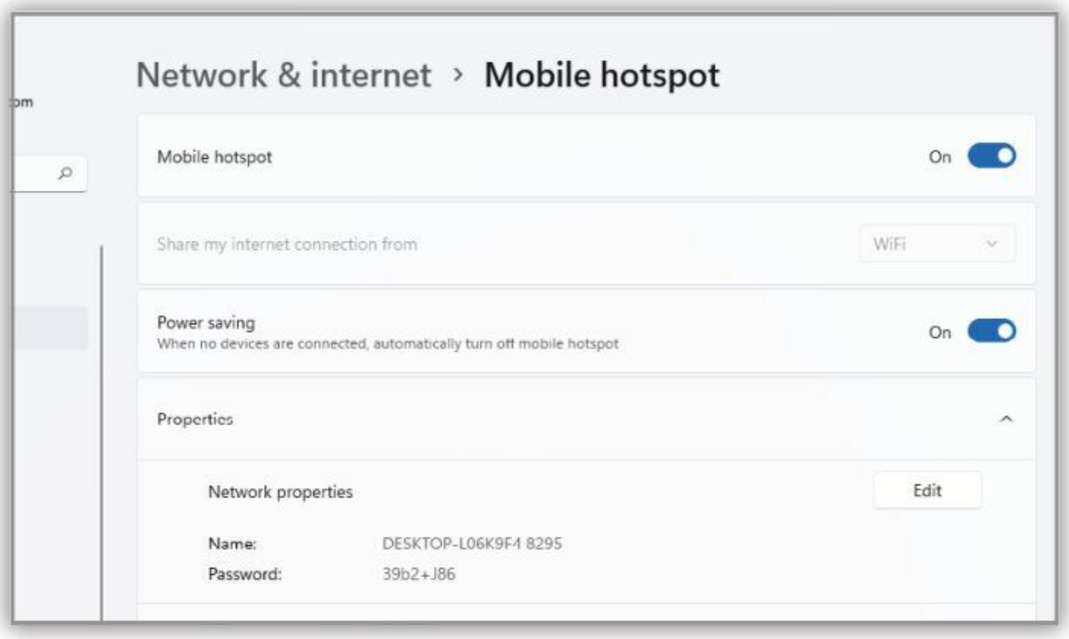
Disable Adaptors

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.



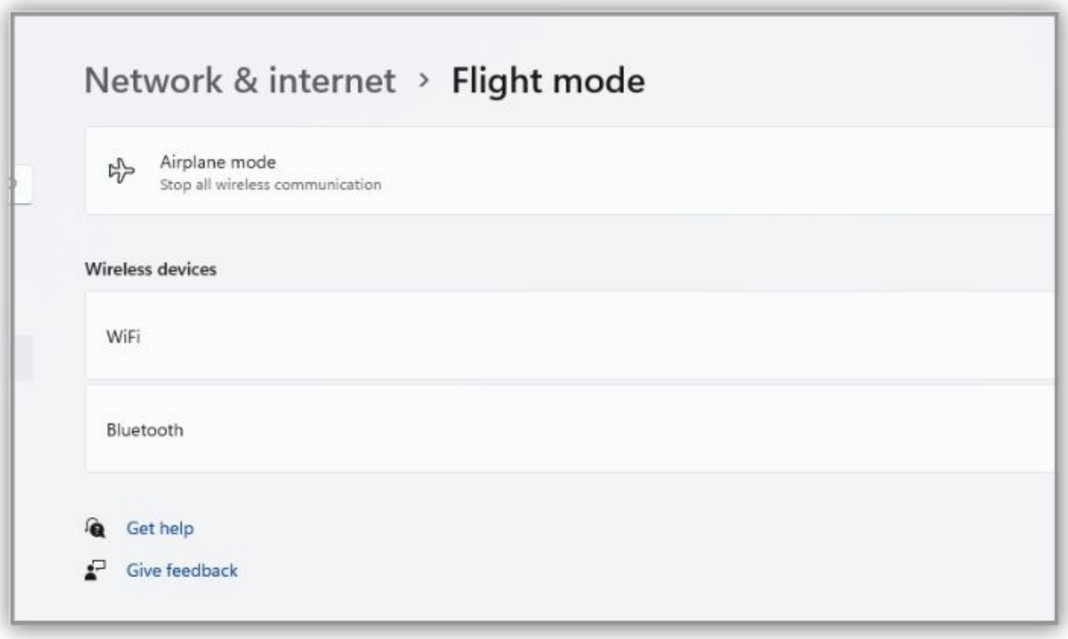
Mobile Hotspot

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.



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.



Exploring the Windows 11 Settings

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.

1 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.

2 Settings Categories

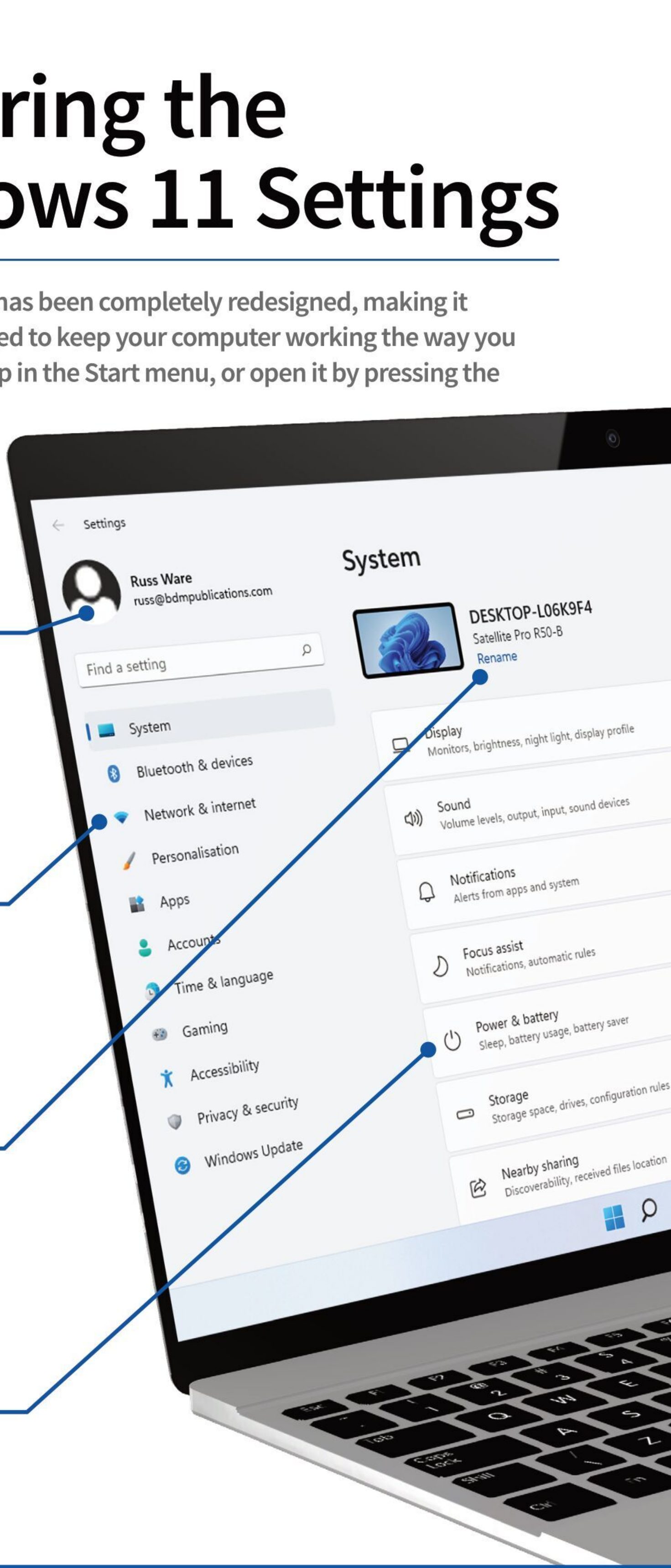
In the left sidebar are all of the main settings categories, from System settings to Windows Update settings. This sidebar remains visible no matter where you are within the settings app. Clicking each category heading will open a list of sub categories.

3 Quick Info Panel

Along the top of several settings categories you will 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. At the top of the Network & Internet category, you will see the currently connected network, data usage and network properties.

4 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.



Exploring the Windows 11 Settings

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.

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.

Bluetooth & Devices
Having trouble with your mouse or printer? This is where you can access the settings for almost anything that connects to your computer.

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

Personalisation
If you want to change how Windows 11 looks, this is the settings category you need to explore. Change everything from the desktop background to the Start menu styling.

Apps
Every app or piece of software you have installed can be viewed and managed from here. You can also set things like the default apps, and the apps that run on startup.

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.

Time & Language
No surprise that you can change your computers time and language settings here. You will also find settings for speech, typing, auto-correct and advanced keyboard setup.

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.

Using Widgets in Windows 11

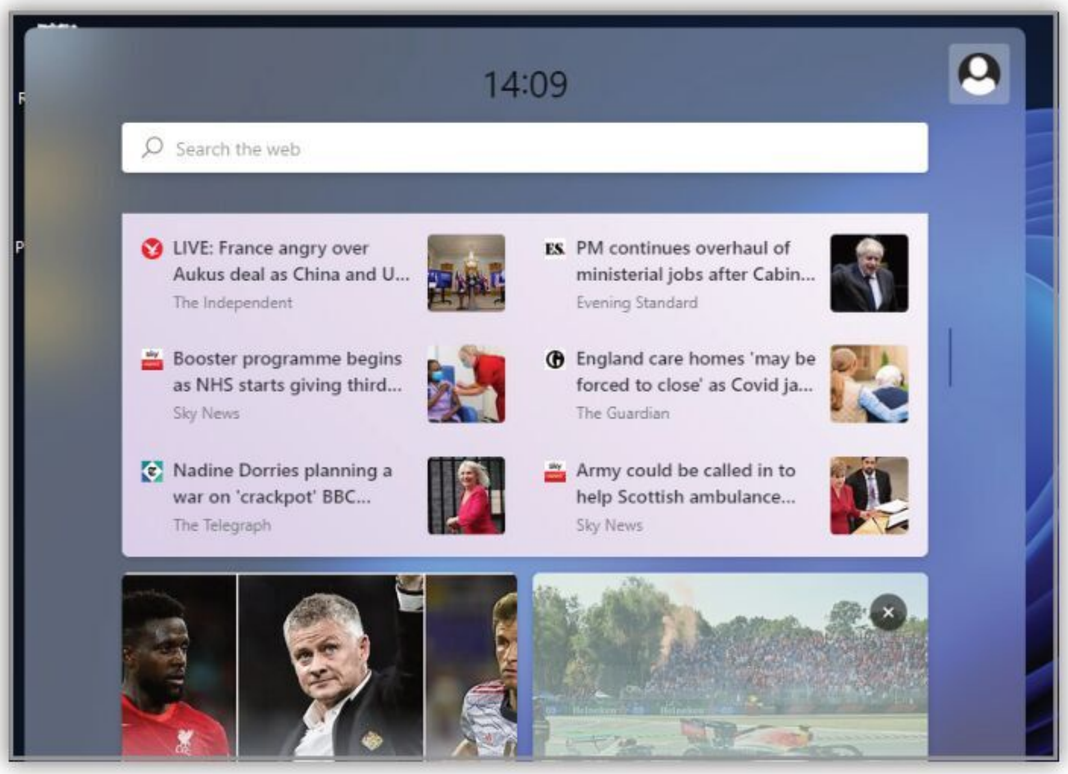
Widgets are desktop app previews, allowing you to see important information from Windows apps, without needing to actually open those apps. Widgets are not new, but the way they are managed and displayed in Windows 11 is new.

Wonderful Widgets

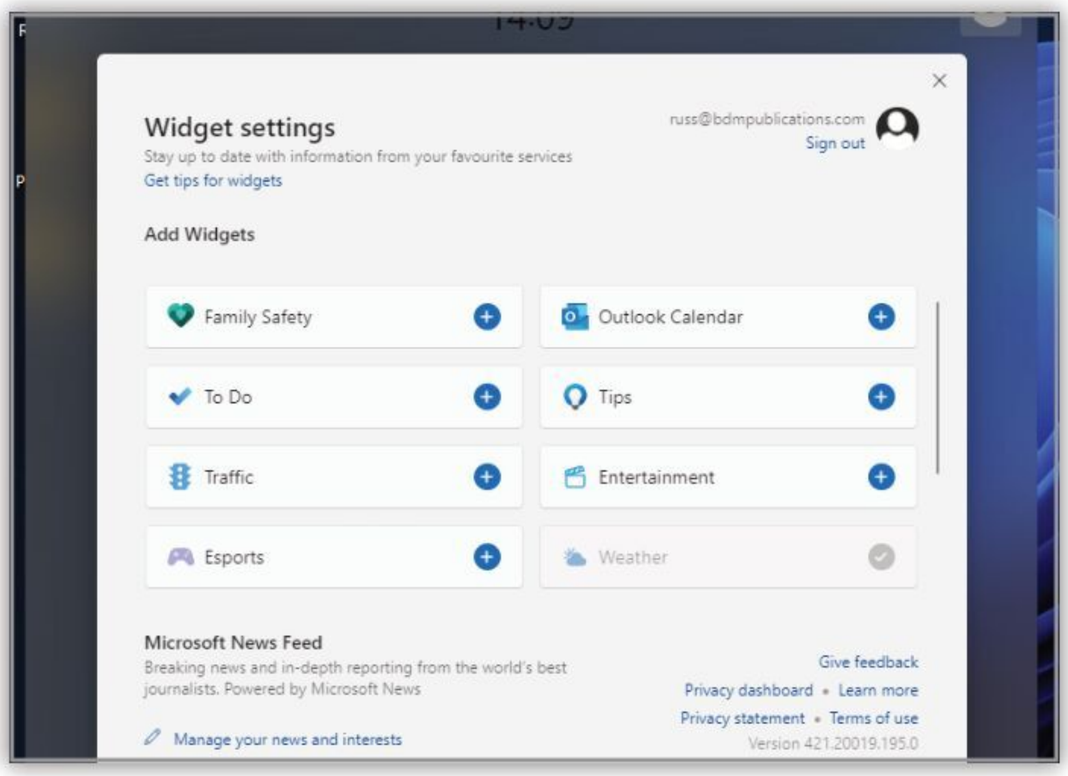
If you are not used to using widgets, you could be excused for hardly noticing they are a part of Windows 11. But once you do start using them, their usefulness becomes obvious.

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 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.

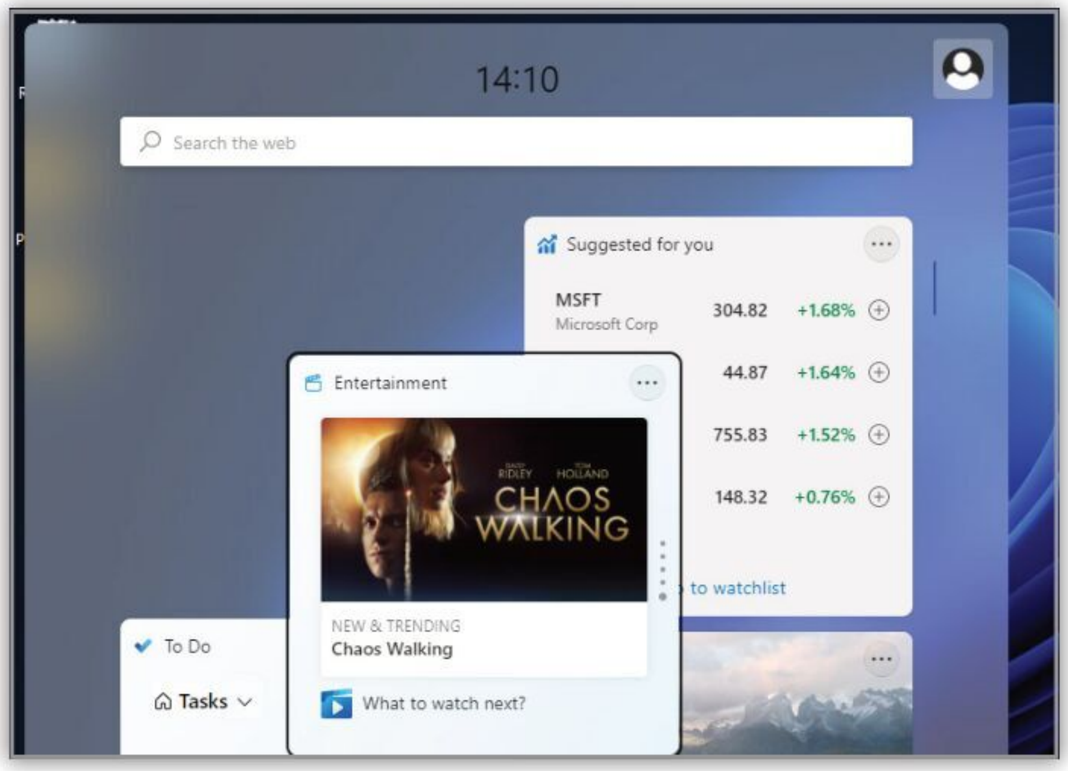
Step 2 The widget panel is initially split up into three main sections: Search, Widgets and News stories. Scroll down the panel to see more content. At the top-right is an account icon, which opens a new panel with account information and the ability to add new widgets.



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.

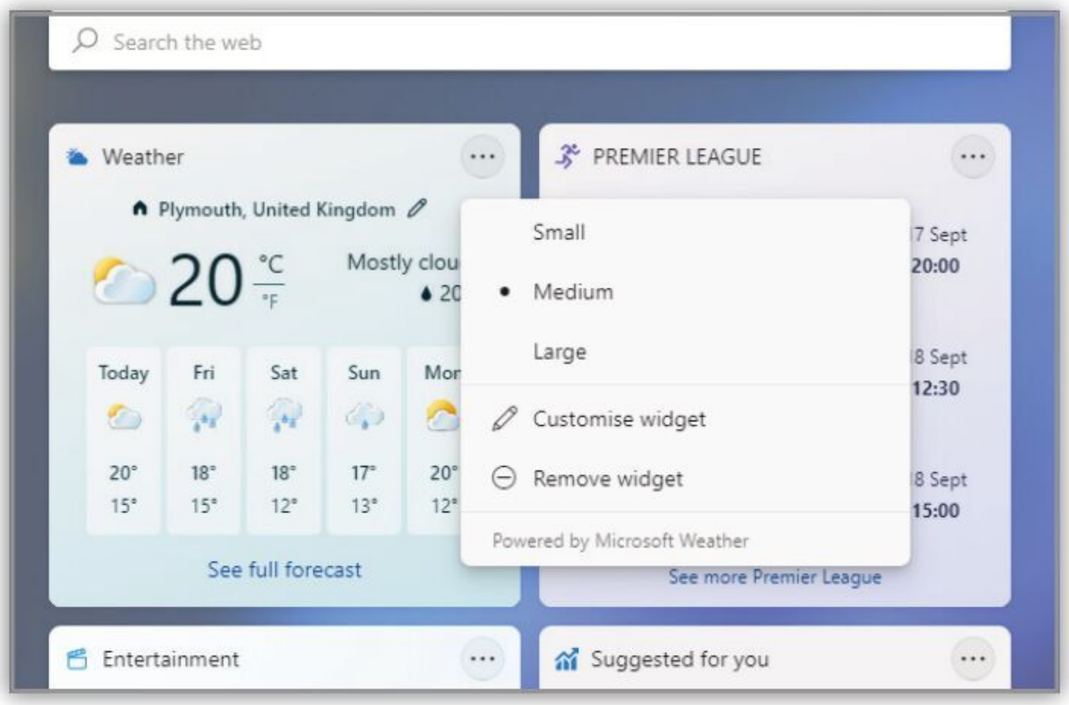


Step 4 After adding widgets, close the account panel and you will see the added widgets in the panel. You can move widgets around in the panel by clicking on the top of the widget and dragging it to the required position. Other widgets will rearrange to fit when you do this.

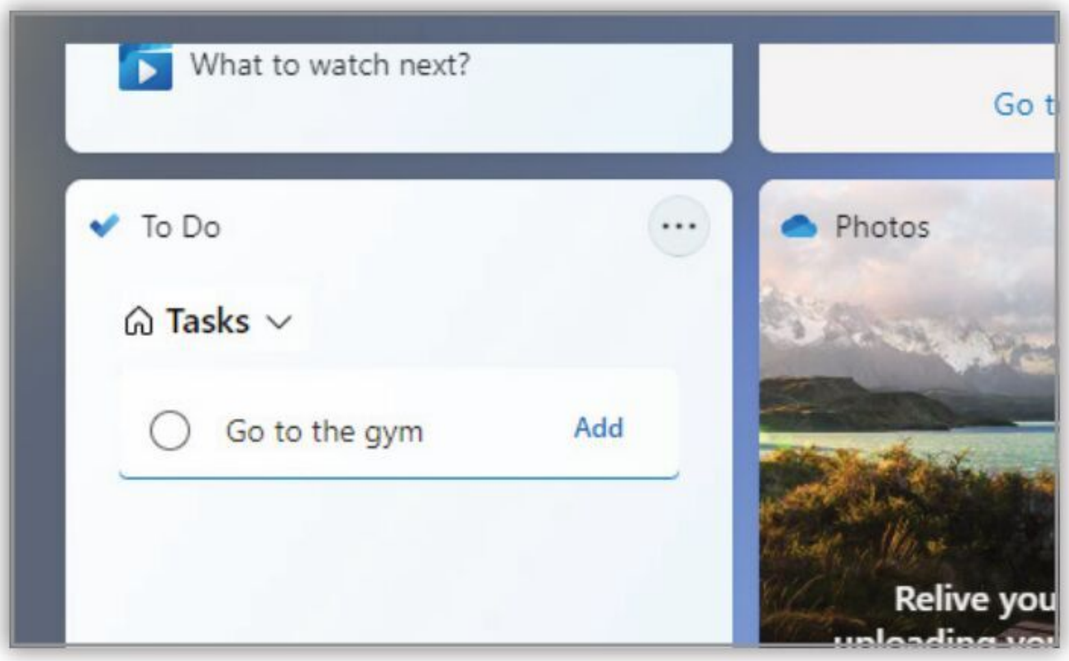


Using Widgets in Windows 11

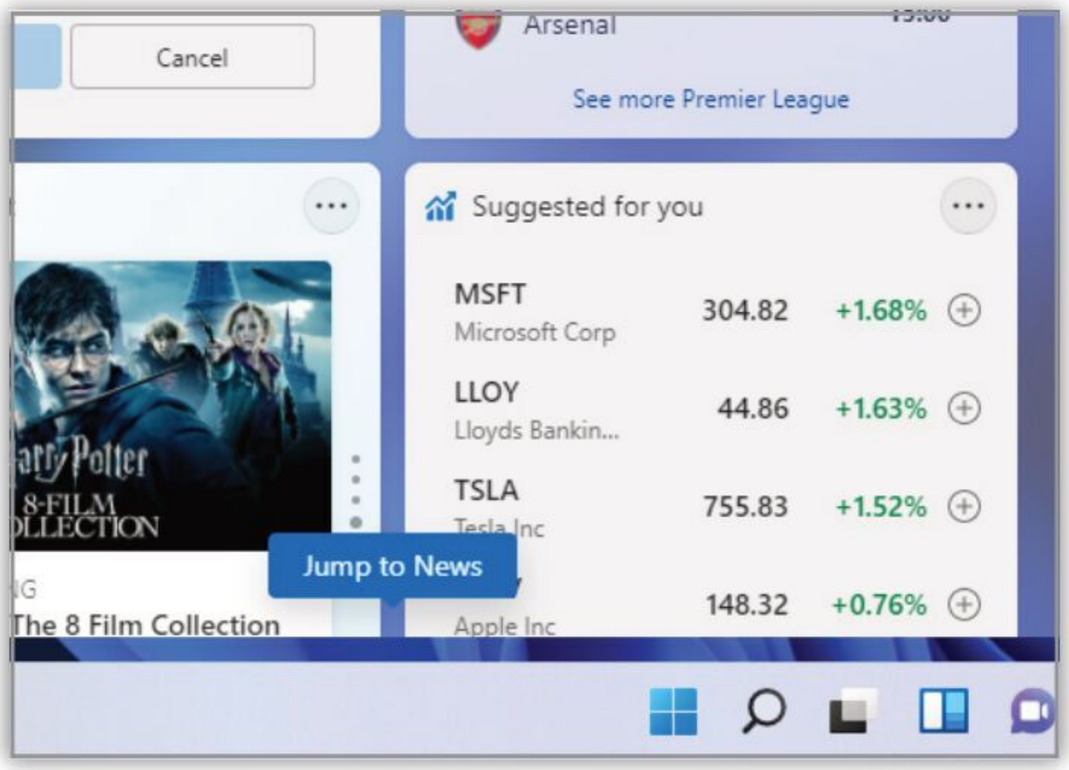
Step 5 To remove a widget, click on the Menu button at the top-right of the widget and choose “Remove Widget” from the menu. You will also see the option to change the size of the widget in this menu. Not all of the widgets will allow all three of the sizing options.



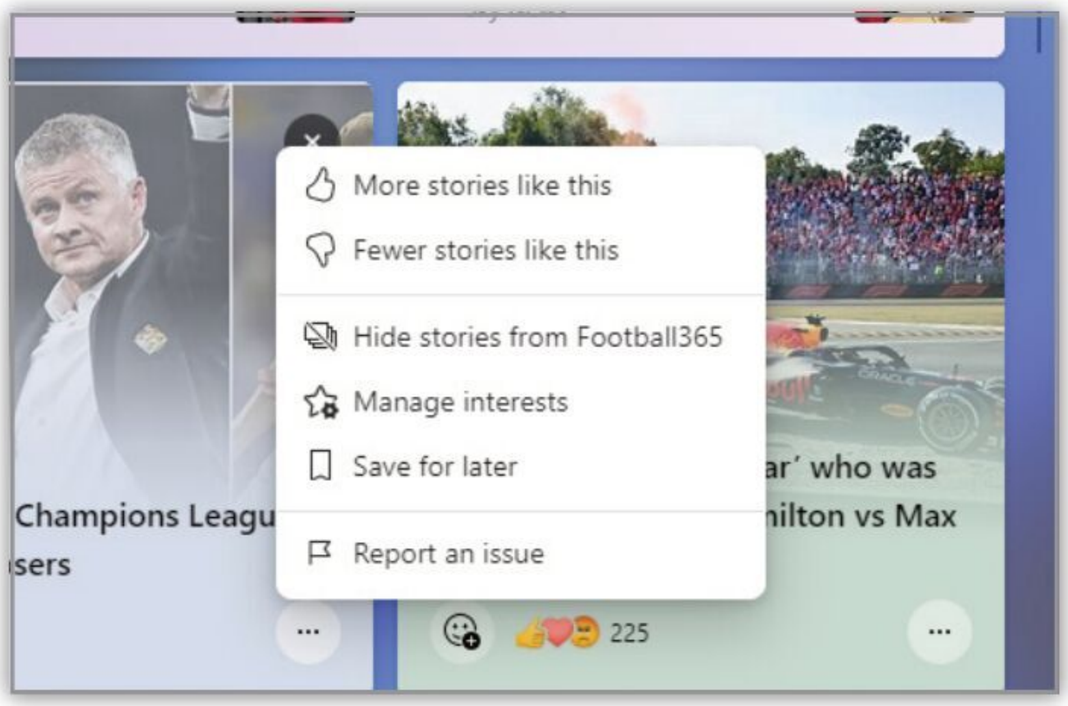
Step 6 Some Widgets allow content editing within the widget. A good example of this is the To Do widget. You can create tasks in the widget by clicking the “Add a task” button, without having to the open the main To Do app. The task then displays instantly in the widget.



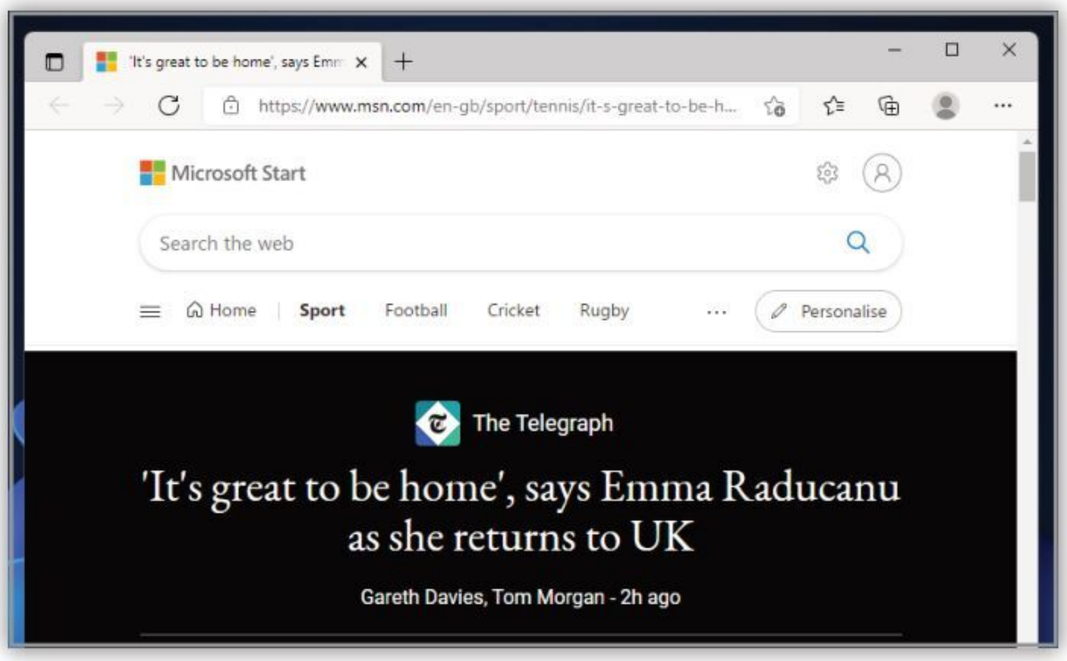
Step 7 Some of the Widgets allow customisation through the More Menu button. The Weather widget, for example, lets you set the default location for the weather forecast that is shown. The Stocks widget lets you change which stock prices are displayed, etc.



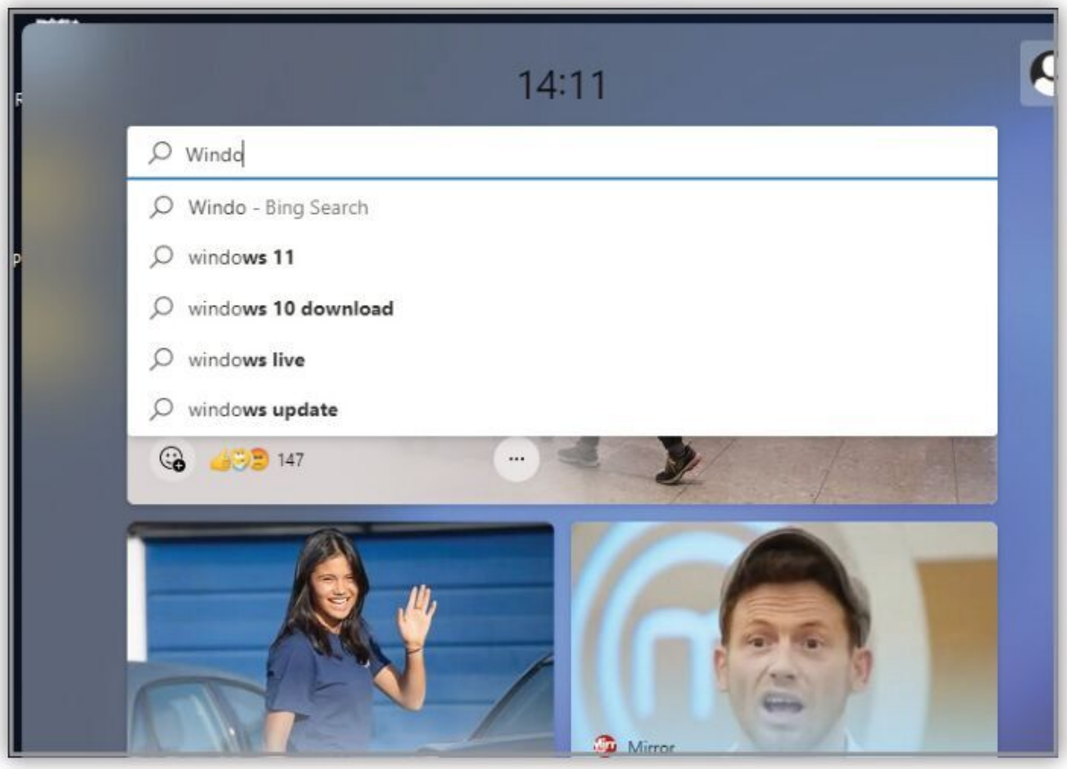
Step 8 The news stories further down the Widgets panel also allow for some customisation. You can click the X to remove a news story, and you can click the More Menu button to choose to see “More/Fewer stories like this”, or to hide all stories from that particular news source.



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.



Exploring Microsoft Edge

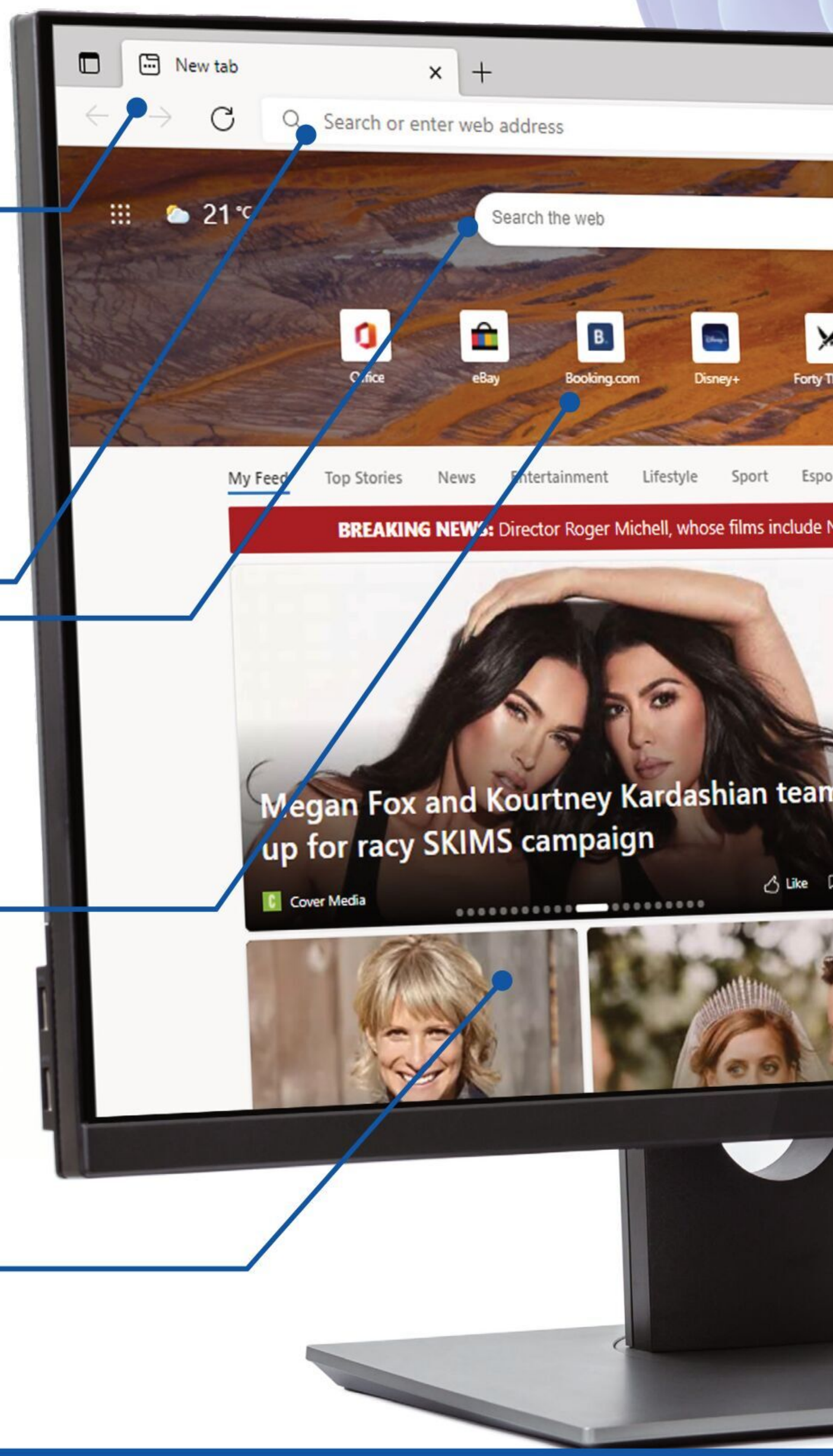
Edge continues to get better and better, and the latest version in Windows 11 is no different. You should be familiar with it if you are upgrading from Windows 10, as it is basically the same version; but let's take a look at the newest and best features of Microsoft Edge.

1 **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.

2 **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.

3 **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.

4 **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.



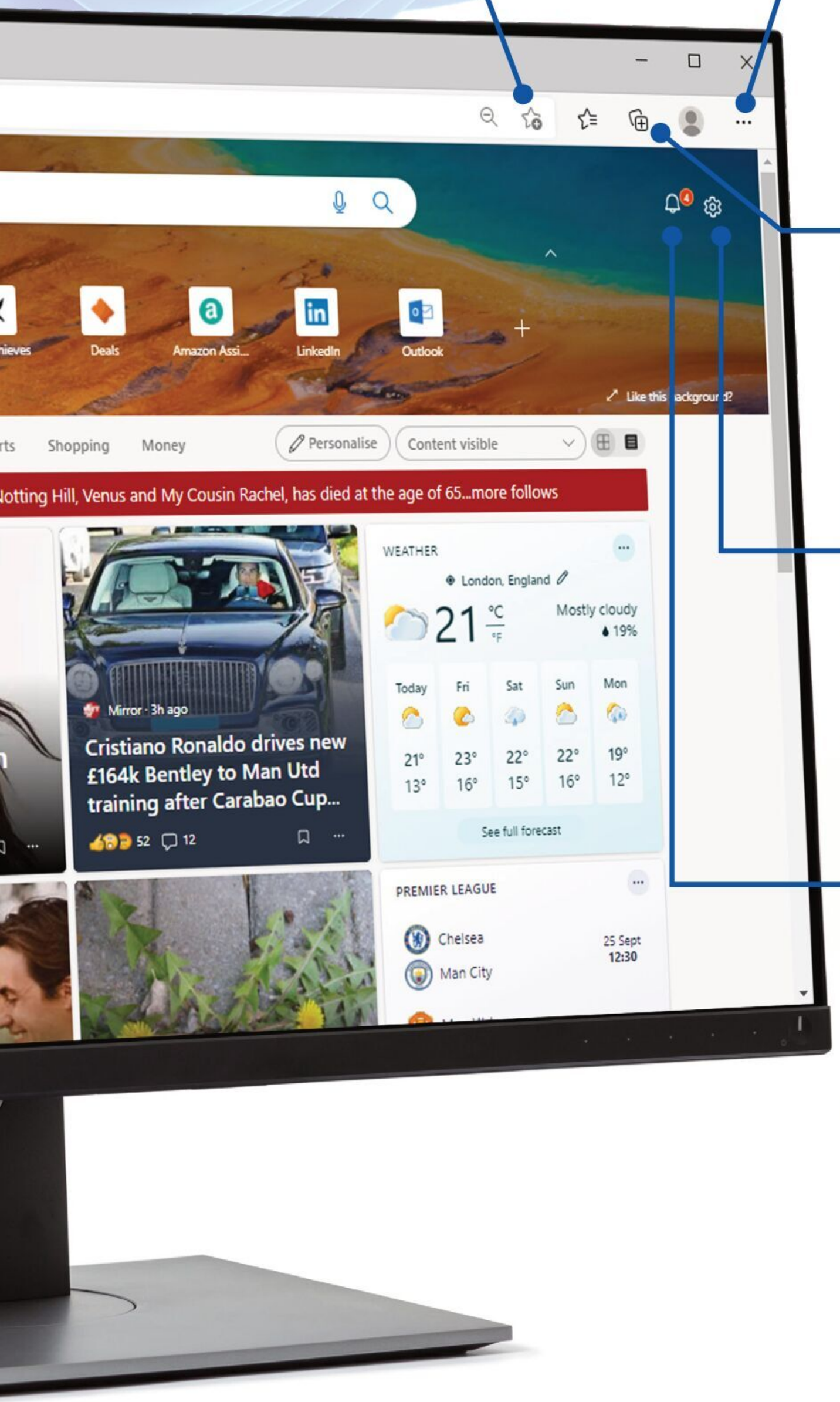
Exploring Microsoft Edge

5 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.

6 Launch

Remember, if you don't want to use Microsoft's launch page to start using the Internet, you can change this via the setting to one of your own choice. Perhaps you prefer the Google homepage, or maybe you've created your own, unique launch page experience.



7 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".

8 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.

9 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.

How to Use the Edge Browser

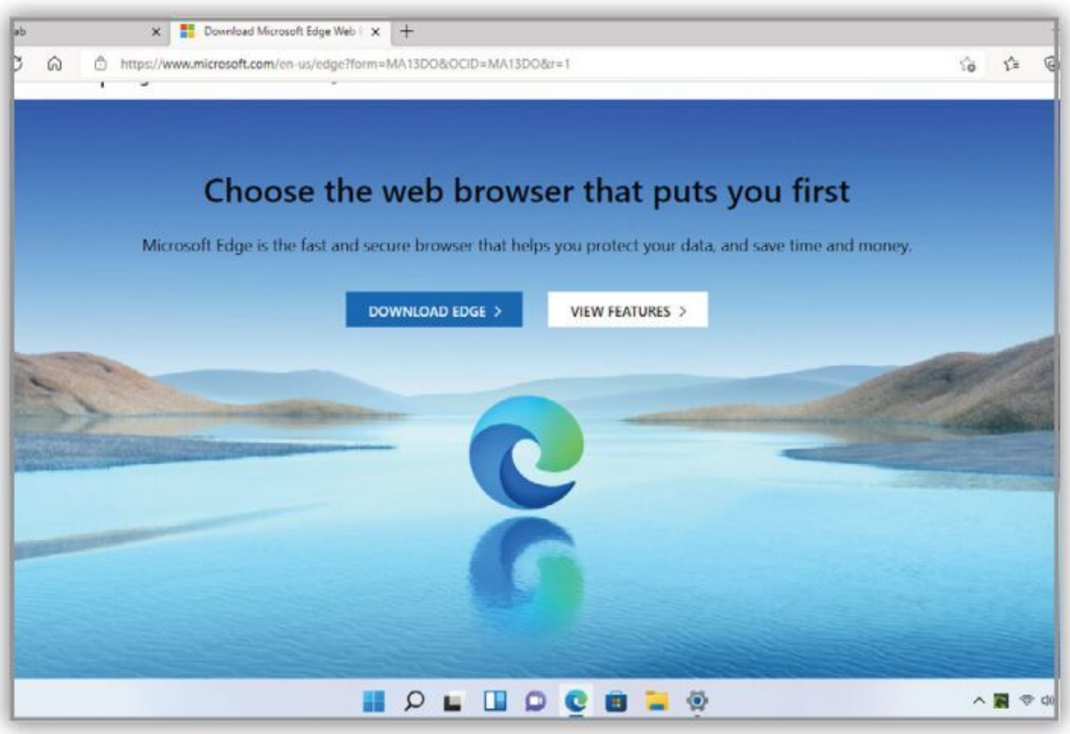
The latest version of Edge, Edge Chromium, is a significant change to the original Edge browser; and offers a much better experience. Based on the Google Chrome browser, Edge is focused on modern web standards, privacy and security and has an impressive feature and tool list.

Get Started with Edge

Edge in Windows 11 feels much less clunky than the previous version and already feels more like the most popular browsers available, such as Chrome or Firefox.

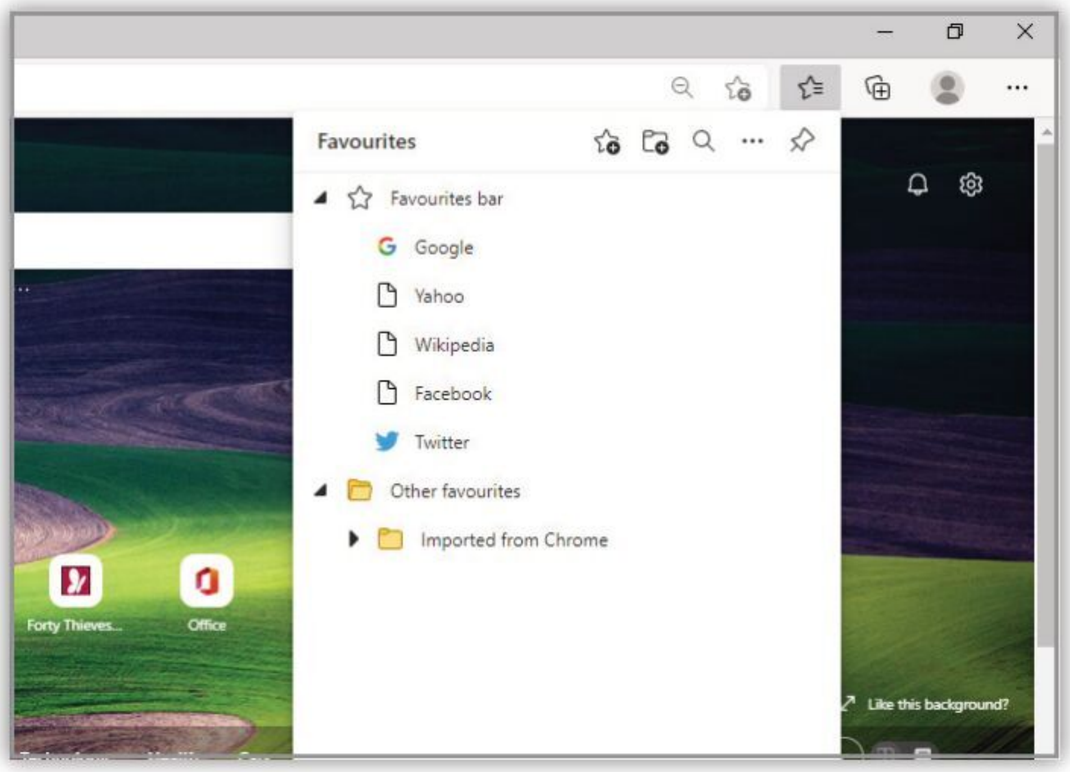
Installing Edge

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.



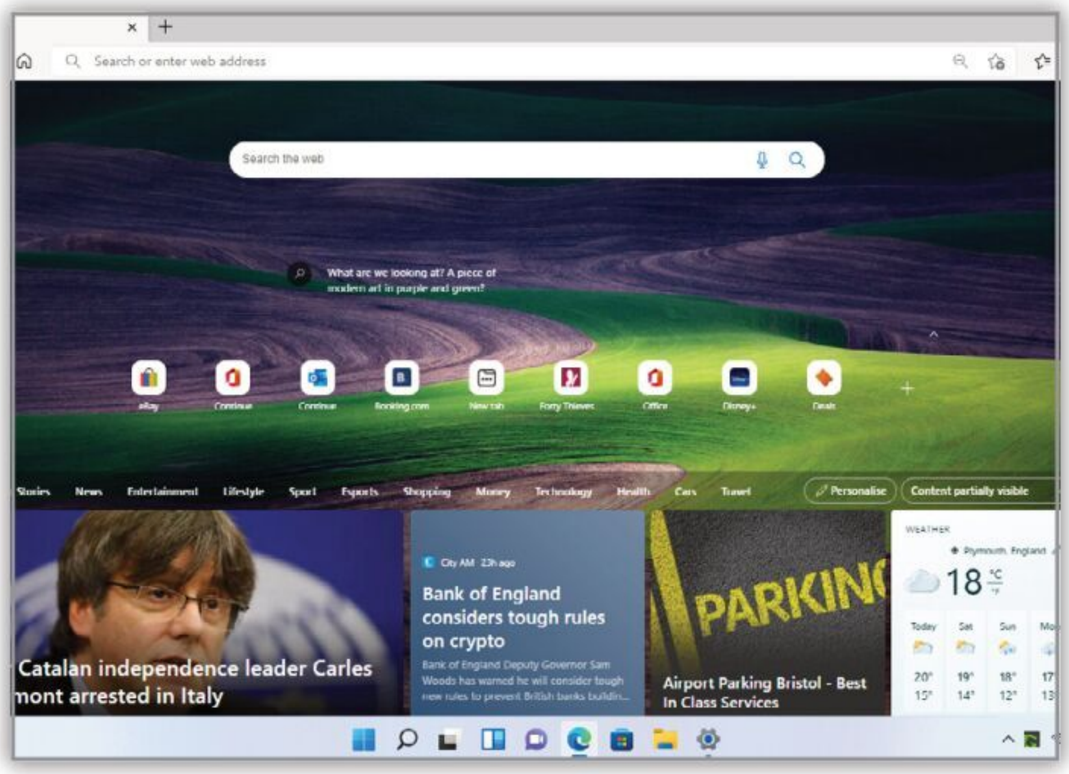
Edge Setup

During setup, you have the option to import browser data such as bookmarks and favourites from Google Chrome, 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.



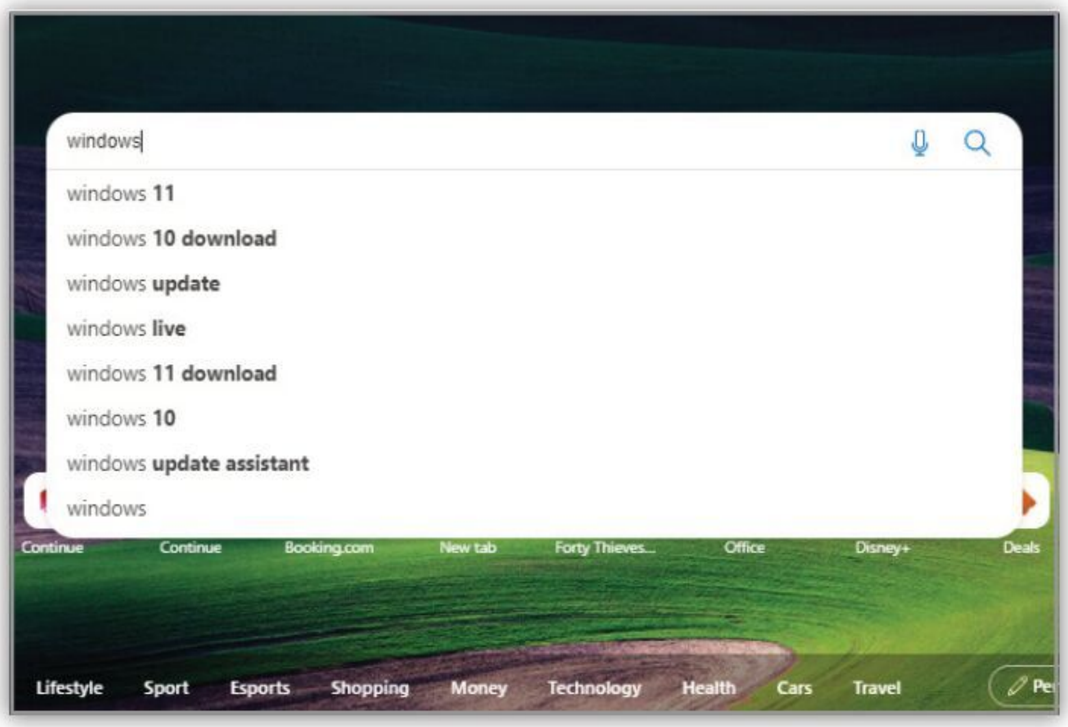
Start Page Layout

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

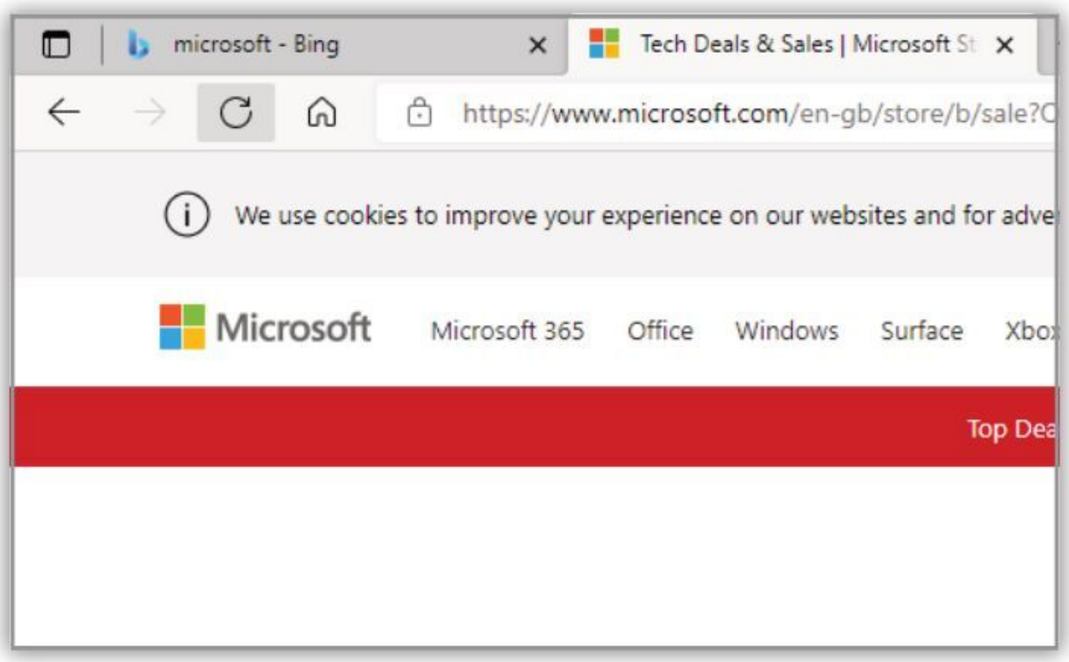
To search for a website or web page, you can type in the search field at the top (which is always there), or you can type in the search box floating on the Start page if you prefer. When you type in either box, Edge shows a list of suggestions based on what it thinks you require. The default search engine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



How to Use the Edge Browser

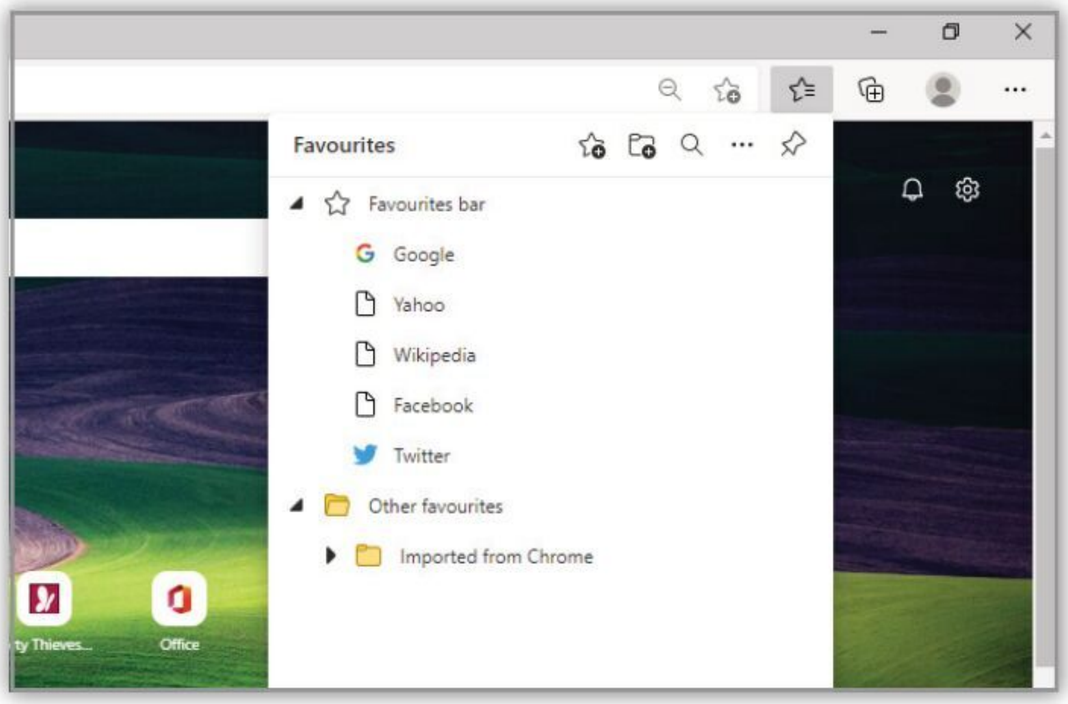
Browser Controls

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.



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.



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.

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.

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 plus symbol (+) button on the right.

Edge Menu

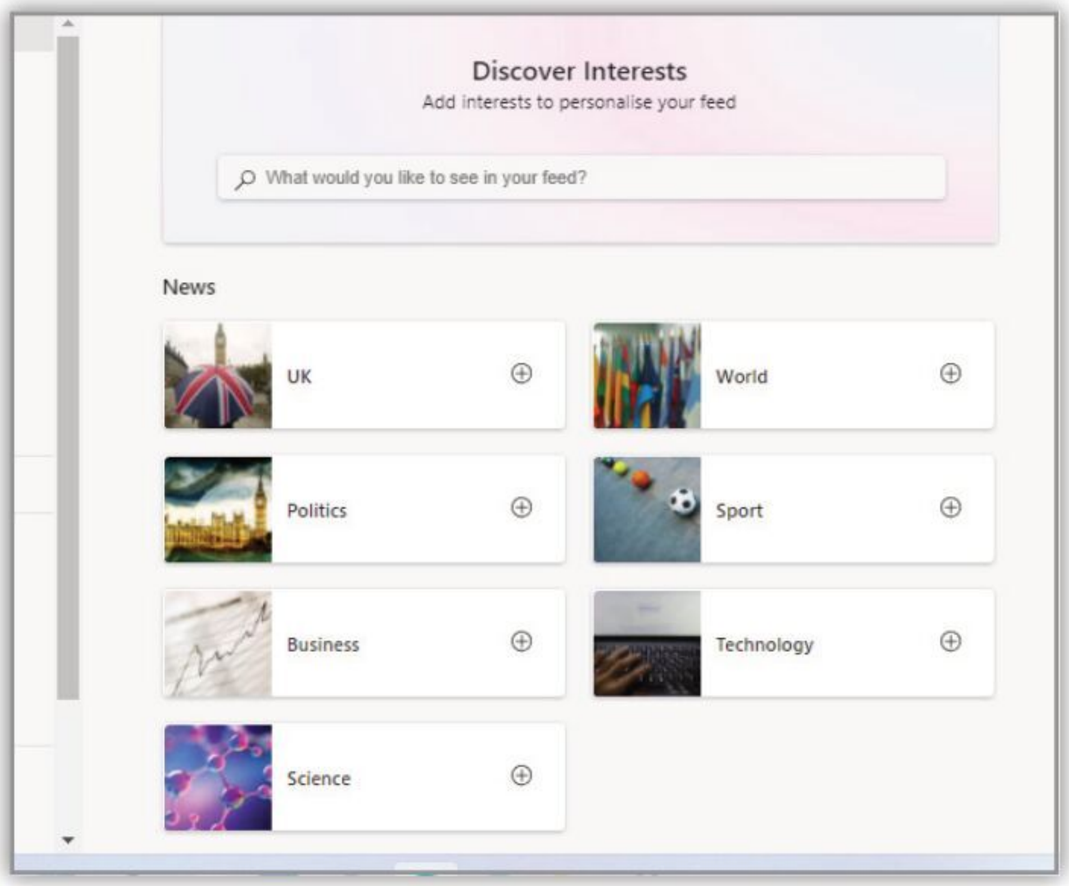
Click the Menu button (three small dots on the top right) to open the Edge menu. From this menu, you’re able to access Settings, print a page and find words or phrases in the open web page. It also contains links to Favourites, Collections, History, Downloads, Apps, Extensions and much more.

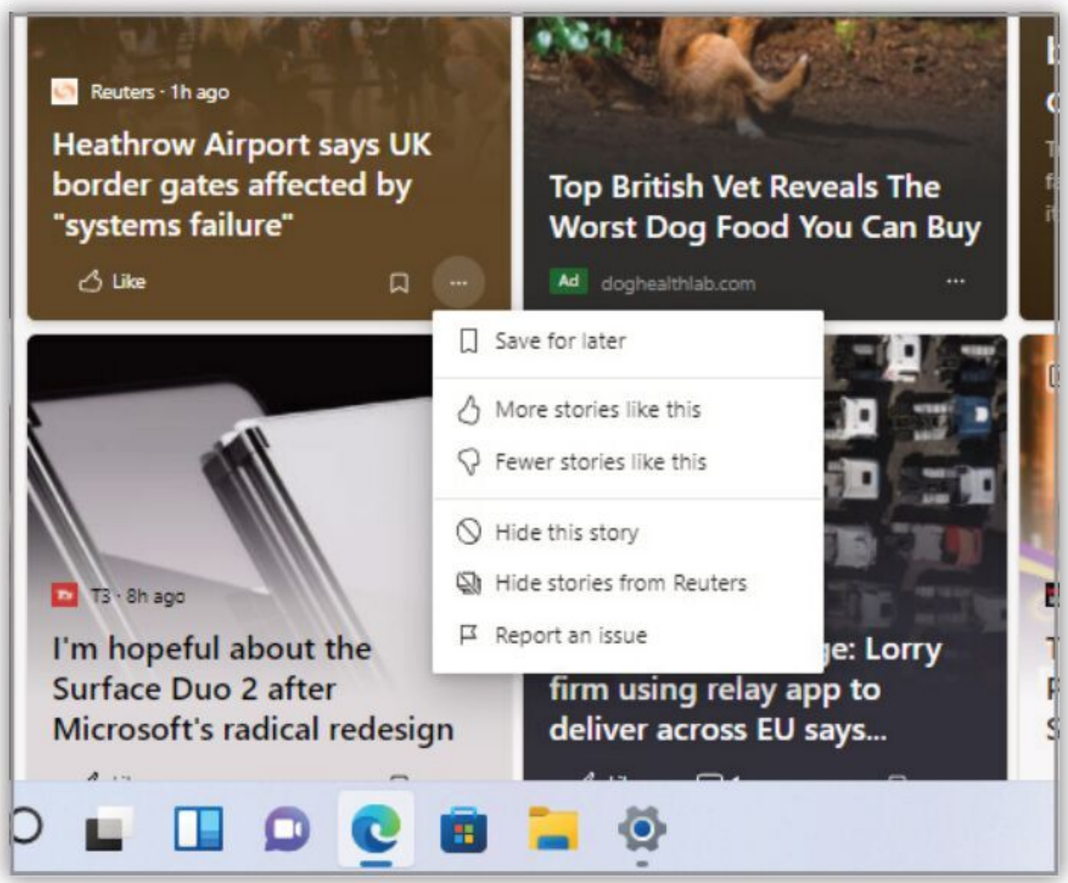
The Edge News Feed

The news feed in Edge is automatically created. Along the top of the news feed are tabs to different news categories, and beside these are buttons that allow you to personalise the feed.

Personalising the Feed 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 News 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.



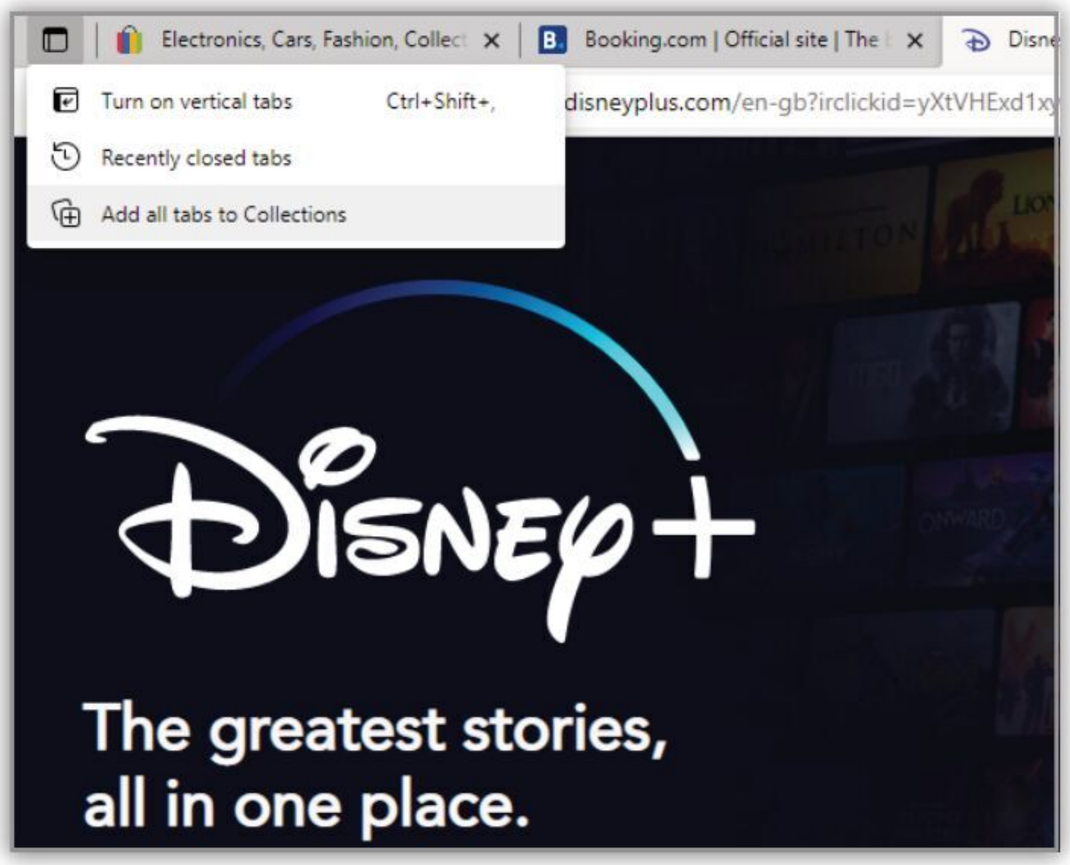


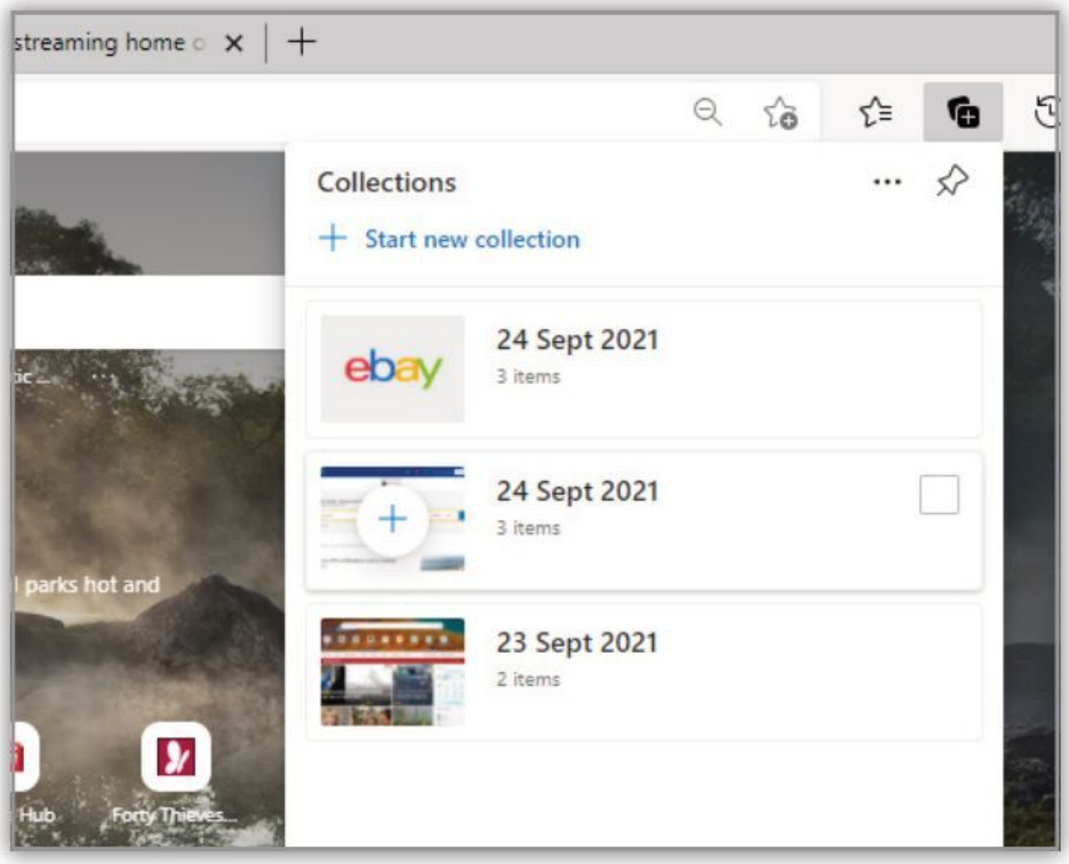
Edge Collections

A relatively new feature in Edge, Collections are groups of tabs that are saved together, allowing you to instantly open your most used websites in one click.

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. This confirms that the Collection was saved.

Step 2 To open a Collection, you'll need to 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.





Personalising Edge

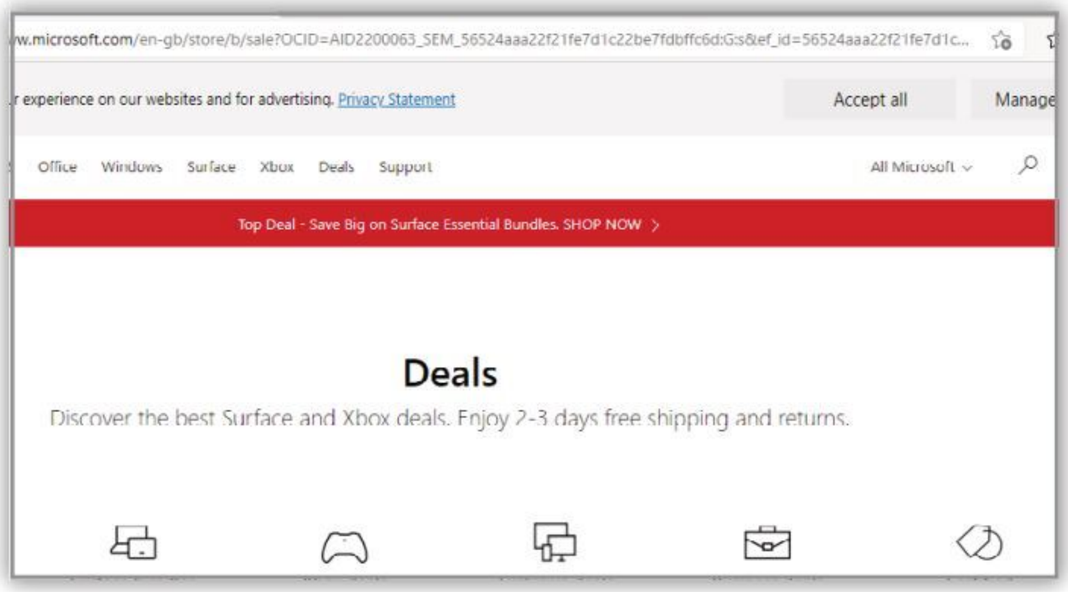
Aside from the customisations to the Start page, you can personalise the look of the browser in several other ways too.

Light or Dark Theme

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.

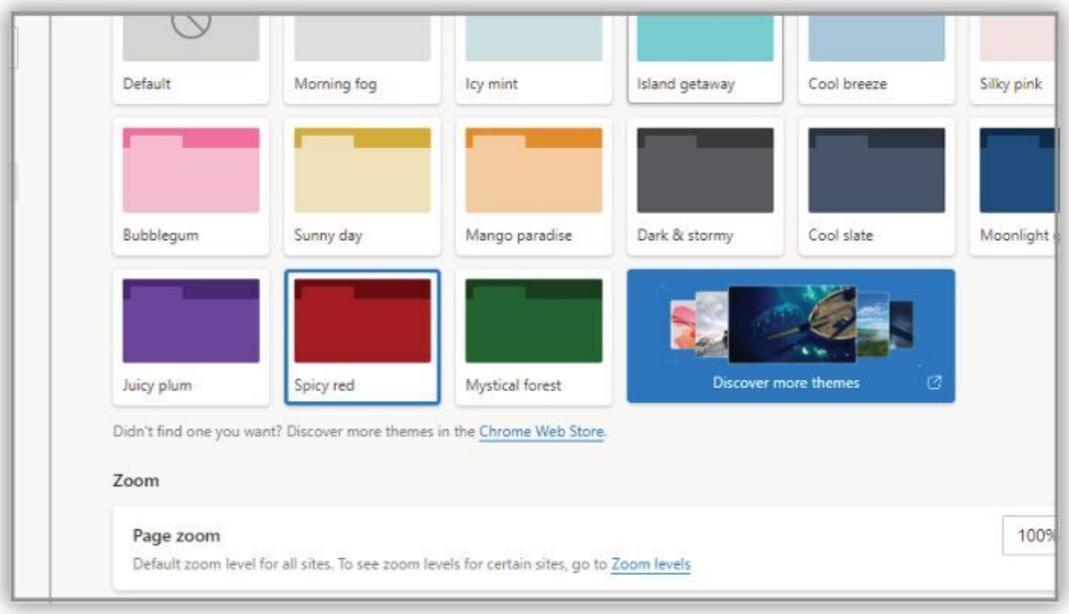
Add Browser Controls

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.



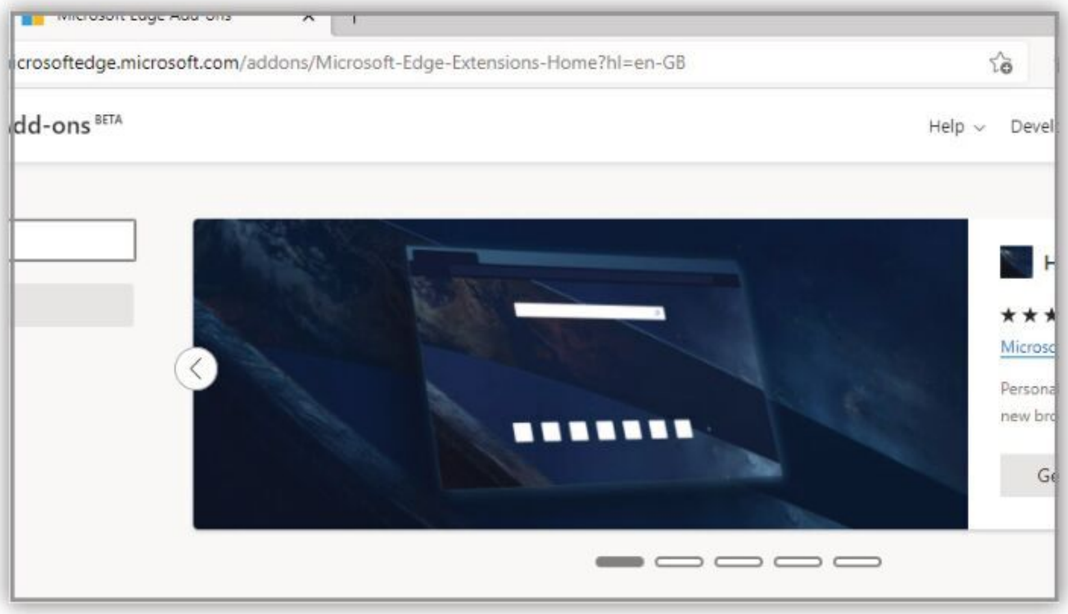
Edge Themes

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.



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.

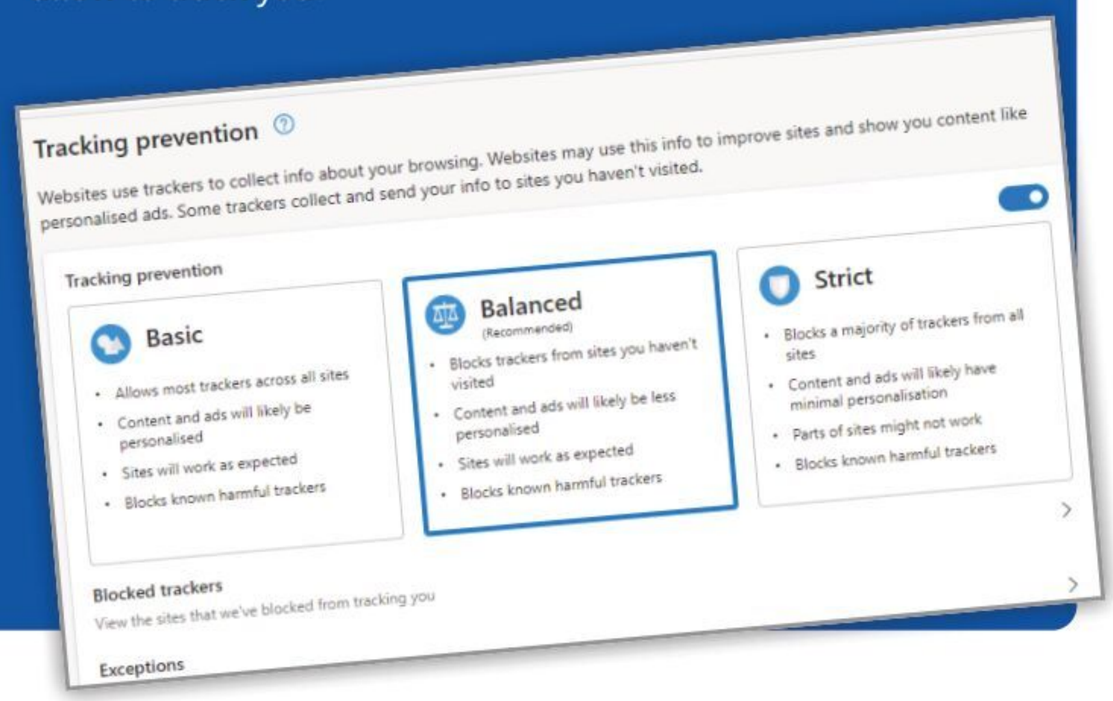


Edge Privacy

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.

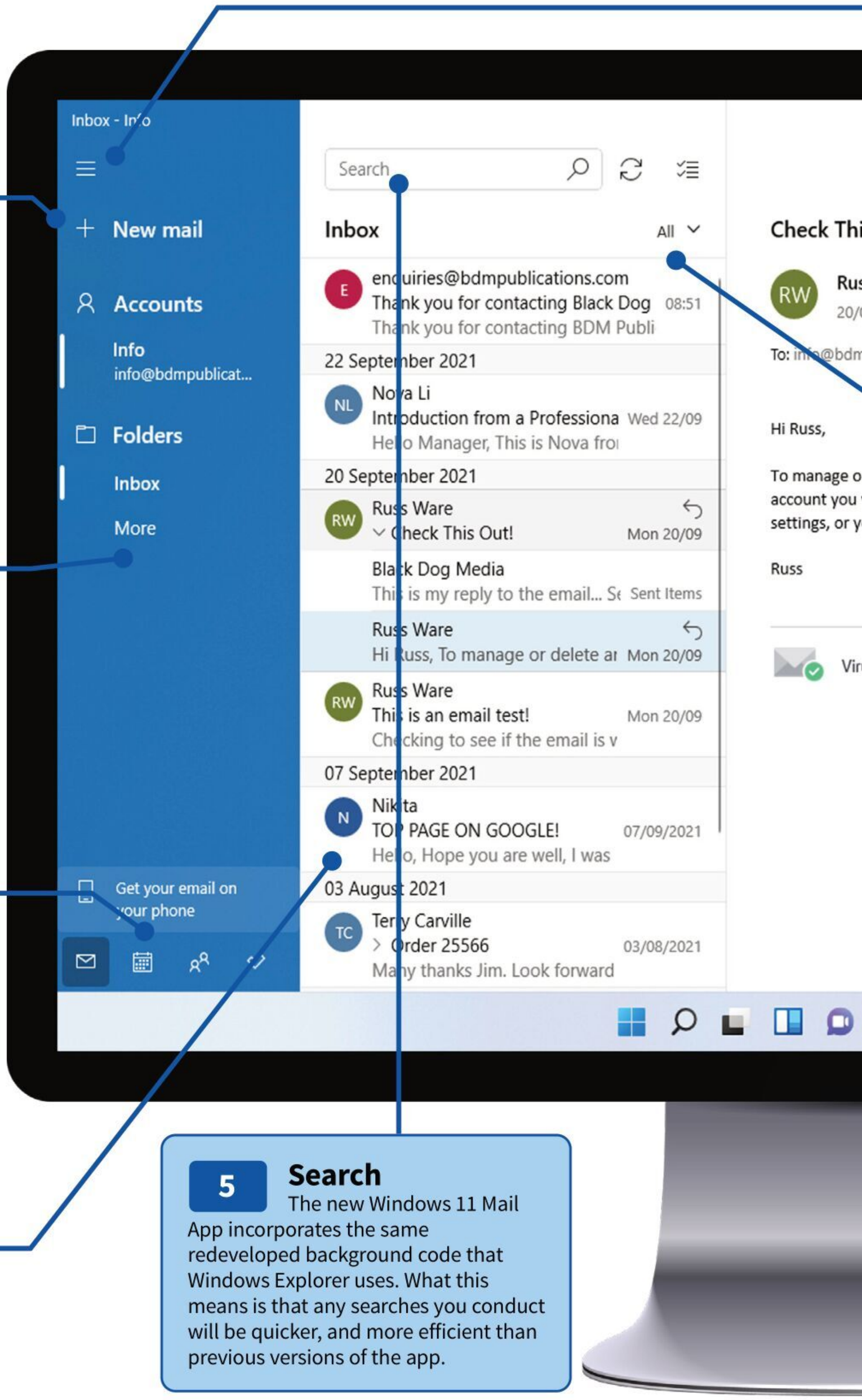
You can choose three different levels of tracking prevention: Basic, Balanced and Strict. These options all block known harmful trackers, but how personalised content (such as adverts) is displayed and how well all website features work, depends on the level you choose. Our advice is to switch to Strict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



Exploring Windows Mail

Long gone are the days of Microsoft Outlook Express being included with new releases of the OS, replaced instead by the Microsoft Mail app. This app first appeared in Windows 8, was vastly improved in Windows 10, and has now been improved yet again for Windows 11.



1 New Mail Button

If you are not replying to an email, but rather starting a new email, you can do so in a couple of different ways. You can either click the New Mail button at the top of the Mail Menu or you can use the Ctrl-N. Both methods open a new email in the main window, with a blank recipient field.

2 Mail Menu

The left-hand menu, which can be minimised and expanded using the button at the top of the panel, contains all of your email accounts (those you have added to Windows Mail). Click on any of your email account headers and the individual folders, such as Inbox and Sent Items, are displayed here also.

3 Calendar View

You can open the Windows Calendar app directly from within the Mail app. Click the Mail app icon at the bottom of the Mail Menu panel and the calendar screen will open in a second window. If you have never used the Calendar app before, you will need to link it to an account.

4 Mail Folder

The messages in whichever email folder you have selected are shown in this panel. By default, the most recent emails are at the top of the list. You can change how the emails are viewed, so that only unread or flagged emails are displayed, using the dropdown menu at the top of the inbox.

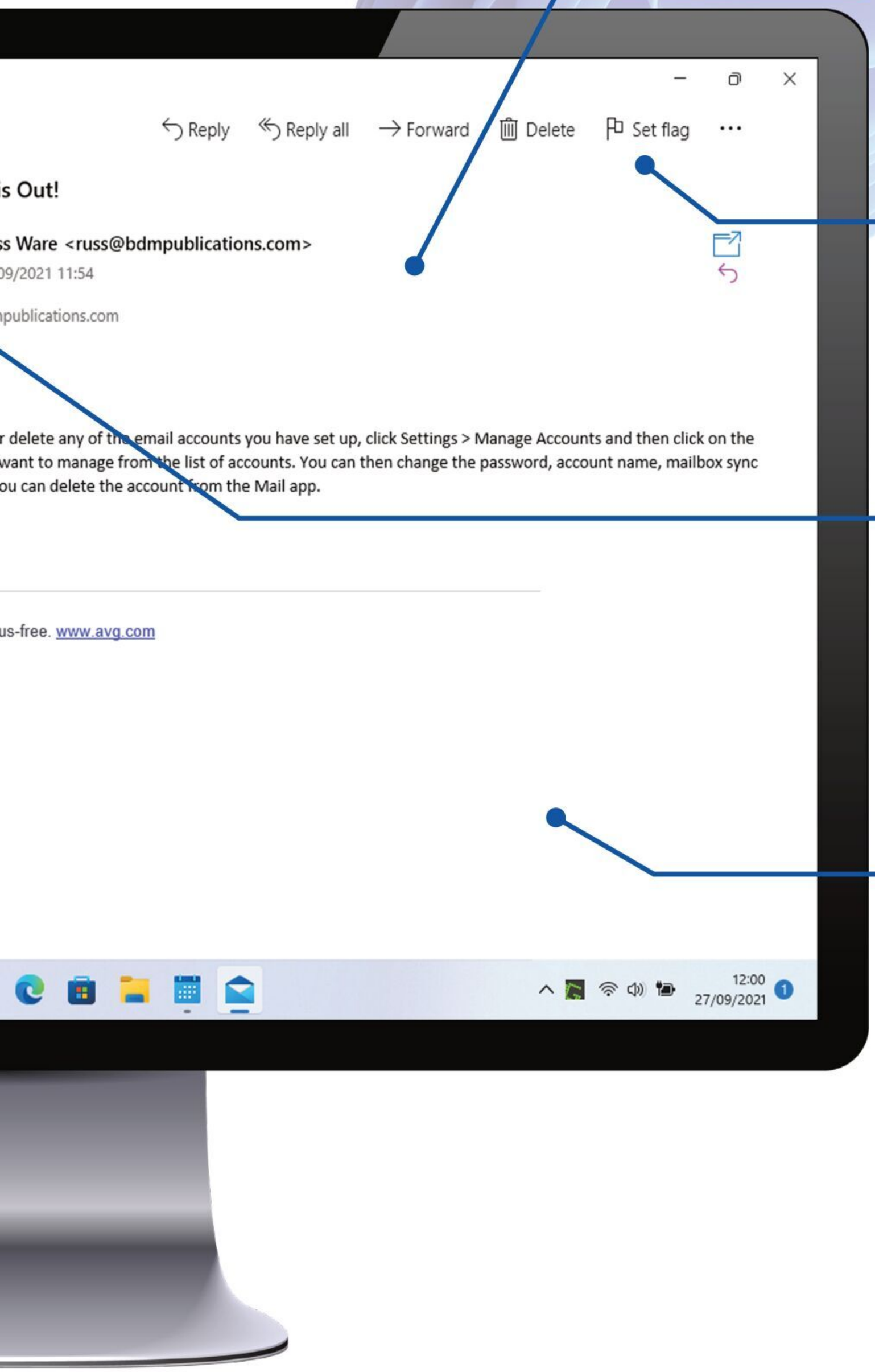
5 Search

The new Windows 11 Mail App incorporates the same redeveloped background code that Windows Explorer uses. What this means is that any searches you conduct will be quicker, and more efficient than previous versions of the app.

Exploring Windows Mail

6 **Mail Settings**
The settings for the Mail app allow you to easily add accounts, change how emails are displayed when they arrive, whether outgoing emails have a signature (which can be customised) added to them, as well as how you are notified of new emails in Windows 11

7 **Message Format**
How messages appear can differ depending on the type of account you've specified and setup. For example, Google and Gmail emails accounts may look slightly different to those of iCloud or Yahoo!. This is mainly due to the way that the different mail providers encode their messages and delivery systems.



8 **Message Options**
In a row along the top of the main message window are the message options. These include Reply, Reply All, Forward, Archive and Delete emails; more options can be seen by clicking the Menu button to the right. The message options only appear when viewing a received message.

9 **Message Tools**
Roll over or click on any of the messages in your inbox, sent items or drafts folders and three icons will appear. These let you quickly Archive, Delete or Flag any message directly in the folder panel. Archived messages can be recovered at any time and returned to the inbox if required.

10 **Main Message Window**
When you start a new email or select an email in one of the mail folders, it will appear in the main message window. As you would normally, you can scroll down to view all of the messages shown. You can roll over the address in the To: field, to see more contact details.

Customise Mail

You can customise how the Email app looks in a number of ways, from simple changes like choosing between a light and dark theme, to setting the overall colour and changing the background image for the app. To personalise the Mail app, click the Settings button and select "Personalisation".

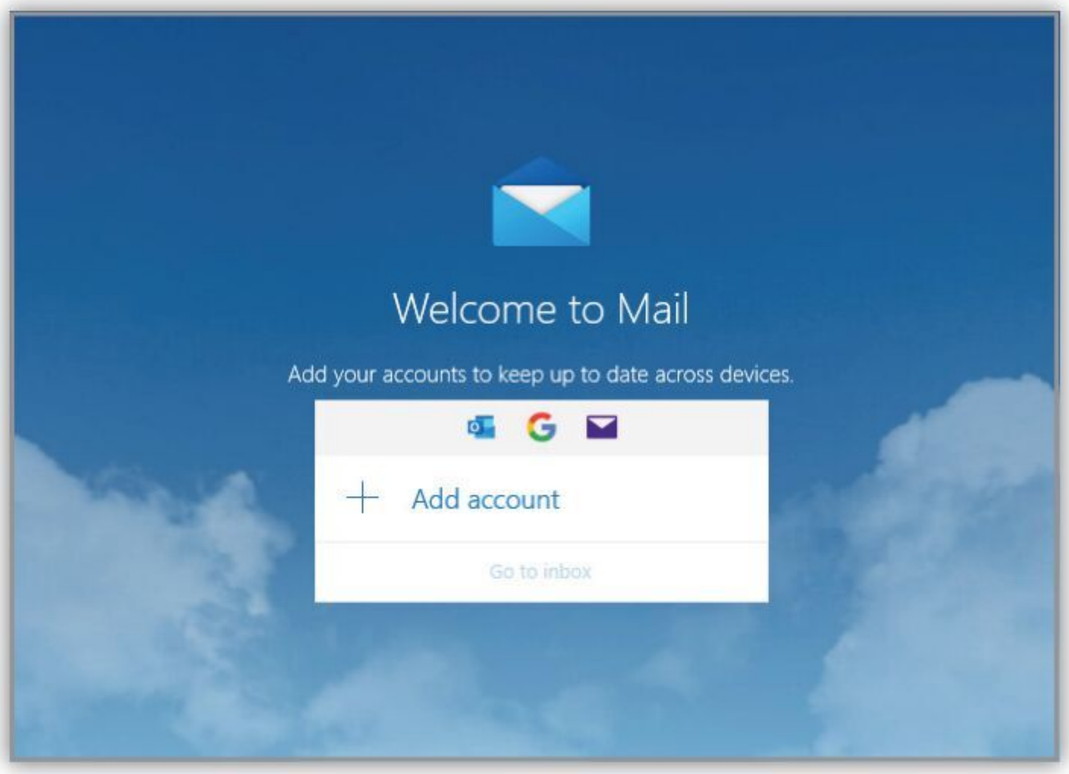
How to Use the Mail App

The Mail app has barely changed in the update, remaining 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.

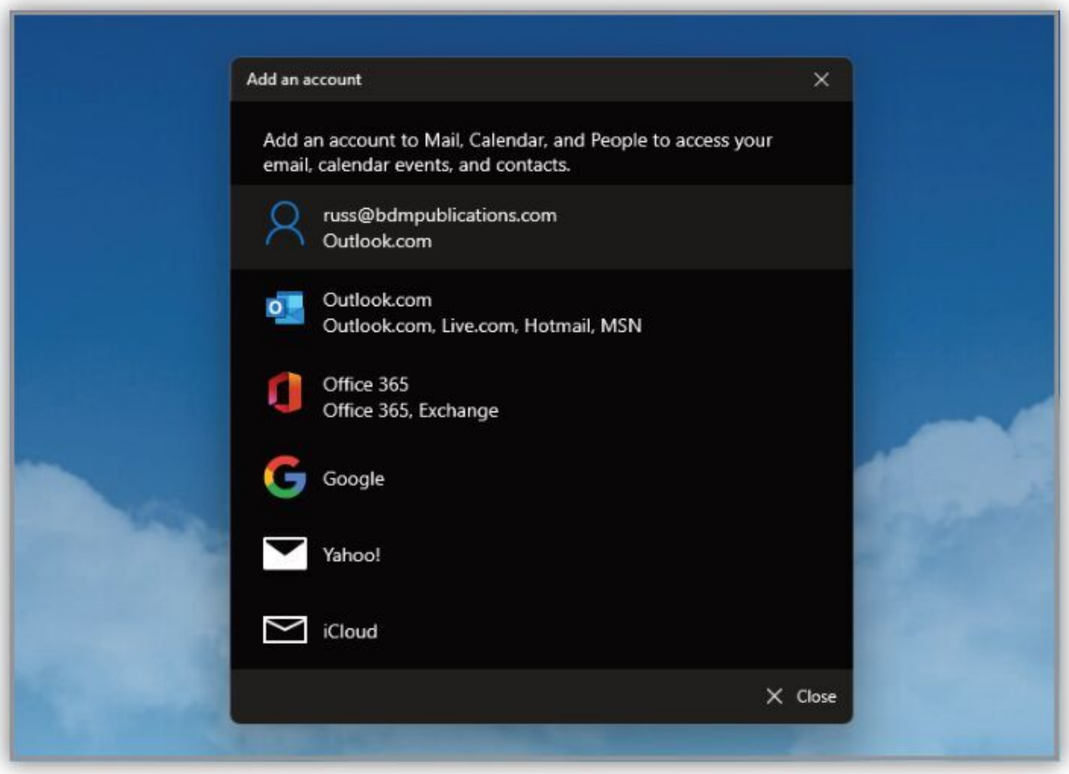
Setting Up Email Accounts

The Windows 11 email client can be used to view emails from multiple accounts, from your POP3 Internet provider account, to Microsoft Exchange, Gmail and even Apple's iCloud.

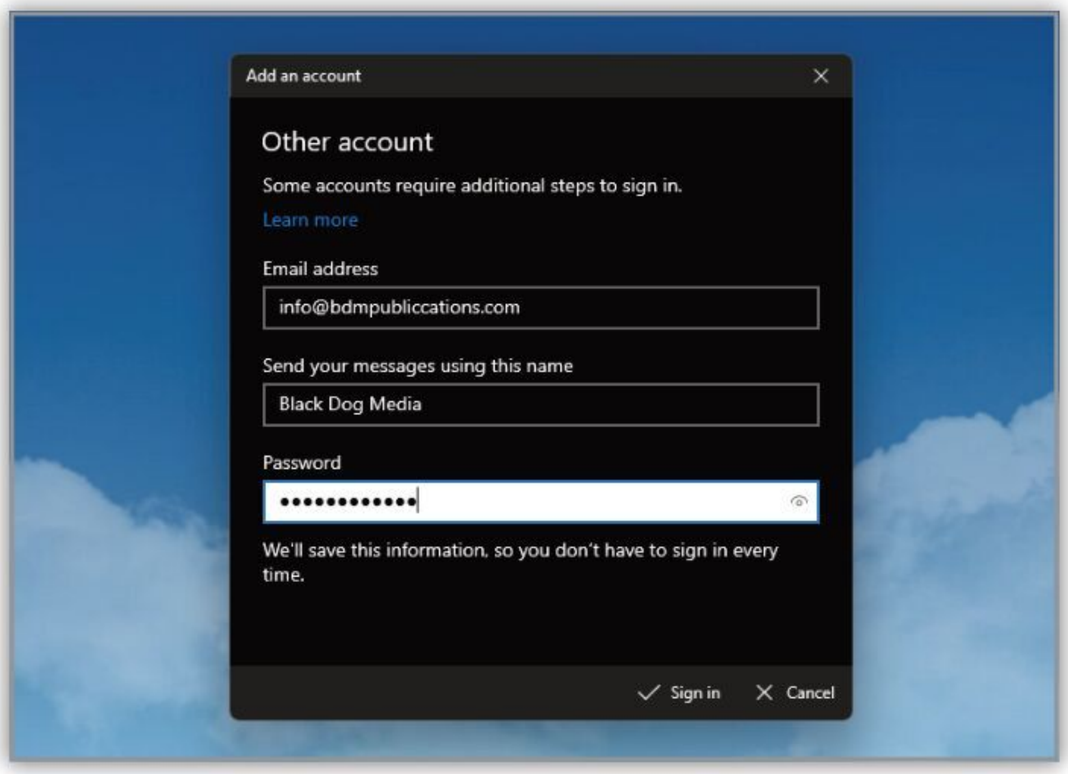
Step 1 If opening Mail for the first time, you will be greeted by a welcome screen, containing a link to "+Add account". Click this to open the list of available account types. You will need the server, password and other information required for each email account you want to add to Mail.



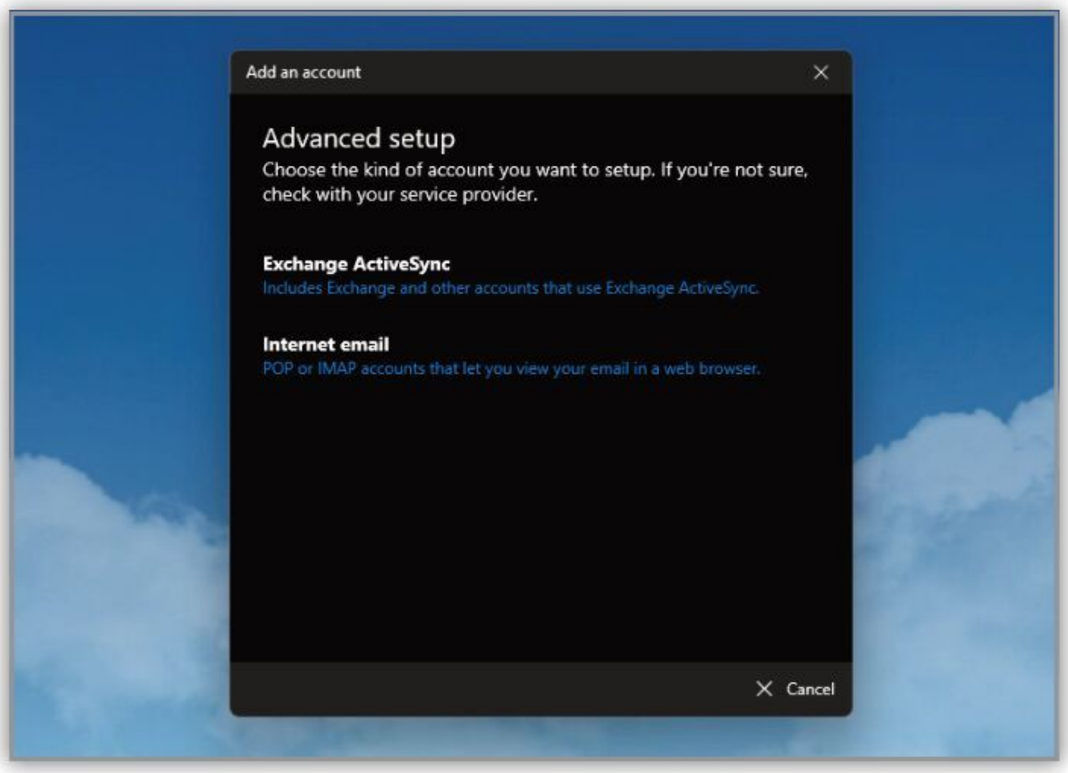
Step 2 You can add accounts from many popular providers including Google, Yahoo! and Apple's iCloud. You can also set up other more specialist accounts if you have the details. Finally, there's also an option to add a Microsoft Exchange account, if your workplace uses that (including Office 365).



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".

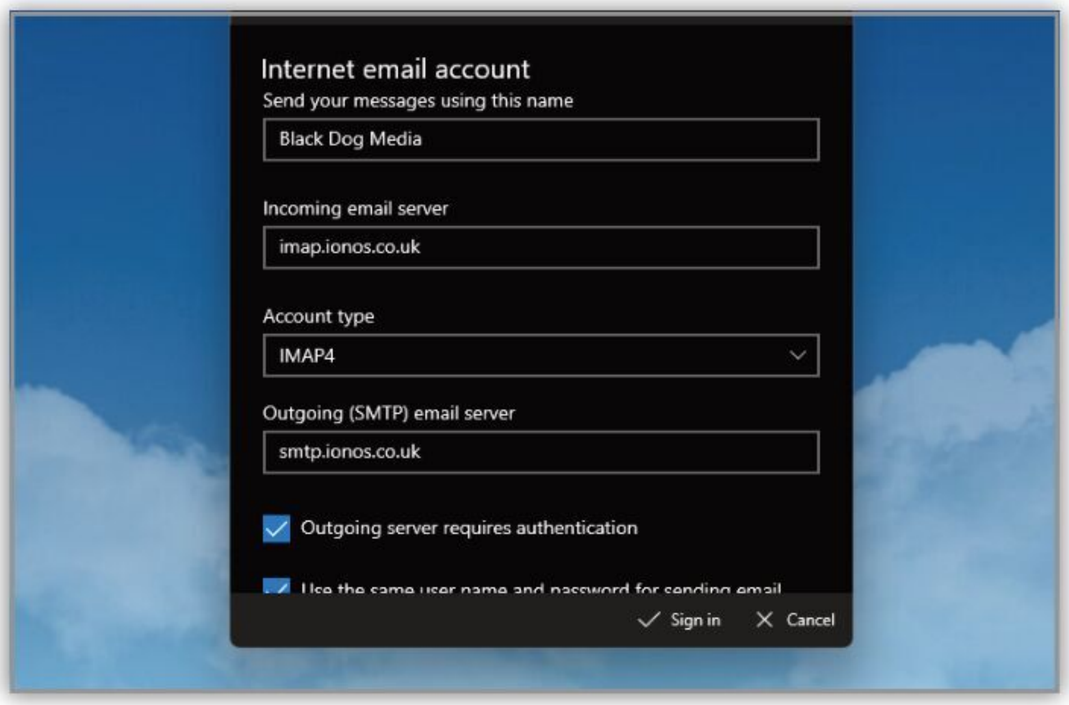


Step 4 The app will try to look for the server settings needed to set this email account up. If it finds them, you should be finished. If not, you will need to add the settings manually. If this is the case, click "Cancel" and then select the "Advanced setup" option in the account list.

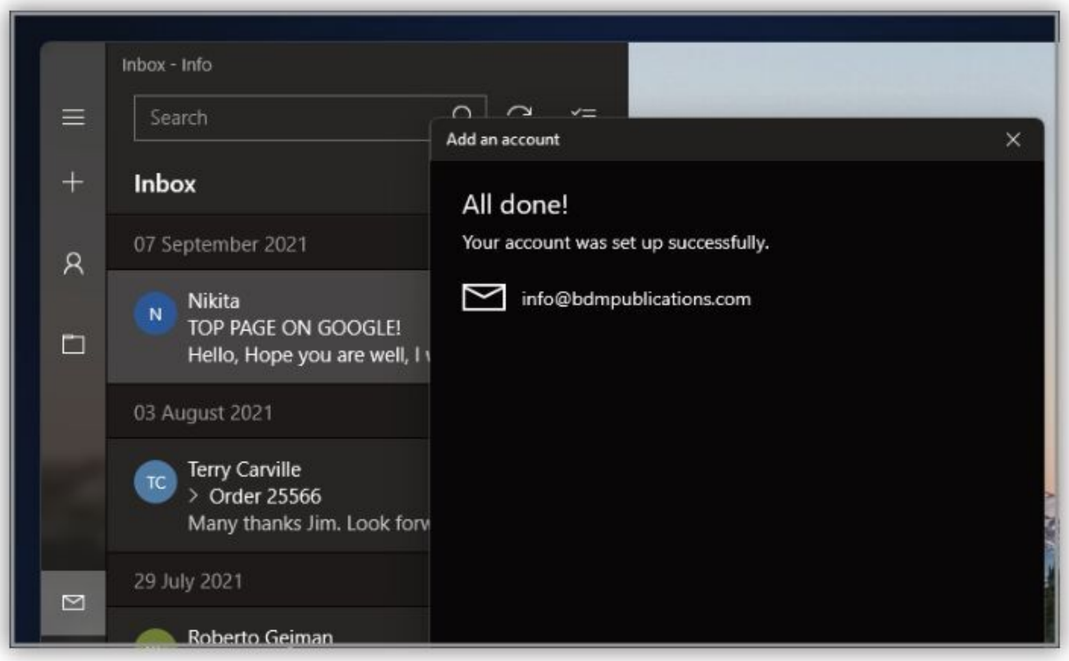


How to Use the Email App

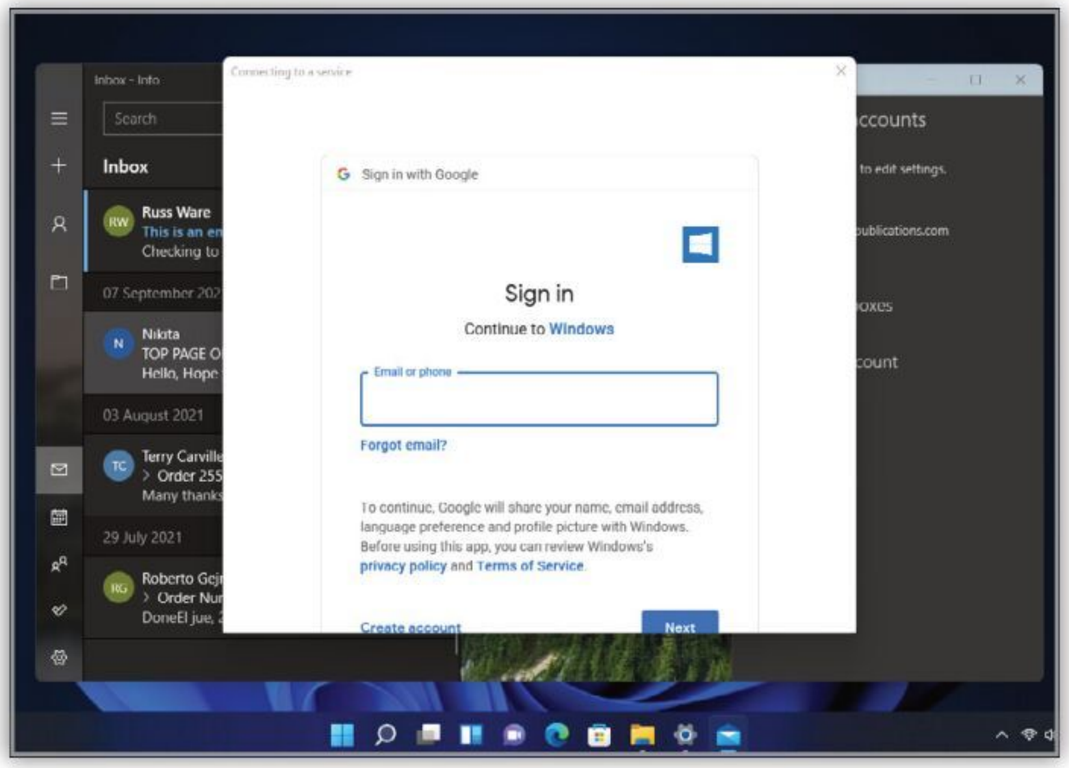
Step 5 Choose the relevant option (in our case, this is "Internet email"), and enter all of the required information; including the incoming/outgoing mail server addresses. With all of the information added, click the Sign in button. If everything was entered correctly, that account is now set up.



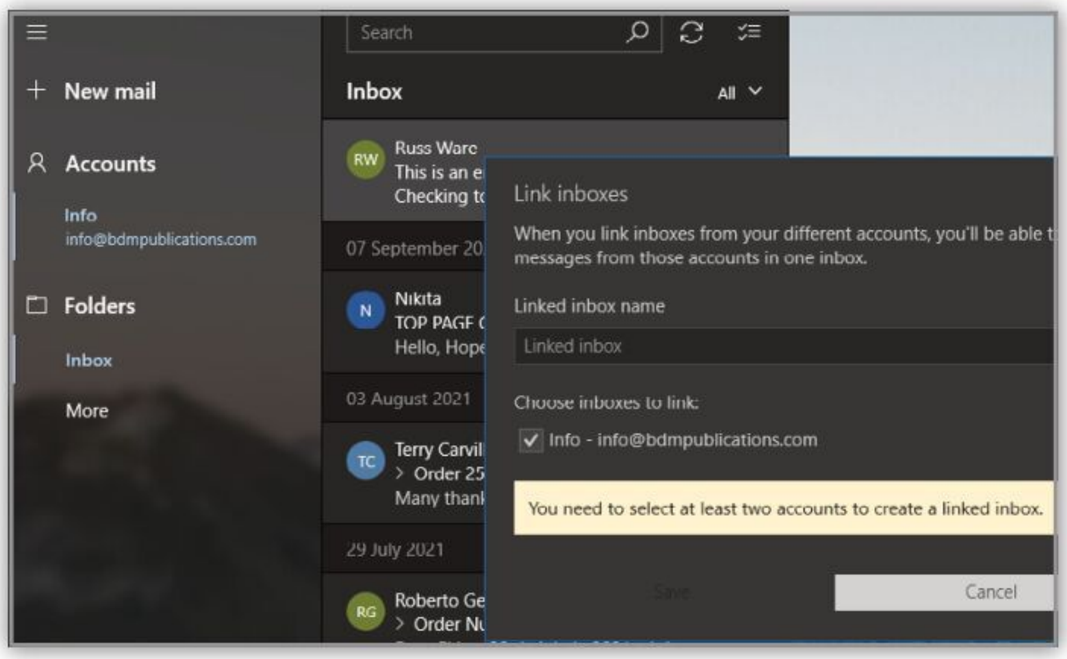
Step 6 To add an additional account after setting up the first one, simply click the settings button in the bottom-left corner of the Mail app window, select Manage Accounts, and then +Add account. Select the account type and repeat the steps above to add the second, third or fourth account to Mail.



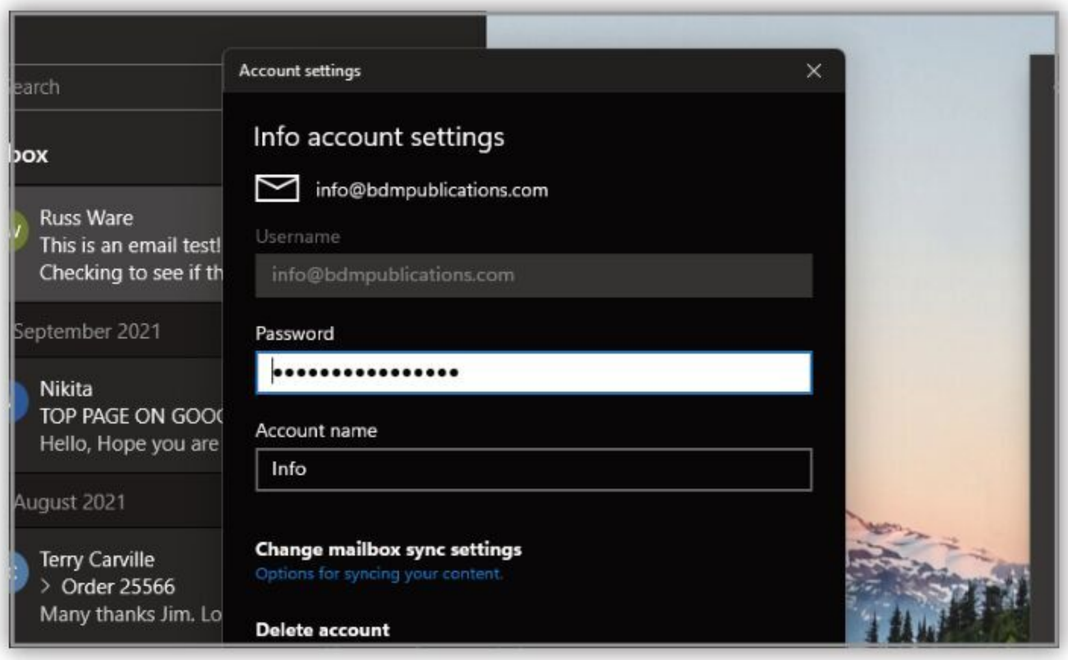
Step 7 If you're adding a Google account, click the option in the account setup list and you'll get the familiar pop-up appearing inviting you to enter your username and password. If you have Google's two-step authentication enabled, you'll get a text message to confirm your identity before you can continue.



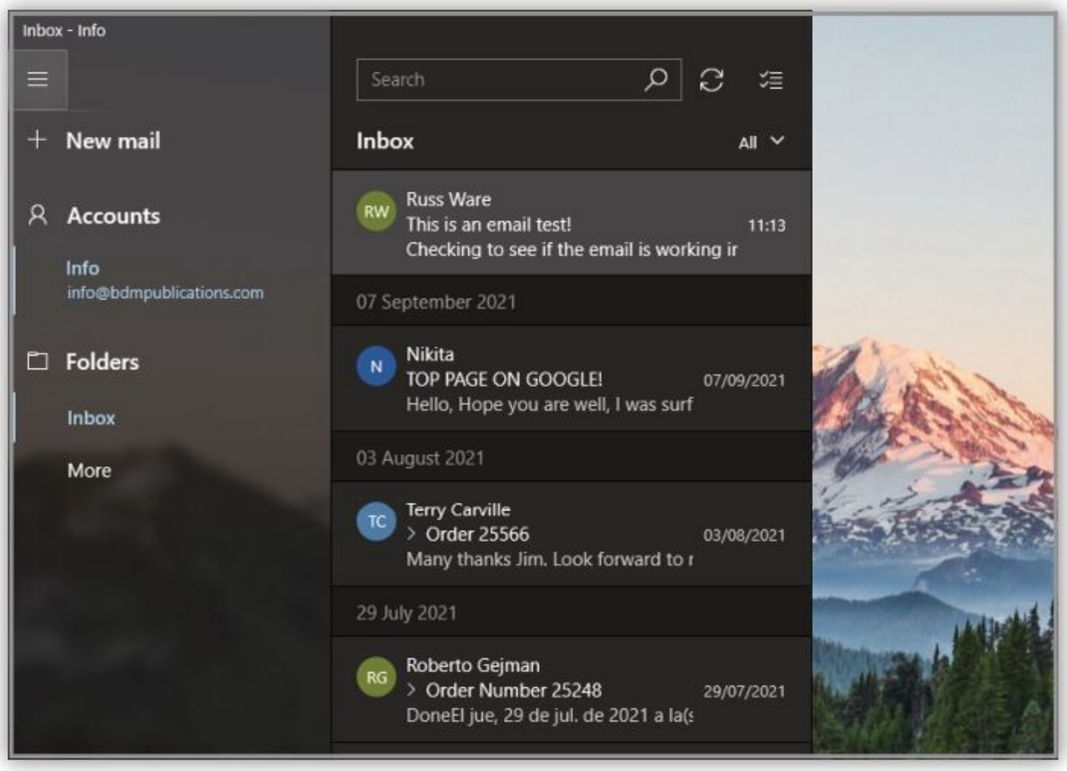
Step 8 Having more than one email account set up in Mail can be slightly confusing. To help with this, the app allows you to Link Inboxes. This puts all of the emails from your linked accounts into one inbox. To do this, click Settings > Manage accounts > Link inboxes. Select the accounts that you want 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.

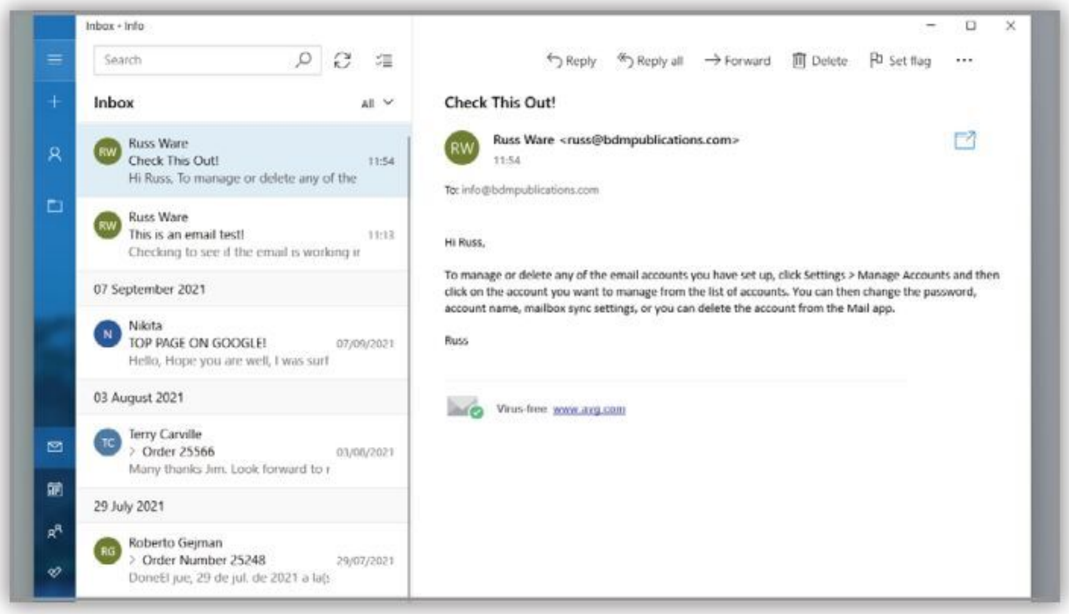


Using the Mail App

With your email accounts set up, you can now start using the app to send and receive emails. You can also personalise how the app looks, and start using the advanced features.

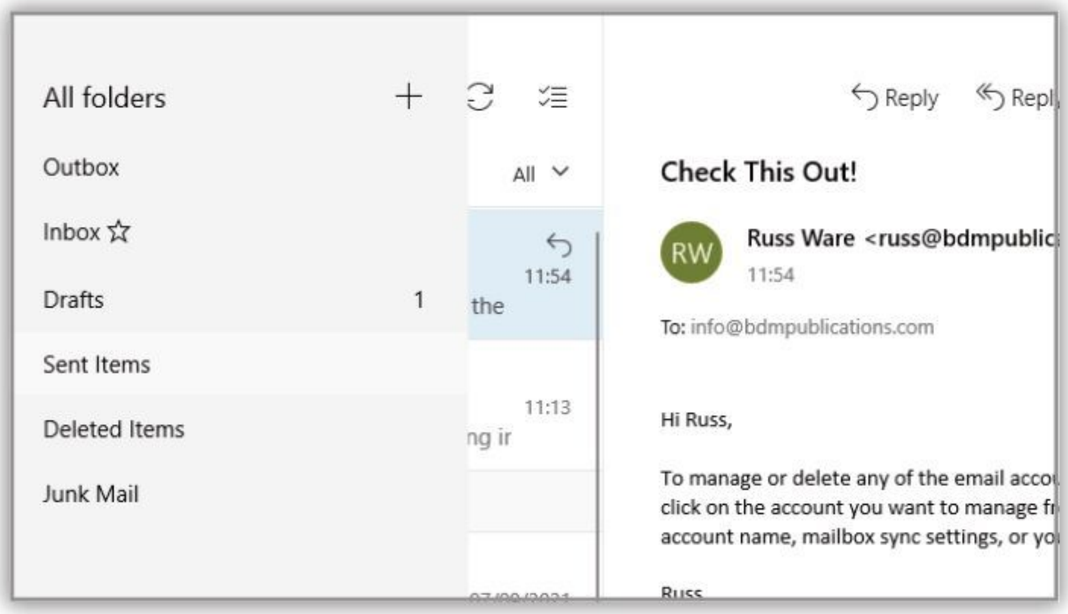
Reading Emails

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.



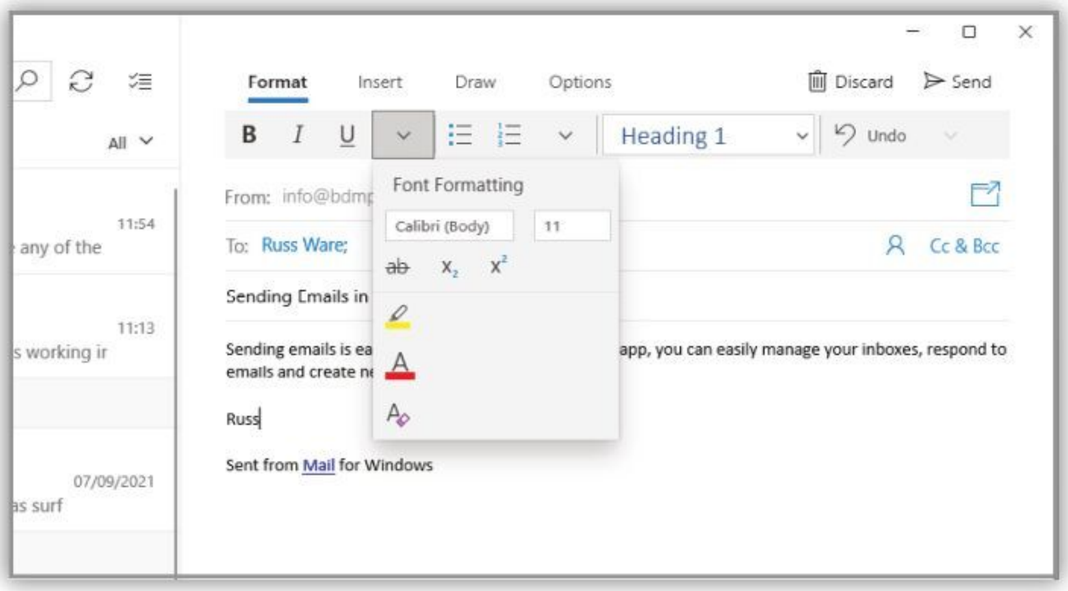
Mail Folders

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.



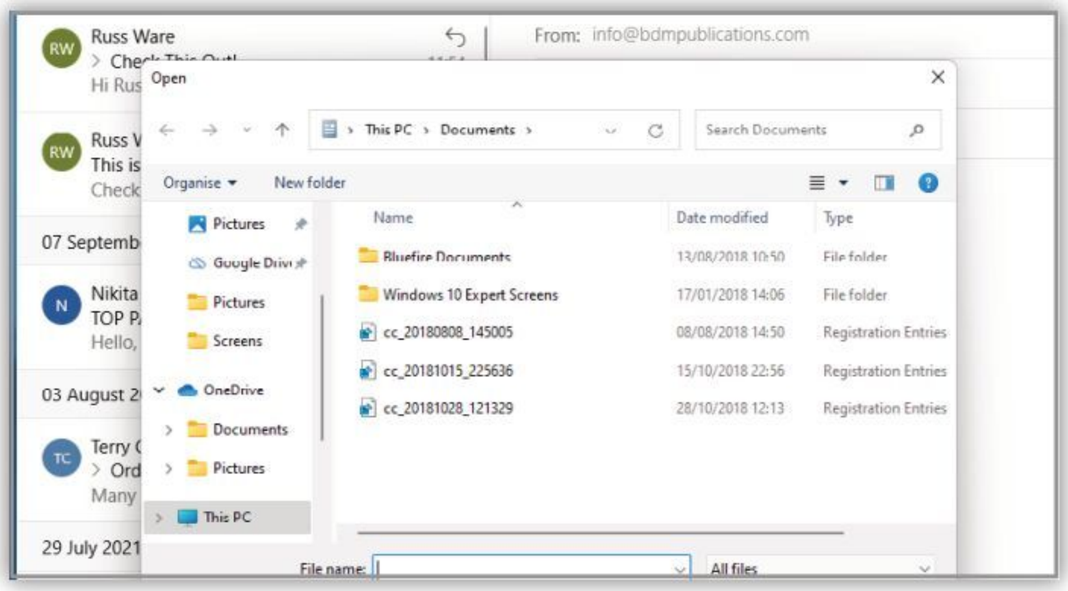
Writing Emails

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.



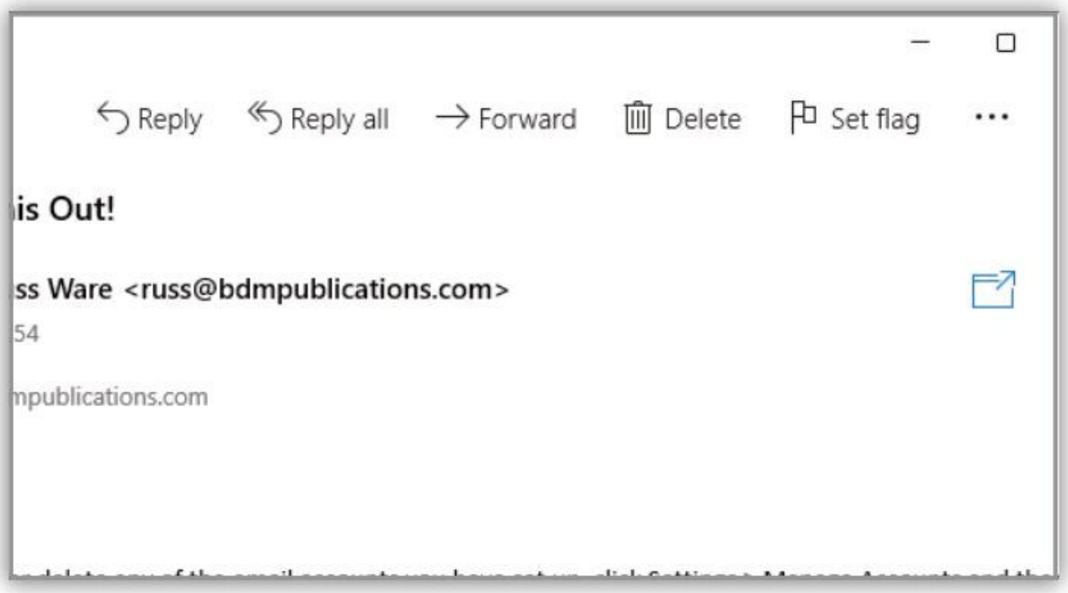
Email Attachments

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.



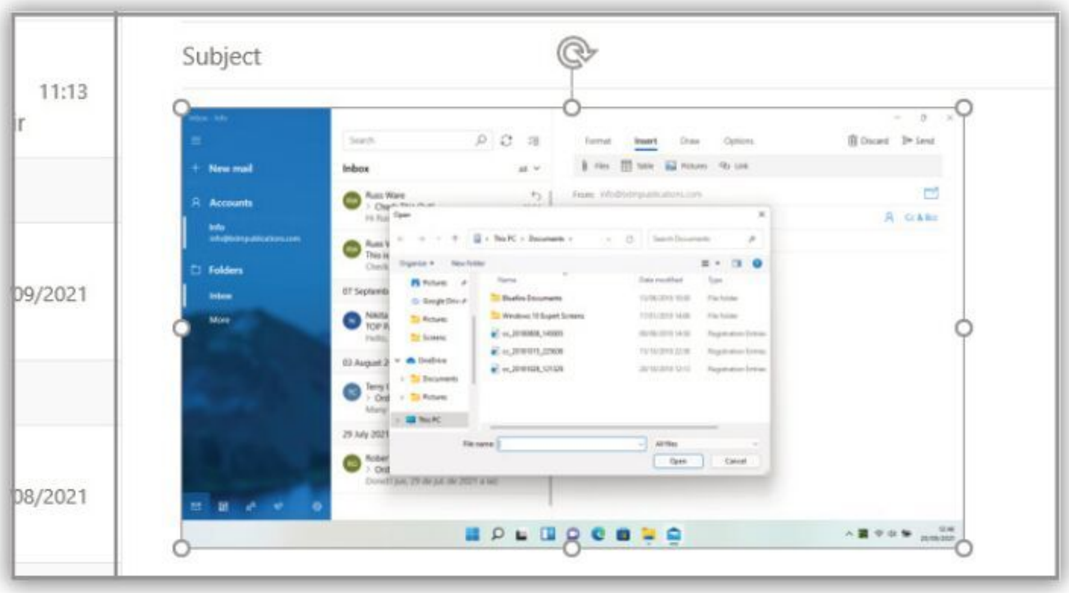
Responding to Emails

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.



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 in the example shown here).

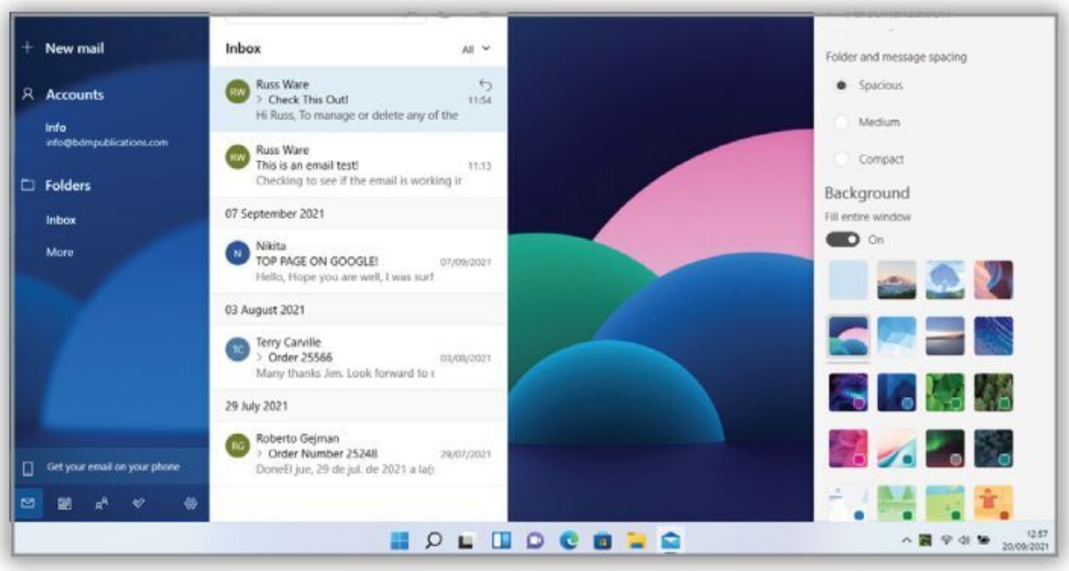


Customise the Mail App

There are several ways to customise the Mail app to better suit your needs, from changing the background image and accent colour, to adding a signature and the display font.

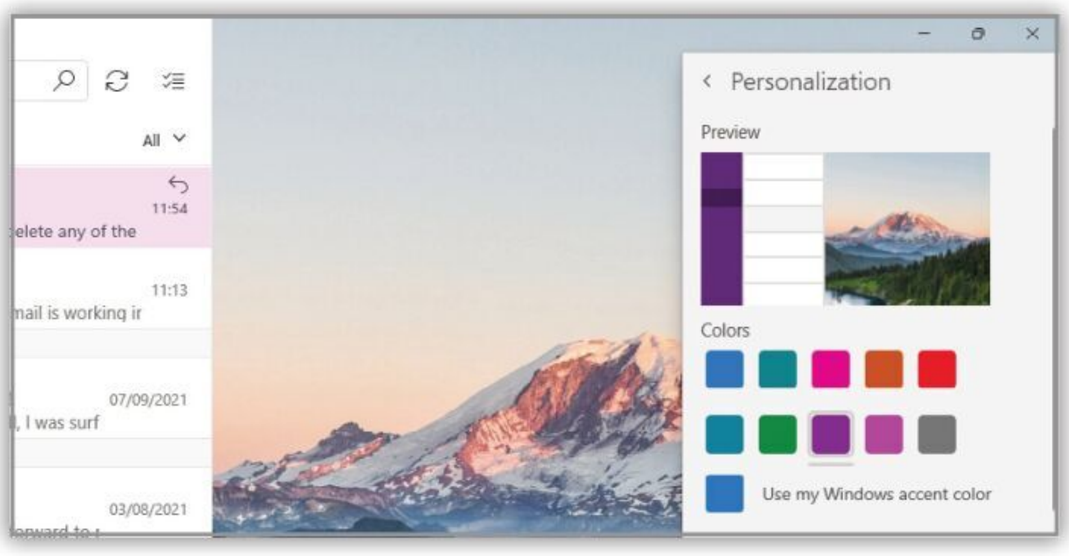
Background Image

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.



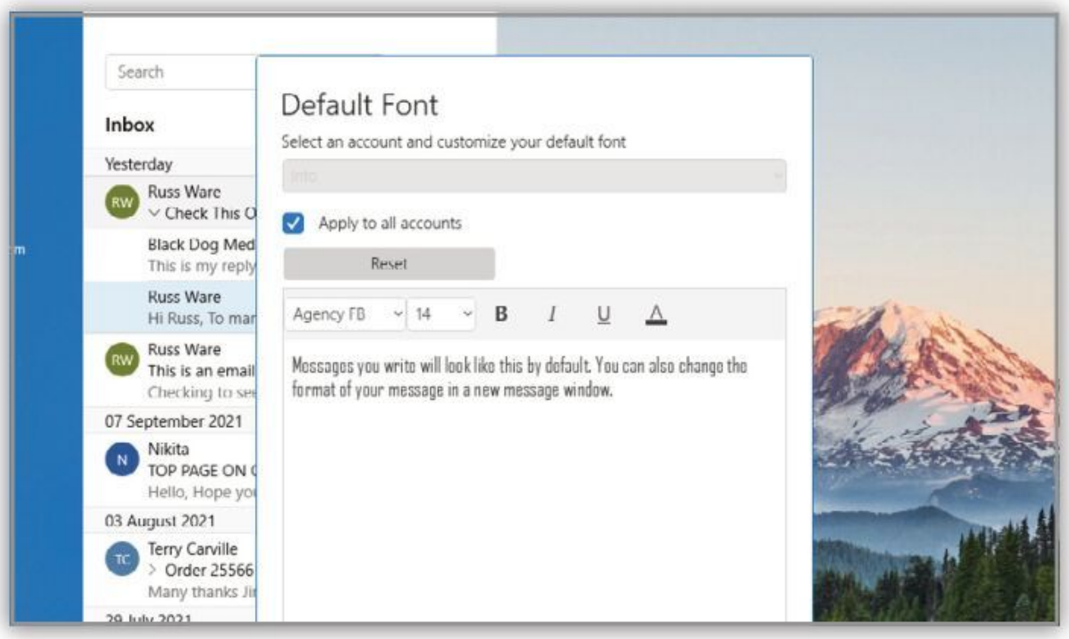
Mail App Colour

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.



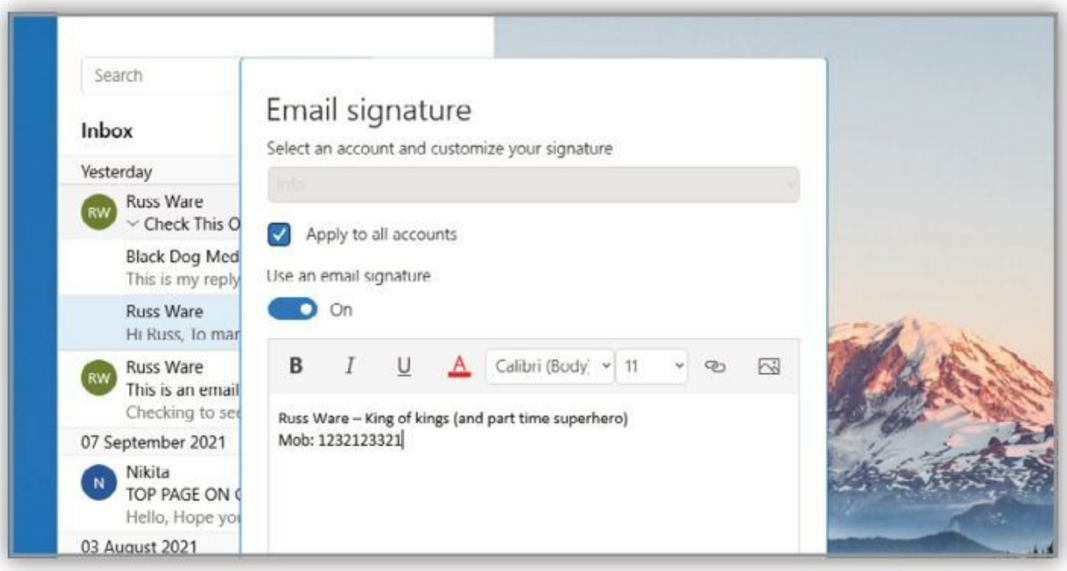
Email Font

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.



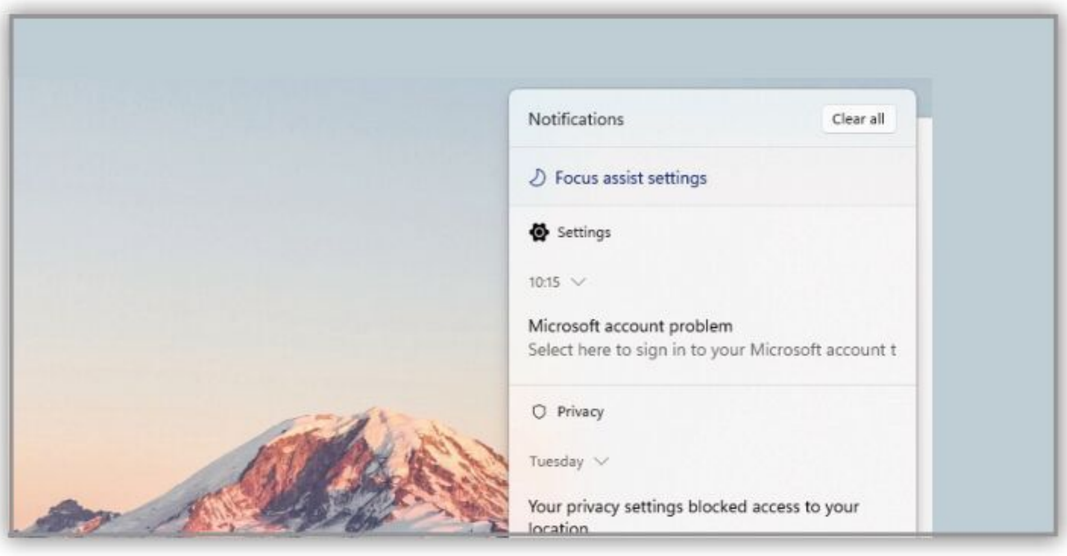
Signature

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.



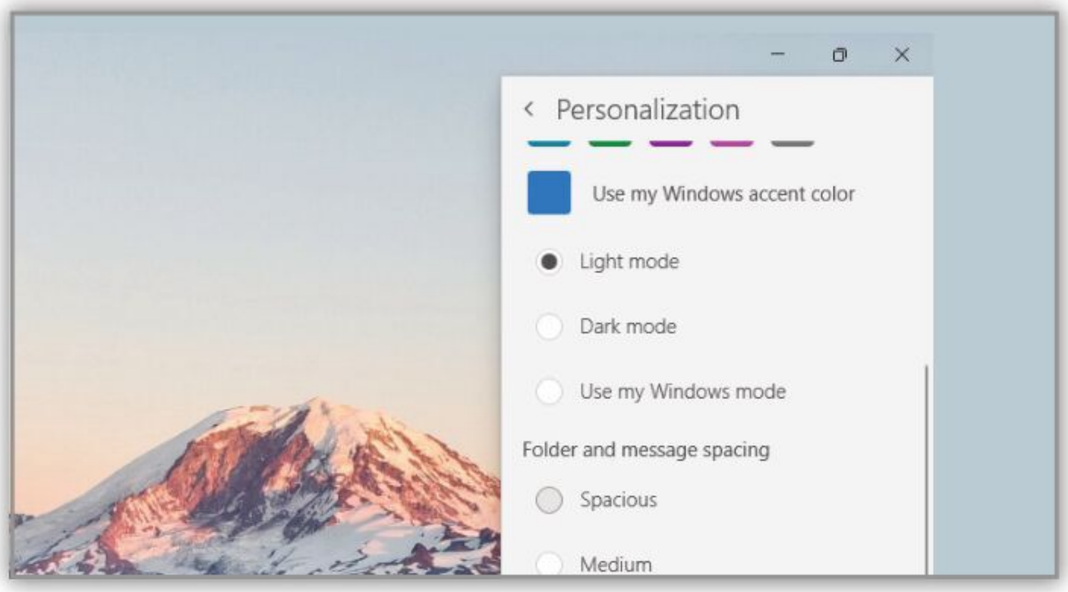
Notifications

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.

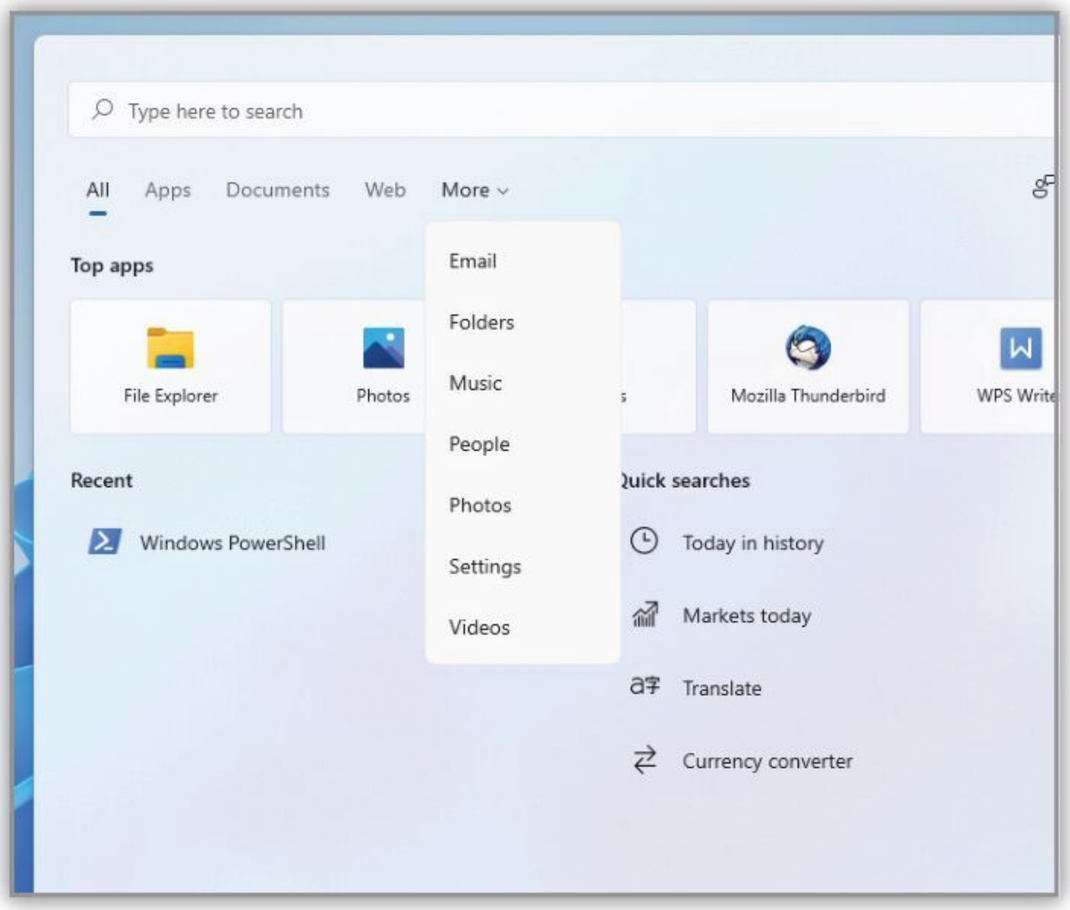


Search in Windows 11

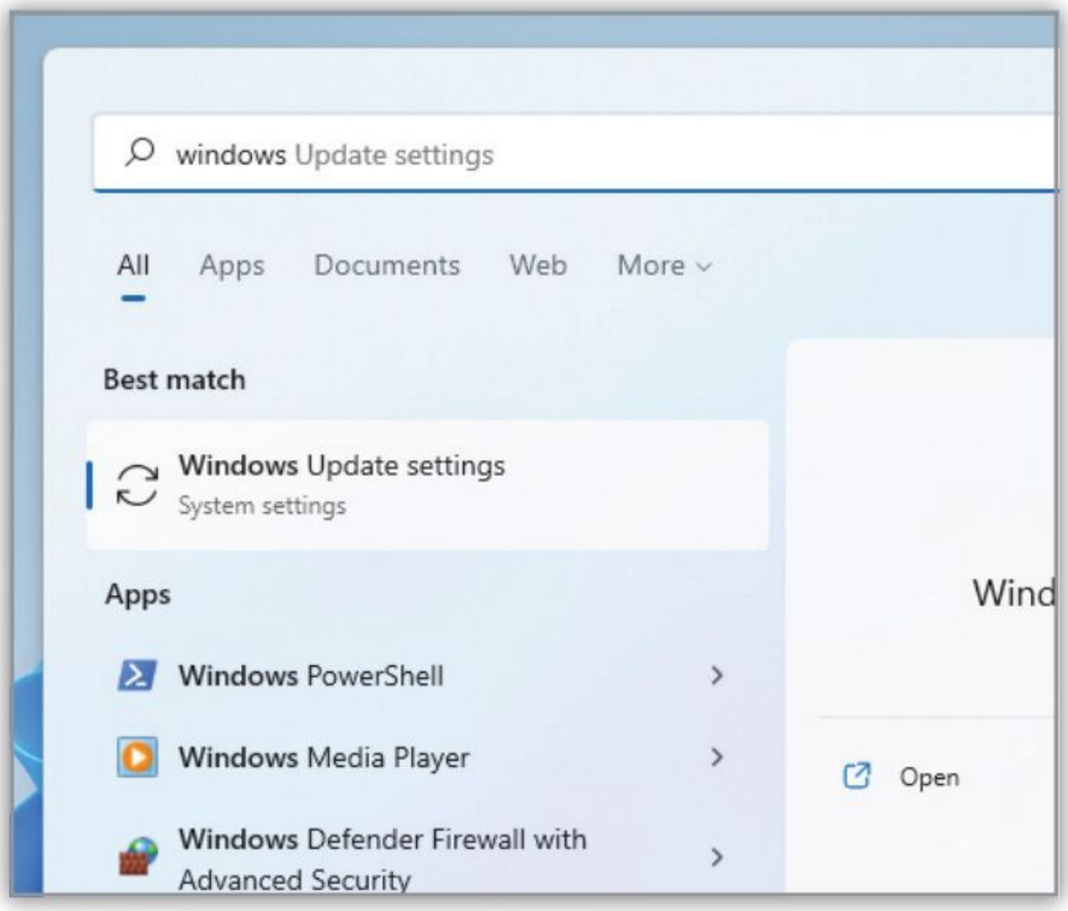
It's hard to describe just how much better Search is in Windows 11, than in previous versions. Microsoft have done a lot to try to match the search functions on offer in rival operating systems, and the results can be seen in the new search feature.

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.

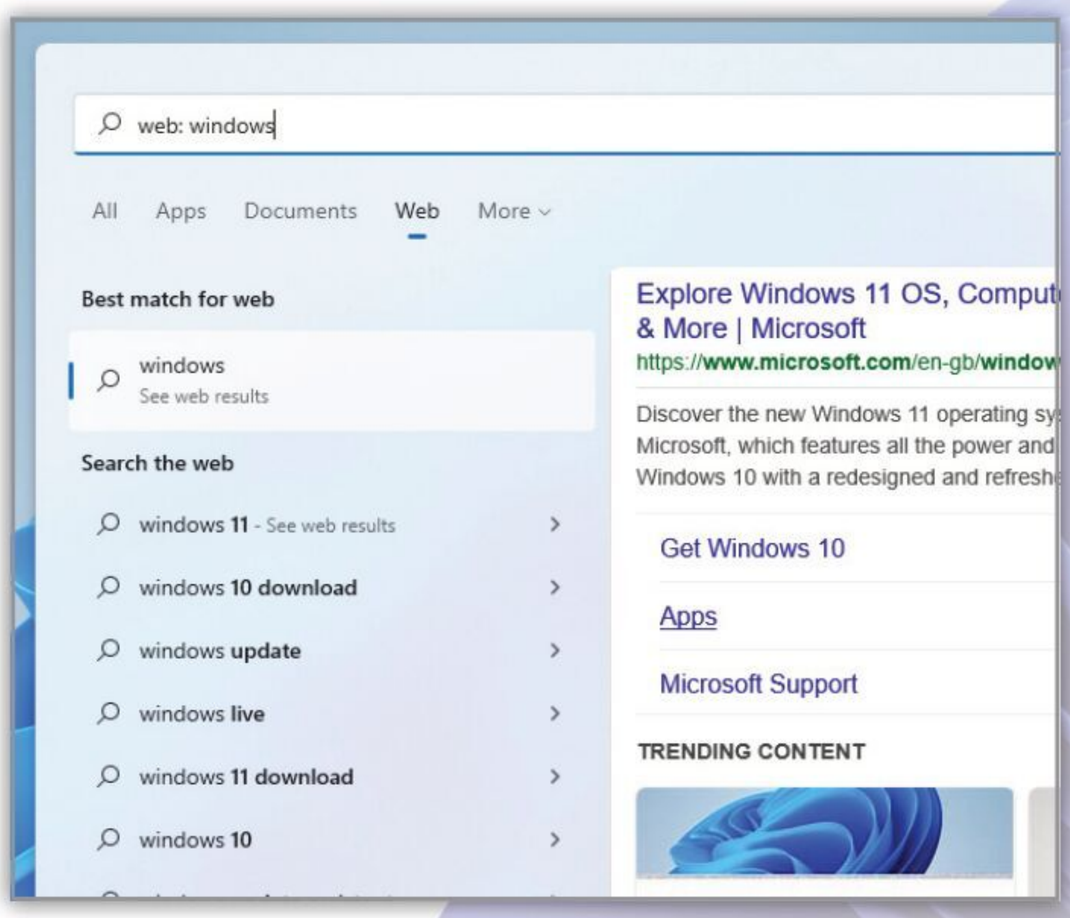
Step 2 In addition to files and folders, you can search for web results and apps. When you first click in the search box you will see three tabs along the bottom that let you choose what to search for; but even if you don't click one of these, the search function is smart enough to return results from 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.

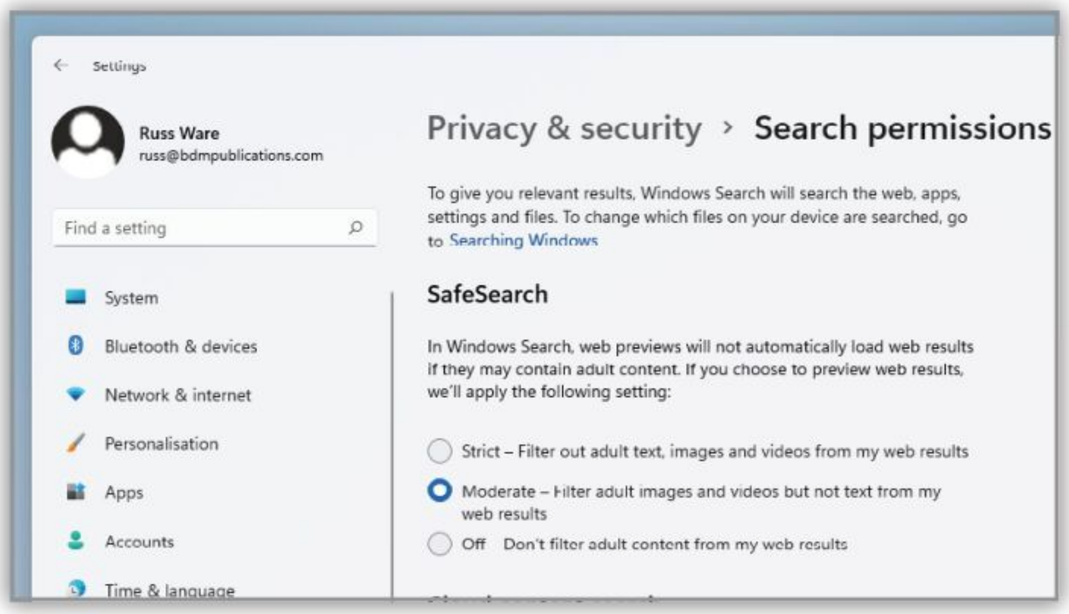


Search Settings and Tools

You have quite a lot of control over exactly how search provides you with search results, and what information it stores about your search history.

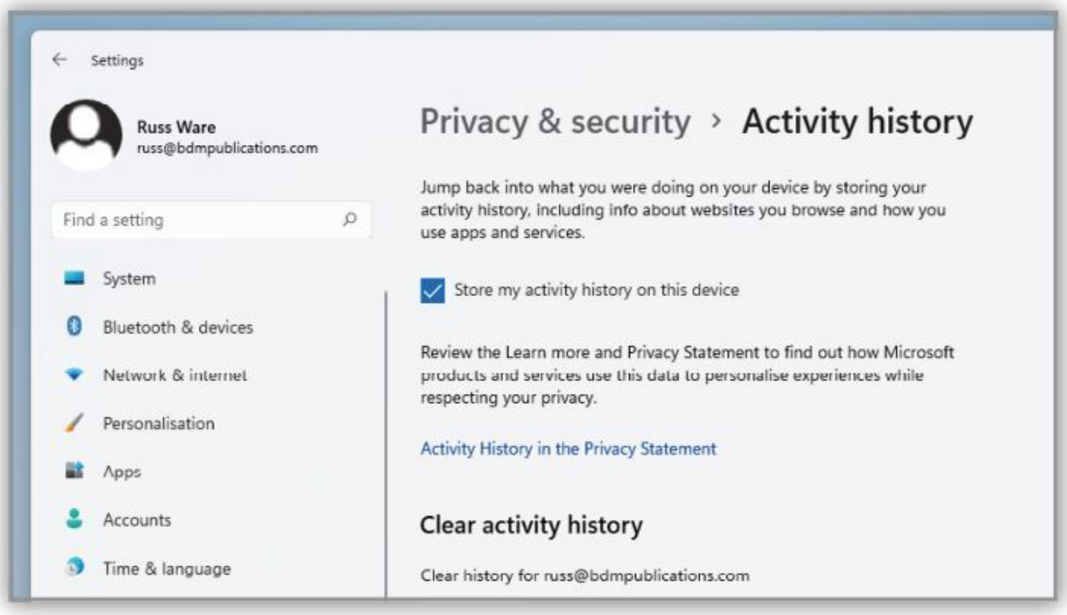
Safe Search

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.



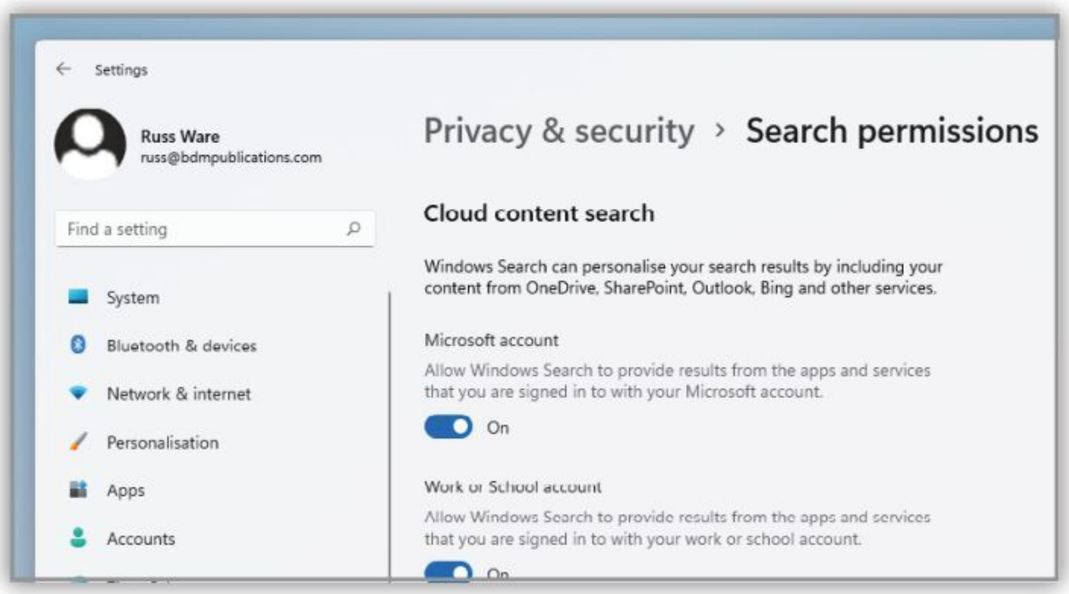
Search History

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.



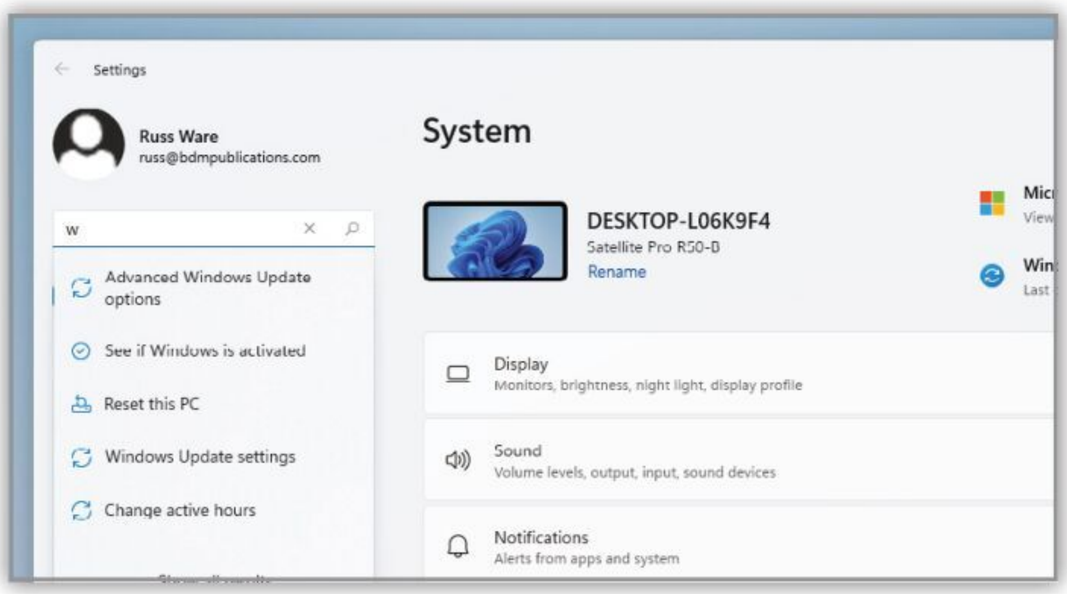
Cloud Search

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.



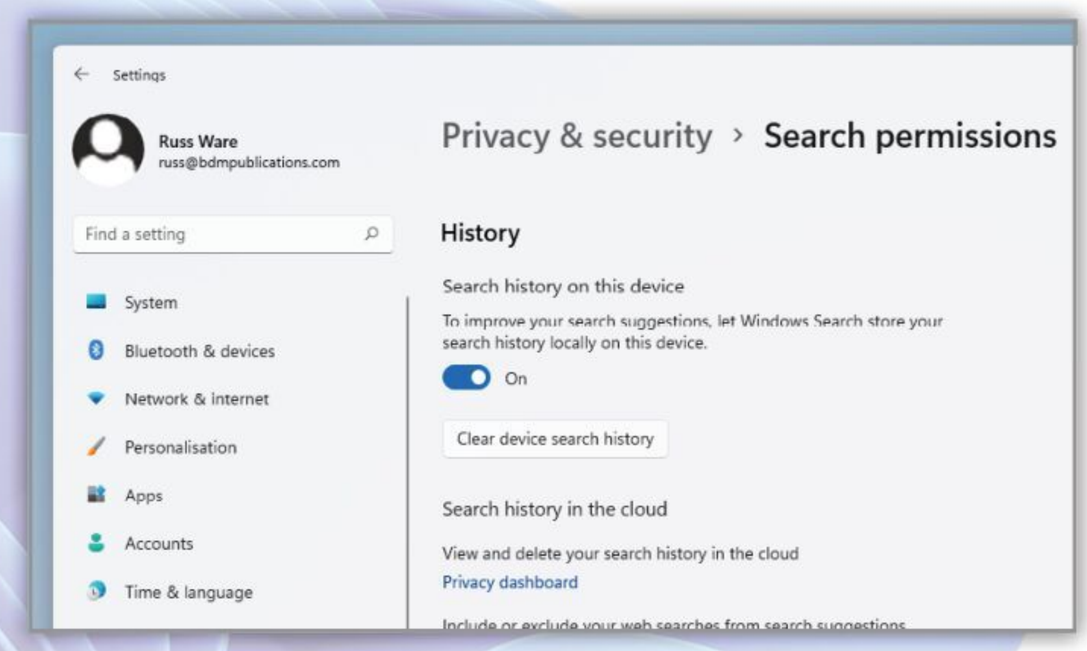
File Explorer Search

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.



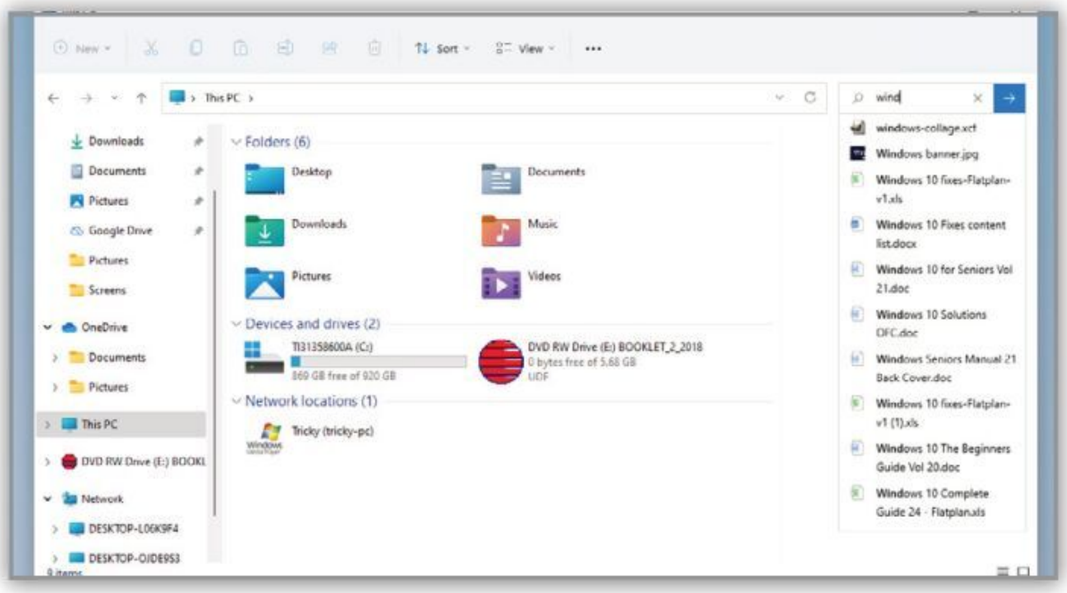
Device History

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.



Searching in 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.



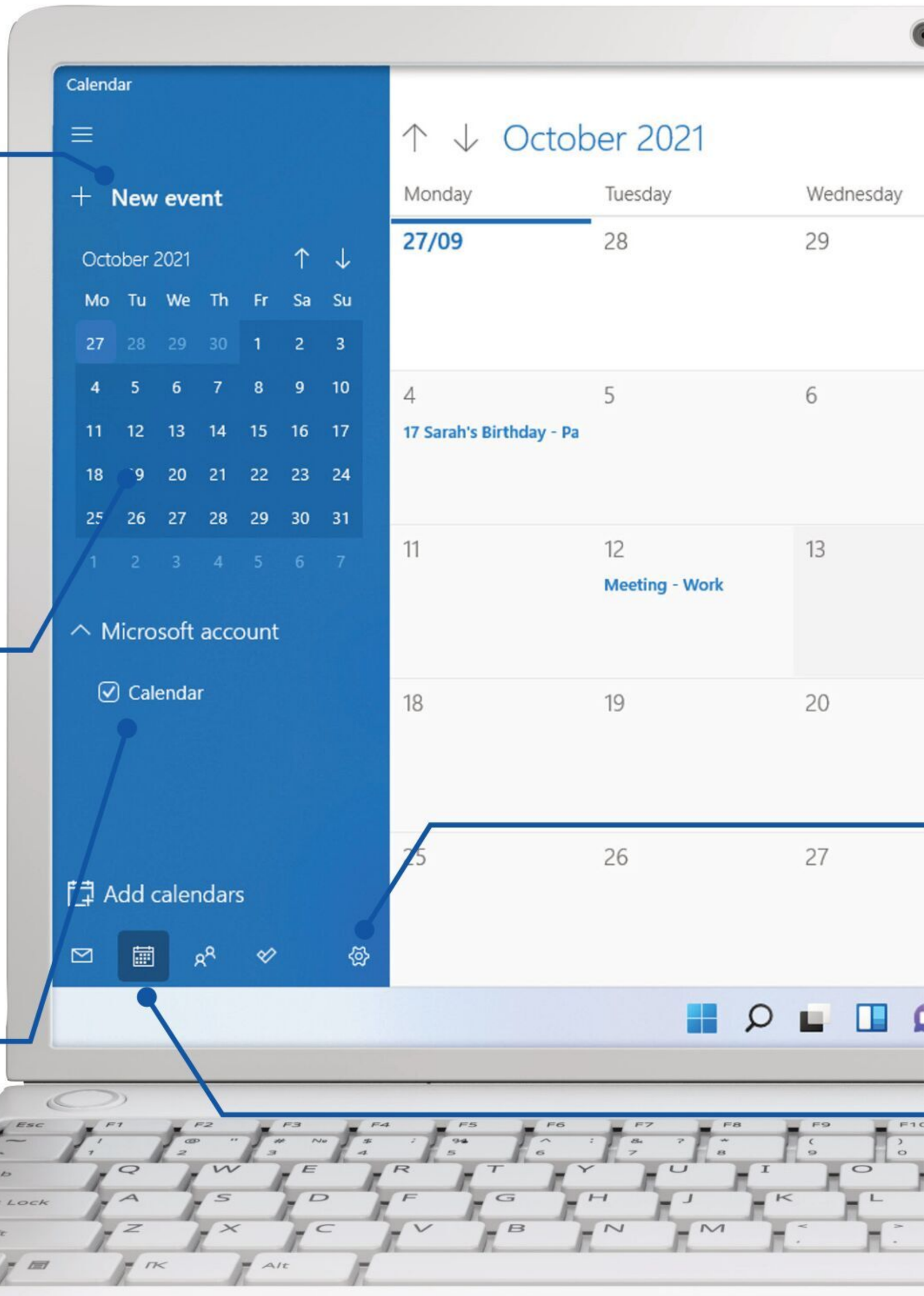
Inside the Calendar App

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; all of which are automatically added based on your location.

1 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.

2 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.

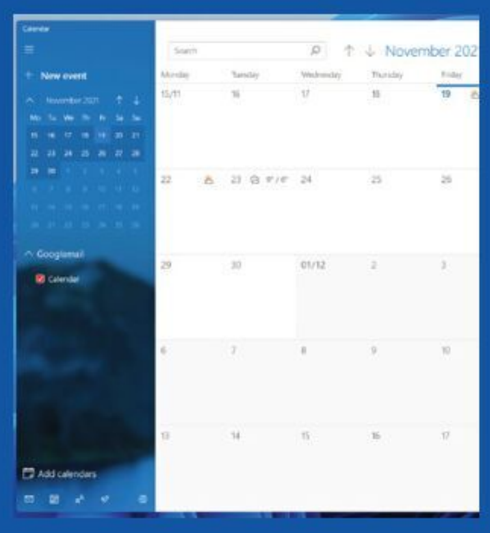
3 Linked Calendars
Your calendar can be linked to your email account, which is shown here. If you are using Gmail for your email account, and have any calendars set up in Google Calendar, these are also shown here. You can use the checkboxes to select and deselect calendars from showing in the main pane;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

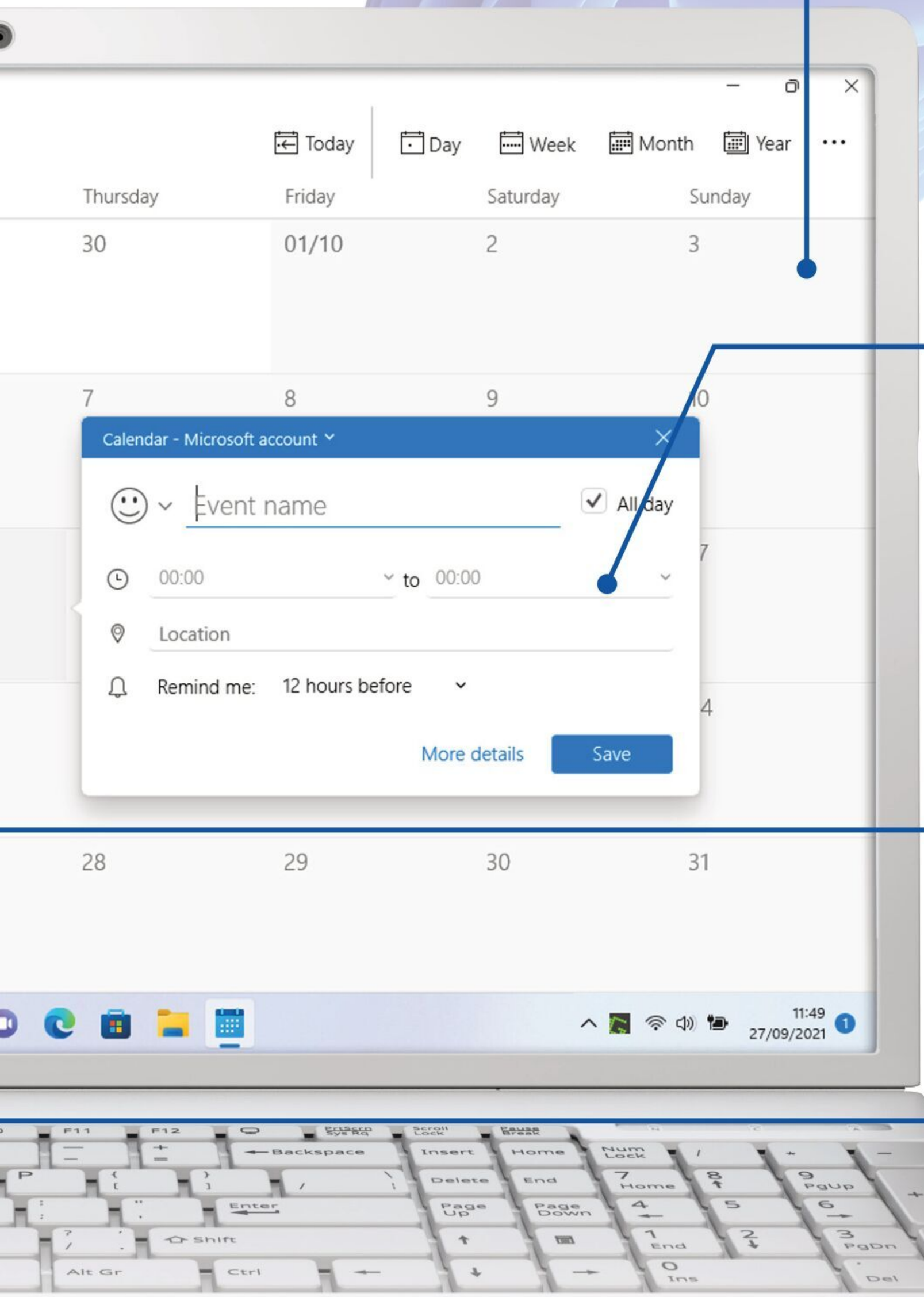


Inside the Calendar App

Calendar Updates

The new Windows 11 Calendar app is one of a number of apps that Microsoft are actively updating on a regular basis. Features were removed and added even in the first few months of Windows 11's launch, and there's more to come. Whether any of the previous features that were removed will return is anyone's guess, as Microsoft is remaining silent. But, with each new update, the Calendar gets better, so keep an eye on it and see how it evolves over time.





4 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.

5 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.

6 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, in Calendar Settings, if they have not been correctly added automatically.

7 Switch to 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.

Dates & Appointments with Calendar

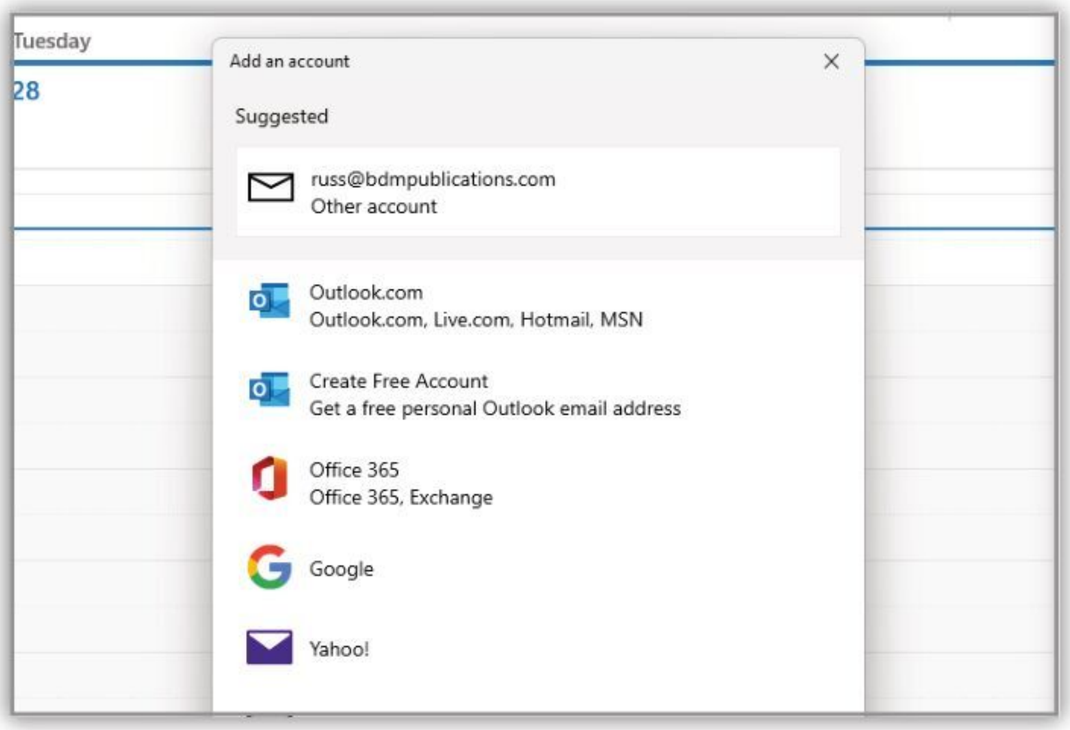
Digital calendars are no longer the preserve of business people scheduling appointments via email. With mobile phones now our new diaries, digital calendars are being used by increasing numbers of people to organise their busy lives. Welcome to Calendar.

Setting Up Calendars

The calendar can be a great productivity tool. We'll show you how to set up your calendar, arrange events and change settings, so your calendar is exactly the way you want it.

Adding Calendars

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.

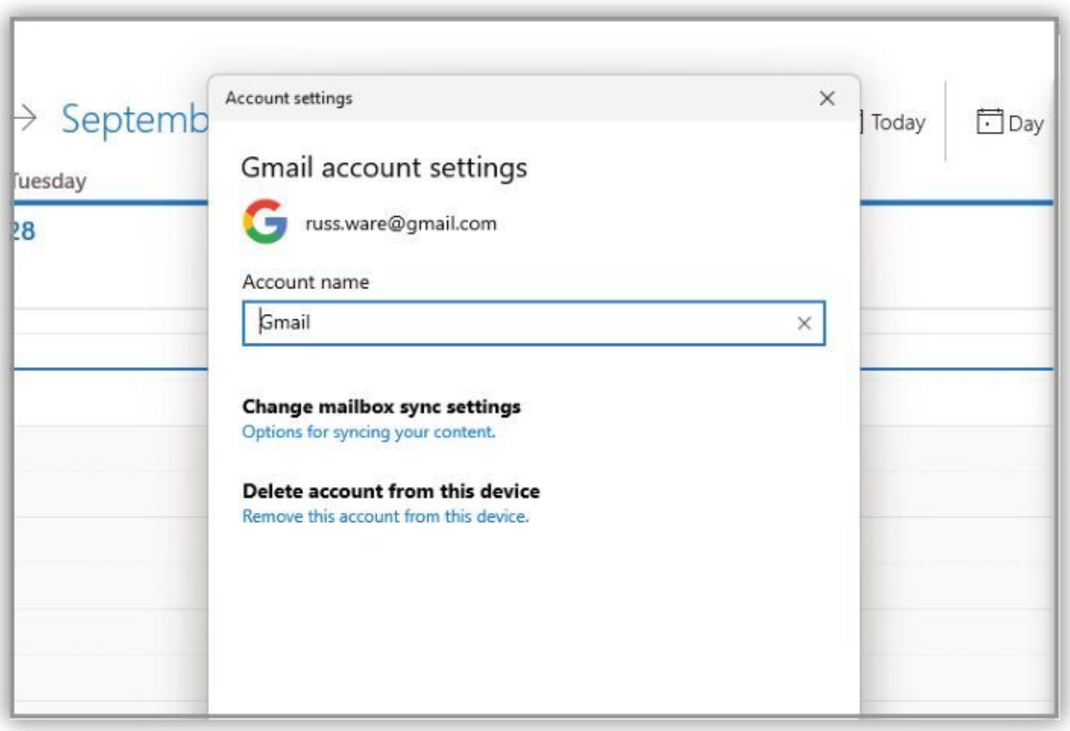


Allow Location

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.

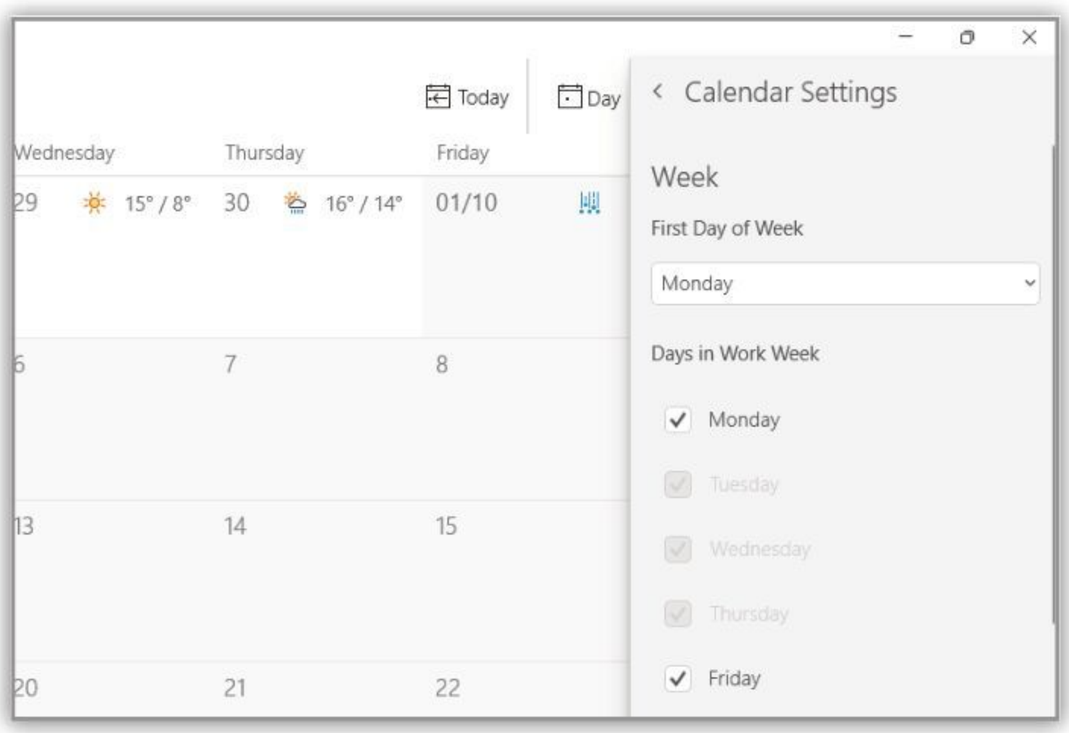
Sign In to Calendars

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.



Calendar Settings

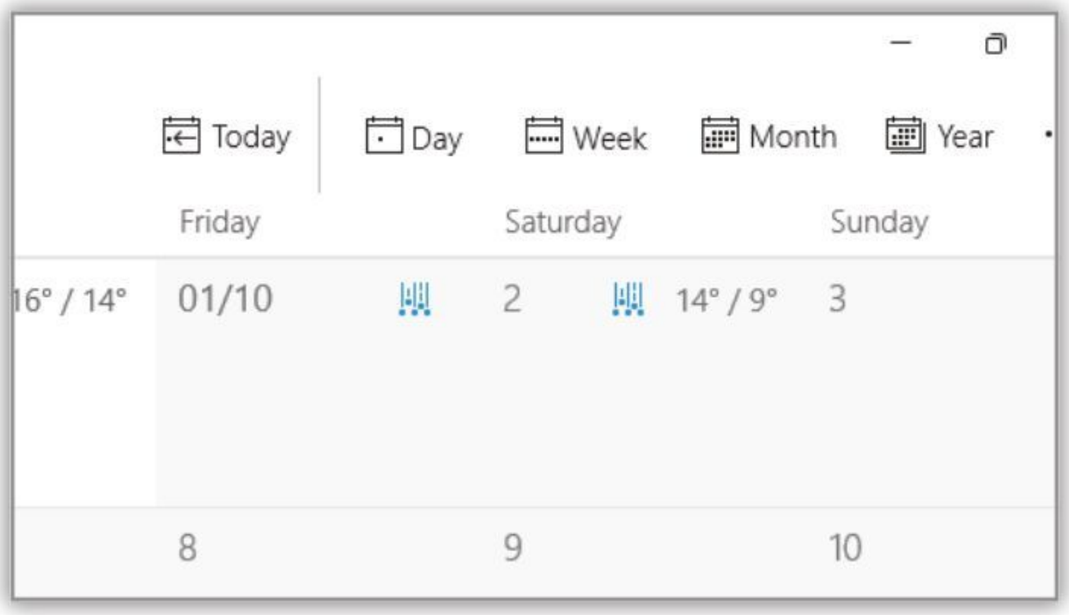
The calendar settings are fairly basic, boiling down to adding accounts, changing the appearance and setting the weather region. The only other settings are the controls to how the calendars are displayed (First day of week, Days in work week, Week numbers on/off, etc.).



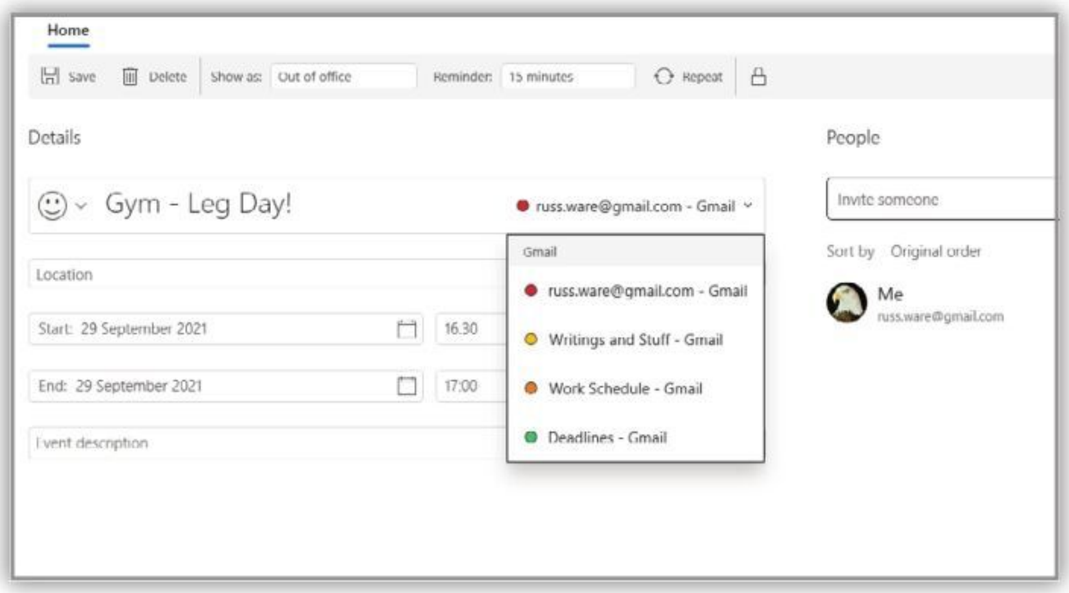
Creating and Managing Events

In the Calendar app, the appointments and reminders you add manually are called Events. You can add multiple events to each day, add emojis and set events to repeat.

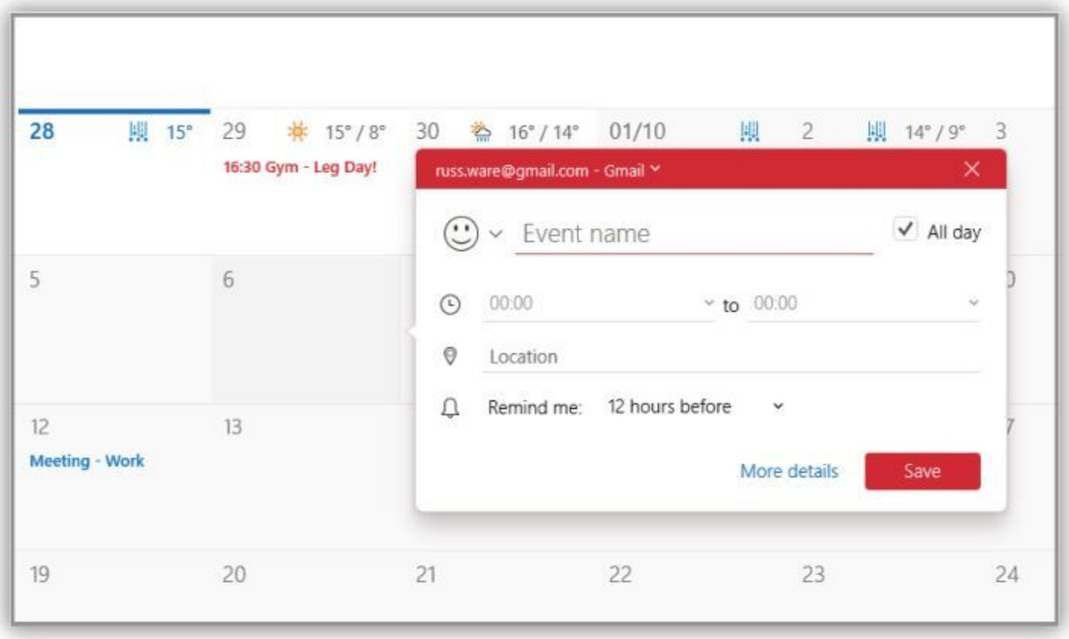
Step 1 The default view when opening the Calendar is the month view. You can switch to the different views (Day, Week, Month and Year) using the buttons along the top of the calendar. There is also a button here to take the view back to the current day, if you have been browsing future or past months.



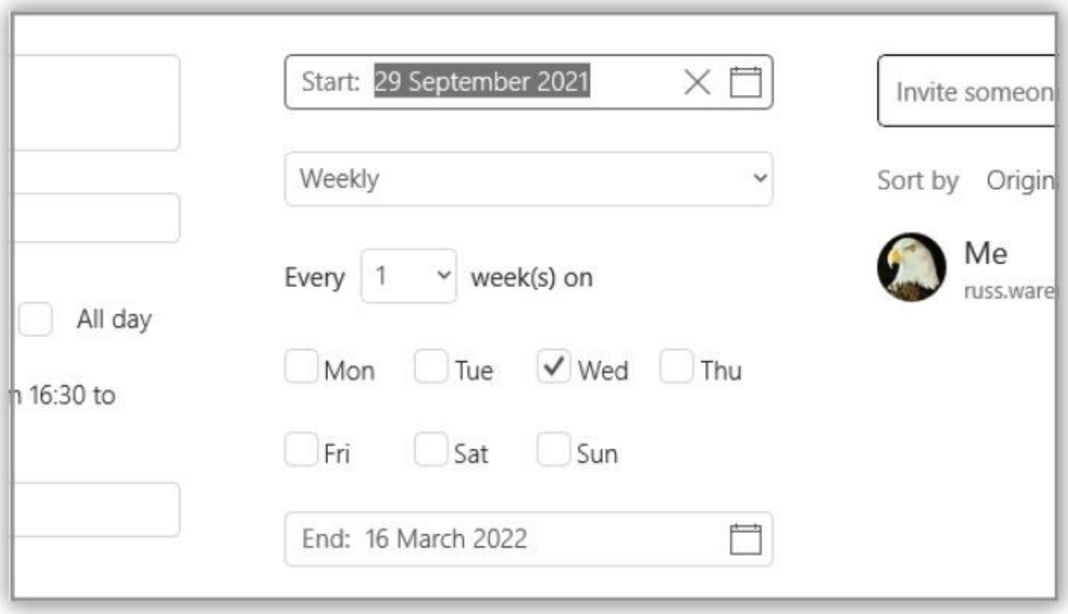
Step 2 Click the New Event button in the top left. Add the name of the event, a location should you wish to, plus start and end dates and times. You're also able to invite people by email using the field on the right-hand side. This will then insert the event into their calendar as well.



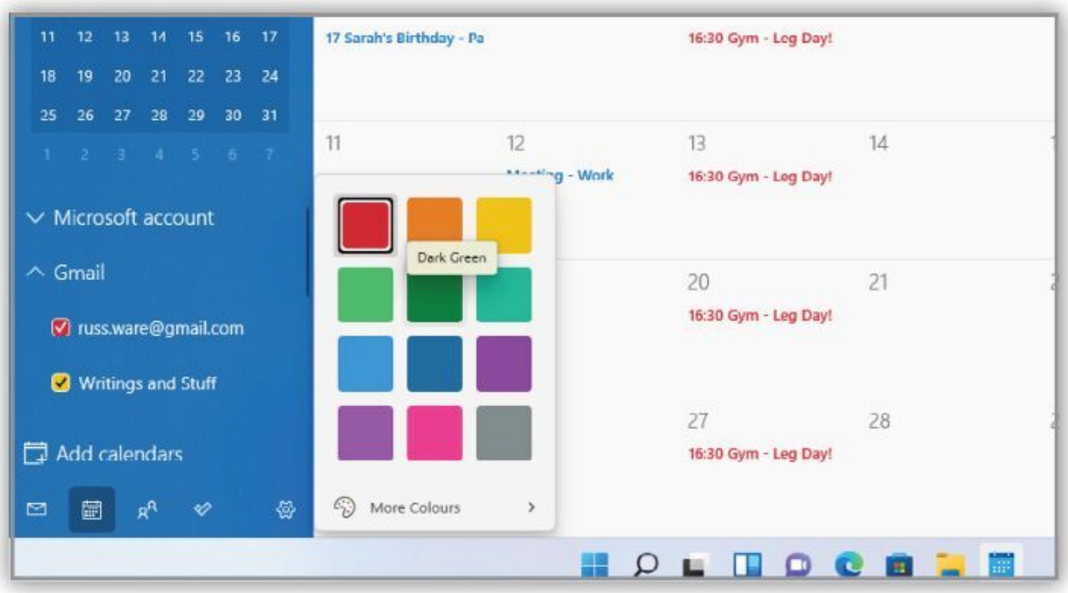
Step 3 You can also add events by clicking on the relevant date block (or time block in Day view), and then adding the event details in the quick event pop-up box. If you want to see the full, new event screen at this point, you can click the "More details" link in the quick event box.



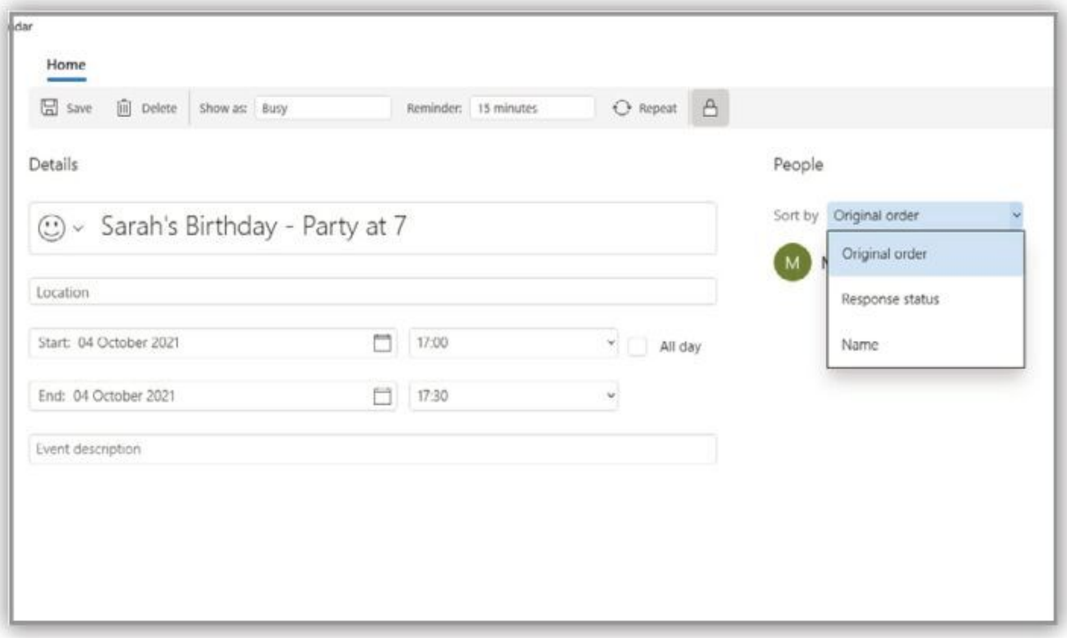
Step 4 You can also choose to set repeat events – just click the Repeat button in the toolbar when you're creating a new event. Check the days you want. You can repeat daily, weekly, monthly or yearly, depending on what you need to do. You can even set a date when the repeated events end.



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.



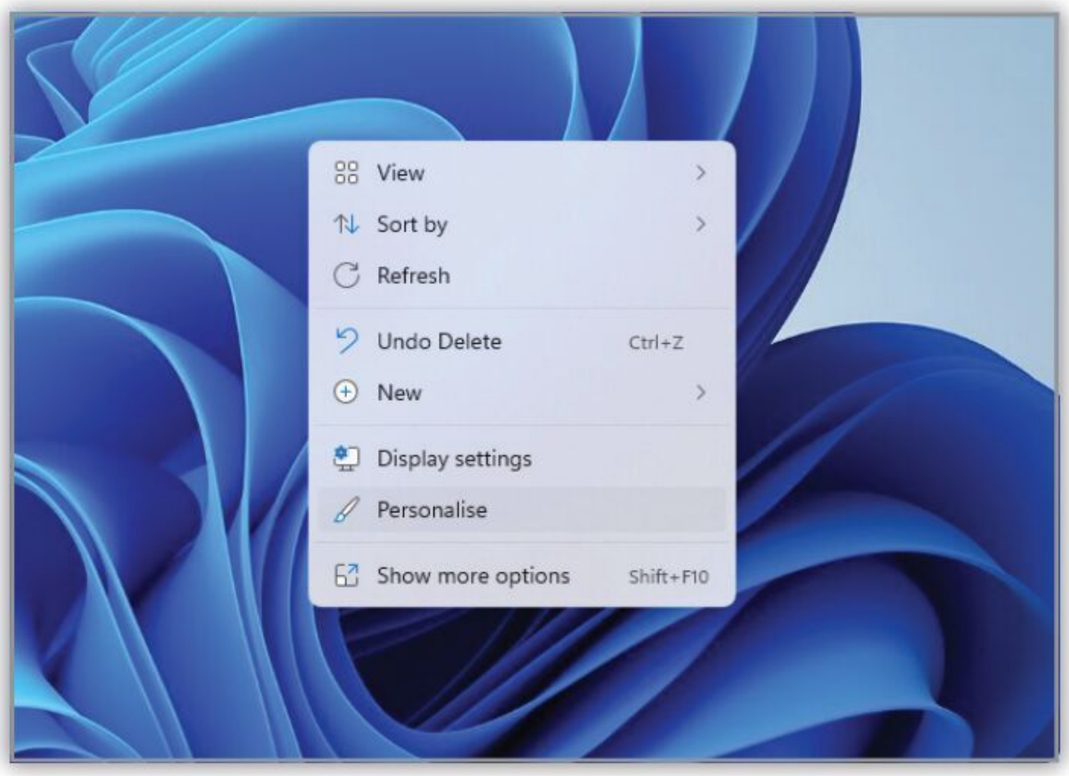
Personalising Windows 11

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.

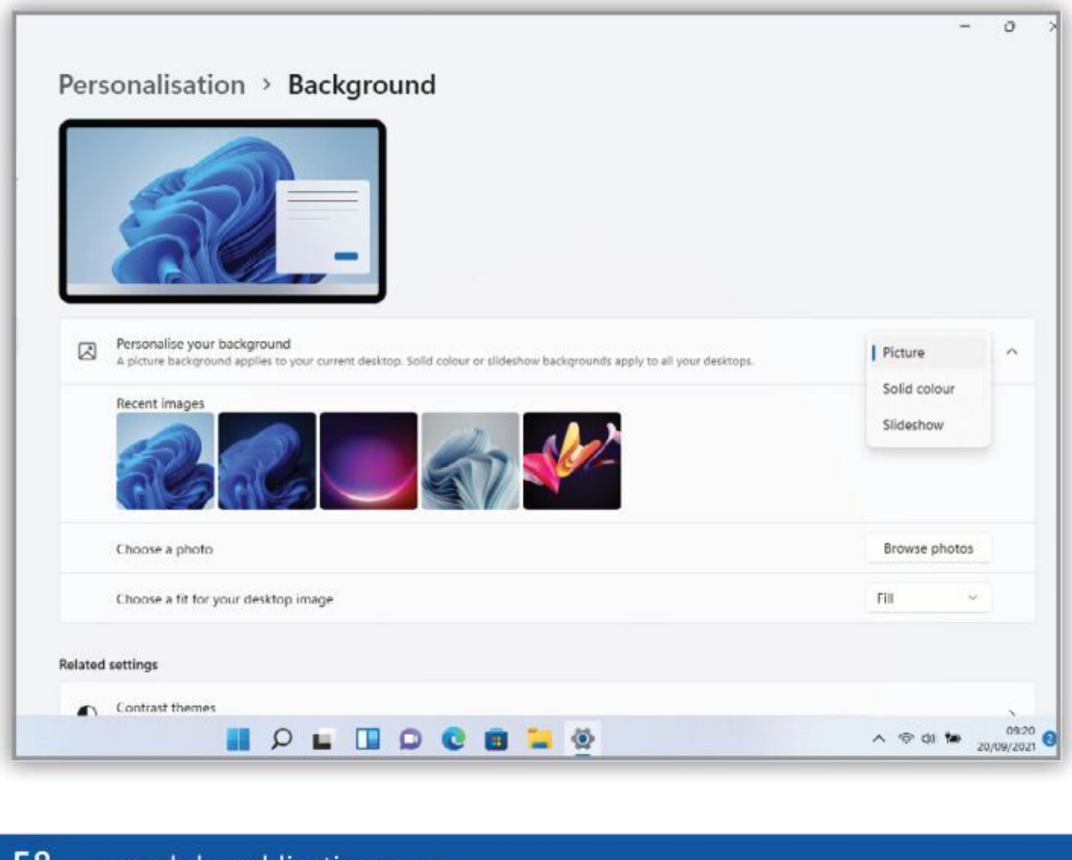
Change the Desktop Background

The desktop personalisation procedure hasn't changed much since Windows 10, so if you've used that OS before this will feel very familiar.

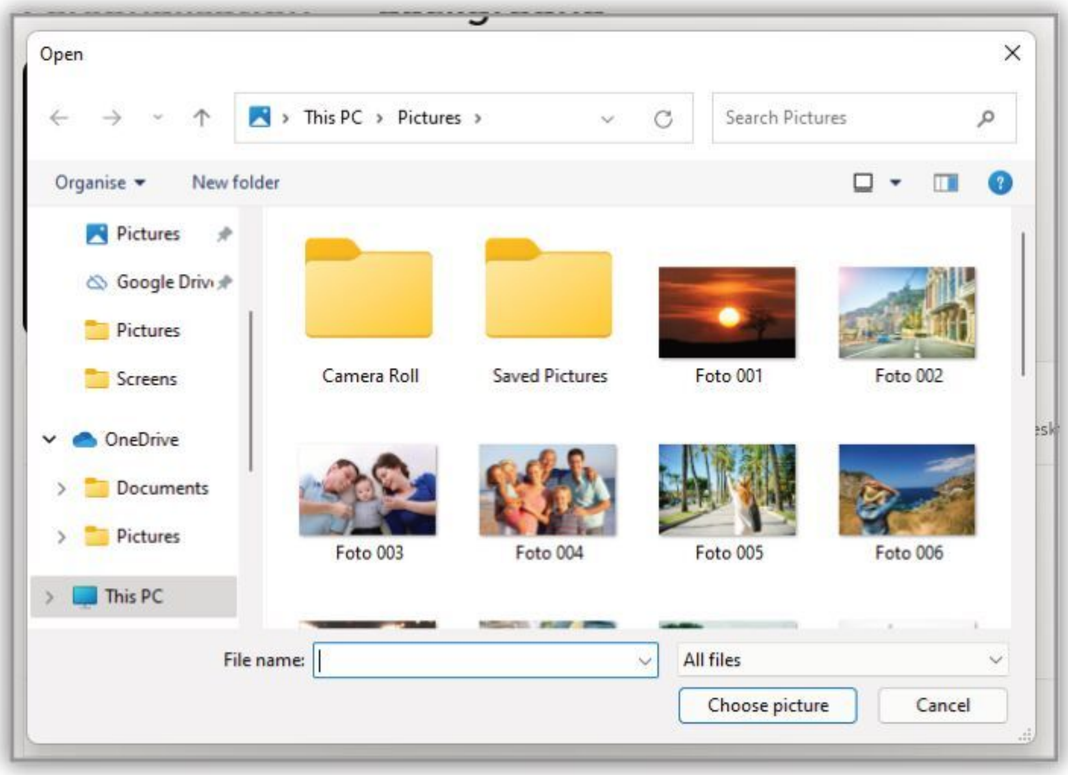
Step 1 You can get started with personalising the Windows 11 desktop in exactly the same way you did with Windows 10. For anyone completely new to Windows, that means right-clicking anywhere on the desktop screen and selecting Personalise from the action menu that appears.



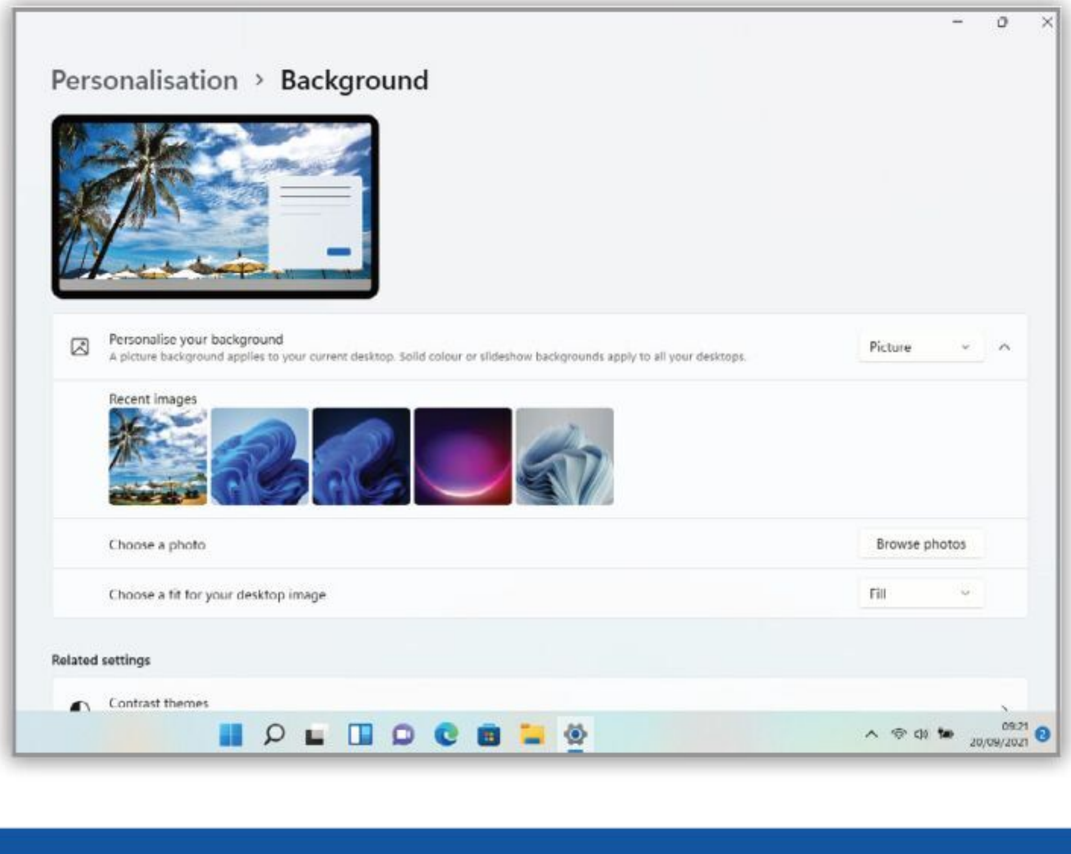
Step 2 The Background settings will be displayed first by default. Click the first drop-down menu to select whether to use the default backgrounds, solid colours or choose to display folders of your own images. Your choices here changes what is displayed in the background settings.



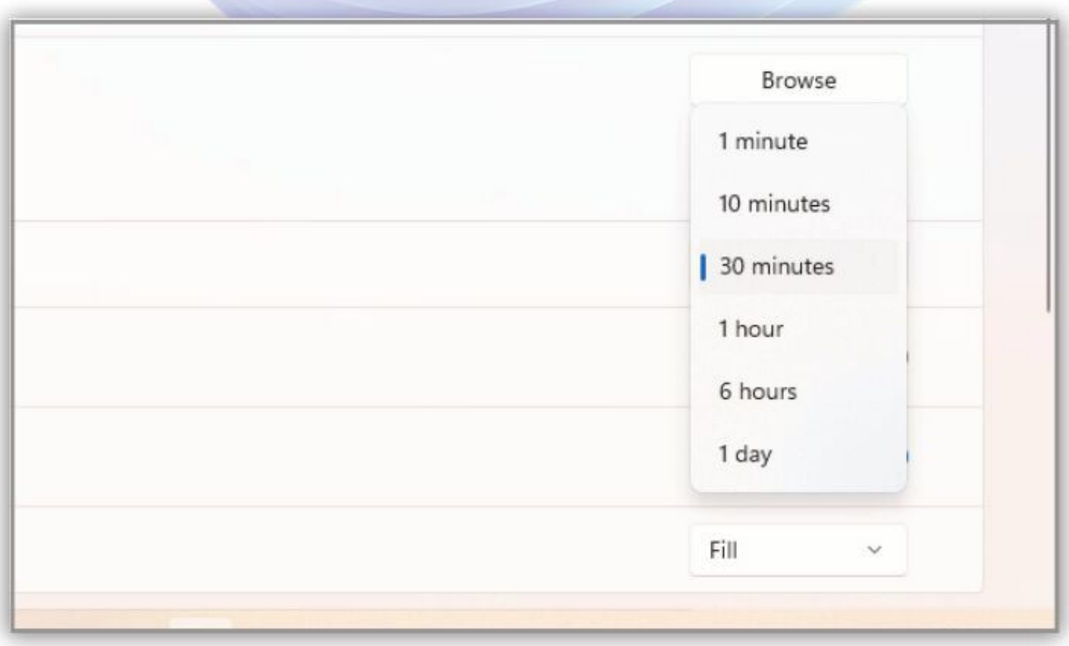
Step 3 To select your own pictures for the background, click on Browse photos in the Choose a photo section and navigate to the folder containing the images you want to use. For best results, use pictures that have the same aspect ratio (i.e. widescreen landscape), as your monitor screen.



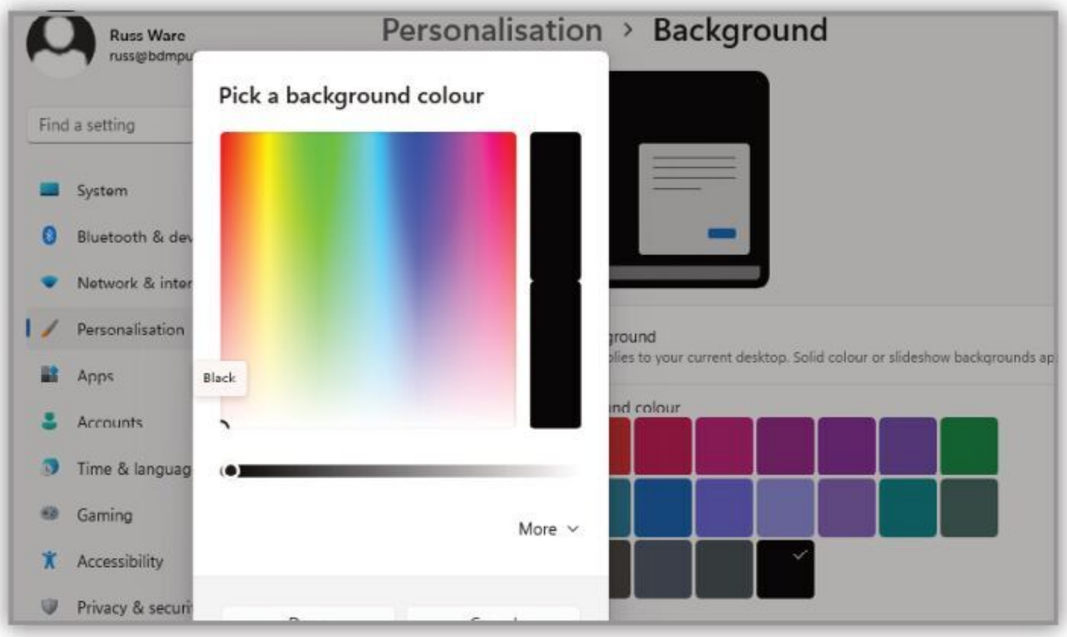
Step 4 To set a picture as your desktop background, simply click on it. It will instantly be set as your new desktop background image (a preview will display). The screen shows you the last five images used or you can click the Browse button to choose a new one from your folders.



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

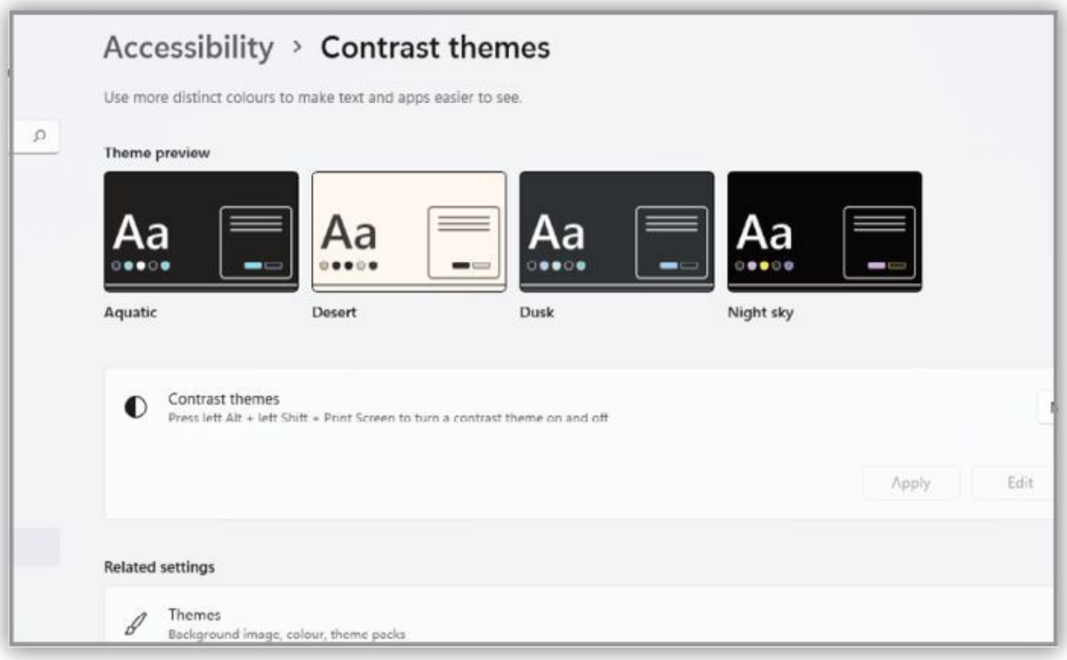
By accent colours we mean the colour of the taskbar, the Start menu and the frames of new windows and so on, that you open on your computer.

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 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 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 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.

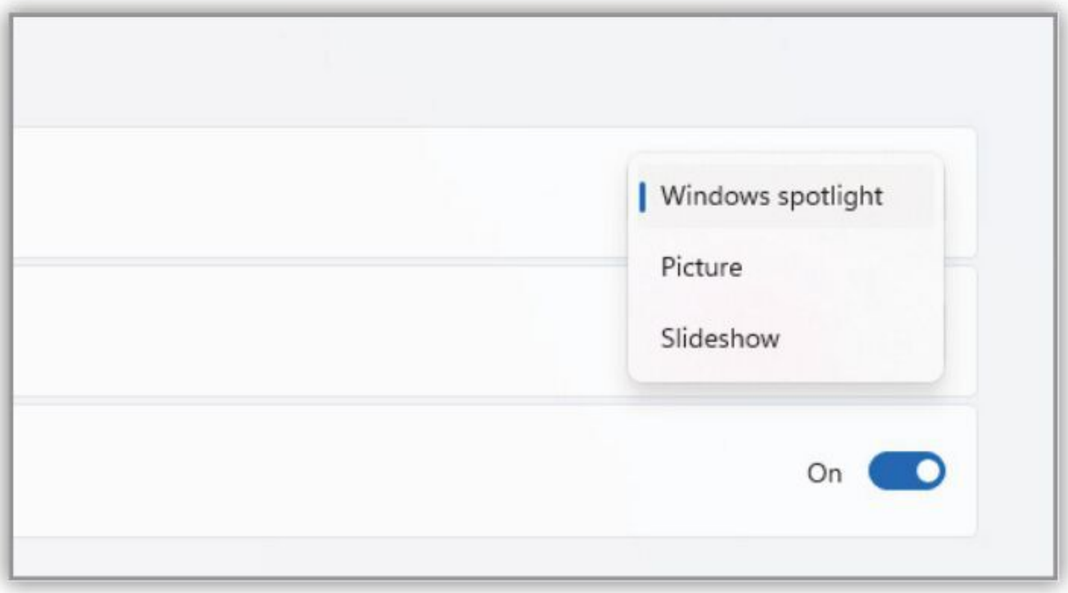


Lock Screen Customisation

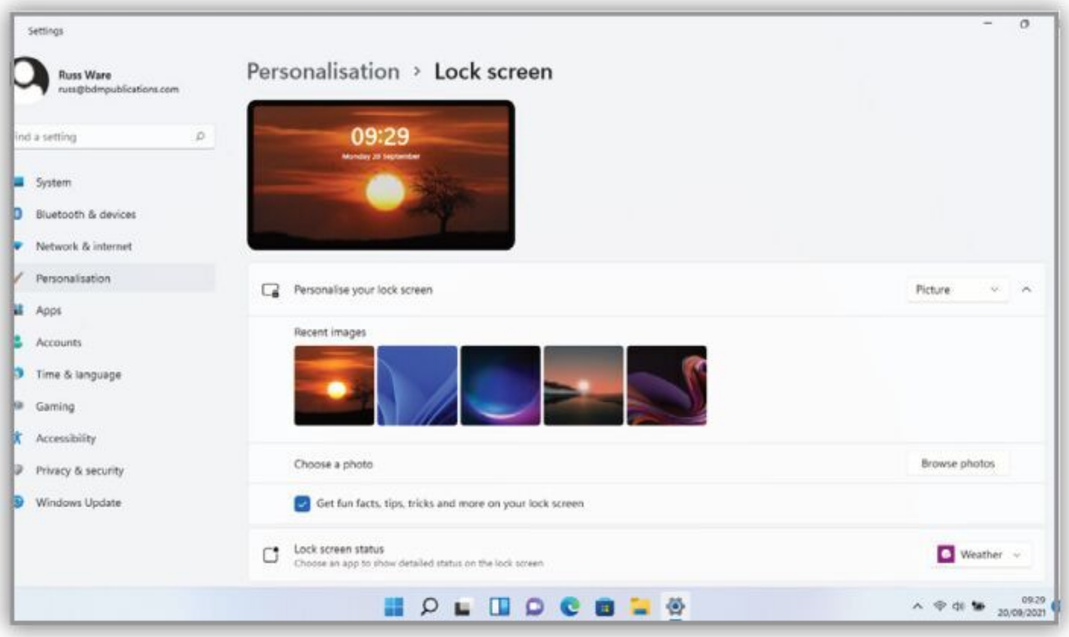
The lock screen is another simplified feature in Windows 11, but can still feature custom backgrounds with Spotlight Images, and display detailed app statuses.

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.

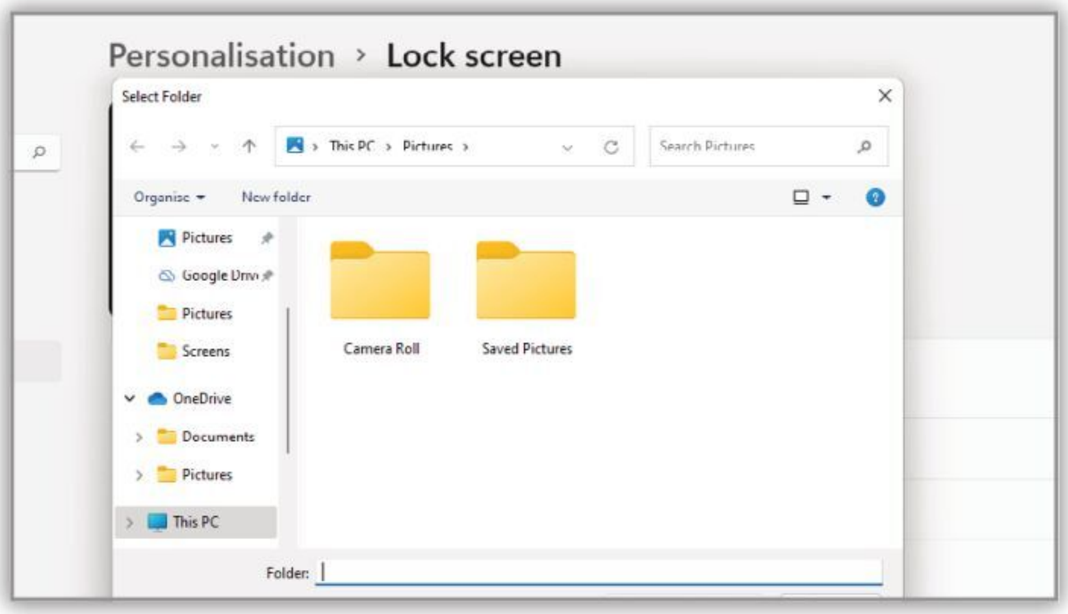
Step 2 The first thing to choose is whether to display one of your own images, a slideshow of images or something from Windows Spotlight. If you choose either of the first two of these, more options will appear to select the images you want to use (single or multiple).



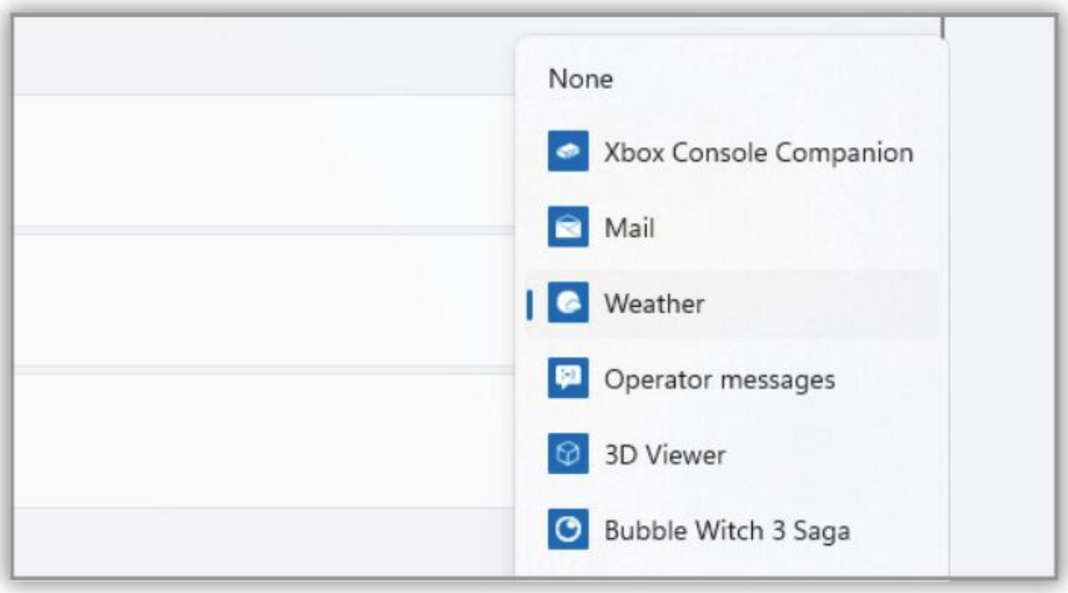
Step 3 If you choose to apply one of your images, some recently used pictures will appear, along with a link to browse your PC for more. When you select an image, it will appear in the recently used panel. You can choose to have facts, tips and tricks displayed over the image, just like with Windows Spotlight.



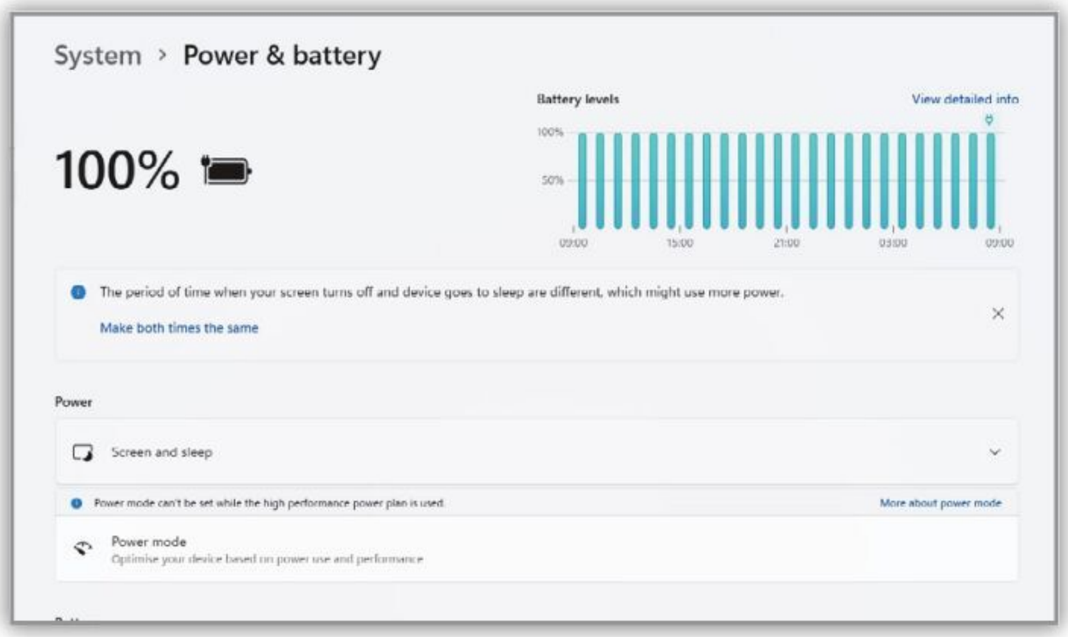
Step 4 If you choose to set the lock screen as a slideshow, you will see the option to add a folder of images rather than just one. You can use an existing folder (such as Pictures), or you can create one. There are several advanced settings for a slideshow, including only using images that fit the screen.



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).

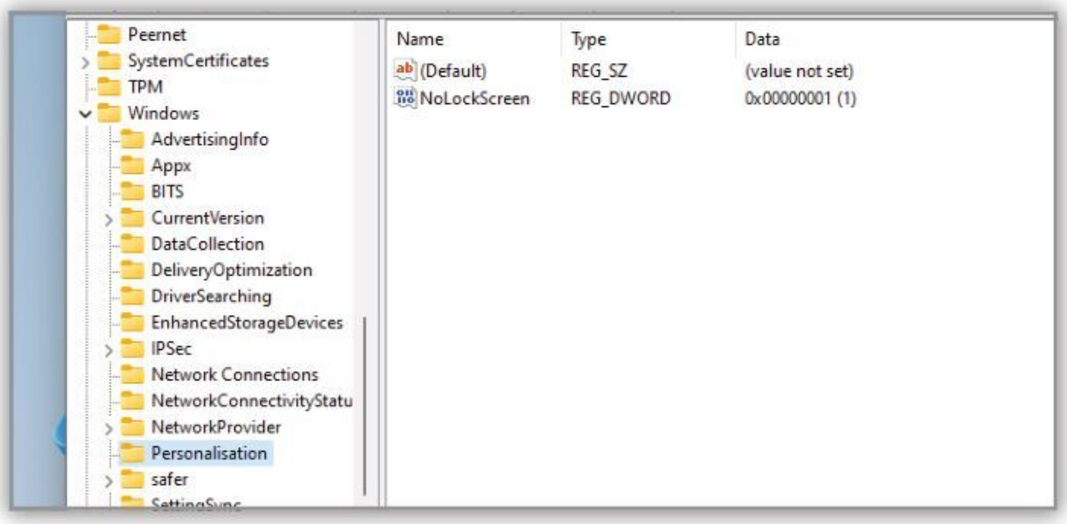


Disable the Lock Screen

There is no setting to disable the lock screen completely but it is still possible to do so by delving into the Registry. This is fairly advanced customisation, so approach with care.

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 to proceed.

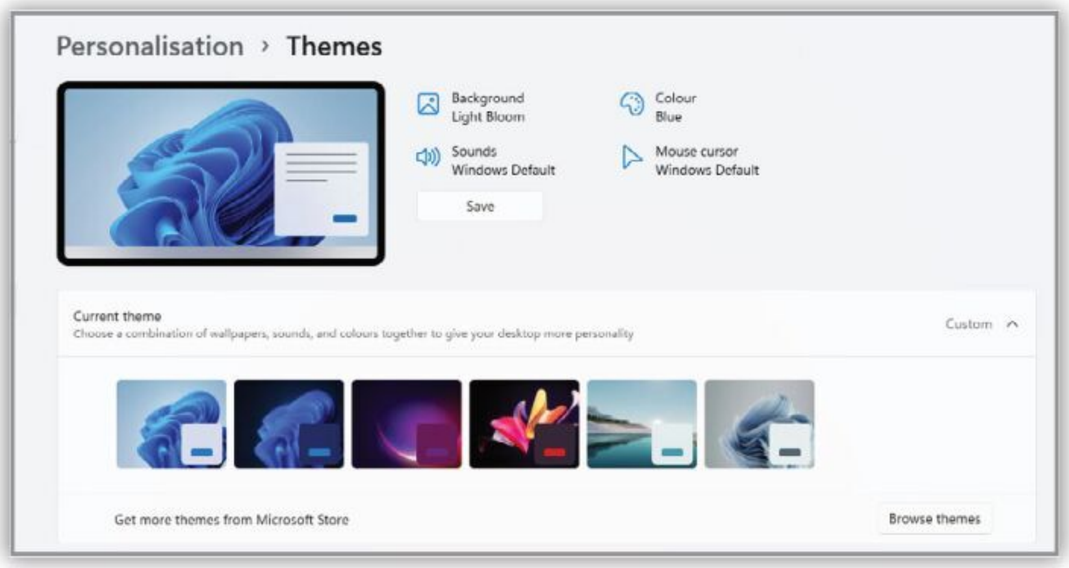
Step 2 Name this new key “Personalisation” and then navigate inside it. Right-click inside the right-hand pane and select New > DWORD (32-bit) Value. Name it “NoLockScreen”. Then double click this new value and change the Value data to 1. Then click OK and exit the Registry Editor.



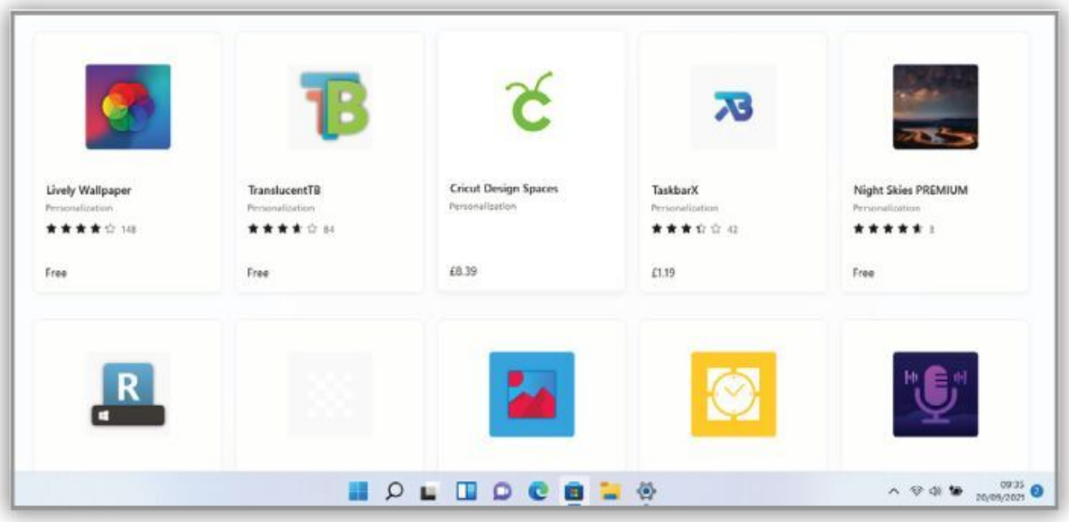
Adding New Themes

Themes in Windows 11 have now all been moved to the Microsoft Store, so you no longer have to find them elsewhere on the Internet.

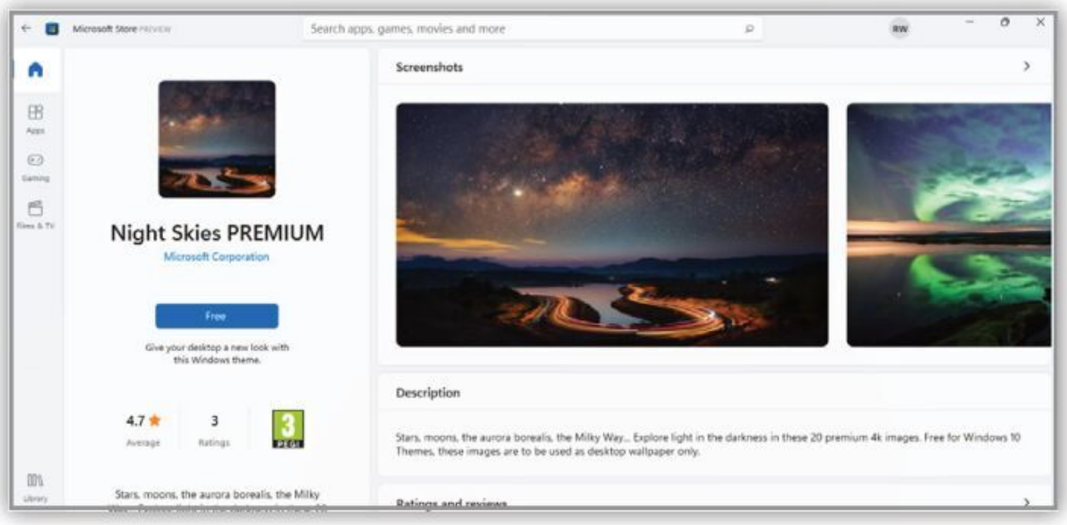
Step 1 You can find new themes in a couple of ways: Open the Microsoft Store app and search for themes, or open the main settings app, go to Personalisation and then click on the themes option. Here you will see a link to “Get more themes…”.



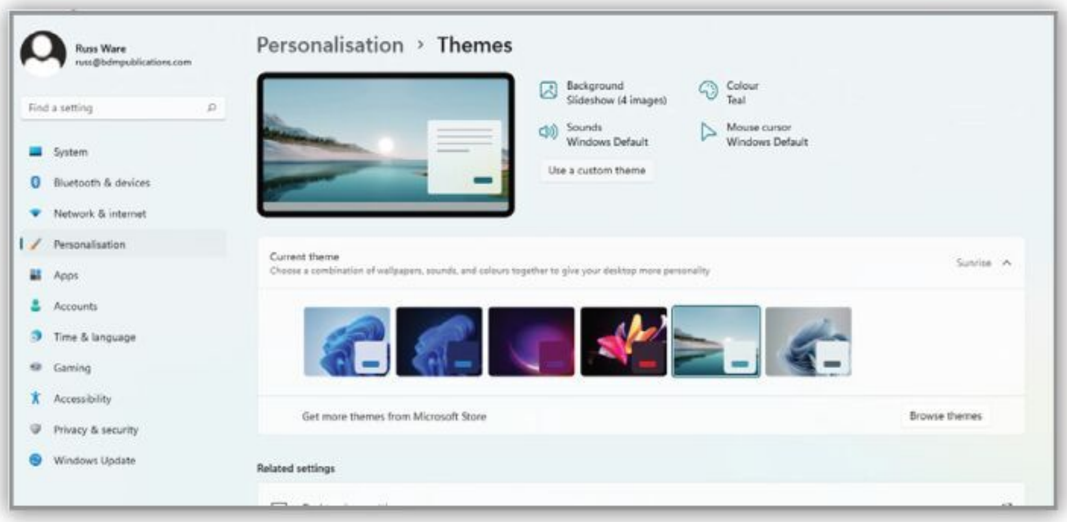
Step 2 Both of these actions should bring you to the same themes page. All themes have now been moved into the Windows Store app, rather than on a webpage. Themes are all listed under Personalisation in the Store, so you can also search for that if your themes search doesn’t bring up the expected results.



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.



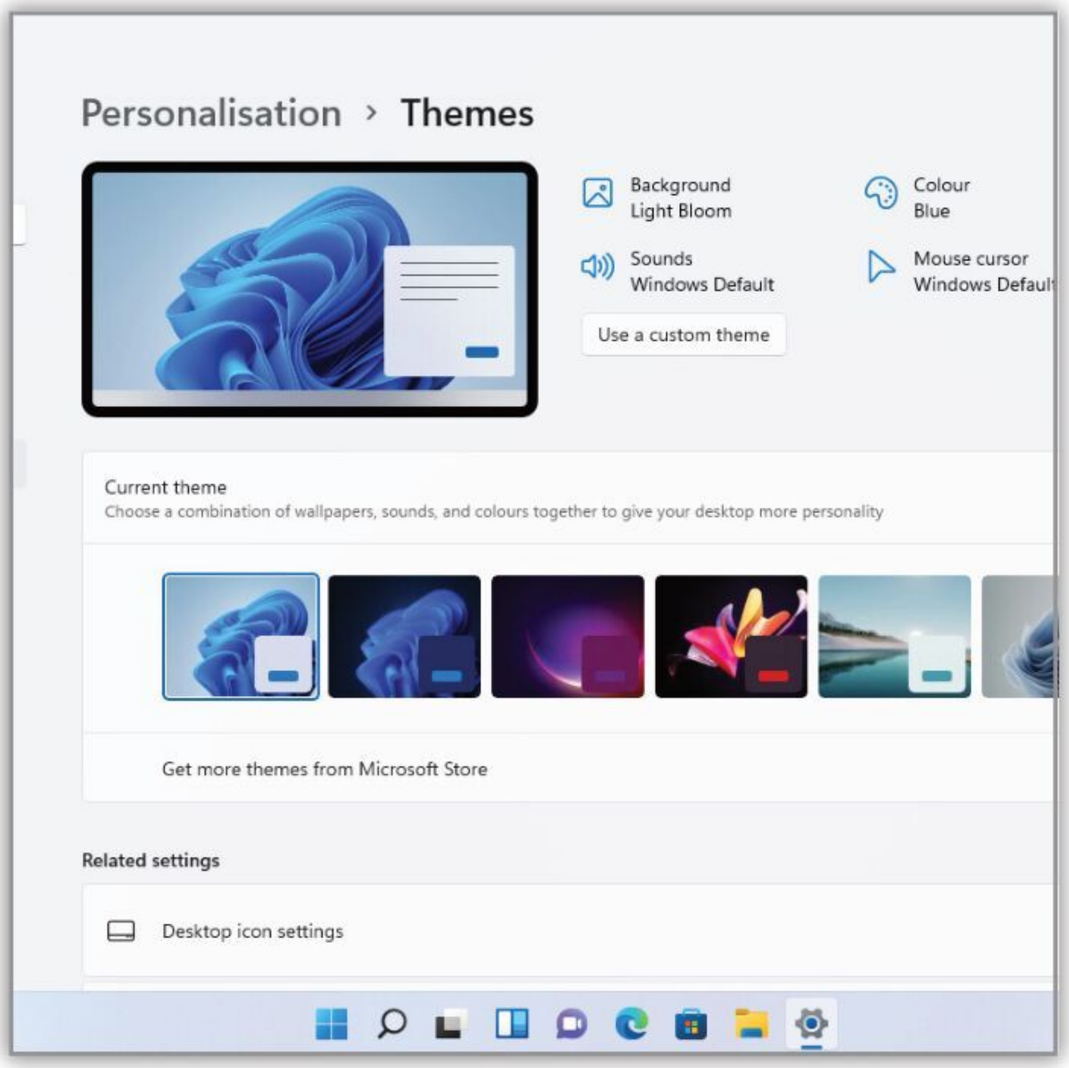
Step 4 Each theme applied can be customised further using the options in the Themes section. You can alter the background, colour, sounds and even the mouse cursor of any theme, making it completely unique to you. When you have chosen the changes, you will need to click Save Theme.



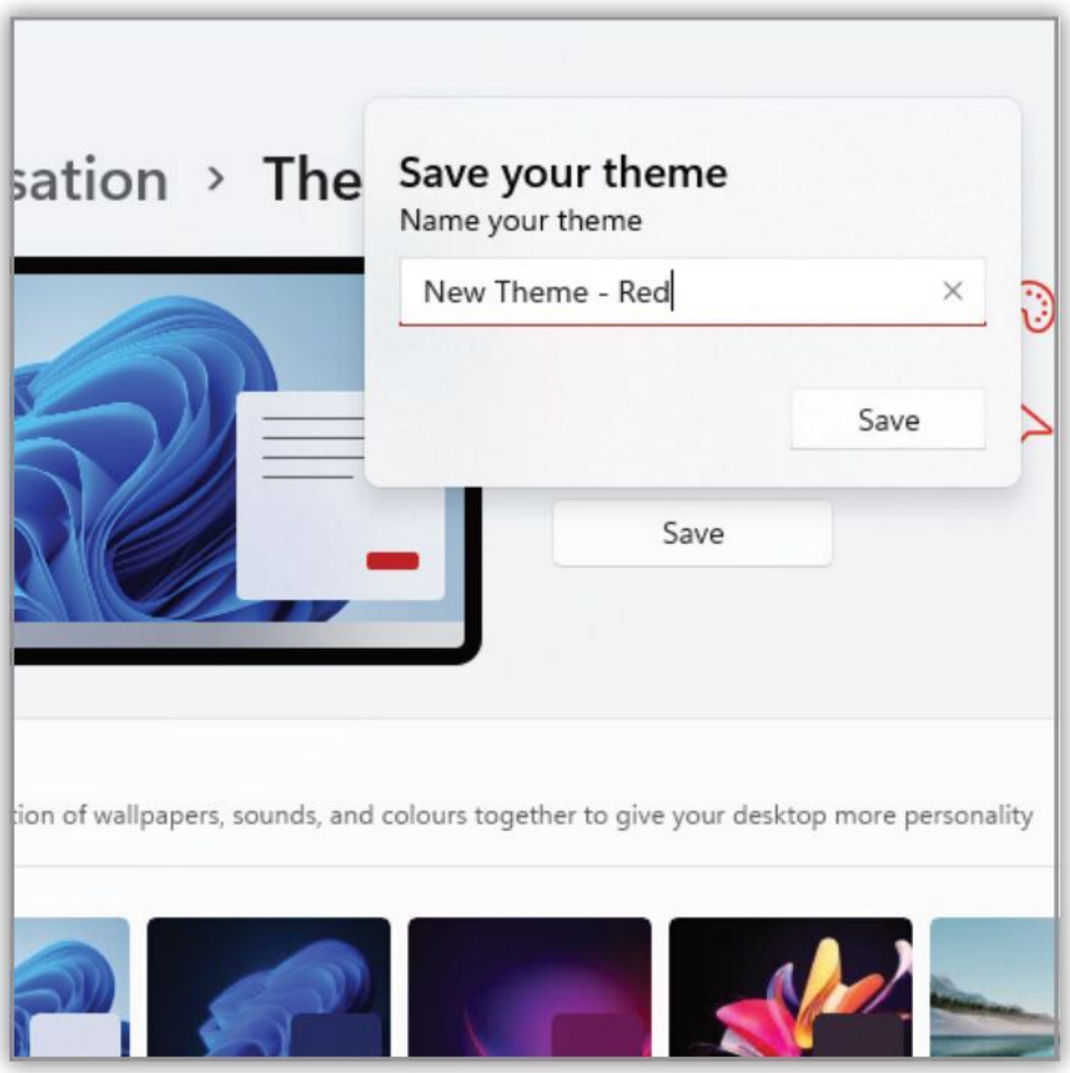
Modifying Themes

There are several themes preset in Windows 11. These can be applied at the click of a button, and then further customised to suit your needs.

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.

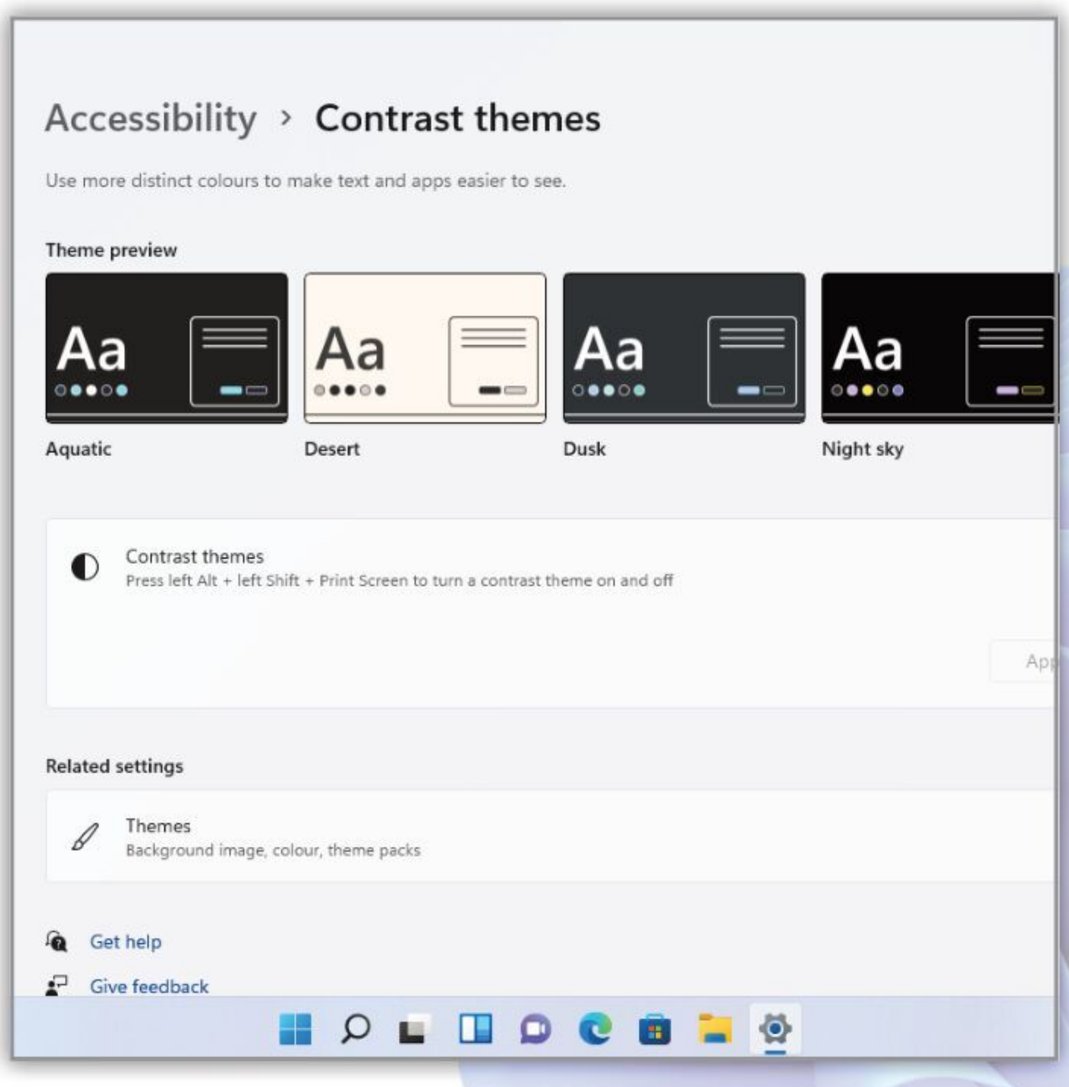


Step 2 Each time you make a change using these links, return to the Themes section to see the changes in the preview window, or minimise the Settings app to see the desktop. When you are happy with all of the changes, click "Save" and the theme will be set and added to the other themes.



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.

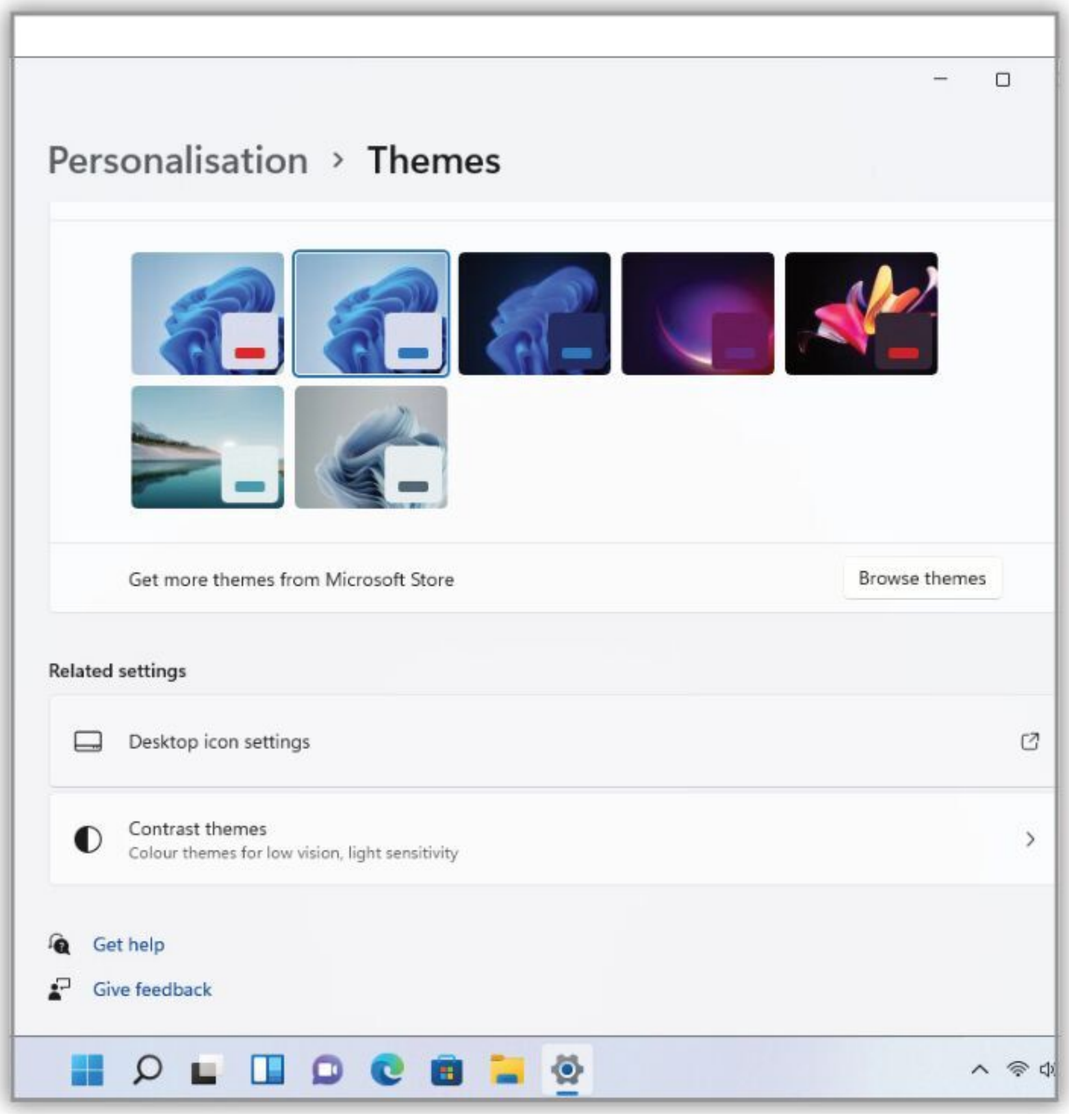
Step 4 At the bottom of the themes settings page are a few more links, taking you directly to desktop icon settings and high/low contrast themes. Desktop icon settings are separate to the themes, so if you change these, they will remain even if you then go back and choose a new theme.



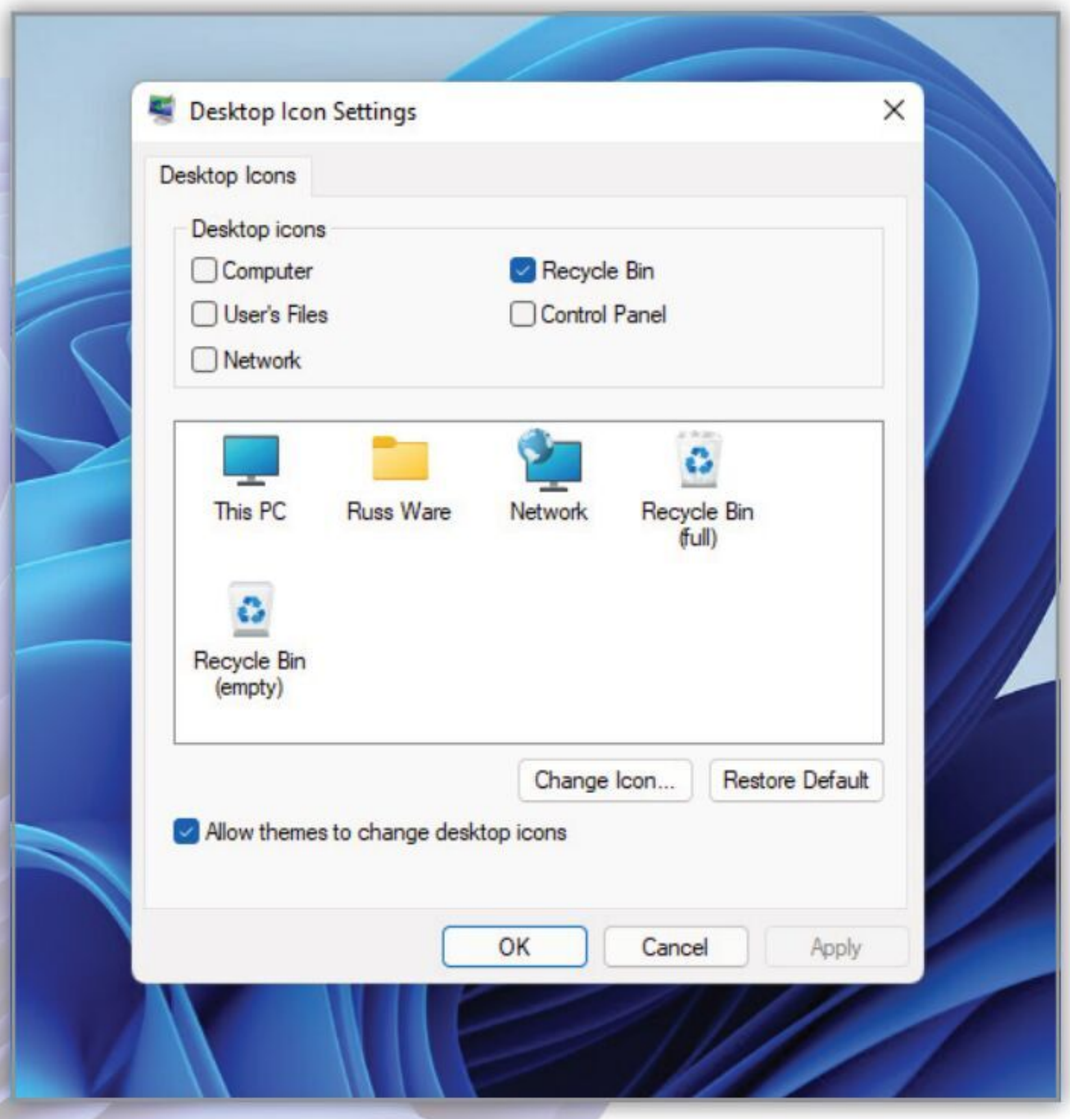
Change Your Desktop Icons

If you use desktop icons such as This PC, your personal folder or Network connections, you can change those icons too. You can even download complete icon packs online, giving your desktop a completely different feel.

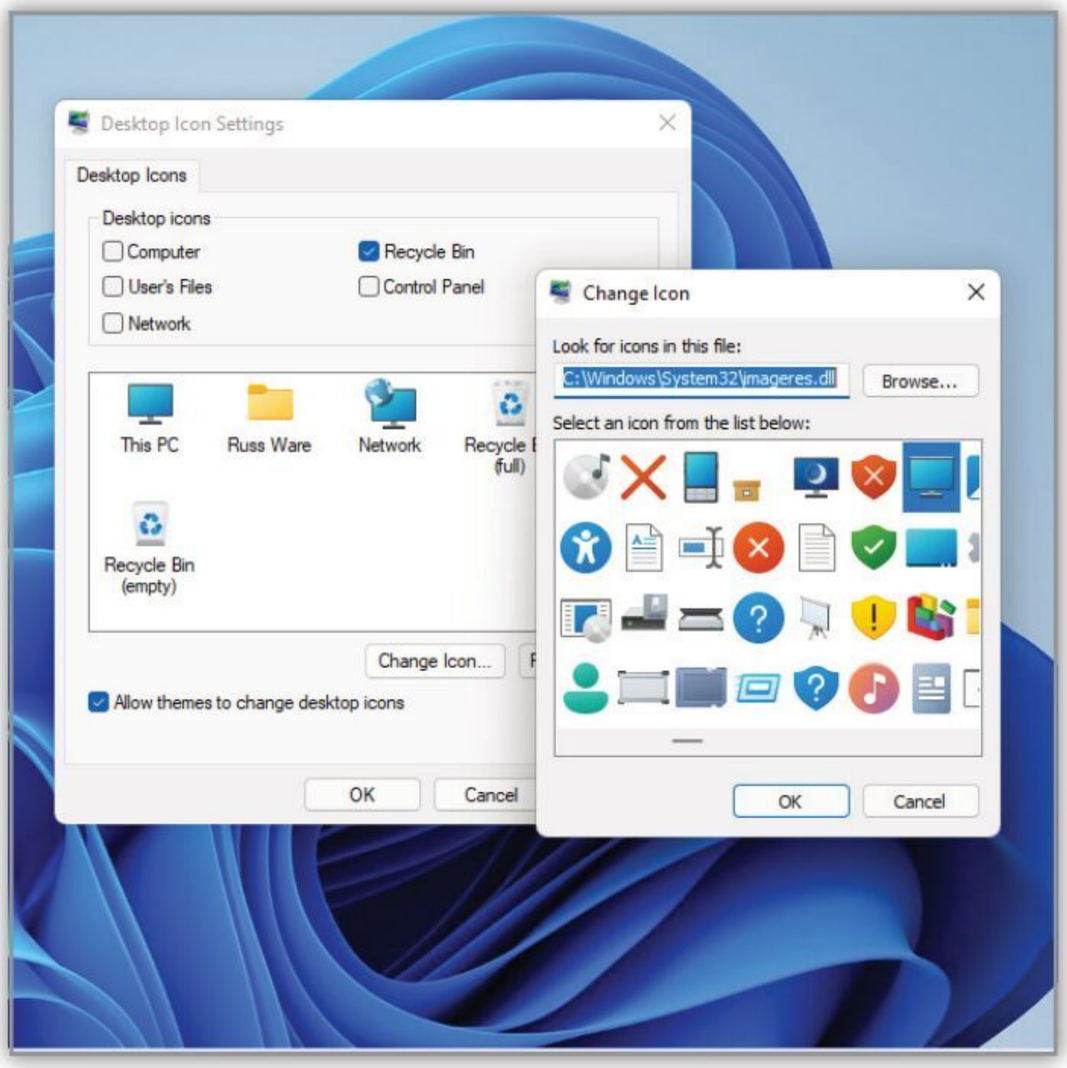
Step 1 Open the Personalisation screen of the Settings menu and select Themes from the Sidebar menu. You now need to look for the Related Settings option. In the Related Settings section, click on the link to Desktop icon settings.



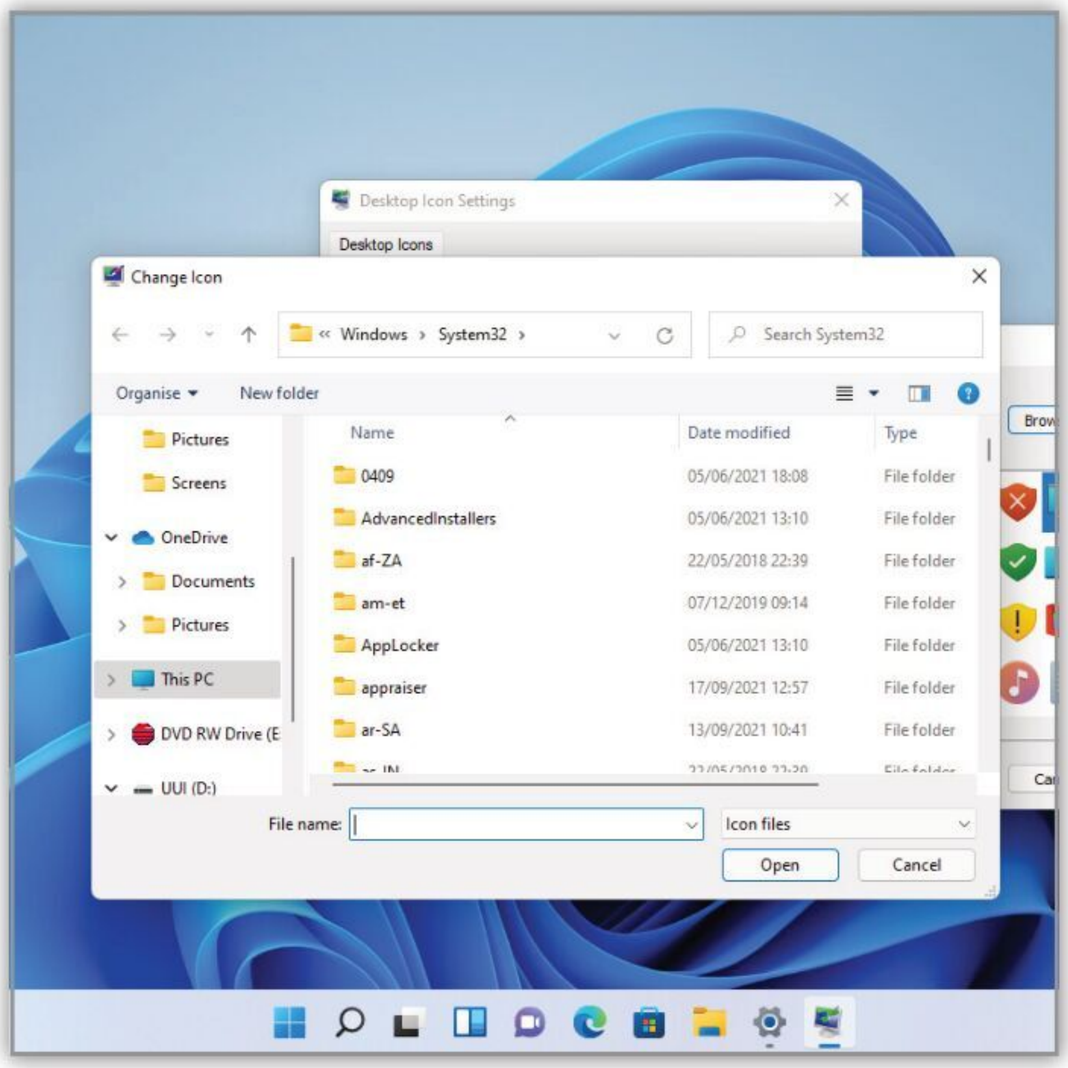
Step 2 The window that now opens lets you choose which default icons appear on your desktop. The Recycle Bin is just about essential but the others, including Computer, Users Files, Network and Control Panel icons are optional.



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.



Windows 11 Keyboard Shortcuts

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 to learn, but here are some of the most useful keyboard shortcuts for everyday use.

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

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

Windows 11 Keyboard Shortcuts

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

Wordpad Shortcuts

Ctrl + 1 Set single line spacing

Ctrl + 2 Set double line spacing

Ctrl + A Select all

Ctrl + B Make selected text bold

Ctrl + C Copy a selection

Ctrl + E Align text center

Ctrl + F Search for text in a doc

Ctrl + H Replace text in a document

Ctrl + I Italicise selected text

Ctrl + J Justify text

Ctrl + L Align text left

Ctrl + N Create a new document

Ctrl + O Open an existing document

Ctrl + P Print a document

Ctrl + R Align text right

Ctrl + S Save changes

Ctrl + U Underline selected text

Ctrl + V Paste a selection

Ctrl + X Cut selection

Ctrl + Y Redo change

Ctrl + Z Undo change

Ctrl + Shift + greater than (>) Increase font size

Ctrl + Shift + less than (<) Decrease font size

Ctrl + Shift + A Change to all capitals

Ctrl + Shift + L Change bullet style

Ctrl + Home Go to the beginning of the doc

Ctrl + End Go to the end of the doc

Movies & TV Shortcuts

Alt + Enter Play full-screen

Esc Leave full-screen

Enter Select what is in focus

Spacebar Play or pause

Alt + Left arrow key Go back

Ctrl + T Turn repeat on or off

F7 Mute the sound

F8 Volume down

F9 Volume up

Microsoft Edge Shortcuts

Ctrl + Shift + B Show/hide the favorites bar

Ctrl + Shift + D Save all open tabs as favourites to a folder

Alt + D Select the URL in the address bar

Ctrl + E Open a search query in the address bar

Ctrl + F Find on page

Ctrl + Shift + L Paste and search

Ctrl + N Open a new window

Ctrl + Shift + N Open a new InPrivate window

Ctrl + P Print the current web page

Ctrl + R Reload the current page

Ctrl + S Save the current page

Ctrl + T Open and use a new tab

Ctrl + Shift + U Start or stop Read Aloud

Ctrl + Shift + V Paste without formatting

Ctrl + W Close the current tab

Ctrl + Shift + W Close the current window

Take the time to learn your keyboard shortcuts for Windows 11, and you'll be opening, closing, moving, creating and modifying everything on your desktop with ease. You don't have to learn them all, but make yourself familiar with the basics of each app you use, and you'll be maximising your workflow in no time.

Do More with Windows 11

Want to do more with Windows 11 and its new features? Excellent, then this is the chapter for you. Within the coming pages, you'll learn how to utilise Microsoft's apps to your best advantage, and how to get to grips with some of the more technical aspects of the operating system. From learning how OneDrive works through to working with Windows 11 Widgets, and exploring the Windows 11 Command Line with some interesting features, there's something for every user here.

Exploring the Microsoft Store

If the Desktop, Widgets, Notifications and new apps weren't enough of an update for you, then you're in luck as Microsoft has also updated and revamped its online Store. Giving you access to the best apps and entertainment.

1 New Look
The Microsoft Store has a new look to it, in-line with the rest of the Windows 11 theme and desktop. You'll find the Store located by default in the taskbar.

2 Categories
Quick access to the main categories: Apps, Gaming and Films & TV are available to the left-side of the Store window. Click each one to be taken to specific pages where you can find the latest content.

3 Library
The Library contains all the apps you currently have installed on your system. From here you can further break them down into sub-categories such as Games, Movies & TV, etc. You can also check their update status, pin them to the Start or taskbar, and even open them.

4 Top Apps
Scrolling down through the Store will reveal the most popular, Top Free, Essential and New content available. Simply click on one of the tiles, and you'll be taken to the content's Store front.

5 Install
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.

Exploring the Microsoft Store

6 **Featured Offers**
Periodically, the 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.

7 **Search**
If you're looking for something specific, then rather than trawling through the categories, use the Search function to find it, and other apps and content relating to it. The Windows 11 Store search is much faster than previous versions.

8 **Profile**
Clicking your name in the upper-right of the Store window will display the profile you're logged in as. From here you can setup payment methods, redeem gift cards and manage Windows computers under your Microsoft login.

9 **See All**
You can click the See All links throughout the Microsoft Store to reveal all the apps under a general category, or simply all the ones currently available with a special offer, for example. Drilling down further can often yield some great apps and bargains.

10 **App Information**
Featured apps will also scroll horizontally across the screen, depending on what's currently trending, or based on apps you've searched for or installed previously. Some contain videos, so be sure to click on them for more information when they appear.

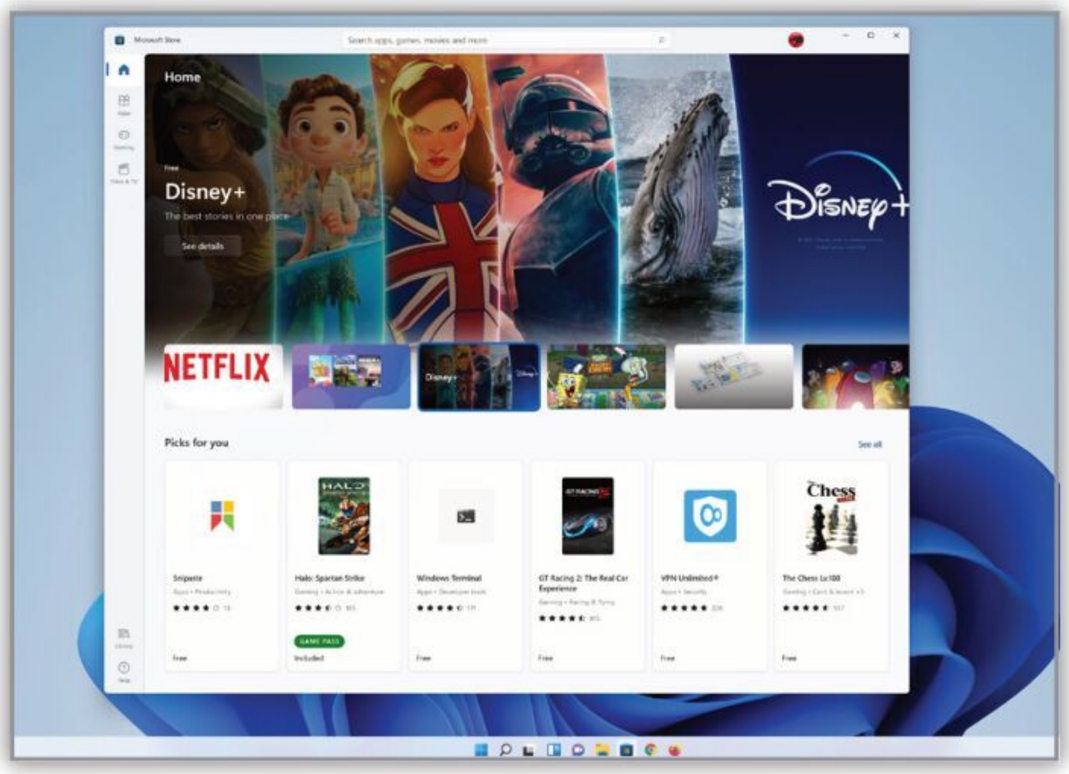
How to use the Windows App Store

The Windows App Store has been updated, and given a new look fresh for Windows 11. It's now designed to be more efficient and easier to get to the apps you want; and those that are trending or highlighted by Microsoft.

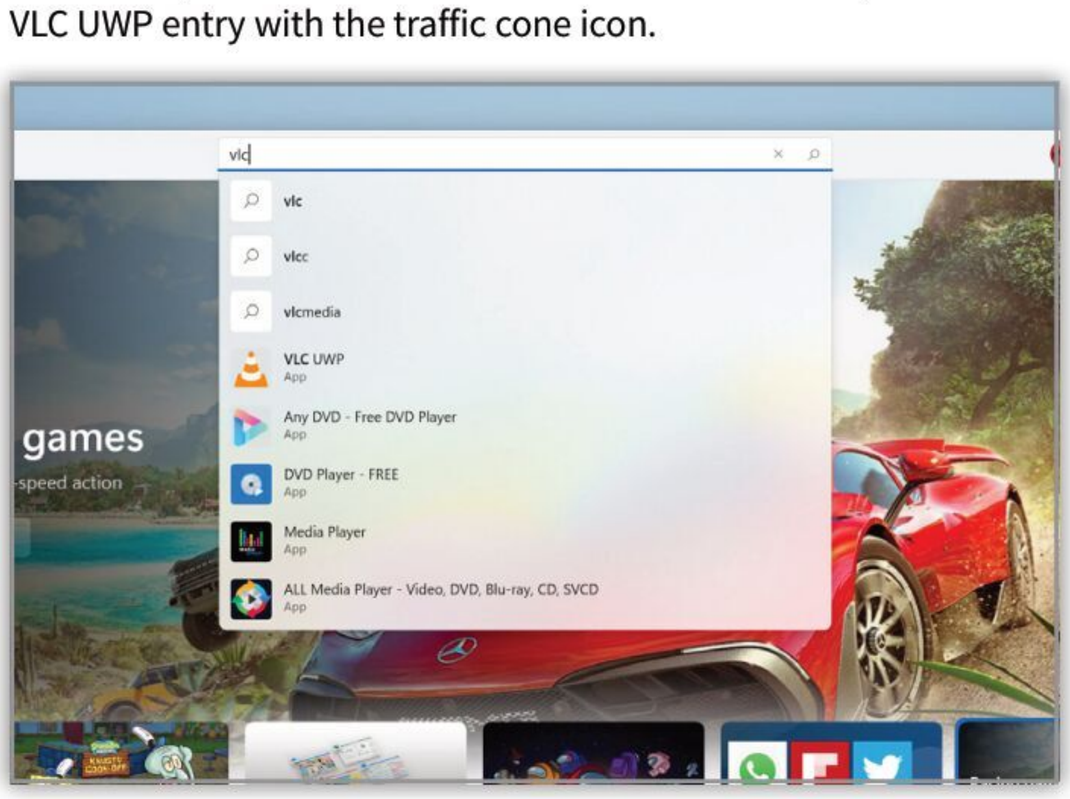
Go Shopping

With more content, and more to explore, there's a lot to cover in the Windows 11 App Store. Here's how it works, and some of the highlights.

Step 1 The Windows App Store is located, by default, within the new taskbar. It's easy to identify, it's the carrier bag icon with the Microsoft logo. Click it, and as long as you're signed into a valid Microsoft account, it will launch with the latest trending and highlighted apps displayed



Step 2 Let's run through locating and installing an app from the App Store. In the Search box, located at the top of the Store window, enter: VLC. In case, you're wondering, VLC is a free, cross-platform media player. In the Search bar, there will be a number of returned results, click the VLC UWP entry with the traffic cone icon.

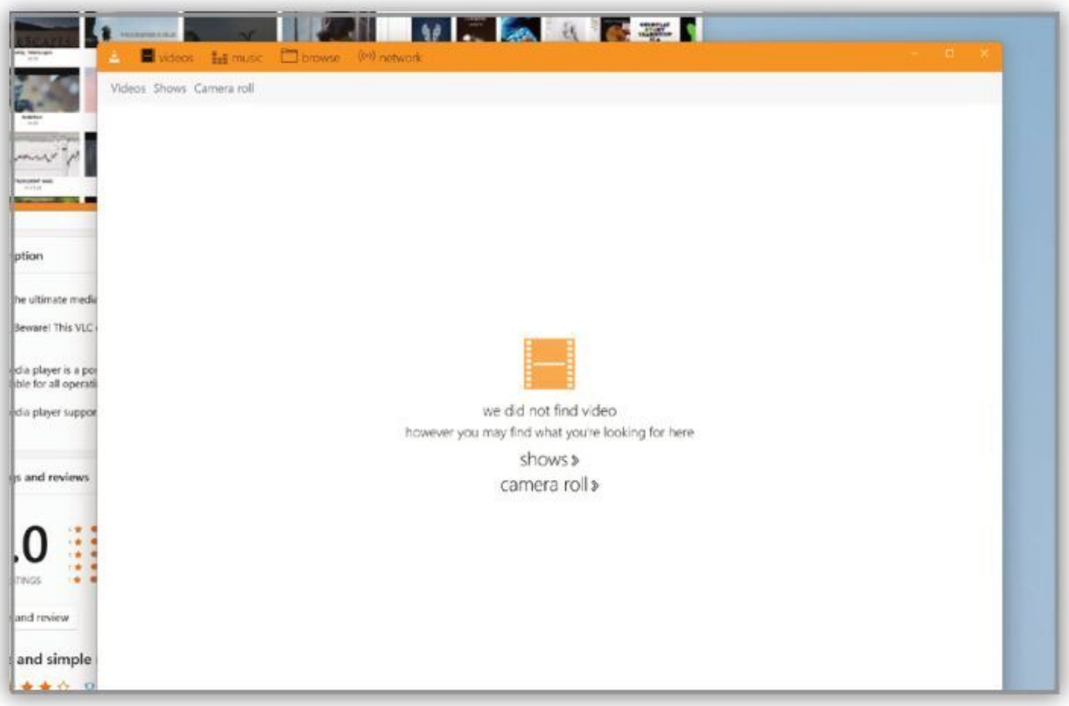


Step 3 Every app in the App Store will behave in the same manner: there will be screen shots of the app along the top, a short description, rating and reviews from other users, and in the left-hand pane you will find a brief summary of the app. Also, in the left-hand pane, is a Get button. To install VLC, click on the Get button.

Step 4 The information below the Get button will change, displaying the amount of time left to download through the number of megabytes (or more) remaining from the total. When it's downloaded, there'll be a brief installation display, and when that's done the button will change to read, Open.

How to use the Windows App Store

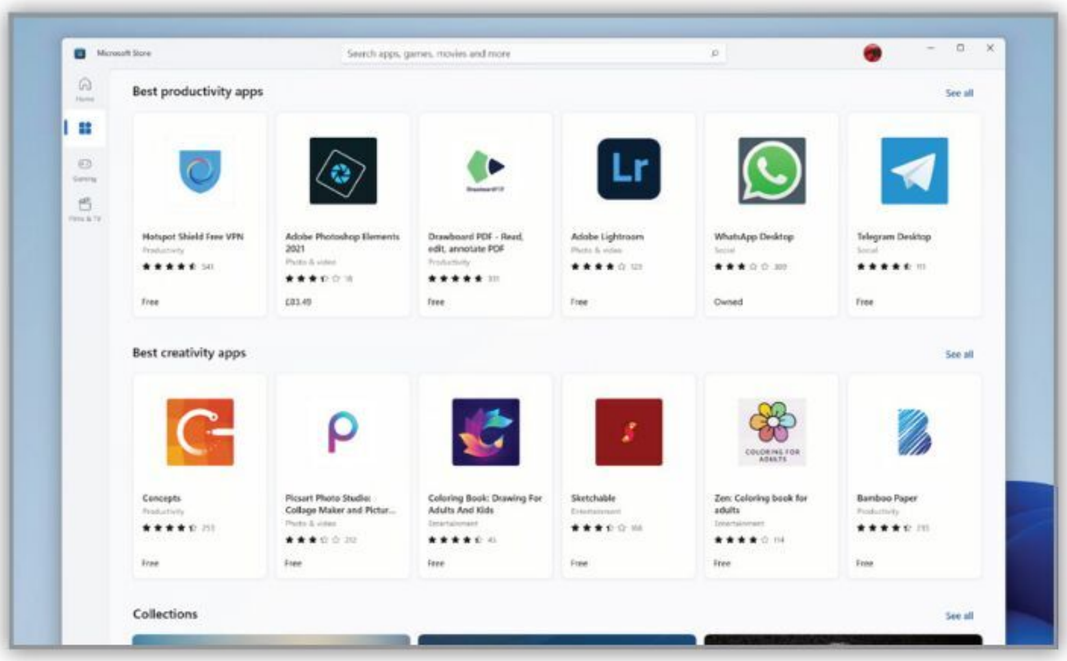
Step 5 Click on the Open button and the app will launch. This will work for most, if not all the available apps on the App Store. Some may require further steps, such as signing into a third-party account – the Twitter app, for example, requires you to have a Twitter account.



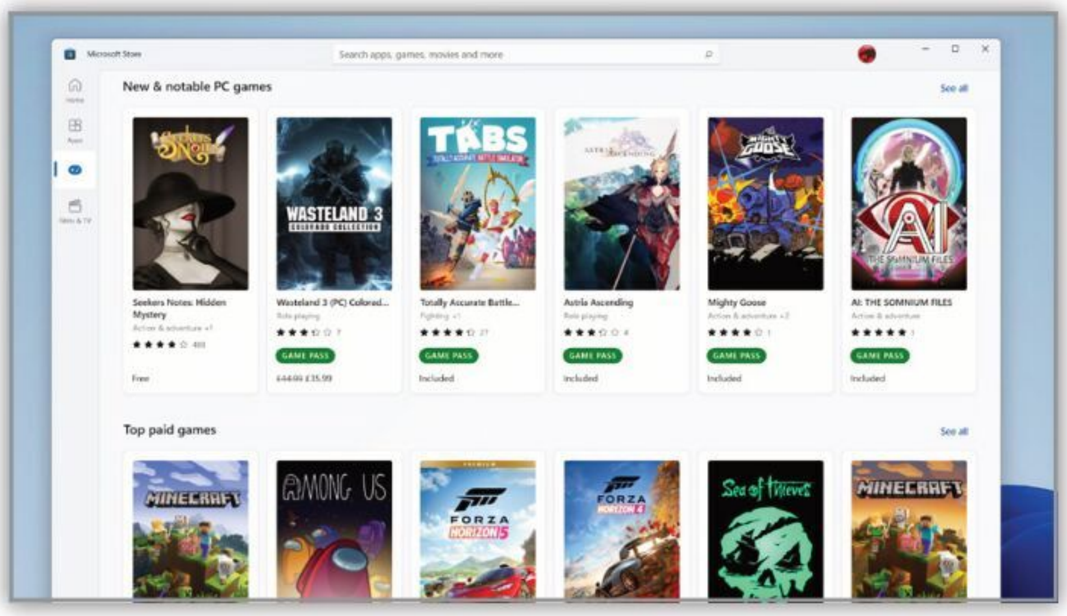
Step 6 Sadly, you can't remove an app via the App Store. To remove an App Store installed app, locate it within the taskbar Start button, right-click the app, and select Uninstall from the list. This will remove the app, and any associated elements that were installed by the App Store. Anything you've added outside the App Store may remain, however.

Step 7 You'll notice that down the left-hand panel of the App Store Home screen, are a number of category icons: Home, Apps, Gaming, Films & TV; and further down the screen, Library and Help. The Home button will return you to the main Home screen, click the Apps button next.

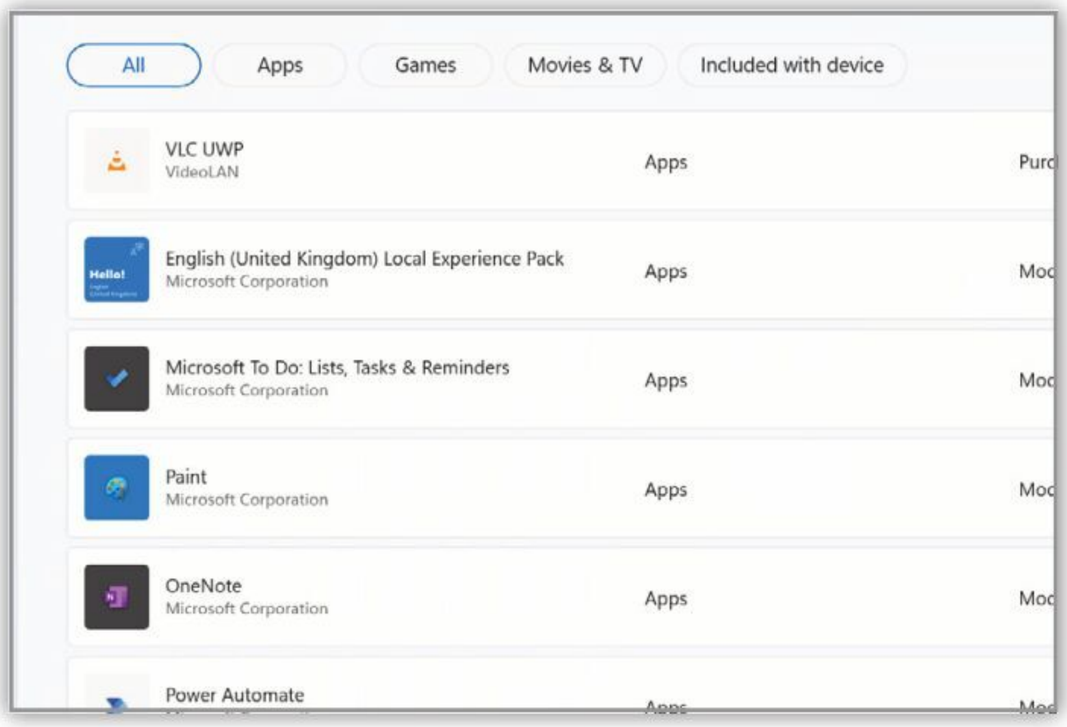
Step 8 The App category simply removes the Gaming and Films & TV entries in the Home screen, to help you find what you're looking for without unnecessary content getting in the way. Scrolling down through the Apps section reveals best selling apps, collections, and specific apps such as productivity, photo and video editing and so on.



Step 9 The Gaming category does the same, but removes the other apps and retains all the apps relating to games. Again, you can scroll down to reveal top free games, highest rated, top paid, and special deals that may be currently running on the App Store. Films & TV is identical in behaviour, but displays the latest titles to rent or buy.



Step 10 The Library section will detail all the apps you currently have installed on your Windows 11 system. These can be further broken down into Apps, Games and Movies & TV; as well as the apps that are included in Windows 11 by default. You can also check for any app updates, and Share the app across other devices.



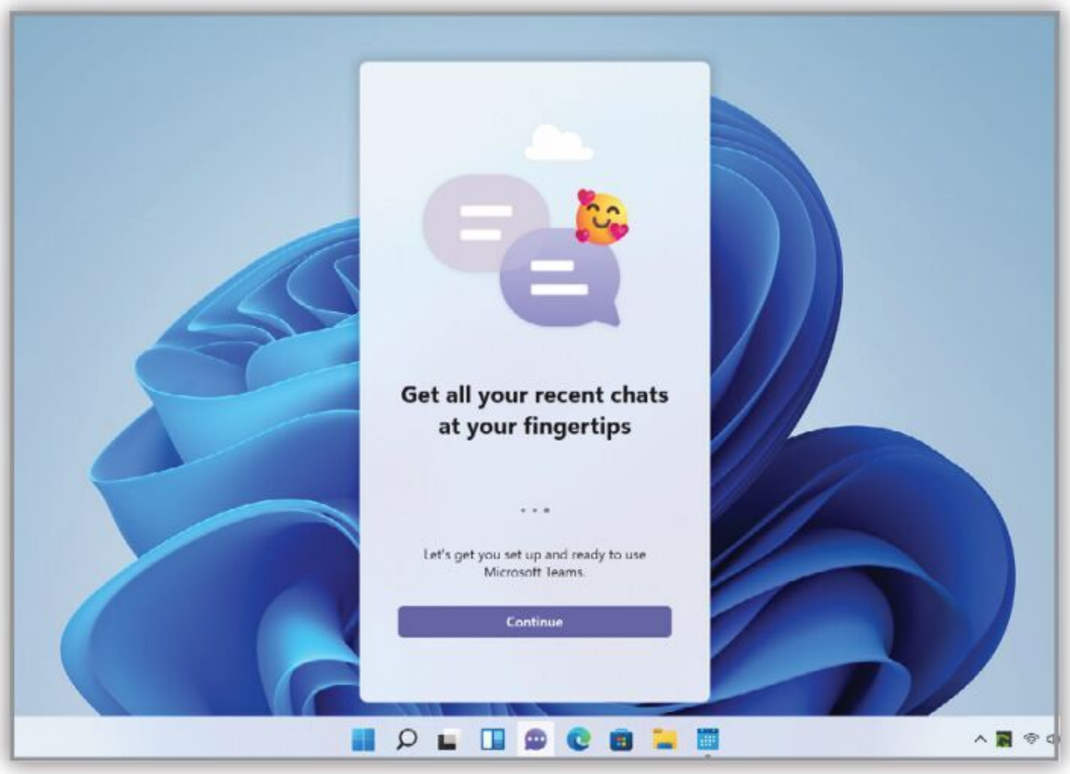
How to Use Teams Chat

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

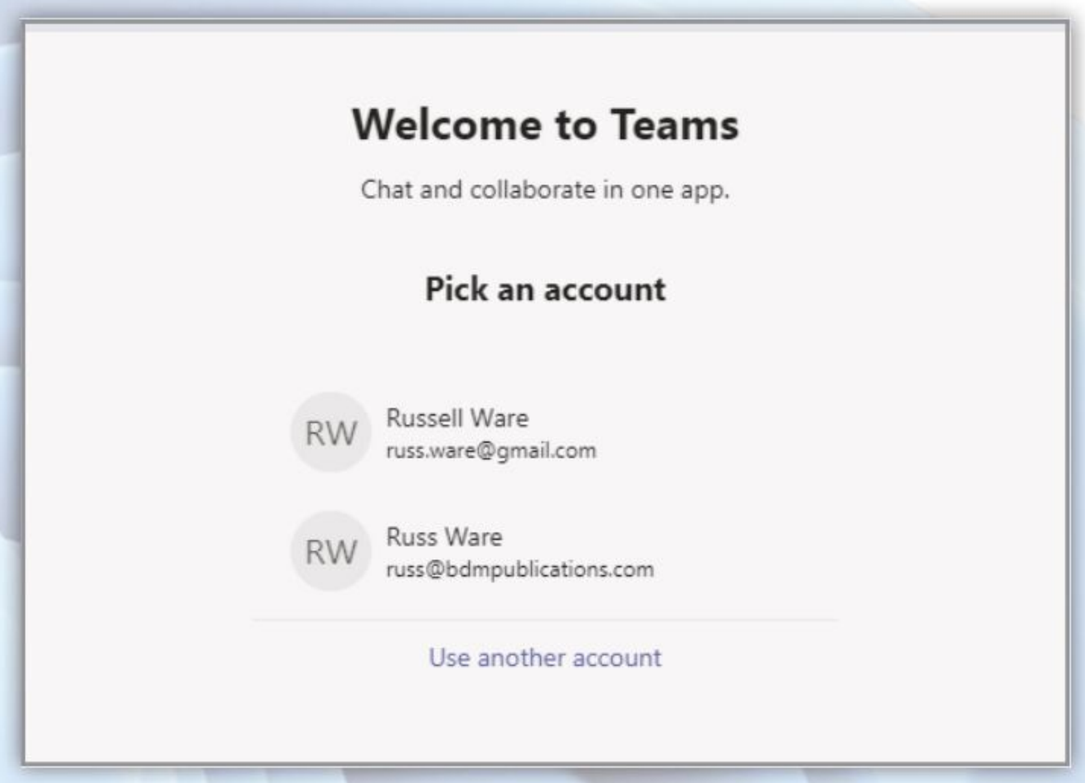
Setting Up the Teams App

Getting started with Microsoft Teams on Windows 11 is relatively easy if you have a Teams account already set up, which we assume you do if you are trying to use this app.

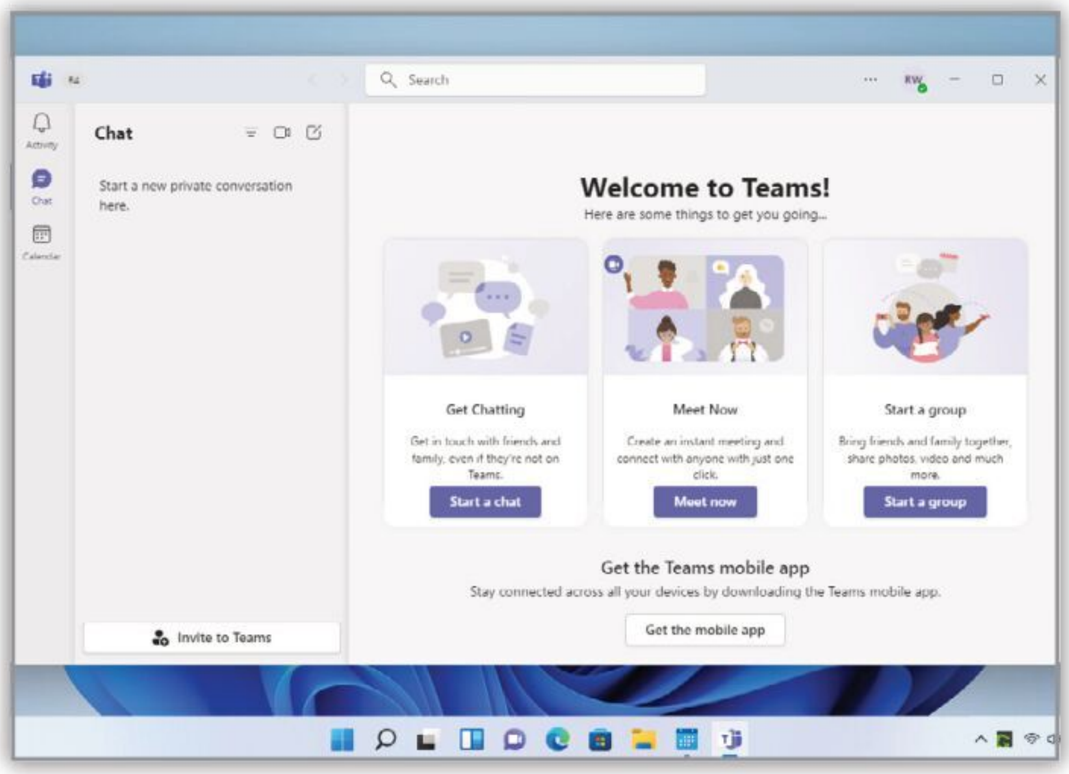
Step 1 Click the Teams Chat icon in the taskbar, or open the Teams app in the main apps list. If your Microsoft account email matches the one you use when setting up your Teams account, the app should automatically detect it, and log you in to the app after a few moments.



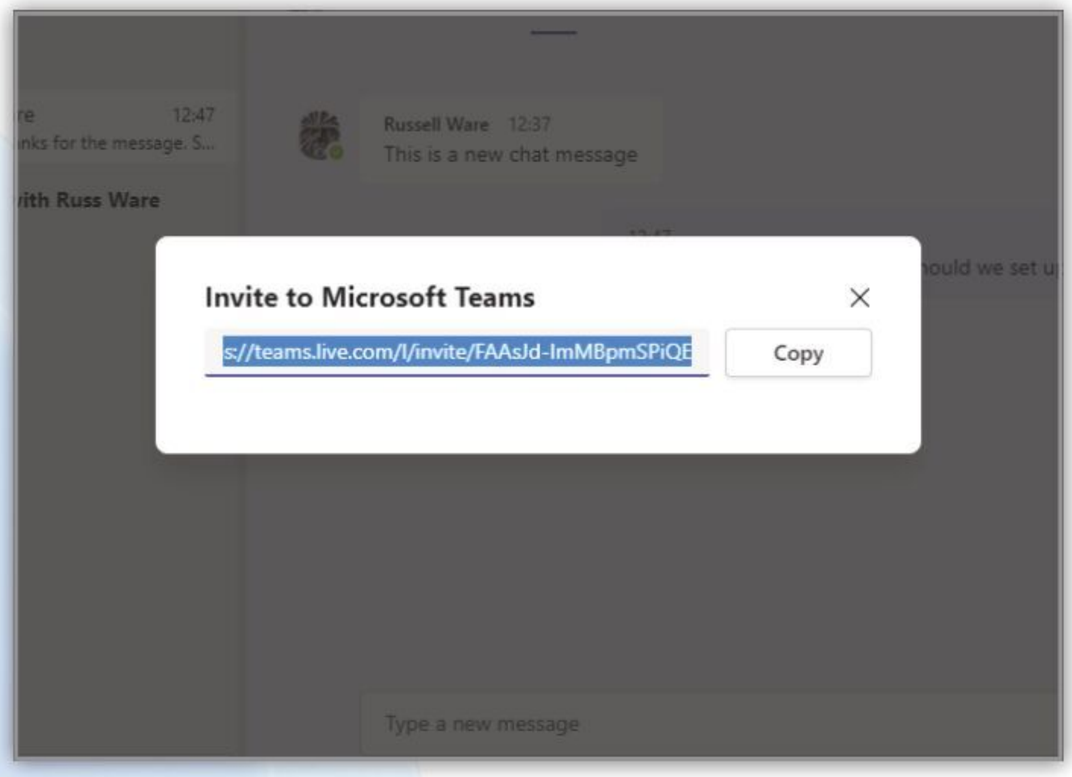
Step 2 If the app doesn't recognise your email address, it will open the Teams login screen. Here you can choose an account to sign in to (if any are displayed), or you can pick another account. If you have yet to set up an account, you can use the link at the bottom and set one up in the browser.



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.



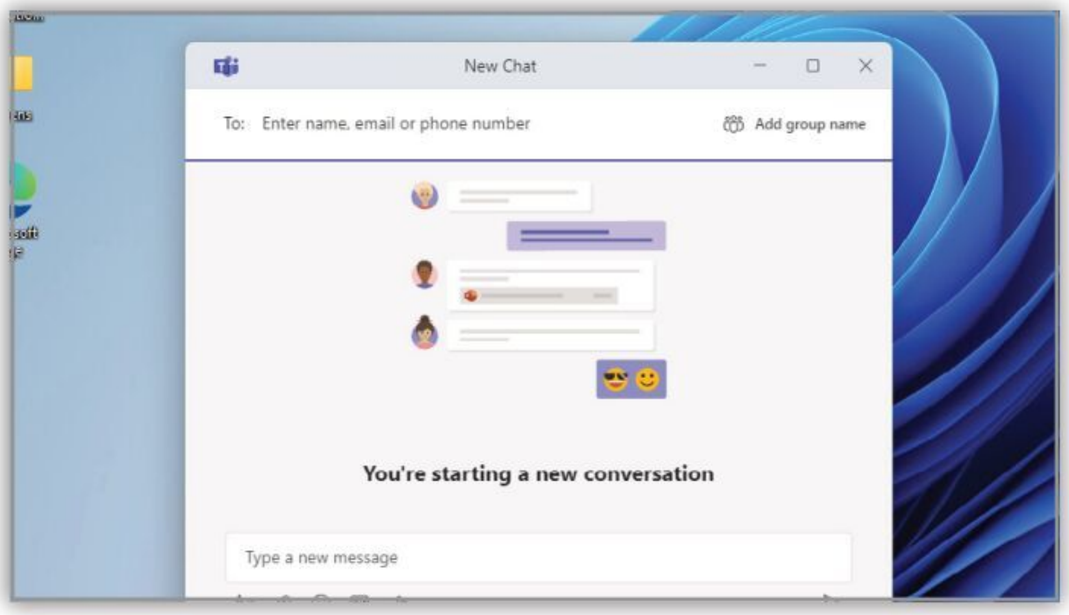
Step 4 You can invite people to Teams using the button on the left sidebar. Clicking this will create a link that you can send to anyone you want to join Teams. You can invite people to chat by clicking the "Start a chat" button, then entering a name (if in your contacts), email address (anyone) or phone number.



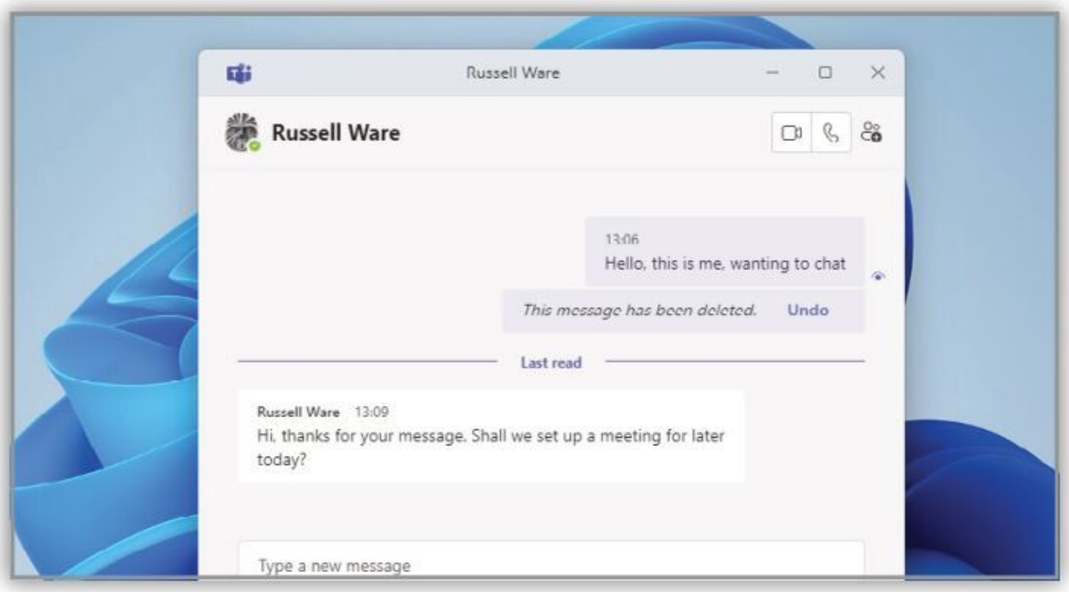
Meet and Chat in Teams

With Teams set up, you can now easily start or join meetings, or chat with others who are also using Microsoft Teams. Either from the main app or by using the taskbar tool.

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.

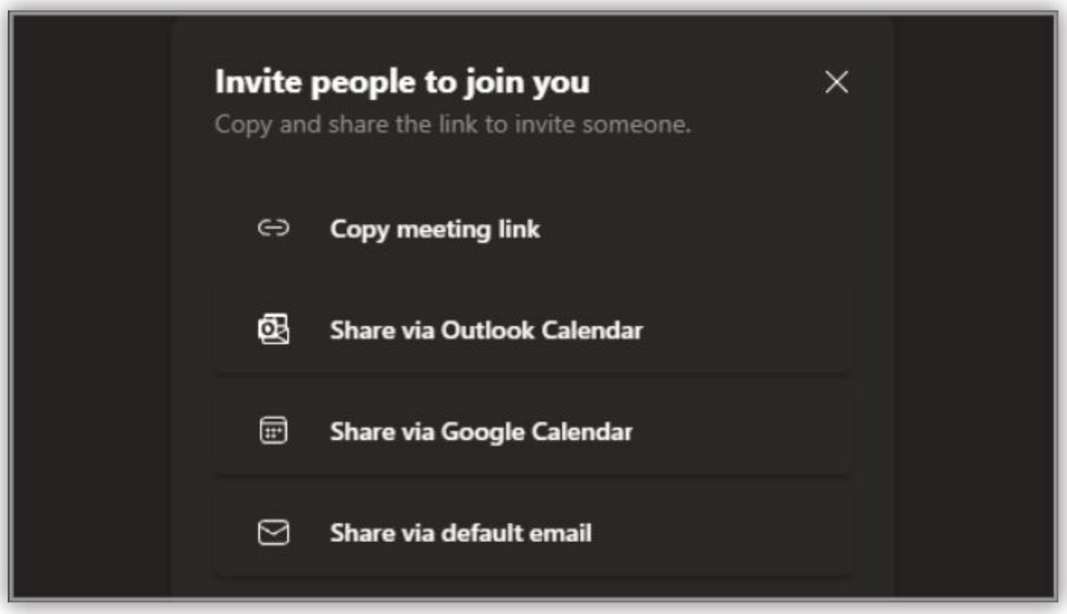


Step 2 Your messages, and the replies, are shown in the conversation window. You can attach and send files via the chat by clicking the paper clip icon. If you want to switch from a text chat to an audio or video call, click either of the buttons at the top-right of the chat window.

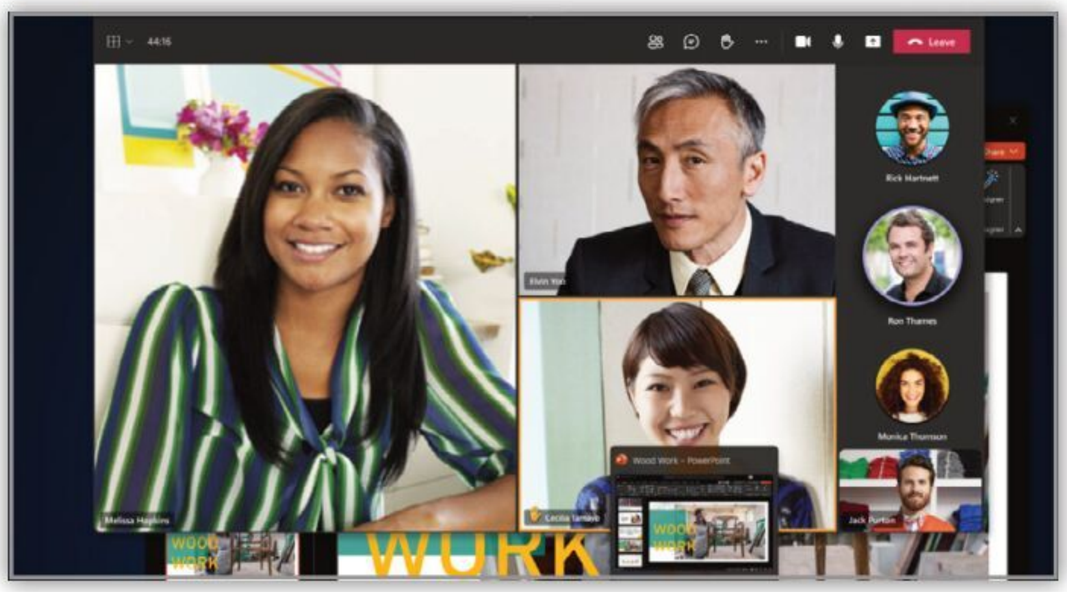


Step 3 If you receive a chat request, you will see a notification in the main Notification center (Action center), and a badge will appear on the chat icon in the taskbar. You can choose to accept or reject the chat request. If you accept, the message will appear and you can start chatting.

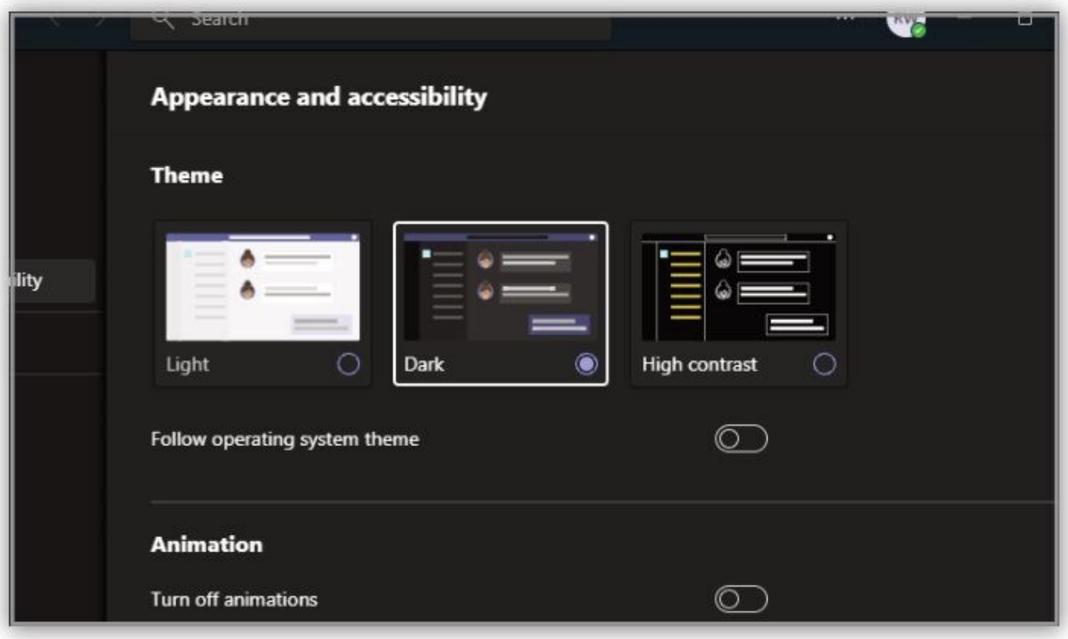
Step 4 To start a meeting, click the Meet button. Give your meeting a name, and you will then be shown several ways to invite people. These include a link you can send, via Outlook Calendar, Google calendar or email. Once shared, you can start the meeting and wait for others to join.



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.



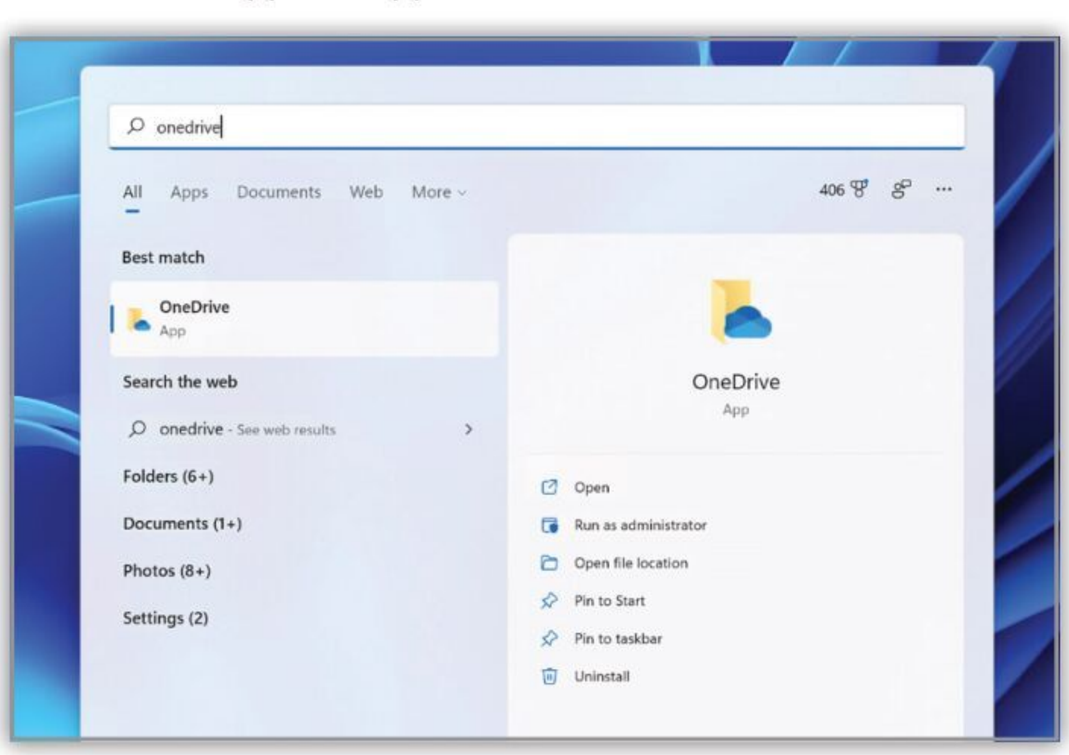
Using OneDrive Cloud Storage

Microsoft's OneDrive has vastly improved over the years. Where once it was a simple backup and online storage solution, today it's now a connected collaborative service, with many excellent features. All of which make it one of the best cloud services available.

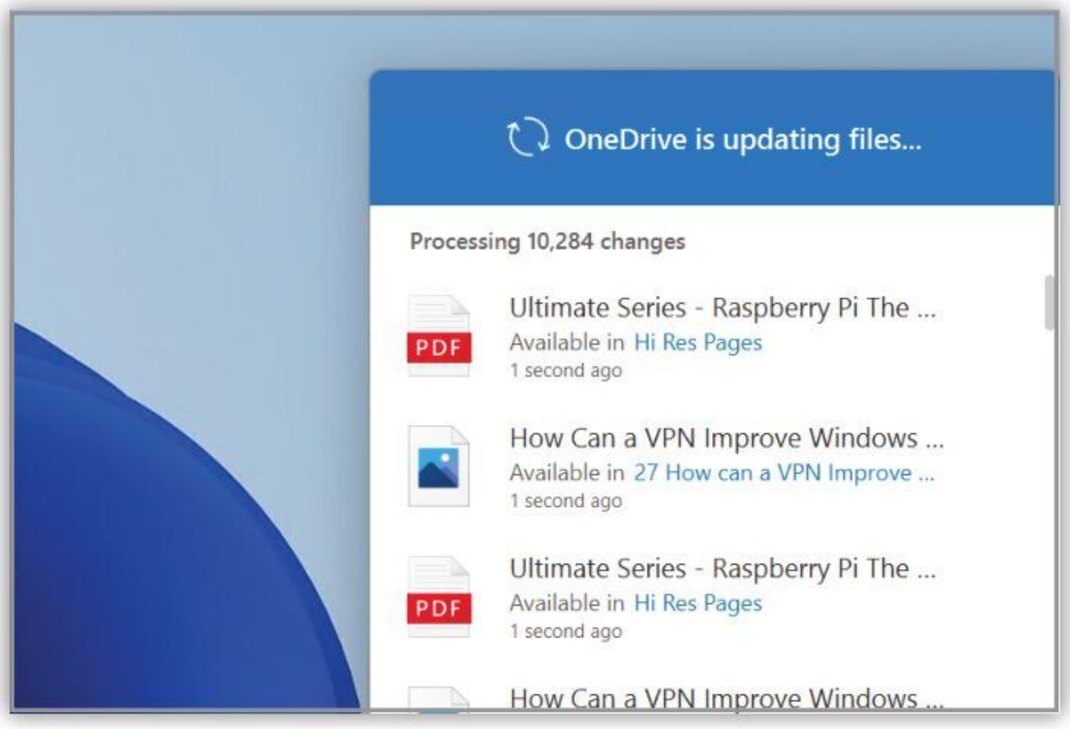
Silver Linings

Here's a quick guide on how to get the best from your OneDrive service, and how to ensure that your important data is always backed up and safely stored within that voluminous online cloud.

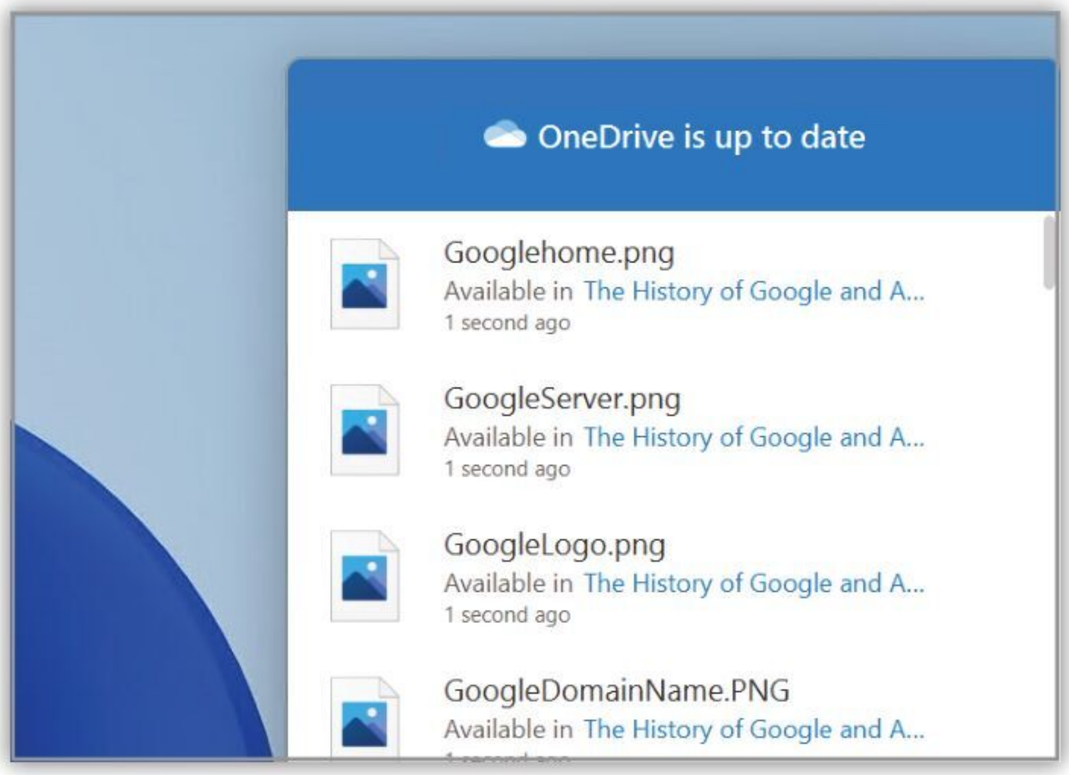
Step 1 You can check to see if you have Microsoft's OneDrive already loaded on your Windows 11 computer by clicking in the notification area in the bottom-right of the desktop. You're looking for a cloud icon. If it's not there, simply click the Windows Start button and type 'OneDrive'. Click the OneDrive app that appears in the list.



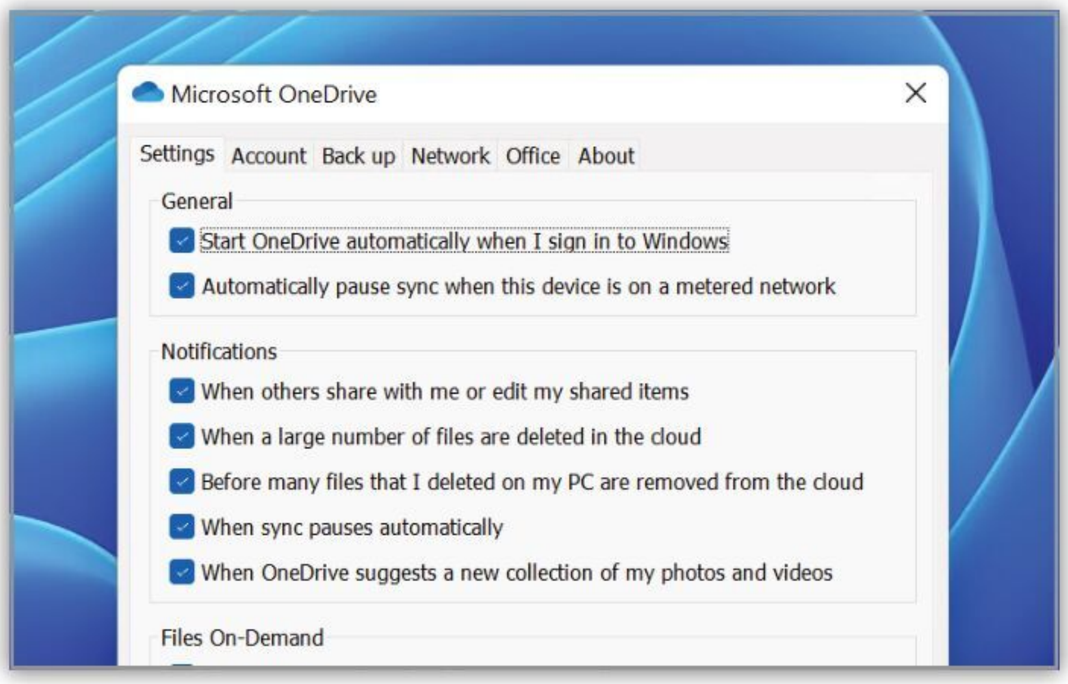
Step 2 You may be asked to sign in with your Microsoft account, follow the instructions, and you'll notice that the cloud icon in the notification area may have an extra icon over it to indicate it's synchronising with your computer and OneDrive. If you click it, you'll notice a flurry of activity, this is because OneDrive is automatically backing up your files.



Step 3 When your current files on your computer have been backed up, a OneDrive notification will inform you that OneDrive is up to date. This will also list the files that have been synced across from your PC to your OneDrive area in the cloud. You can scroll though the list to view the files synced.

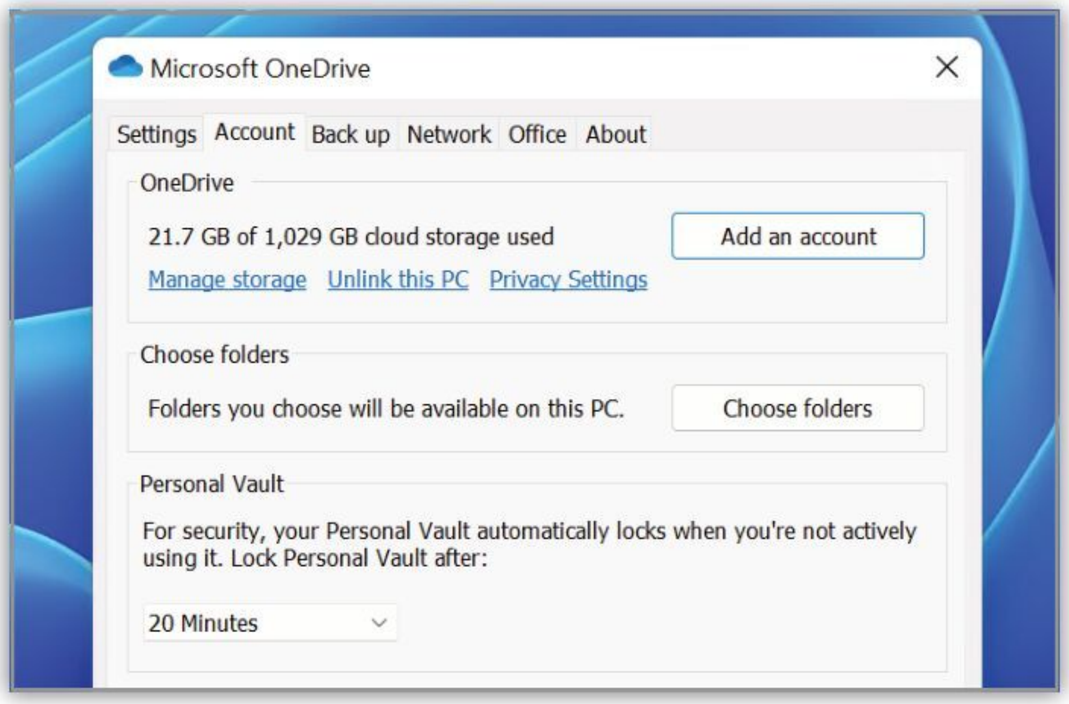


Step 4 Right-click the OneDrive cloud icon in the notification area. This will bring up a menu; click on the Settings option within the menu. The OneDrive Settings menu is divided into several tabs. To begin with, ensure that in the Settings tab, the first option, Start OneDrive automatically when I sign into Windows, is ticked. Otherwise, your auto-backups are pointless.

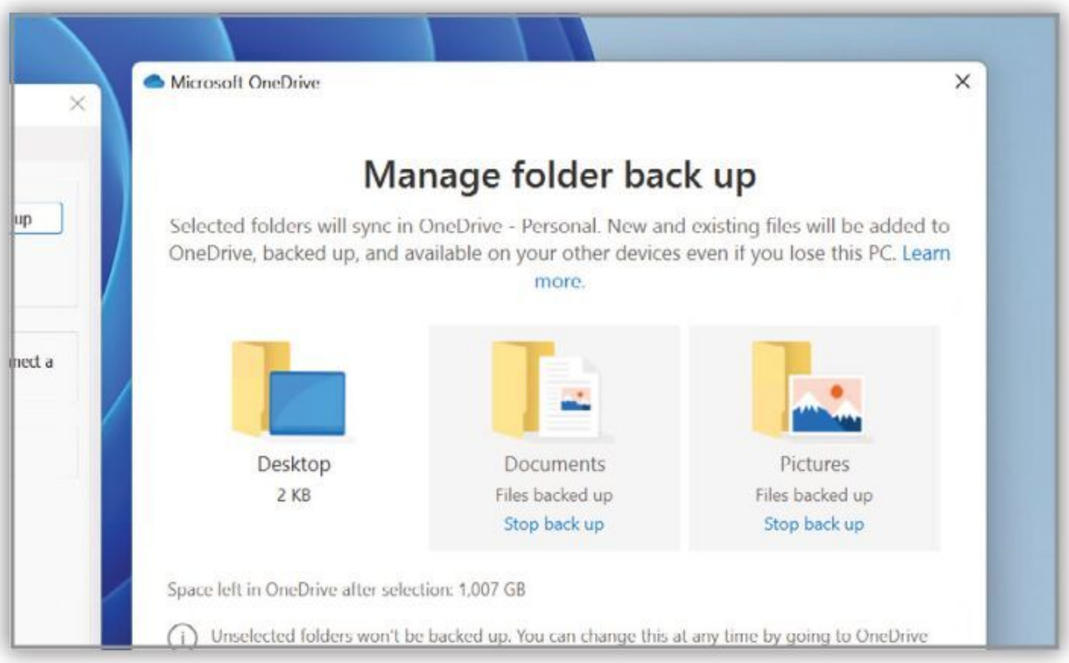


Using OneDrive Cloud Storage

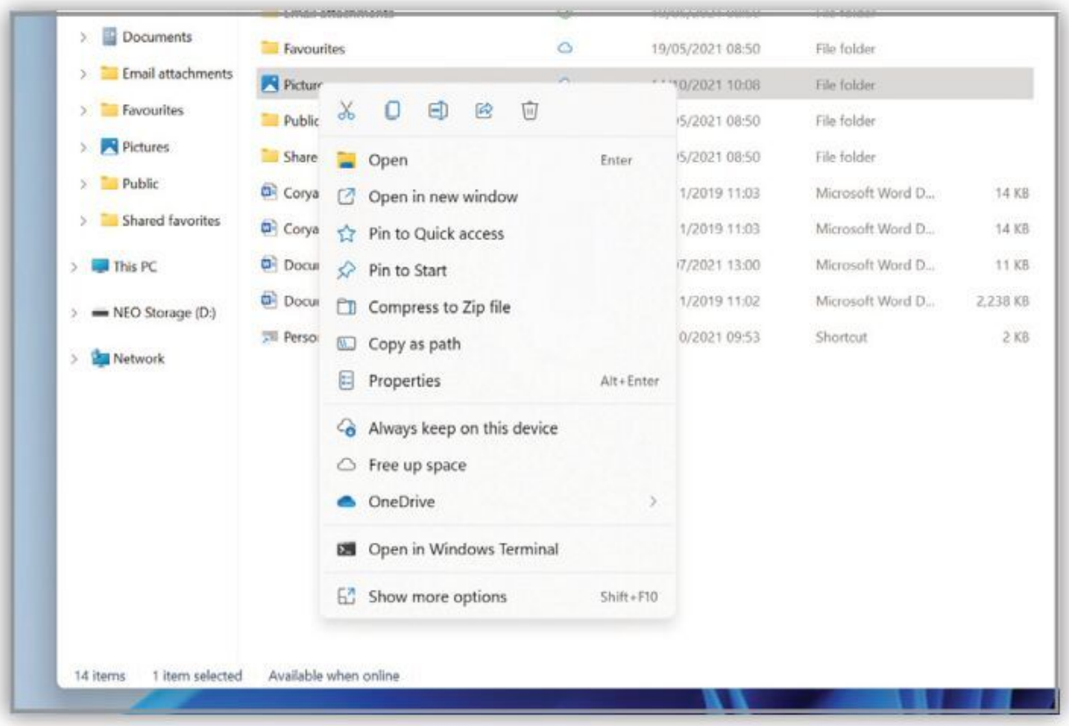
Step 5 In the Account tab, you can choose to Unlink the PC with the OneDrive account, Add another Microsoft OneDrive account (such as your work account), and Choose which folders will be available on the PC in your personal OneDrive File Explorer area.



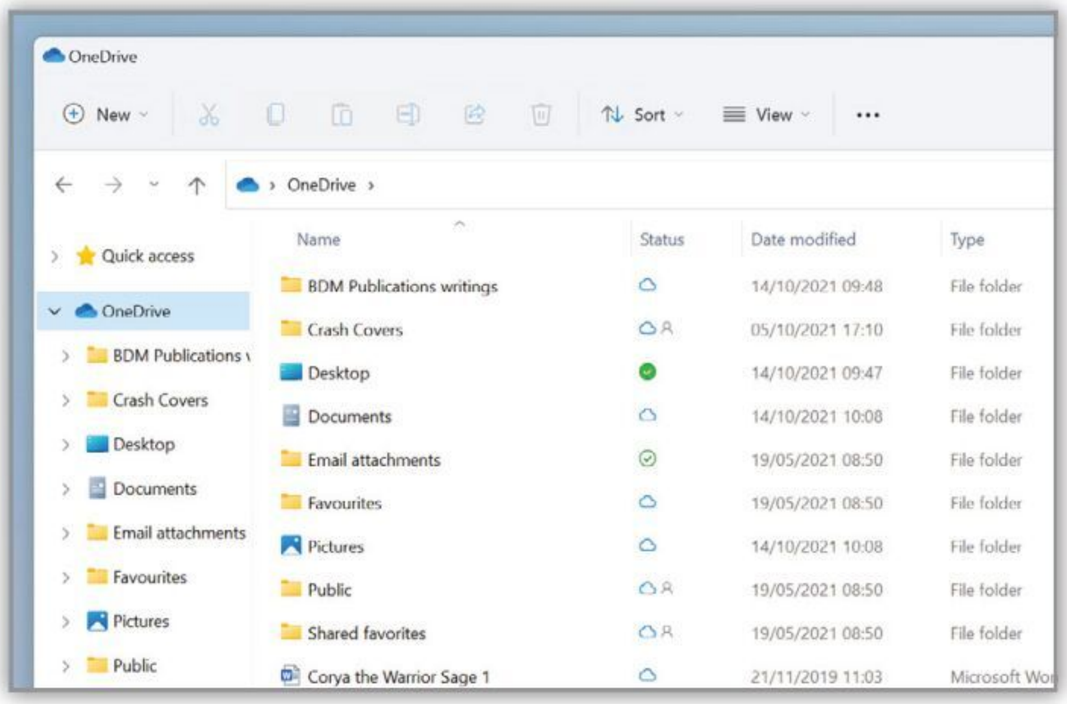
Step 6 In the Backup Tab, click the Manage Back Up button. These are the default, important folders on your PC that will automatically be backed up by OneDrive. You can de-select these folders whenever you want, but they won't be available to other Windows or Microsoft devices when you login to them.



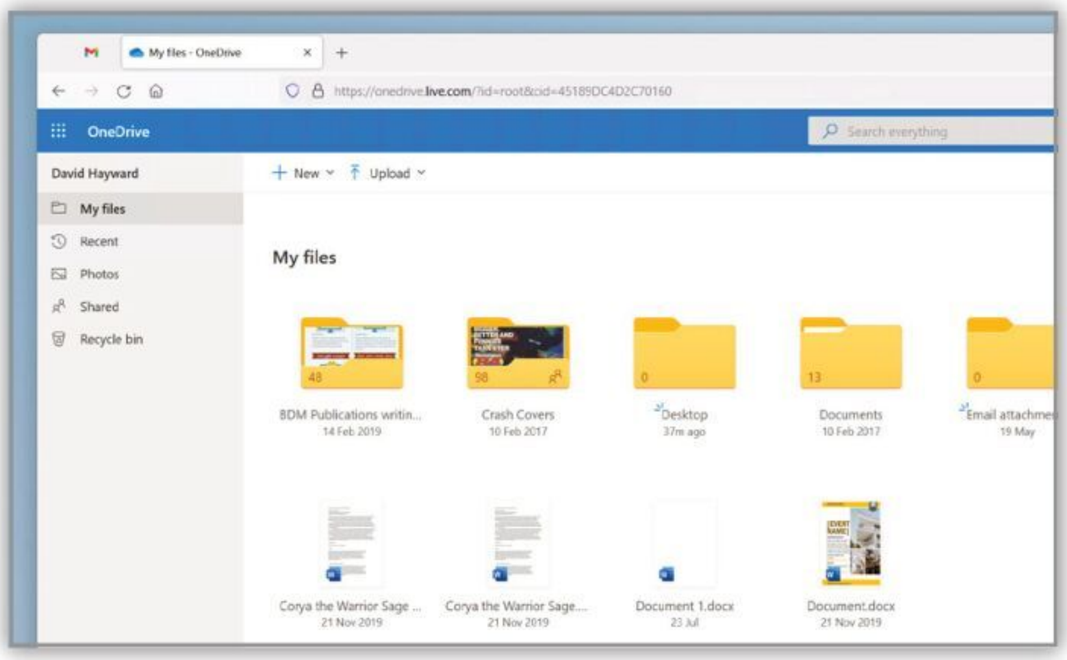
Step 7 If you close the OneDrive Settings window, and now open File Explorer, you'll notice a new section in the left-hand pane: OneDrive. This is where you can work with your online files from your PC. They'll only be available on demand, but can be made available permanently by right-clicking and selecting Always Keep on this Device.



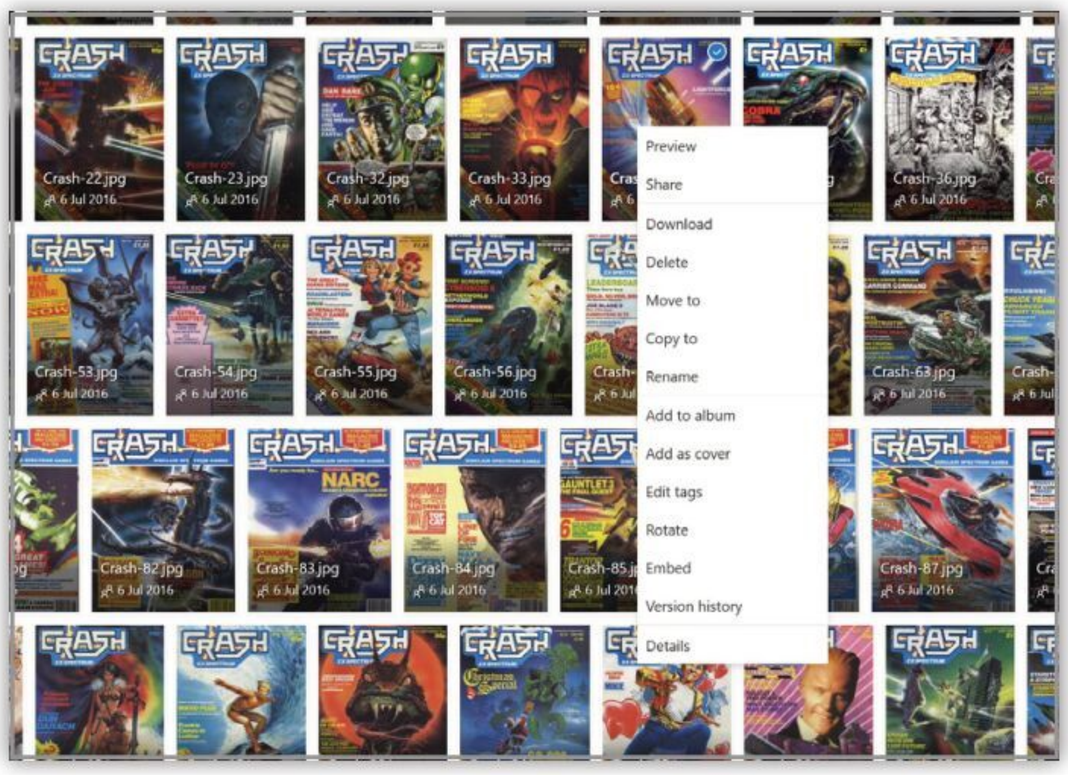
Step 8 If you need to ensure that any file or folder is to be backed up to OneDrive, they must exist in either the main Documents, Pictures or Desktop folders within your user area, or be copied to the OneDrive folder. This will make sure they're synchronised with your online OneDrive storage area.



Step 9 If you again right-click the OneDrive cloud icon in the notification area, and select the View Online option, a web browser window will open and take you directly to your OneDrive storage area in the cloud. This area is available from any device that's connected to the Internet.



Step 10 From within the online OneDrive view, you can create files and folders, view image galleries, move, copy, rename, upload, and most importantly, share any of the content with others. Everything can be done via the top menu bar, or by right-clicking each of the files or folders within your area.



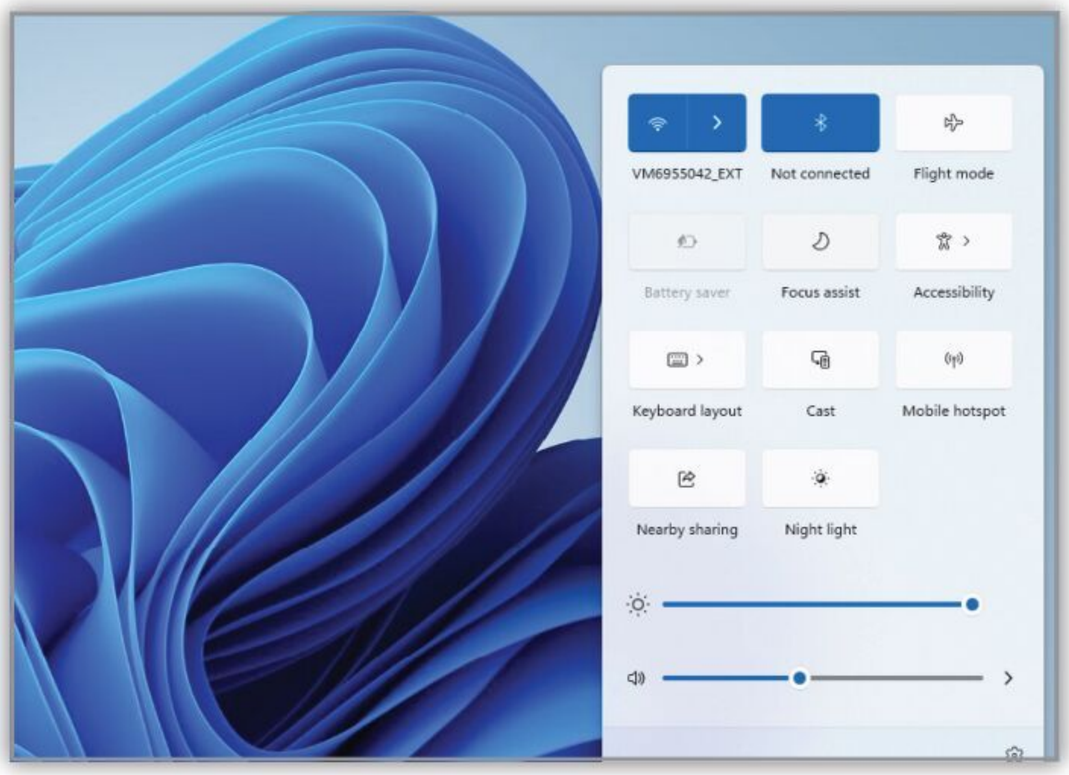
Using the Focus Assist Tool

Focus Assist allows you to create distraction-free periods by blocking alerts, notifications and other sounds. Turn on Focus Assist to stop distractions like social media or alternatively set it to turn on automatically at certain times during the day.

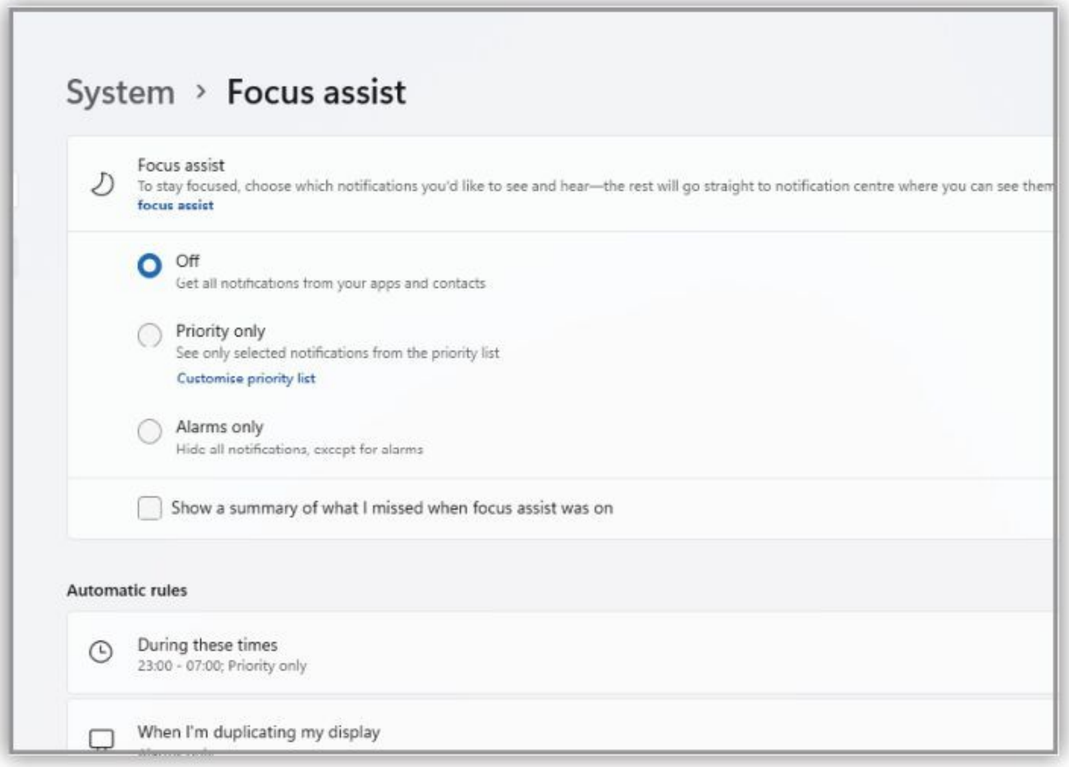
Blocking Notifications

Choose which notifications you want to see and hear. The remainder of your alerts will go into the Action Center so you can see them at a more convenient time.

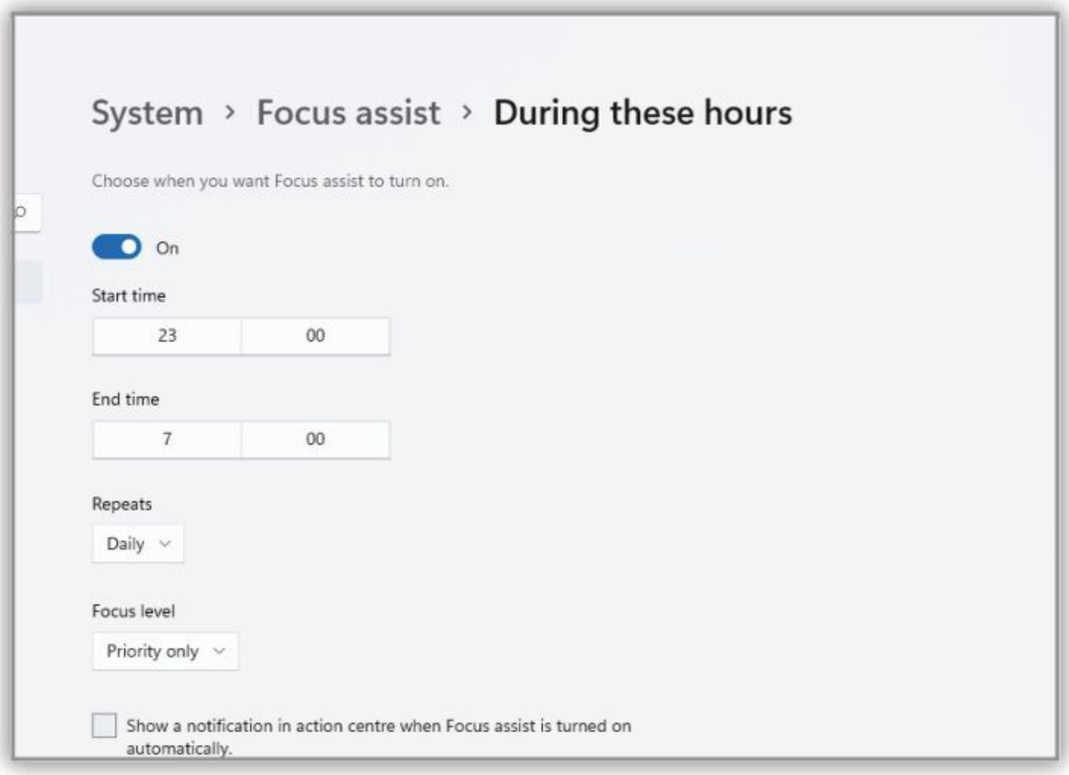
Step 1 You can easily activate Focus Assist using the quick actions panel in the Action Center. The default setting is Off. Click the Quick action button once to allow priority notifications only, click it a second time to allow alarms only. Click the button a third time to turn Focus Assist off again.



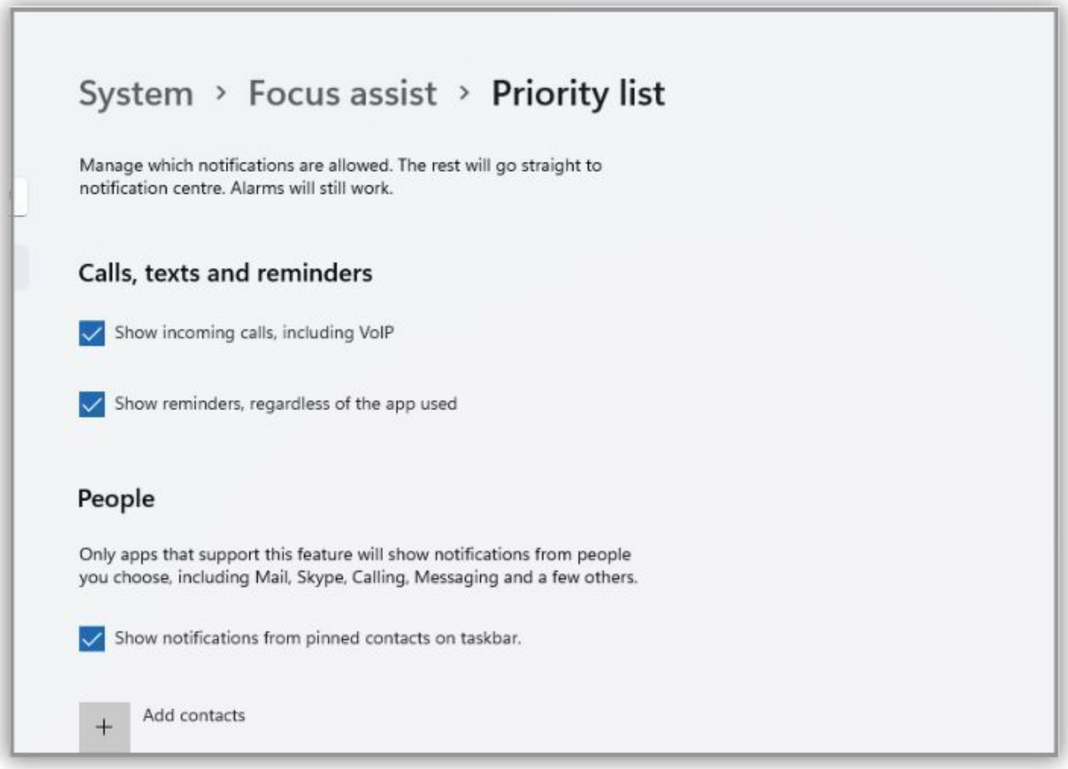
Step 2 You can also turn Focus Assist on or off in the main settings (settings > system > focus assist). Once there, you can also set up your automatic rules and customise your priority list. You can set automatic rules based on times, when you are duplicating your display or when playing a game.



Step 3 To set an automatic rule by time, click on the option and then click the slider to On. You will now see menus to set start time, end time and whether to repeat the rule daily, just on weekdays or just on weekends. The focus level lets you choose if this applies to priority notifications or alarms.



Step 4 If setting Focus Assist to priority, you can set a priority list by clicking 'Customise your list'. Here you can add or remove specific apps, people or Windows 10 features that notify you. When you turn off Focus Assist (manually or automatically), a summary of missed notifications can be shown.



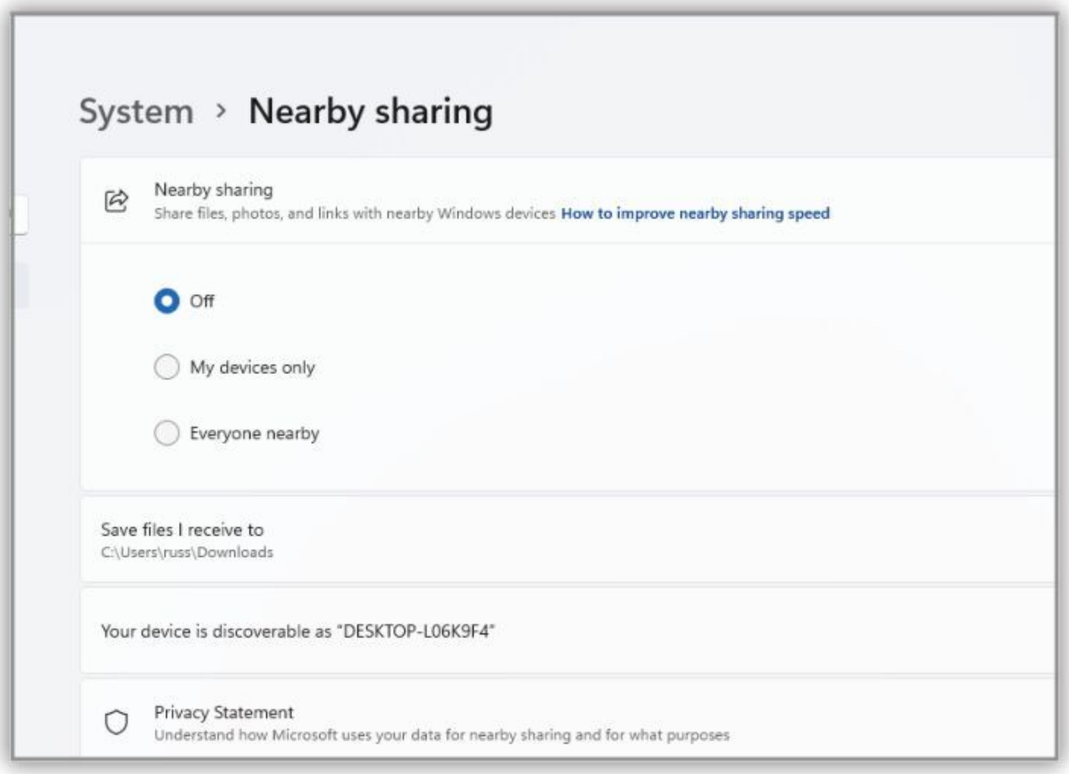
Sharing to Nearby Devices

Nearby Sharing lets you share your videos, photos, documents and websites with people and devices close by, over Bluetooth or Wi-Fi. Useful if, for example, you're in a meeting with colleagues and need to quickly send them a report you're looking at on your screen.

Nearby Sharing

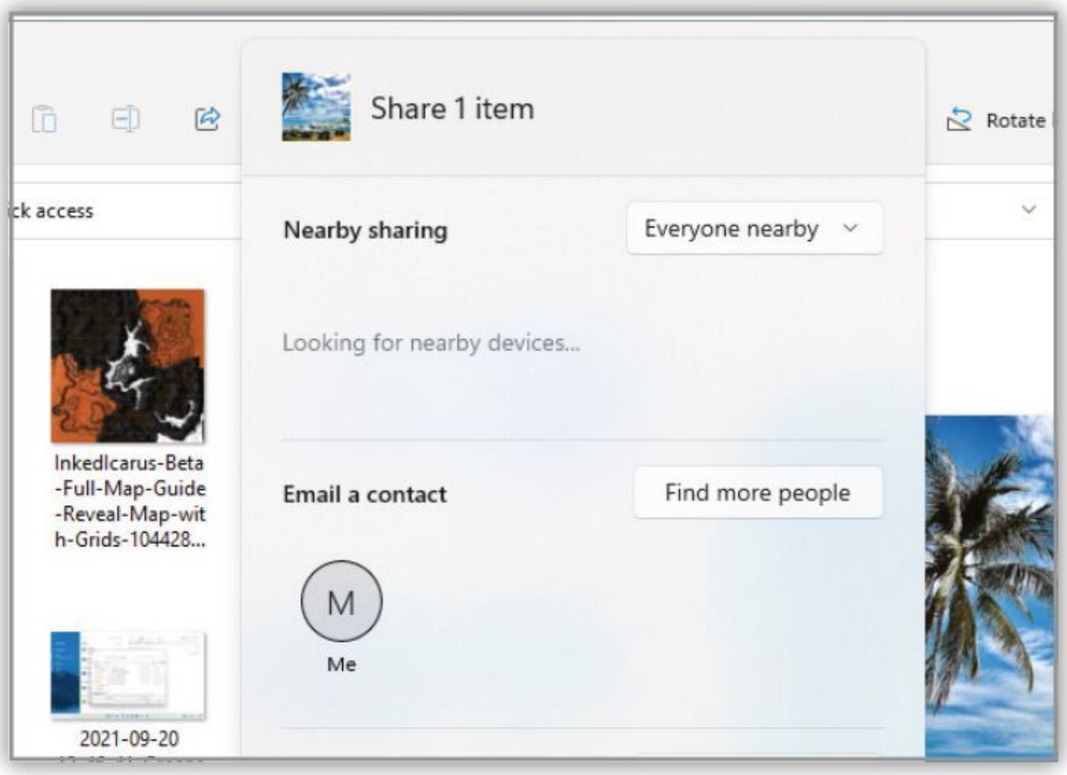
Share your files quickly with Nearby Sharing: your computer automatically picks the fastest way to share your file or webpage, either over Bluetooth or Wi-Fi.

Step 1 To enable Nearby Sharing, open Settings and click on System. Now click on Shared experiences and turn on the Nearby Sharing option. You may be asked to sign in, or confirm sign in, if you have several accounts associated with your computer (Microsoft account, email account, etc.).

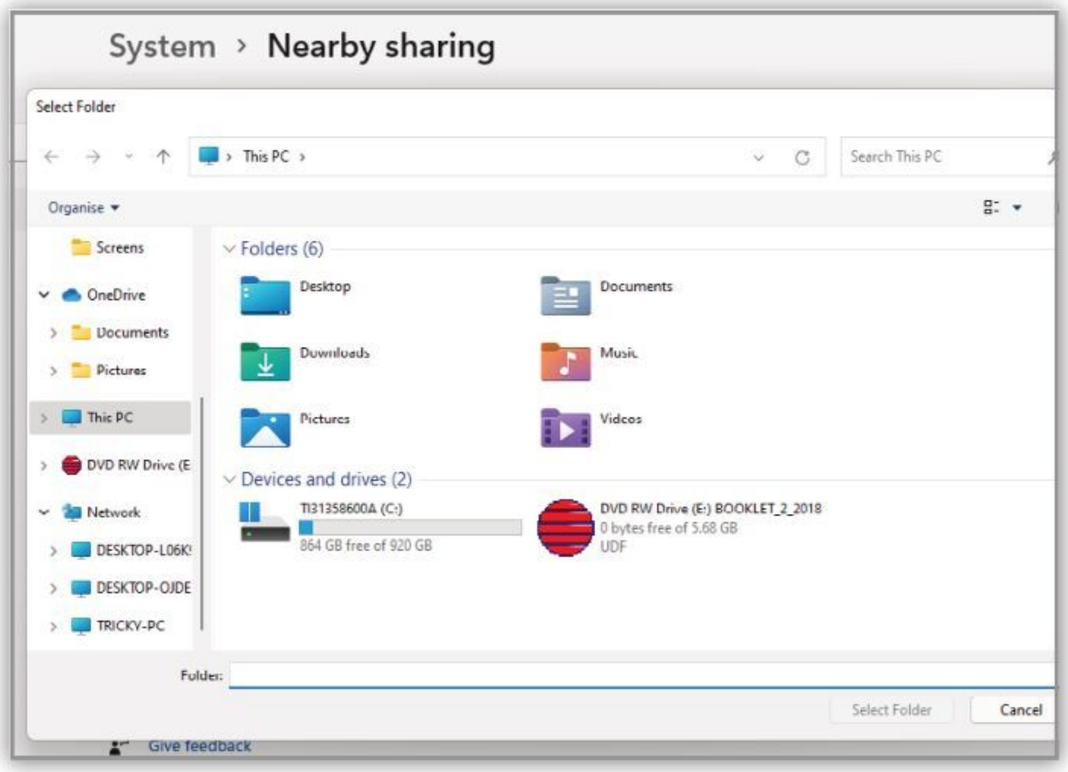


Step 2 You can also activate Nearby Sharing from the quick actions menu in the Action Center. You can send any video, photo, document or webpage viewed on Microsoft Edge to people or devices nearby by clicking on the share icon in the top right corner of the app or right-clicking to view the share menu.

Step 3 If there is a nearby device available, it will be shown in the share menu that pops up. You will need to know the name of the device you want to share to. Once you select the device, the other user will see a notification asking them to accept the transfer. This will time out in a few seconds if not accepted.



Step 4 By default, transfers will be stored in the Downloads folder but you can specify another folder or another drive very easily. Open settings and click on system > shared experiences. Under 'Nearby Sharing', look for the 'Save files I receive to' option and click the Change button.



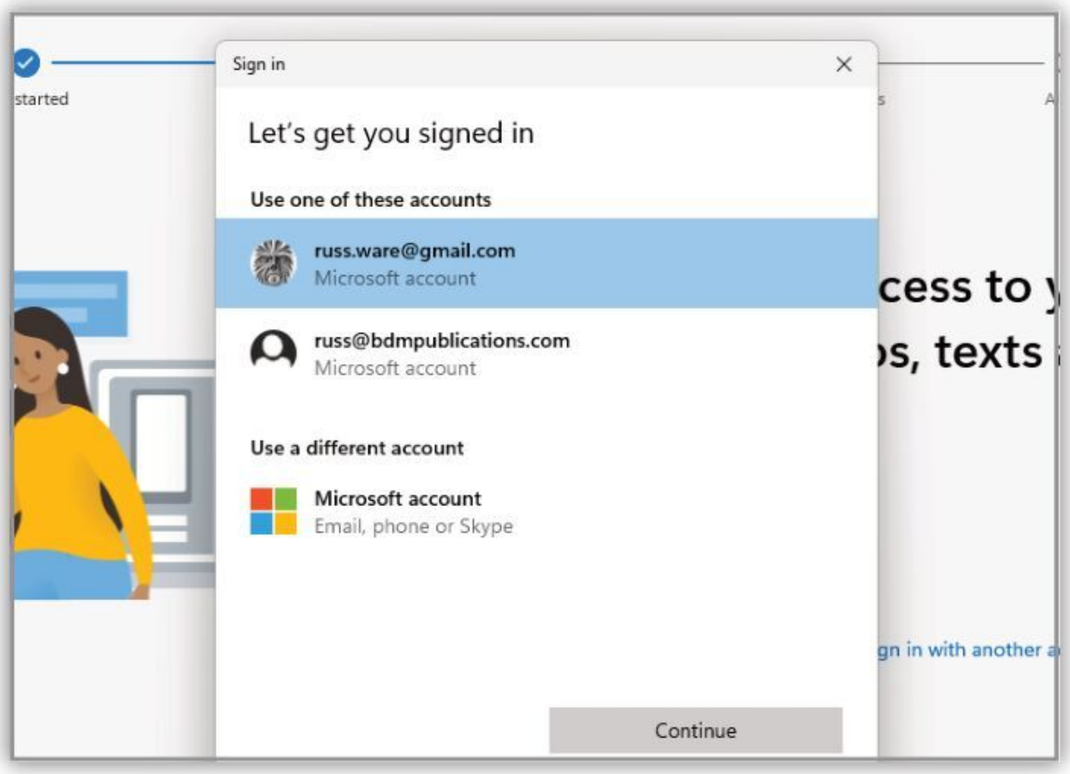
Connect Your Phone to Your PC

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

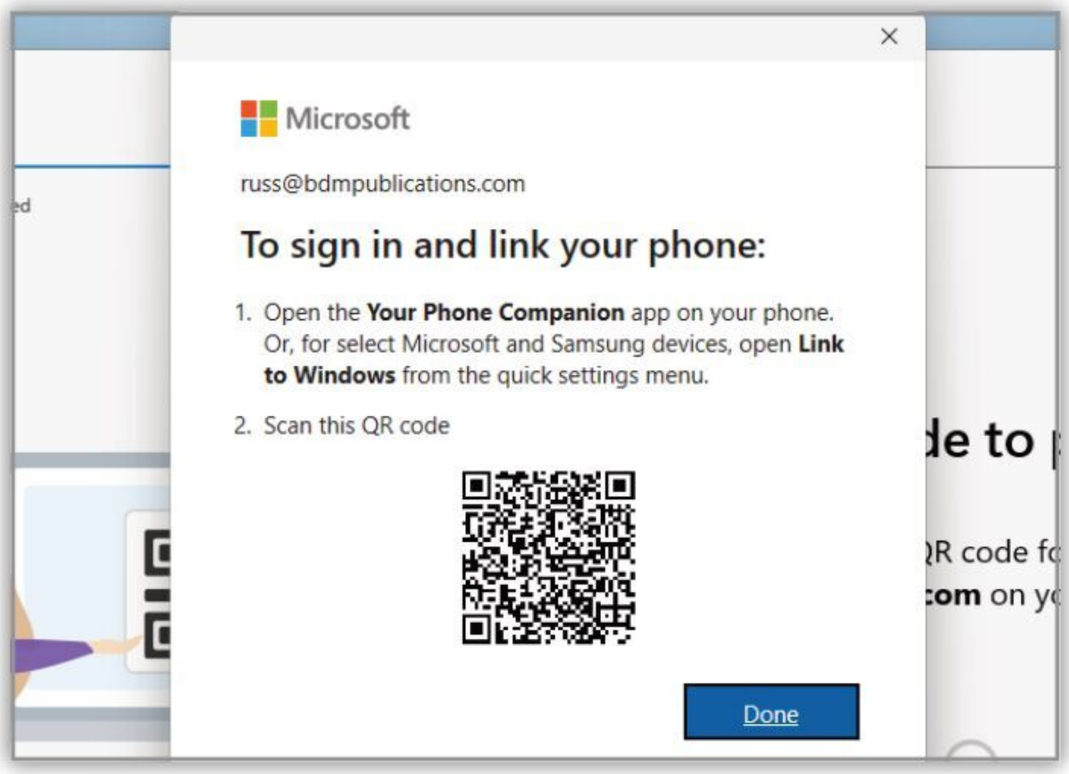
The setup steps for connecting a mobile device to your Windows 11 computer are the same for almost all compatible Android devices. The app offers additional features for Samsung devices.

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.

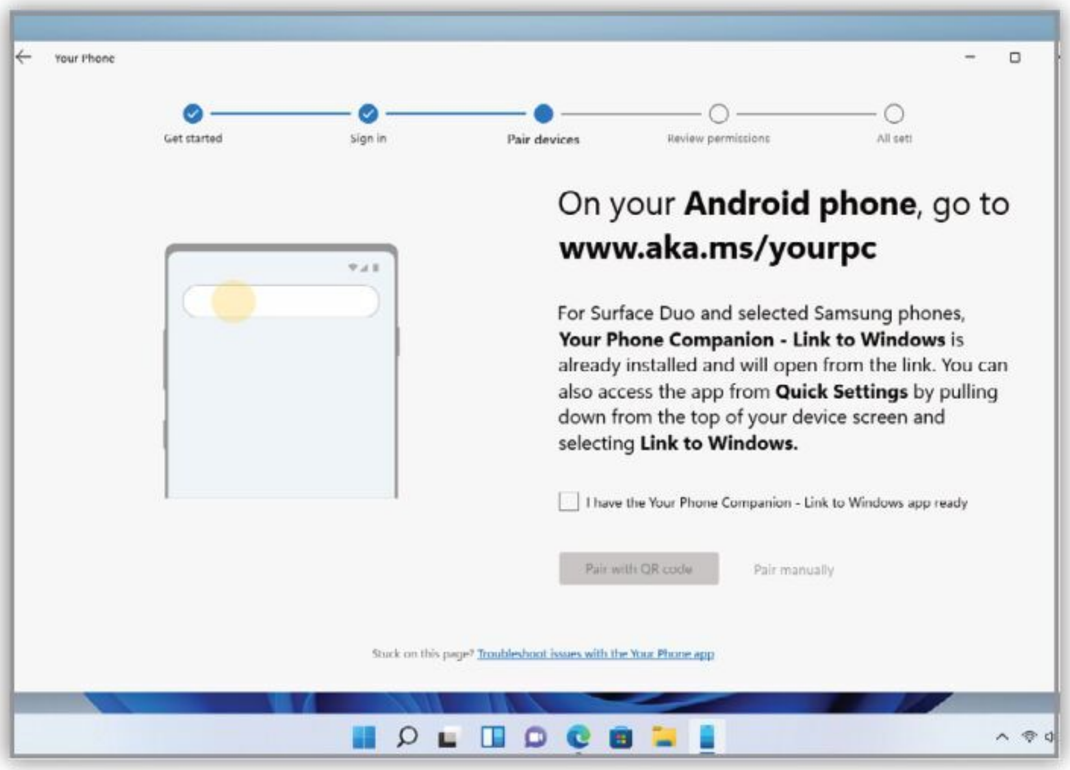


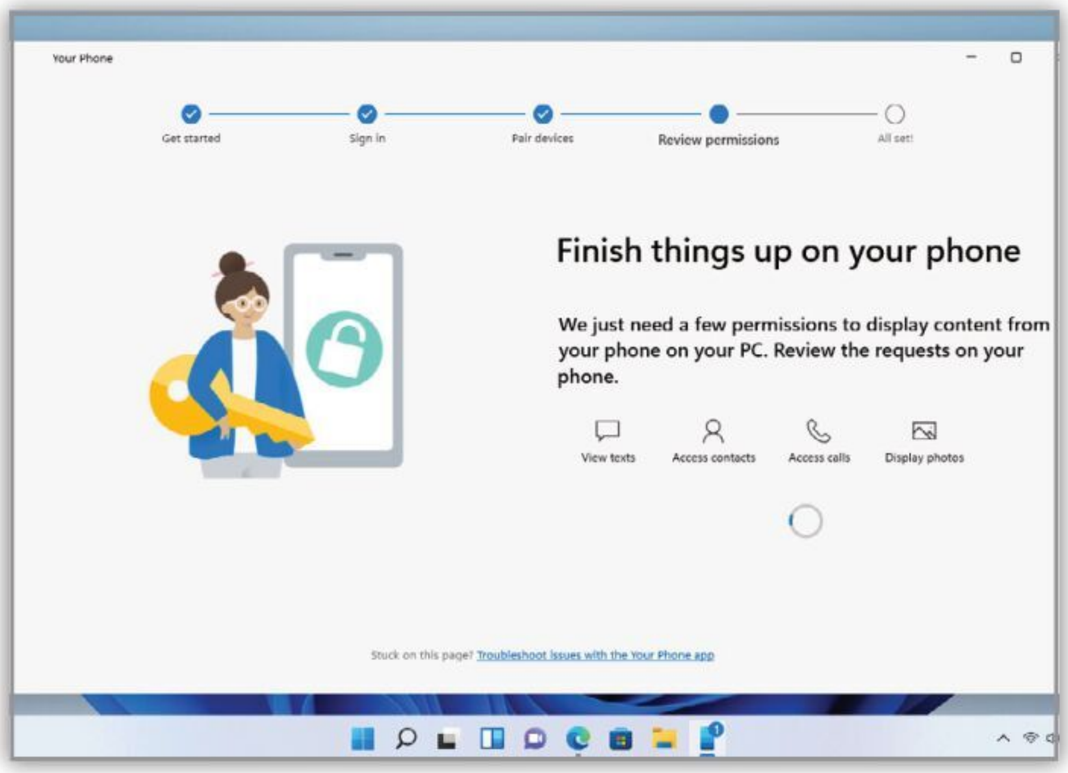
Step 2 On your Android phone, open a browser window and go to www.aka.ms/yourpc. You may already have an app installed that can link to windows called Your Phone Companion (on Samsung, open the Quick settings and look for "Link to Windows"). If so, open the app and follow the instructions.

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.



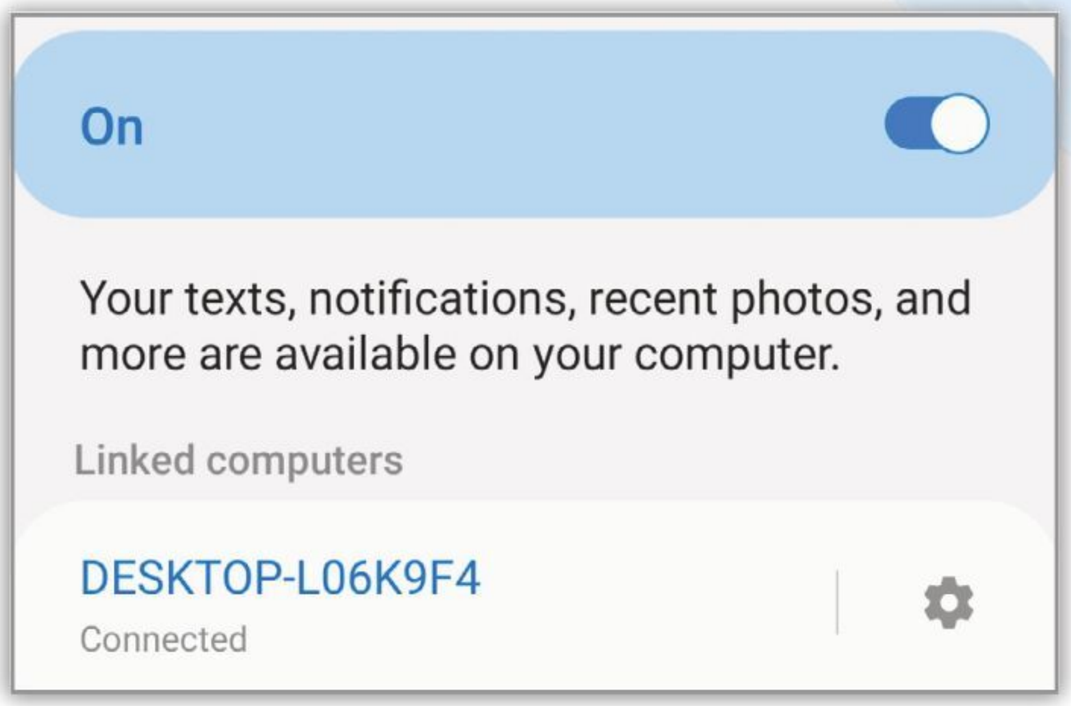
Step 4 You will need to give the app permission to access certain things on your phone. These include contacts, calls, photos and media, and SMS messages. You can refuse any of these individual permissions and the Your phone app will still work, just without access to that feature.



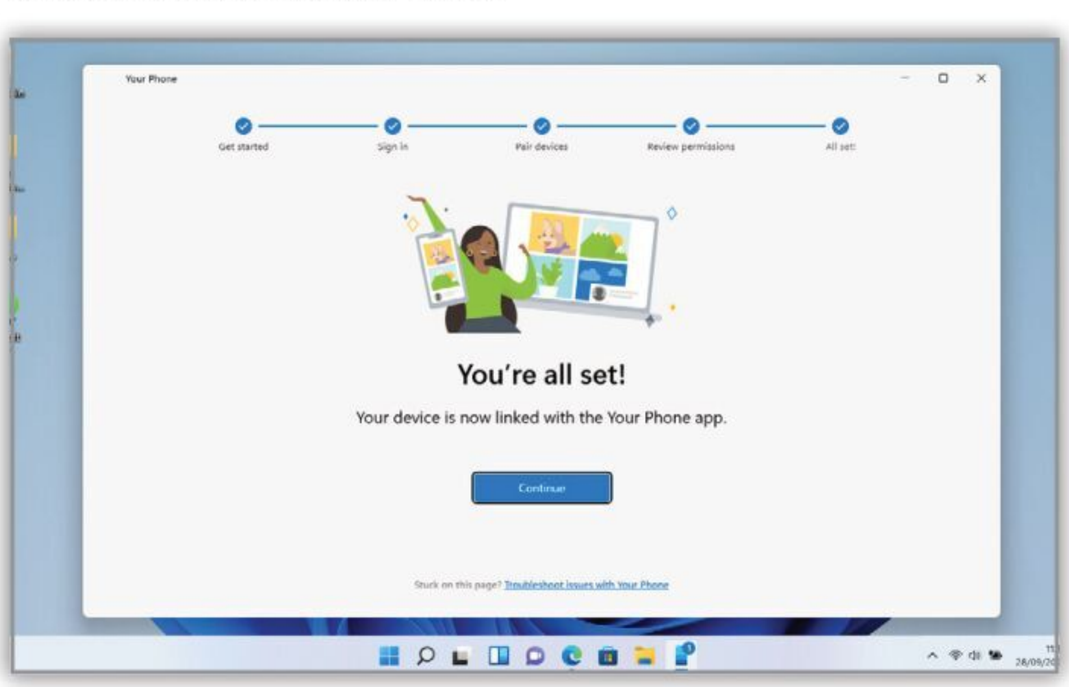


Connect Your Phone to Your PC

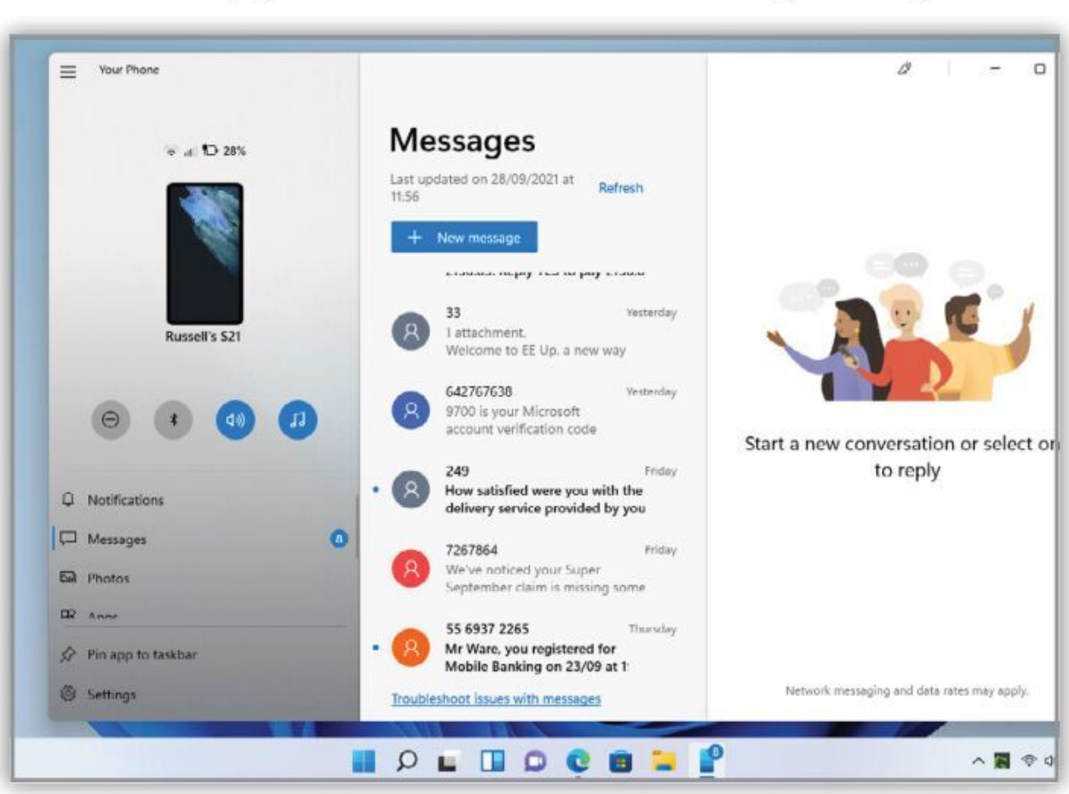
Step 5 If all is successful, you should now see your phone displayed in the Your Phone app on your computer. There is a new screen displayed on your phone, this shows the settings for the Microsoft companion app, alongside which Windows 11 computer it is connected.



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.

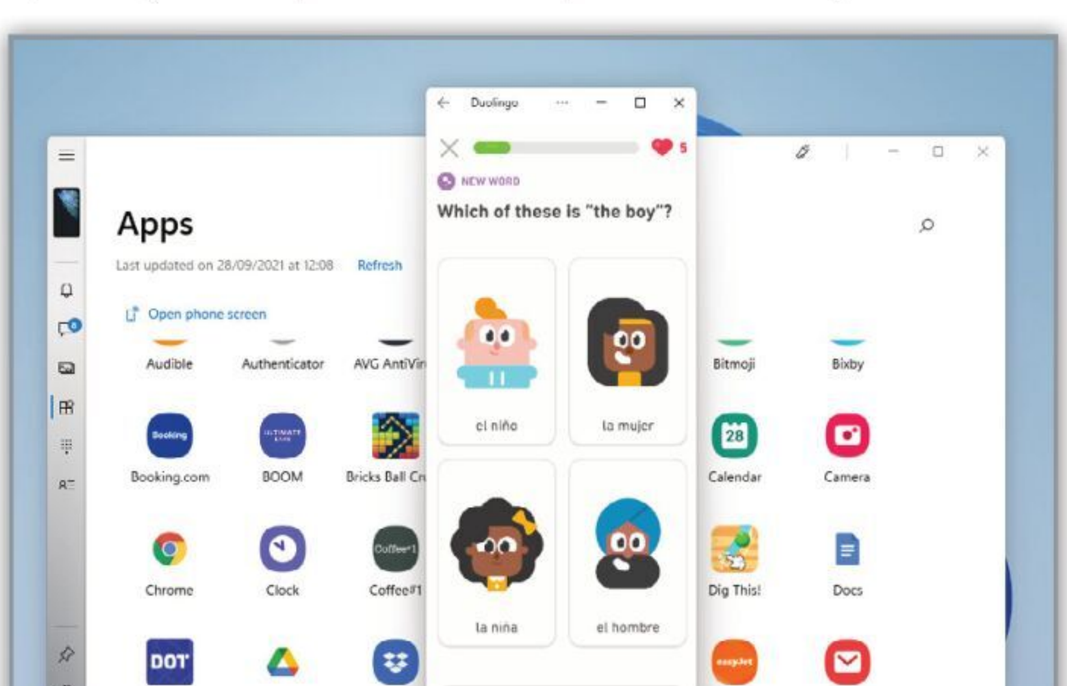


Step 7 Click on Messages first. When asked, send a notification to your phone to ask permission to access messages (if already given, this opens the messages list). Your phone messages are now displayed, and you can click on any to read and reply. You can also create new messages from your PC.



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.

Learn How to Import Photos in Windows 11

Importing your photos to your PC may seem like a very simple task but if you have never done it before, you can encounter problems. We take a look at importing photos from your devices; using different methods and tools already included in Windows 11.

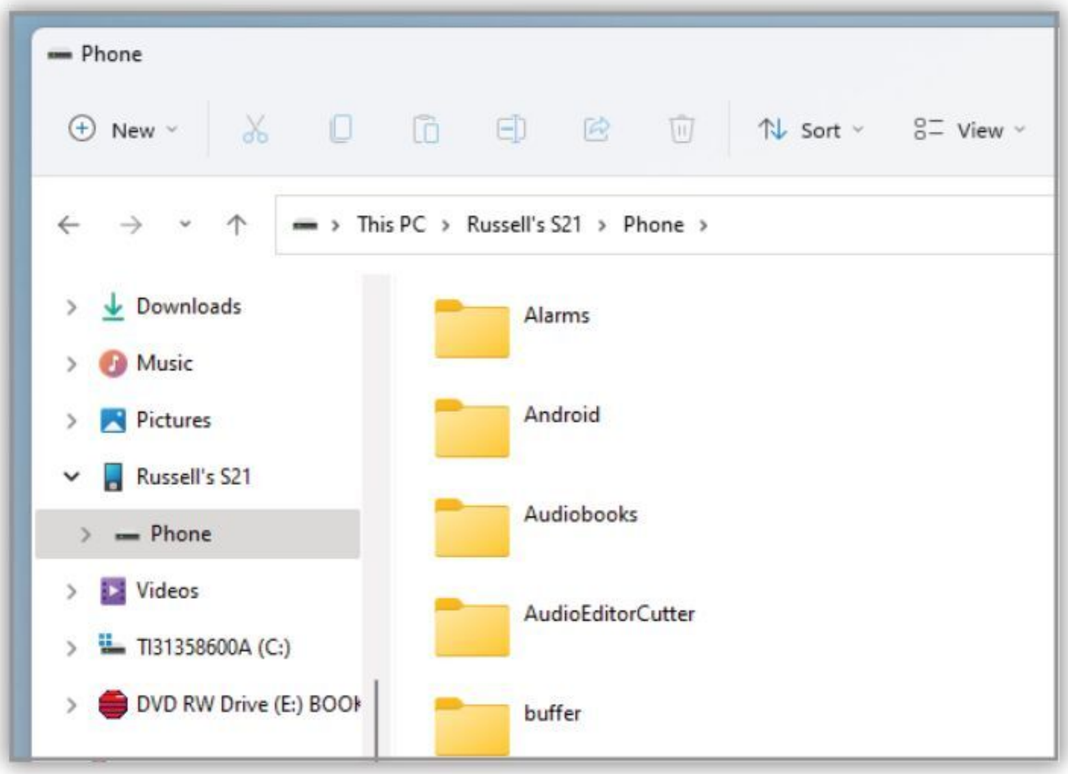
Importing to a Folder

The setup steps for connecting a mobile device to your Windows 11 computer are the same for almost all compatible Android devices. The app offers additional features for Samsung devices.

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.



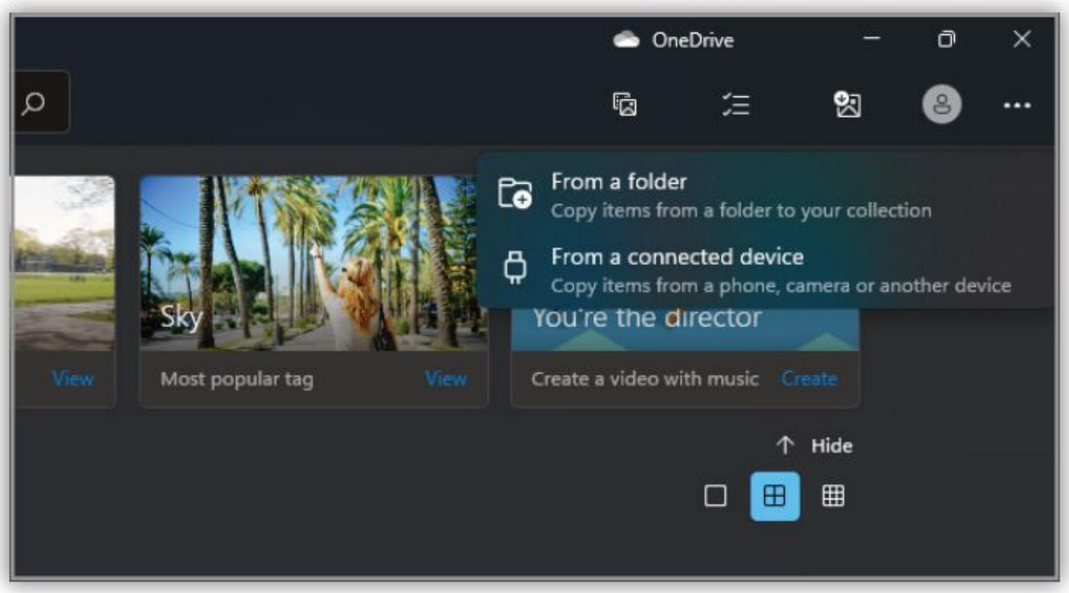
Step 4 If you have connected your phone and PC using the Your Phone app, you can import images from your phone wirelessly. Simply open the app, click on the Photos tab and then browse to the photos you want to import. You can then choose Save as…, or copy and paste to a folder.

Importing to the Photos App

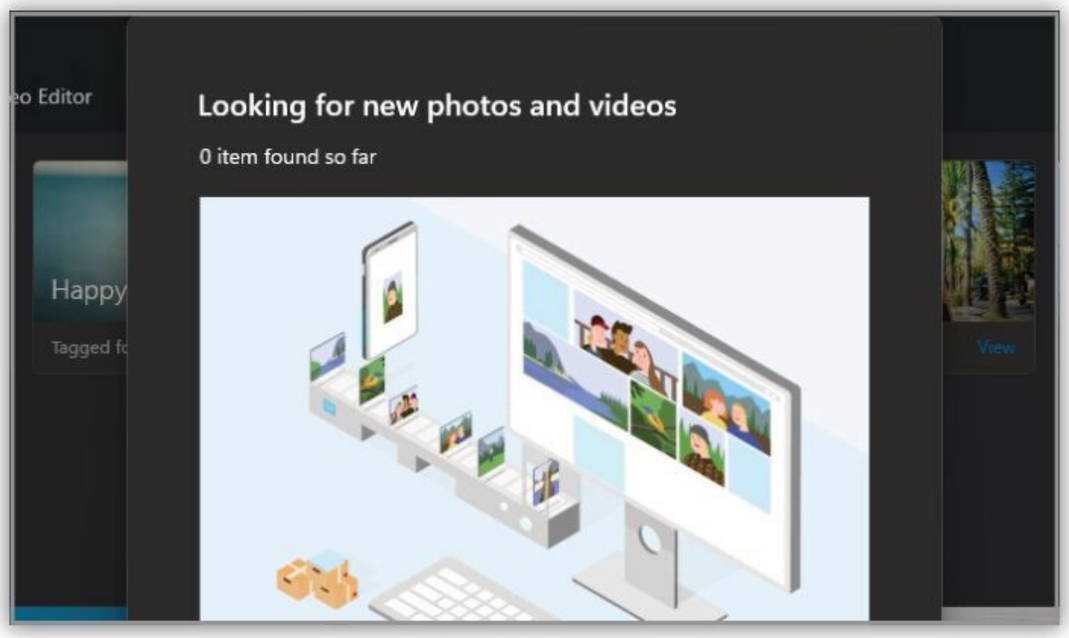
The Photos app is a great tool for importing photos from a phone, tablet or camera. It allows you to preview and individually pick images more easily, and even sorts them.

Step 1 Open the Photos app on your 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.

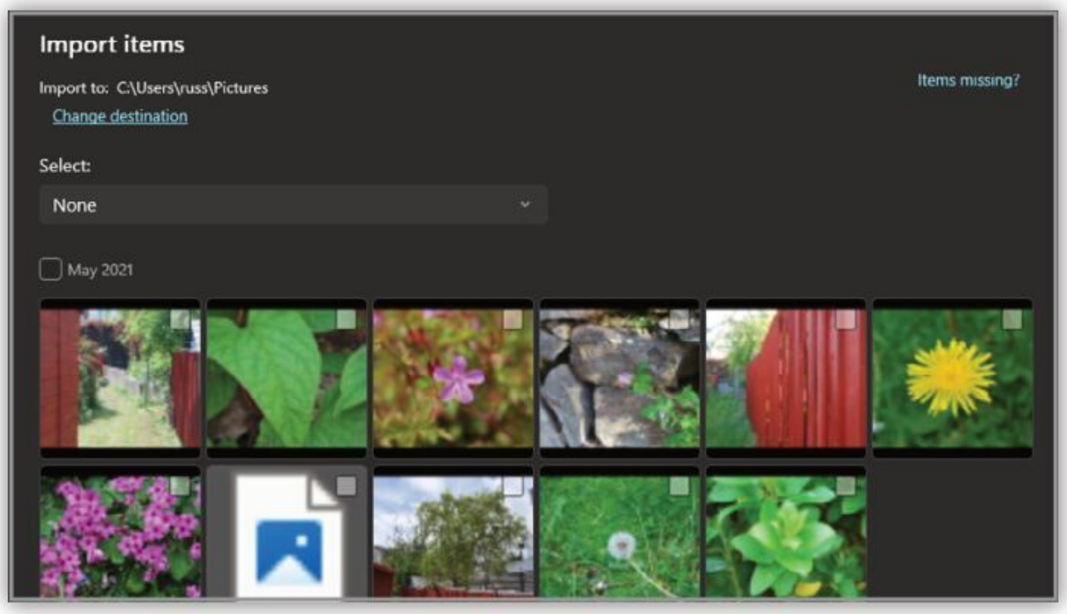
Step 2 The Photos app should have opened up with the Collections screen showing. If not, click the tab at the top to open it now. Along the top of the Collections tab are your controls: Refresh, Select, Slideshow and Import. Import is the only one you need to click at this point.



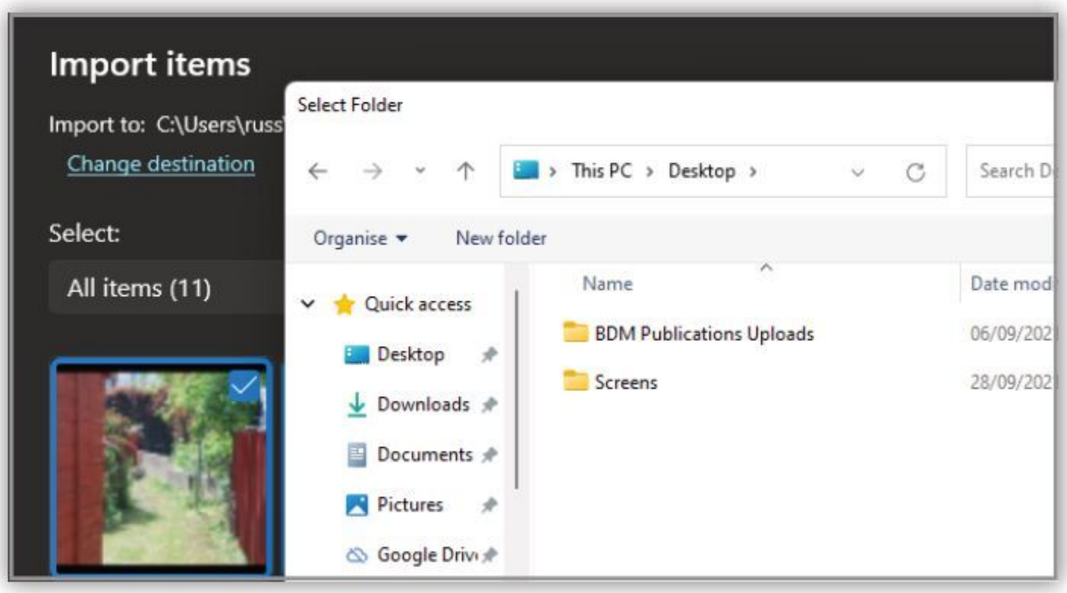
Step 3 The Photos app will now search for photos available to be imported. If your device is not connected properly, or the correct USB drivers are not installed, it will fail to find anything at this point. If you are transferring from a phone or tablet, you may also have to unlock the screen to continue.



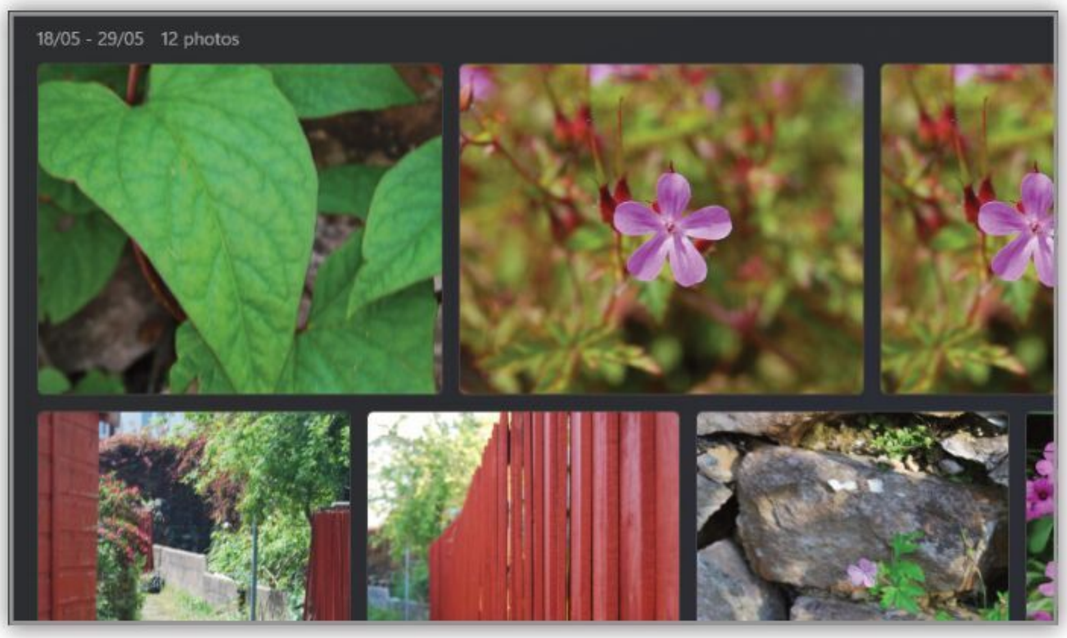
Step 4 By default, every image detected on your device will be selected for importing. If you want to import everything, click Continue. If not, you can use the check boxes on the images to select those you want to import; use the Clear All and Select All buttons as required.



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.



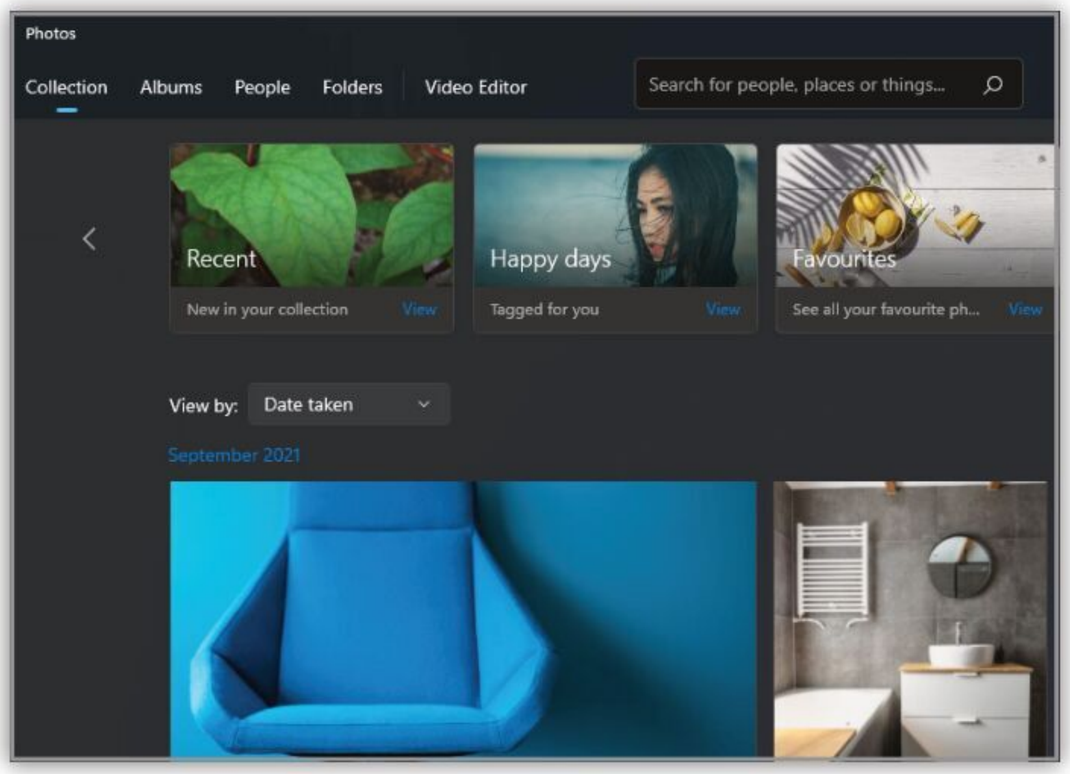
How to Manage and Edit Your Photos

The Photos app was first introduced in Windows 8, but it wasn't the best experience. In Windows 11 it has been improved, even over the Windows 10 version, with better ways to browse photos and a lot more editing options to make the most of your images.

Managing Your Images

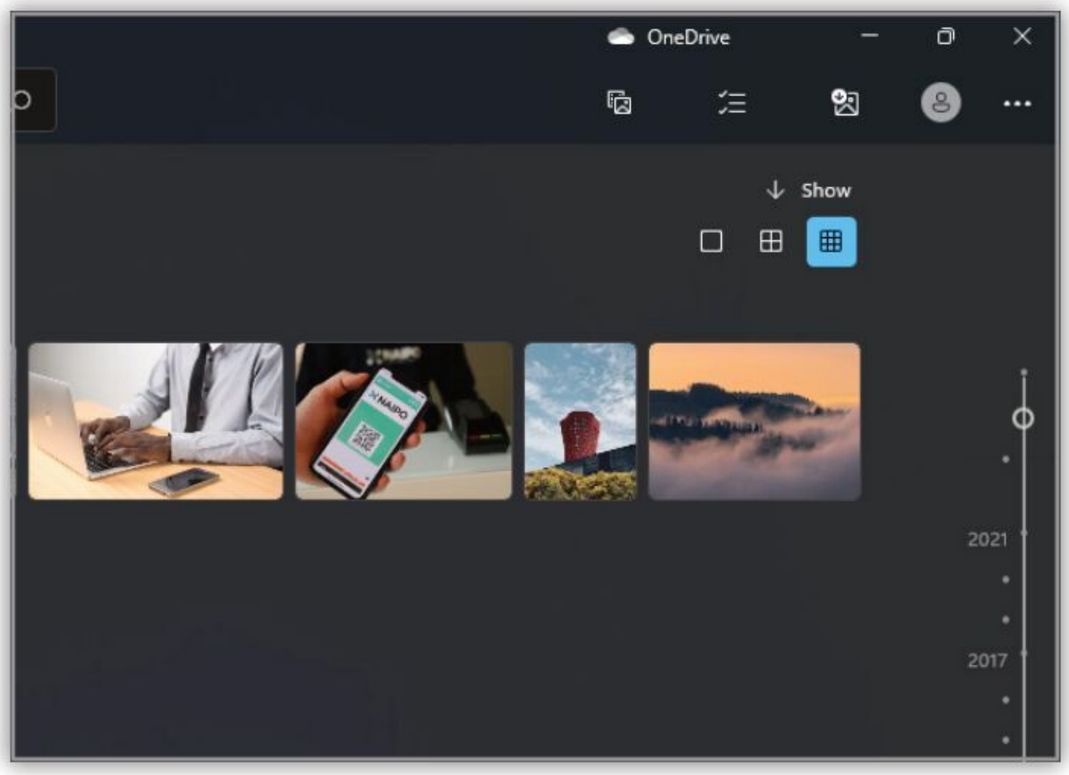
The Photos app has seen some useful improvements over the last few years and is actually very powerful now. It doesn't offer the flexibility of an app like Photoshop Elements, but it does simple image management well.

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.

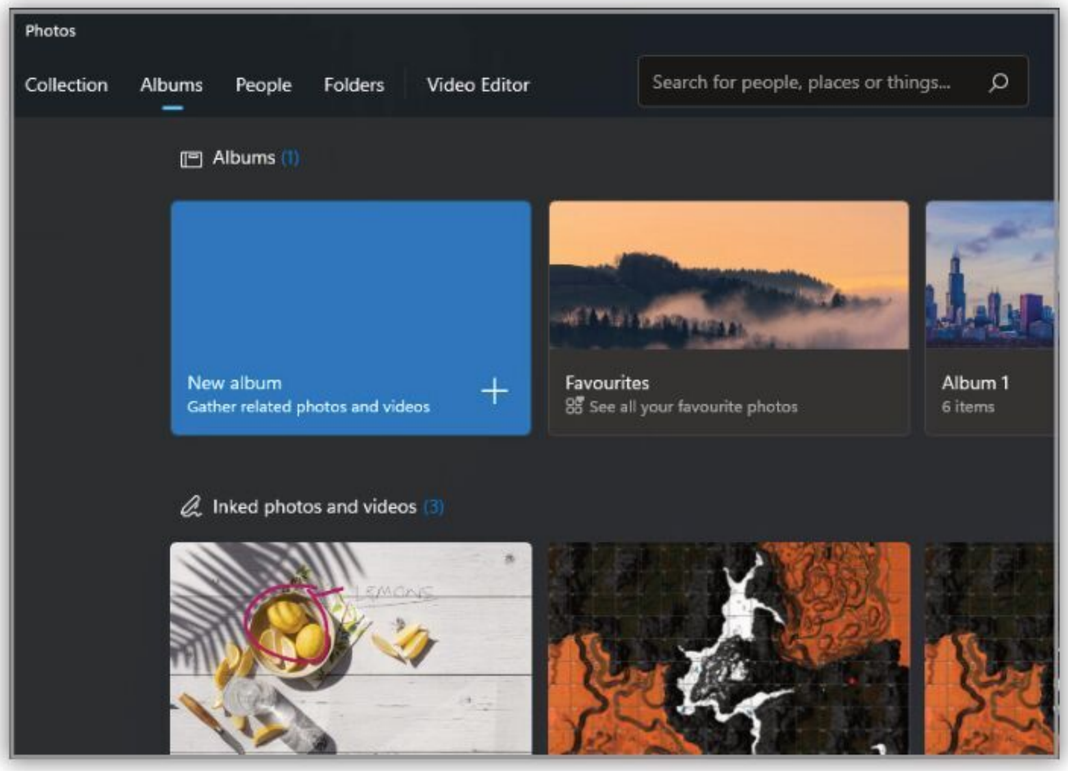


Step 2 Along the top of the full image view is a toolbar. This contains zoom and rotate buttons, an edit image button and draw button, as well as delete, add to favourites, file information, save as, resize and several more. You can click the Back arrow in the top left corner to return to the main image 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.

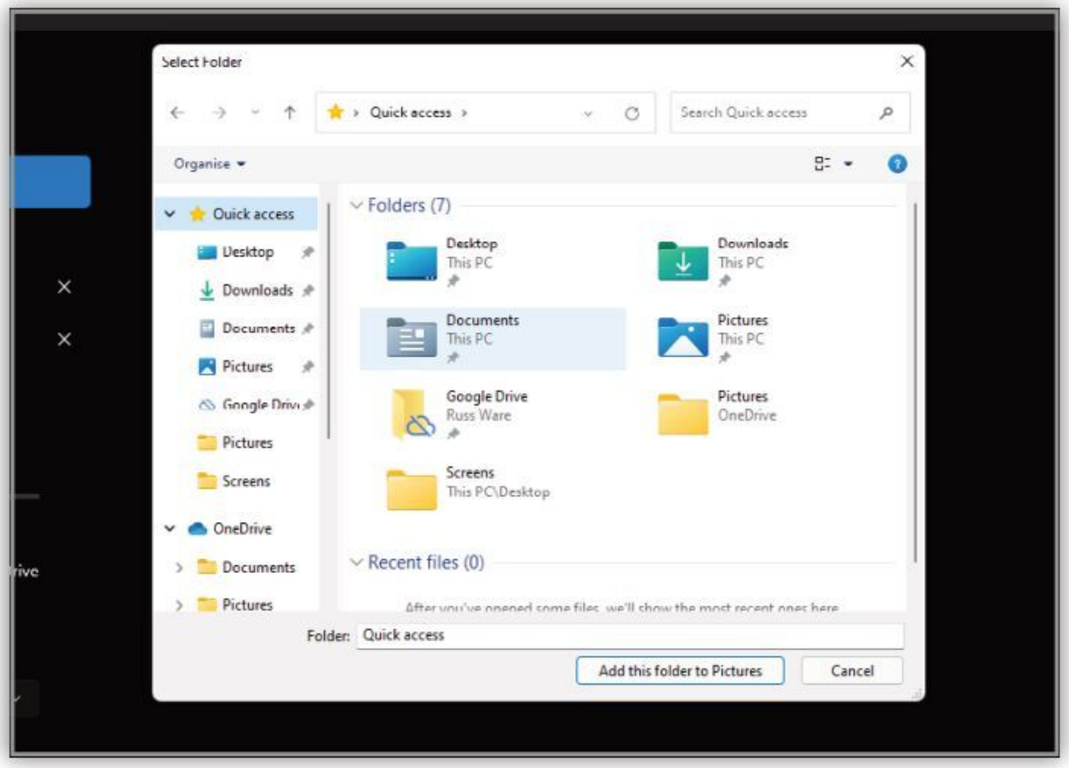


How to Manage and Edit Your Photos

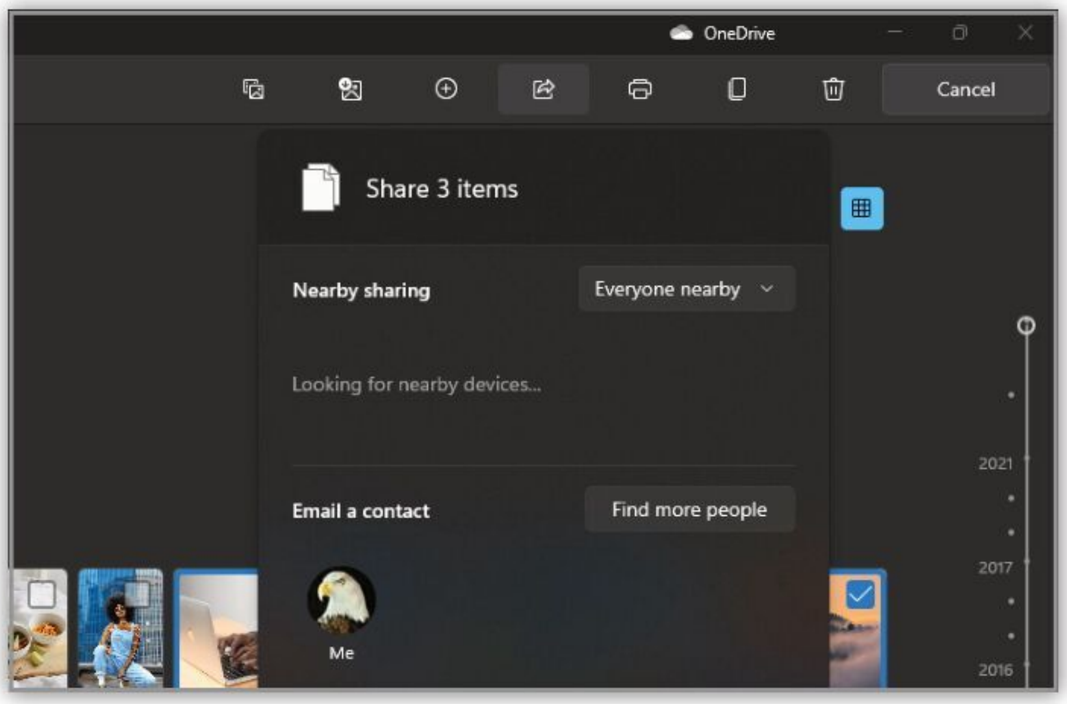
Step 5 You can create your own albums by clicking the "New Album" button. You can then select any images in the Photos app you want to add. With all of the images you want selected, click the Create button and the album will be shown with a slideshow. You can then rename the album.

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.

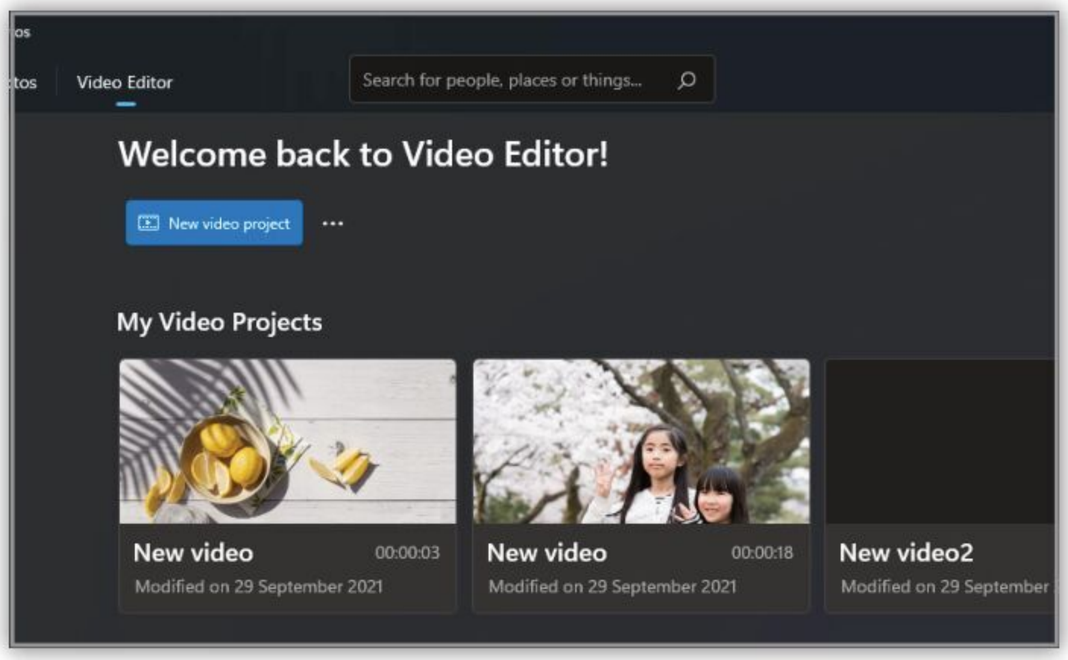
Step 7 You can choose where Photos should look for images in the app Settings. Your own Pictures folder, plus the OneDrive Pictures folder, are automatically included (if you have OneDrive set up), but you can change this if you store your images somewhere else; perhaps on an external hard drive.



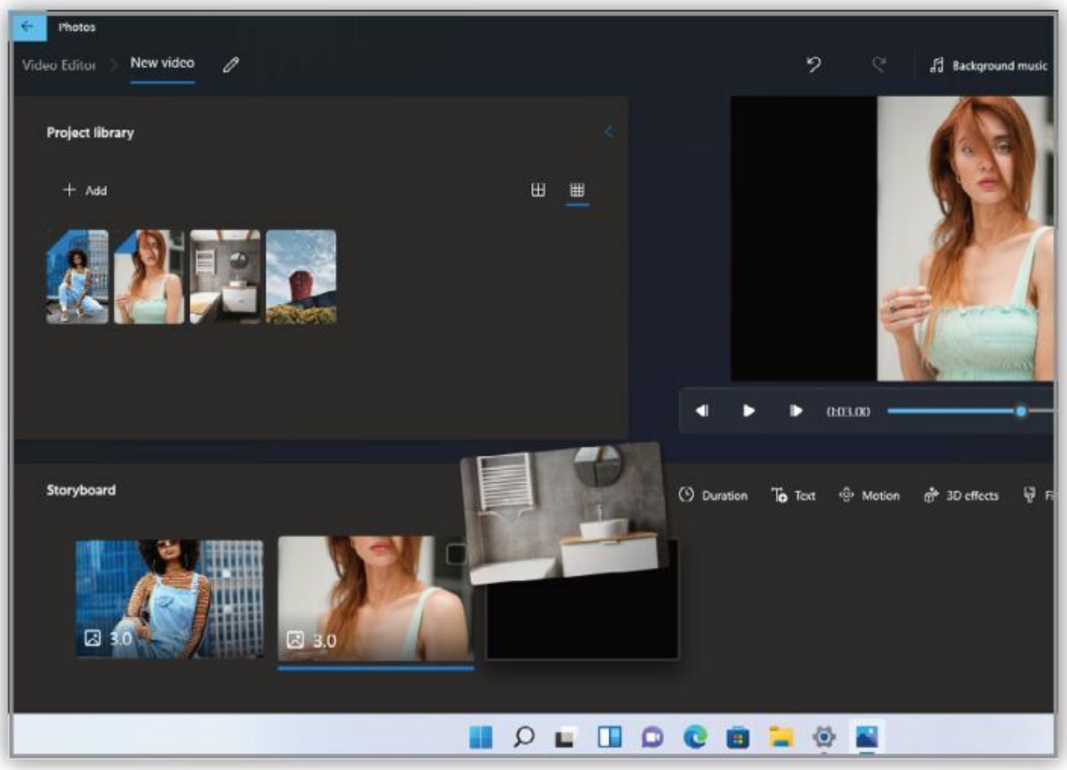
Step 8 The Select feature, found in the menu at the top right, enables you to select individual or multiple images. You'll see the top menu bar changes, and each image has a tick box appear on it. Click them to choose the images you want. You can then use the tools at the top (share, copy, add to and 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.



Explore the Powerful Maps App

Just like Google, Microsoft provides its own Maps app. This incredibly useful tool not only shows you a 2D map of anywhere in the world but also lets you see a satellite view, traffic information and even view major cities in 3D. You can even draw or write on top of maps.

1 Directions

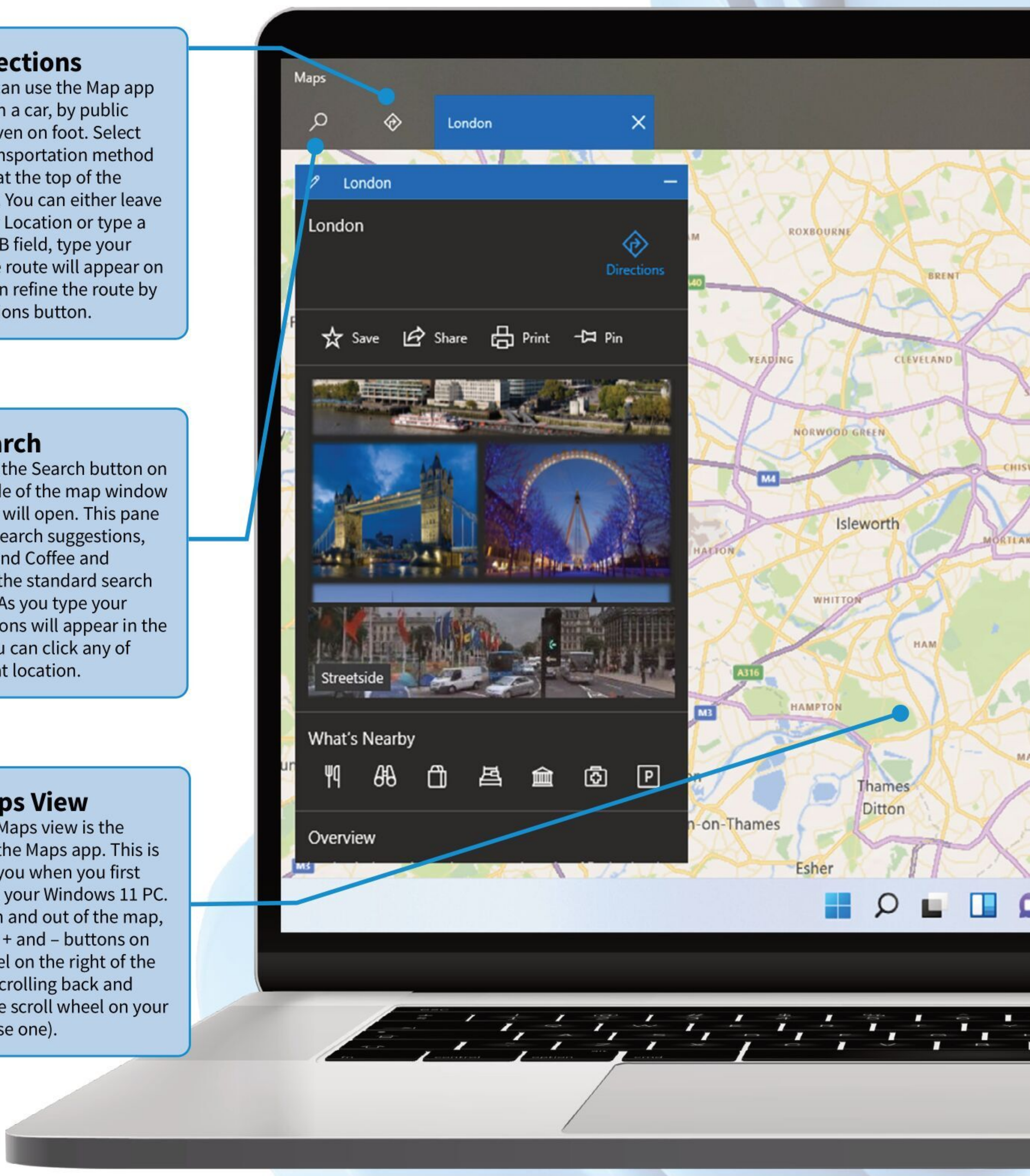
You can use the Map app to plan routes: in a car, by public transport and even on foot. Select your chosen transportation method using the icons at the top of the Directions pane. You can either leave the A field as My Location or type a new one. In the B field, type your destination. The route will appear on the map. You can refine the route by clicking the Options button.

2 Search

Click the Search button on the left-hand side of the map window and a new pane will open. This pane contains some search suggestions, such as Hotels and Coffee and Shopping, with the standard search field at the top. As you type your search, suggestions will appear in the search pane. You can click any of these to find that location.

3 Maps View

The Maps view is the default one for the Maps app. This is what will greet you when you first load the app on your Windows 11 PC. You can zoom in and out of the map, using either the + and – buttons on the control panel on the right of the window, or by scrolling back and forward with the scroll wheel on your mouse (if you use one).



Explore the Powerful Maps App

4 Your Location

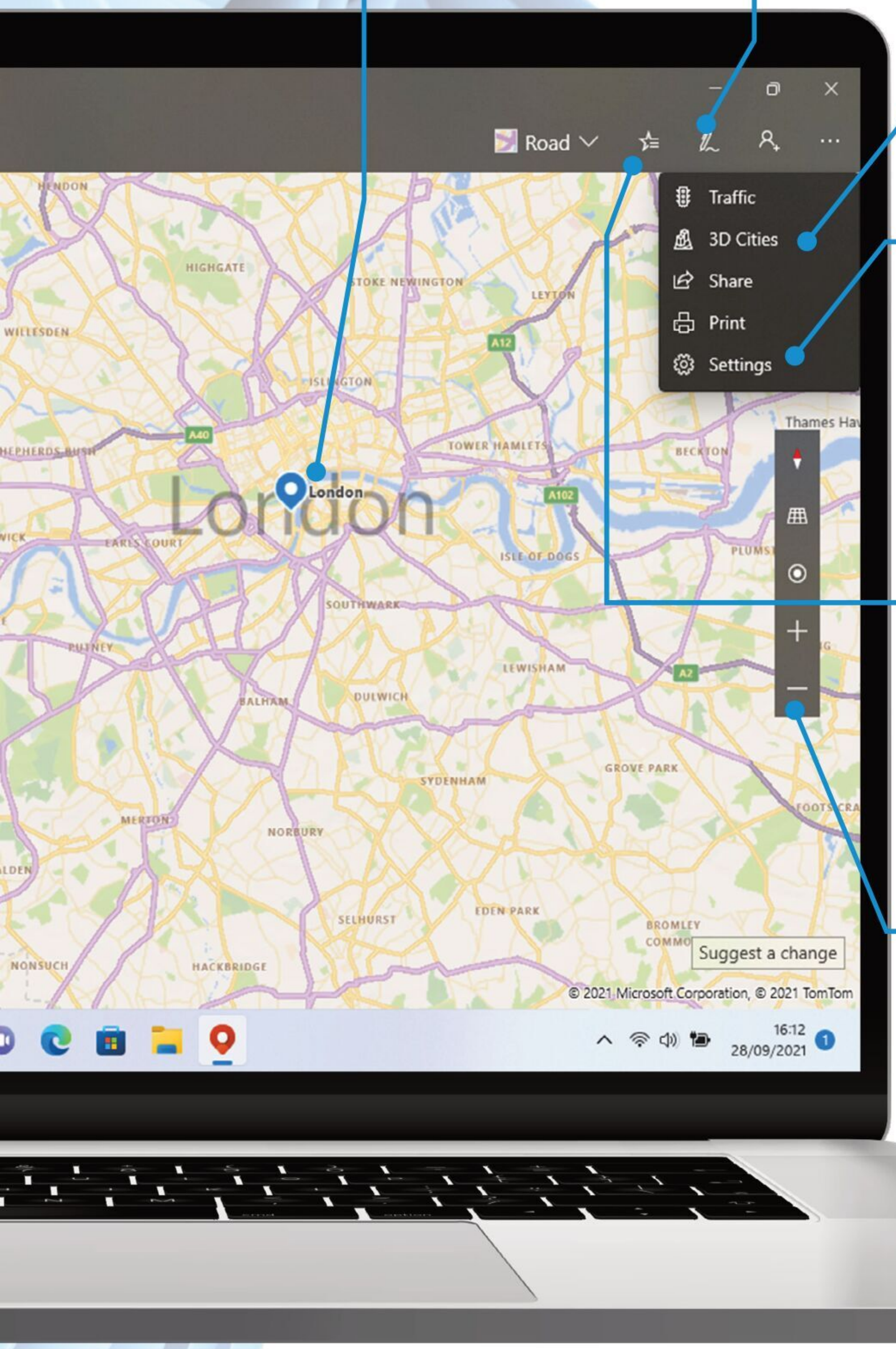
When you open the Maps app it will try to pinpoint your approximate location. You may be asked to allow this location tracking to happen. Your location will then be show on the map as a small black and grey circle. You can click on this to see more information, if available, and then save the location as a favourite by clicking the star in the pane that opens.

5 Windows Ink

Windows Ink allows you to write or draw on a map using the various pen tools (including colours). You can also use the pen to trace a route and have Maps tell you the distance of the line drawn, or even the directions for the route you marked out. You can then save the customised map. It is really very clever and fun to play around with.

6 3D Cities

The 3D Cities button should be fairly self-explanatory. Click the button to open the pane and you will see an alphabetical list of the cities with thumbnails that have been mapped in 3D. Click the Country/Region heading at the top to refine the list. Click on any of the thumbnails to load the 3D map; loading time will vary, depending on your Internet connection speed.



7 Maps Settings

The Maps app settings let you choose the units of measurement used, depending on your preference and your preferred defaults for directions and location. This last option will be used if the app can't find you, by using location services. You can also download maps for offline use or upload maps that have been saved elsewhere, that have been shared with you perhaps.

8 Saved Places

The Saved Places pane contains all of your saved locations. These can be anything from a favourite coffee shop to the street where you parked your car in a new city. To add places, search for a location and select the star underneath the correct one in the search results list. You then have the option to give the favourite a nickname or set it as Home or Work.

9 Rotate & Tilt

The small floating control panel on the right of the Maps window contains several useful tools for changing the current view. The top two controls are rotate and tilt, allowing you to either rotate the map around the central point or tilt the map to give you an isometric view. You can easily centre your view on your location again by clicking the third icon down.

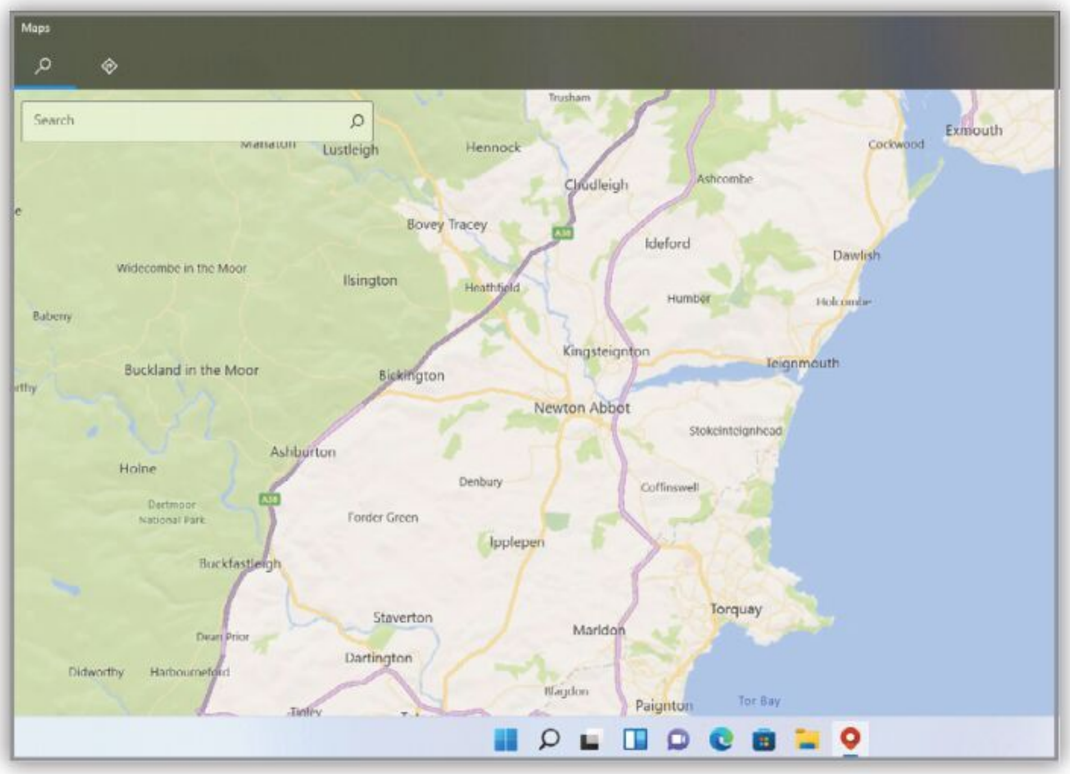
Learn How to Navigate with Maps

Boasting excellent mapping, great aerial photography, up-to-the-minute traffic and the ability to calculate directions by public transport, road or foot, the Maps app is one of the very best ways to navigate. New additions make the Maps app even more useful.

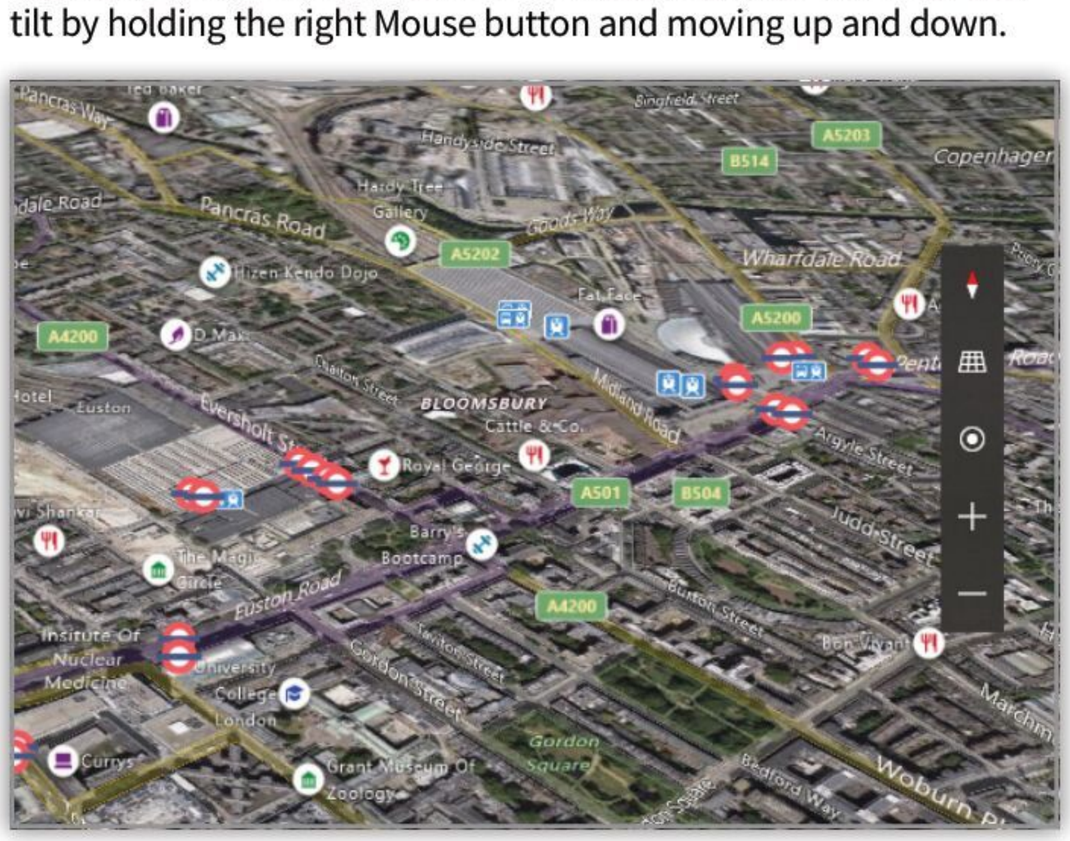
Moving Around in Maps

There are few controls in the Maps app but they allow you to do a lot of things very easily. Let's take a look at how you move around in the app.

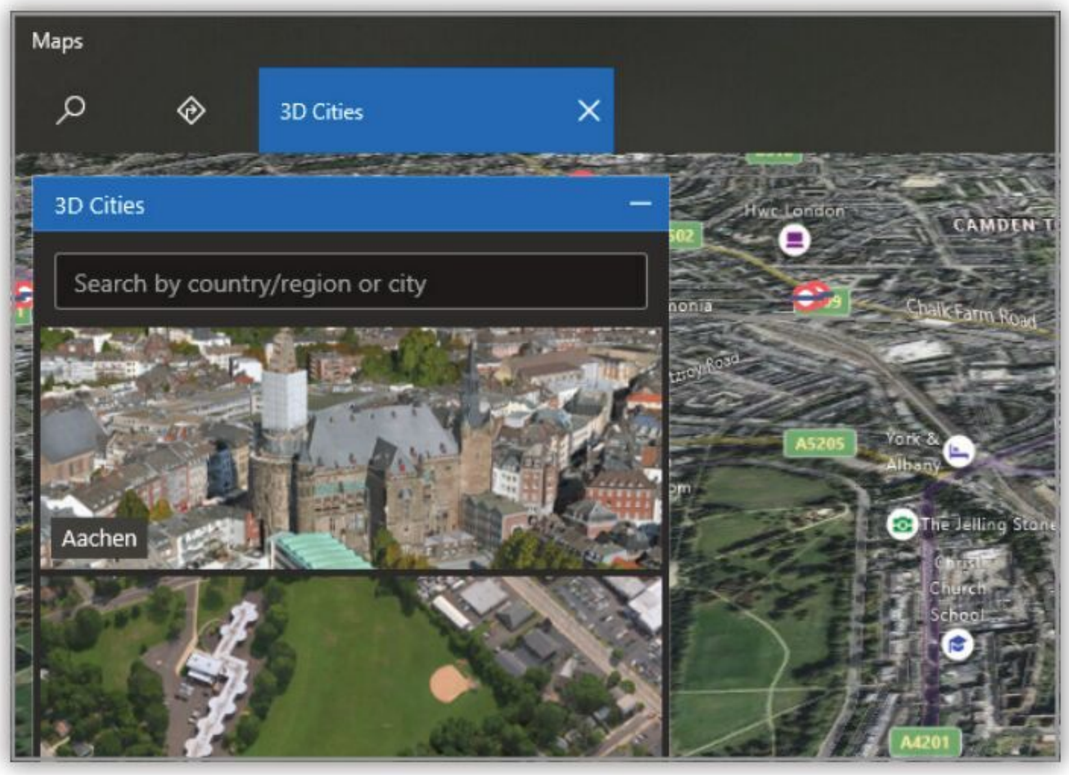
Step 1 The easiest way to move the map around is to left-click and drag it and use the mouse wheel or trackpad slider to zoom in and out. This allows you to move the map around to focus on the area you need. If you are zoomed far out of the map, double-clicking the mouse zooms in quickly.



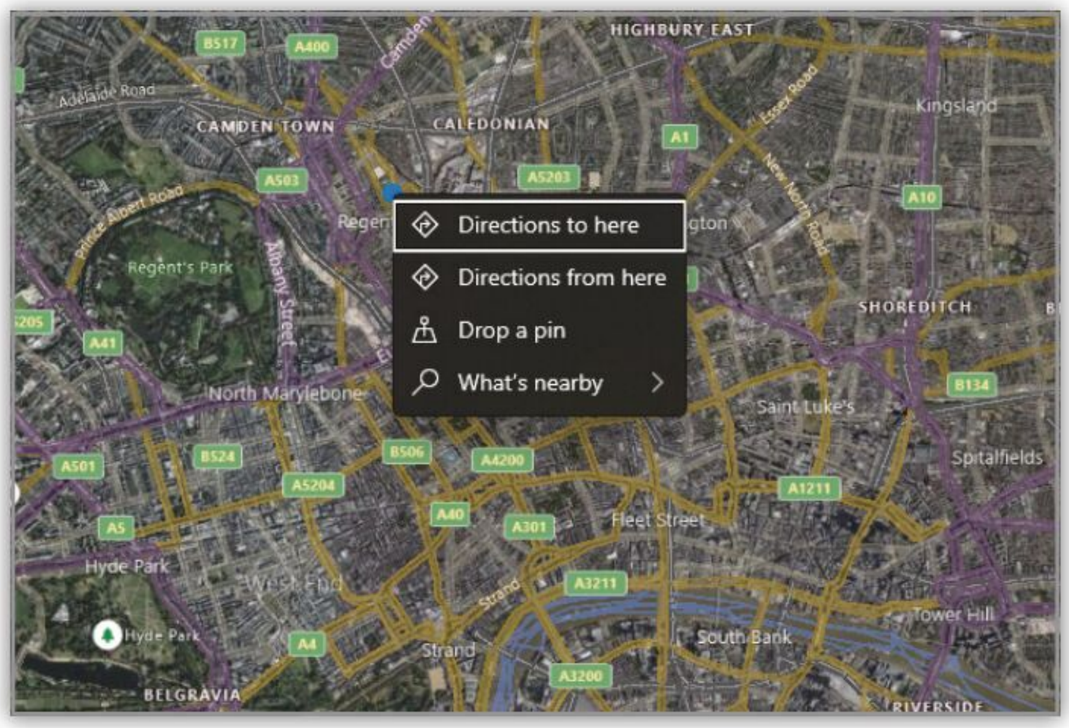
Step 2 Maps has a dedicated control panel on the side of the window containing, from top to bottom: Rotate, hold pointer on it to see; Tilt, hold pointer over to see options; Show Location; and Zoom in and Zoom out. You can also tilt by holding the right Mouse button and moving up and down.



Step 3 Clicking on things like Saved Places or 3D Cities in the top control bar, tabs will line up alongside the permanent Search and Directions buttons at the top left of the window. You can then click on them at any time to see the information contained in each pane or tab.



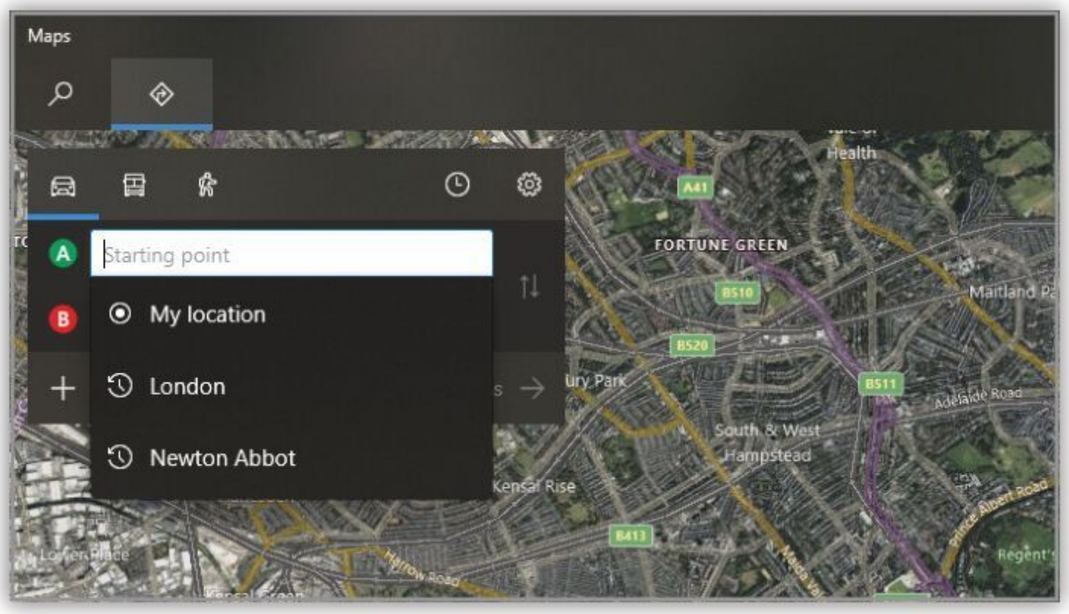
Step 4 Right-clicking on the map brings up a small action menu. This lets you set a To location, a From location (for planning a route), add a new destination and drop a pin in a specific location. When you drop a pin, a new window opens allowing you to search for things at that location, add favourites and more.



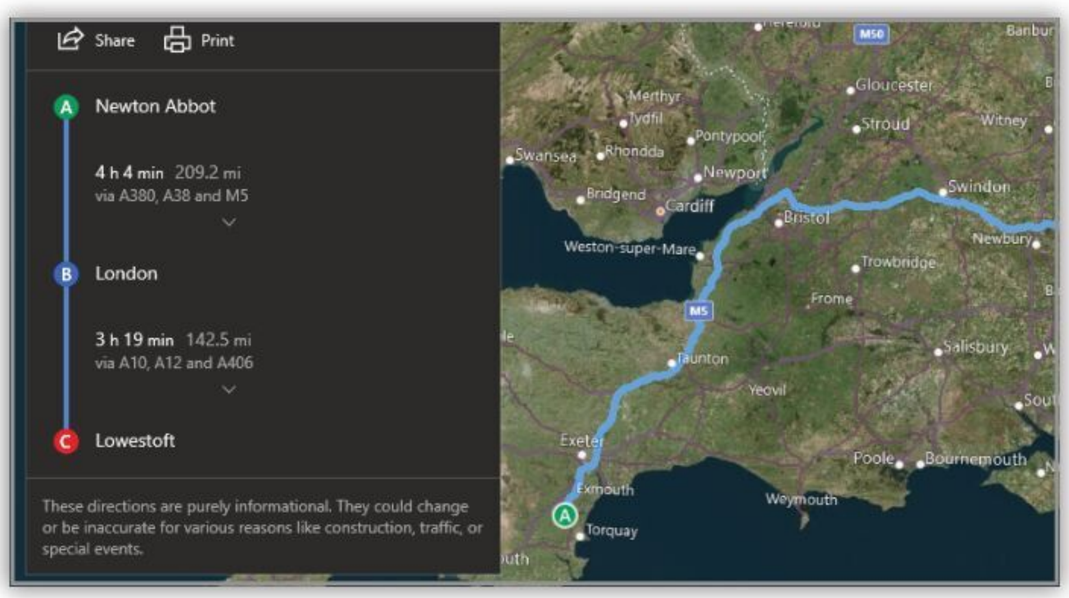
Planning a Route

Maps is great for checking out an area, looking around a city or just finding businesses local to you. It is also great for planning detailed routes.

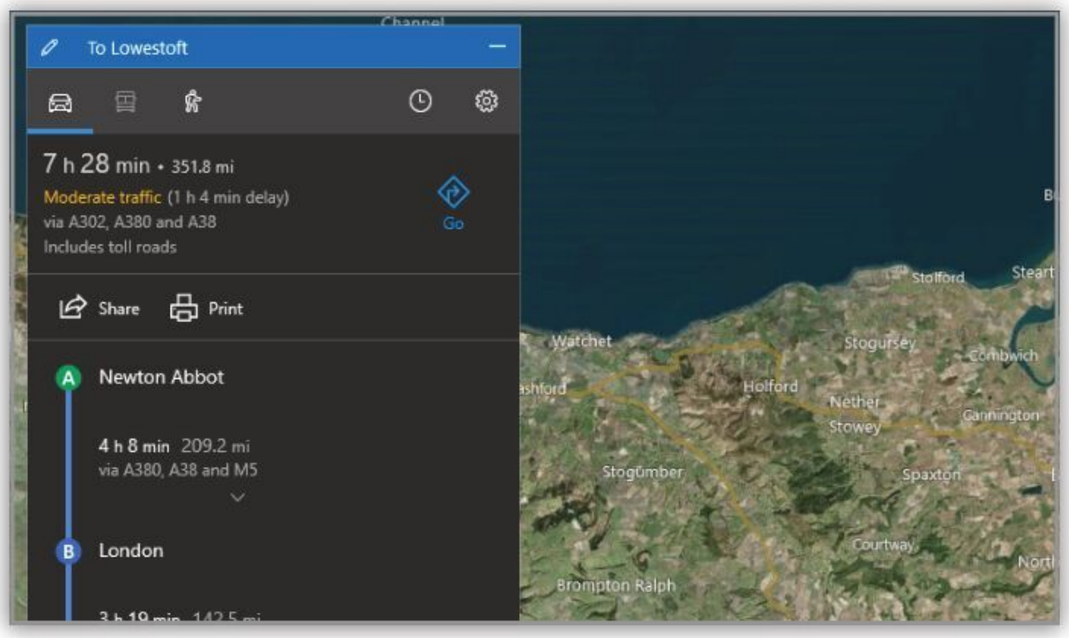
Step 1 To start planning a route, click the Directions tab at the top left of the Maps window. A small panel opens with boxes for your starting and ending location. You can either type a destination or you can choose one from the list that appears below the box when you click on it.



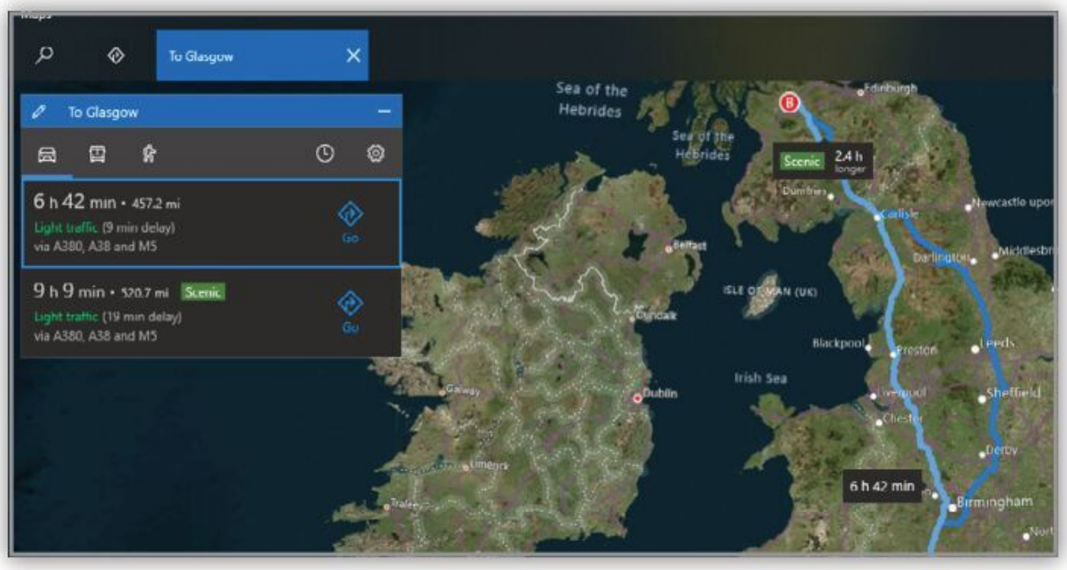
Step 2 If you need to make detours or multiple stops along your route, you can click the + button to add more destination boxes. Each one can have a destination in it, making up your complete route. When you view directions, each of the destinations you added is marked with a relevant letter.



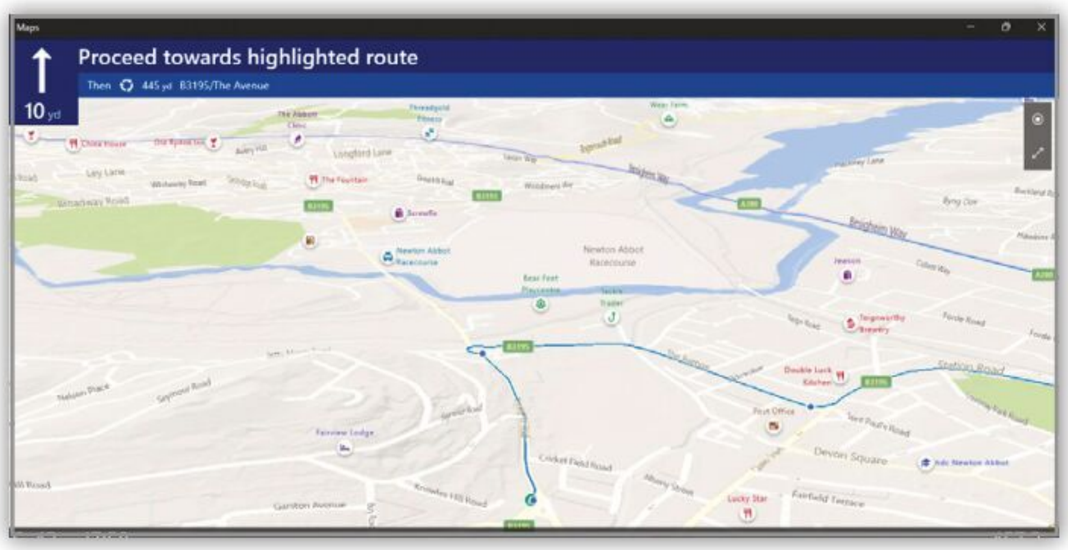
Step 3 Routes vary depending on whether you are driving, walking or need to take public transport. You can quickly flick between these options using the buttons at the top of the directions pane. When you have your start and end points entered and travel method chosen, click Get Directions.



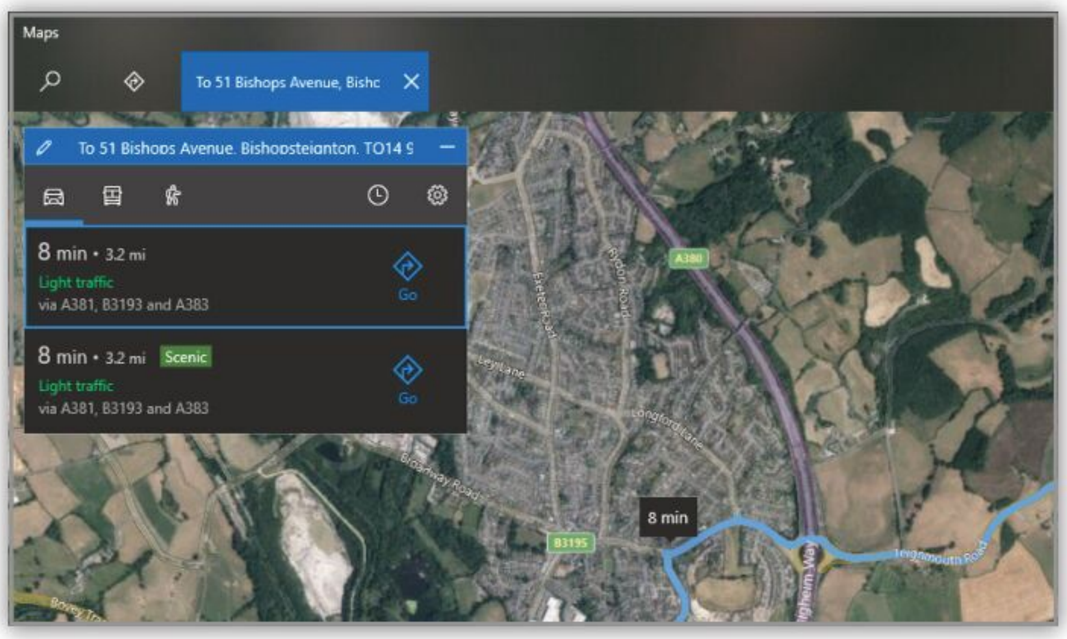
Step 4 The route is now shown on the map, with an estimated travel time readout above the destination. If alternative routes are available, they are shown as a light blue line, with the main route shown as a dark blue line. Points along the route are marked, usually where a change of direction is needed.



Step 5 If you click Go in the directions pane, Maps switches to a satnav-style view and traces your route as you continue along it. This is more for portable devices such as phones and tablets that you might use for directions in a vehicle. Click the Exit button via the three dots in the bottom-right of the screen to return to the normal maps view.



Step 6 You can also plan a route by drawing it. Click the Ink button and then the Directions tool in the menu that opens. Draw a line along the route you wish to take and Maps refines that into a proper route along roads, missing dead-ends, etc. You can save or share the route just as with any other.



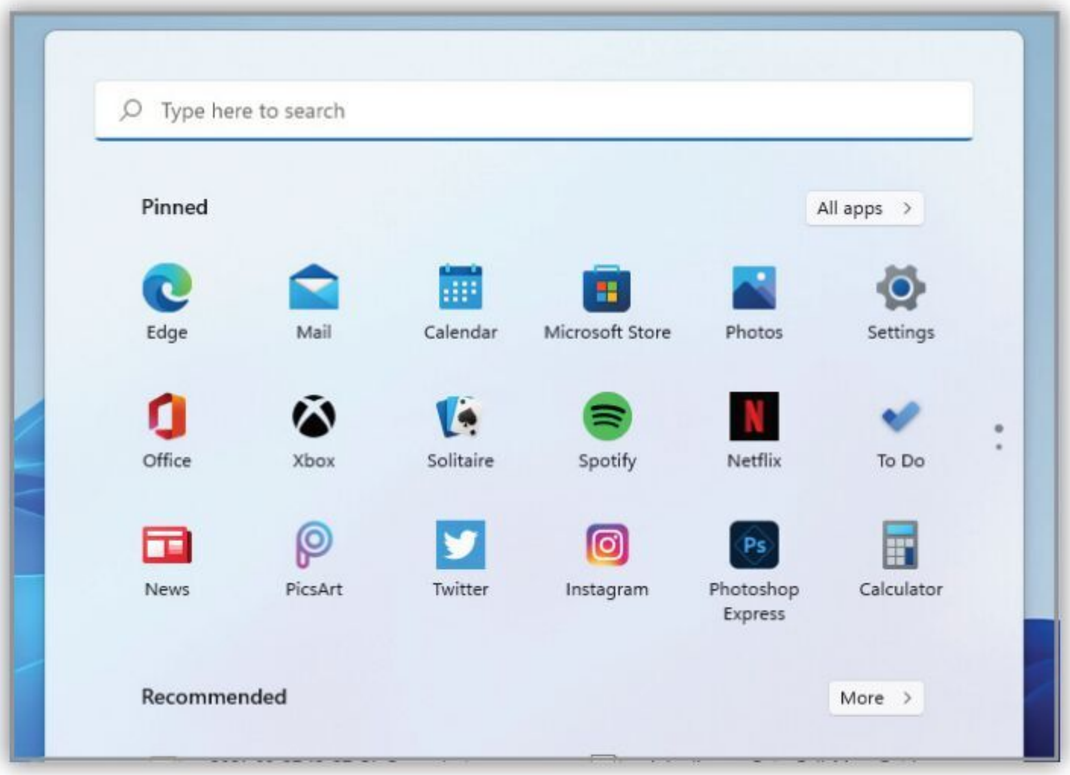
Manage Your Contacts in Windows 11

The People app has been a part of Windows 10 for some time, but in the more recent update to Windows 11, it has had an overhaul. The People app is no longer a part of the traditional taskbar, but instead Microsoft has incorporated into the Mail app.

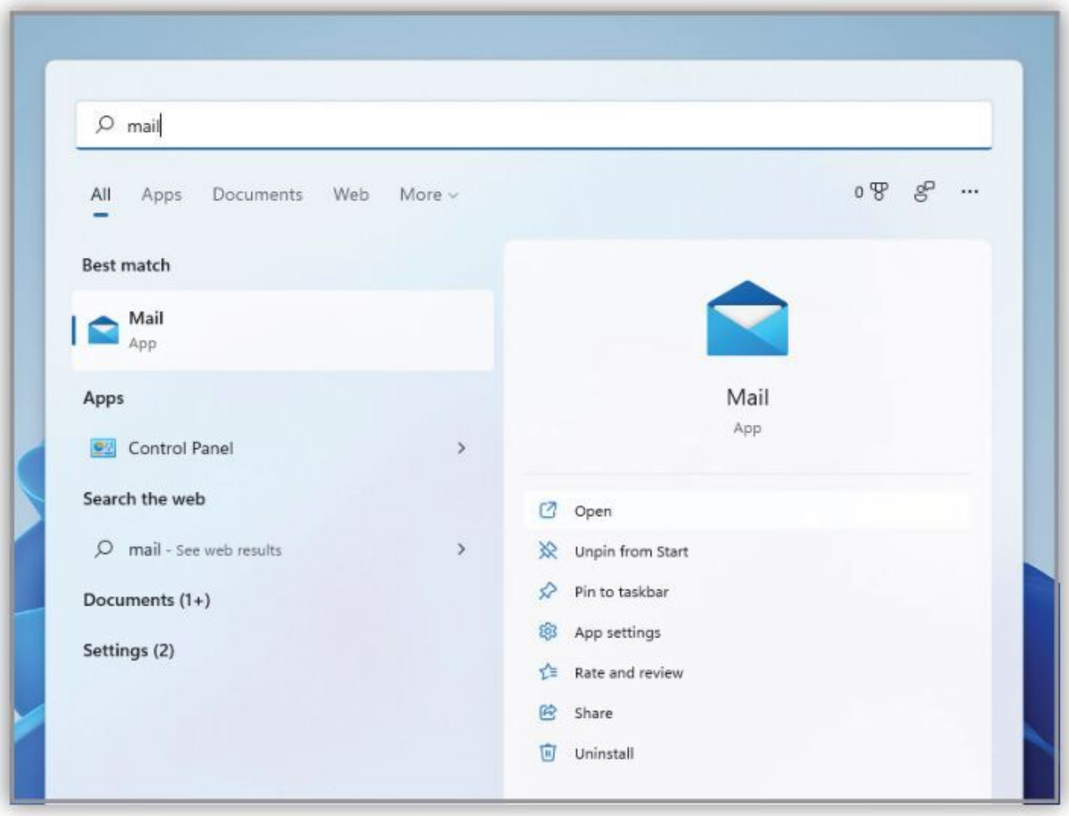
New People, New Apps

Incorporating the People button into the Mail app is probably the more logical location for it; it's just we've gotten used to it being its own app via the taskbar.

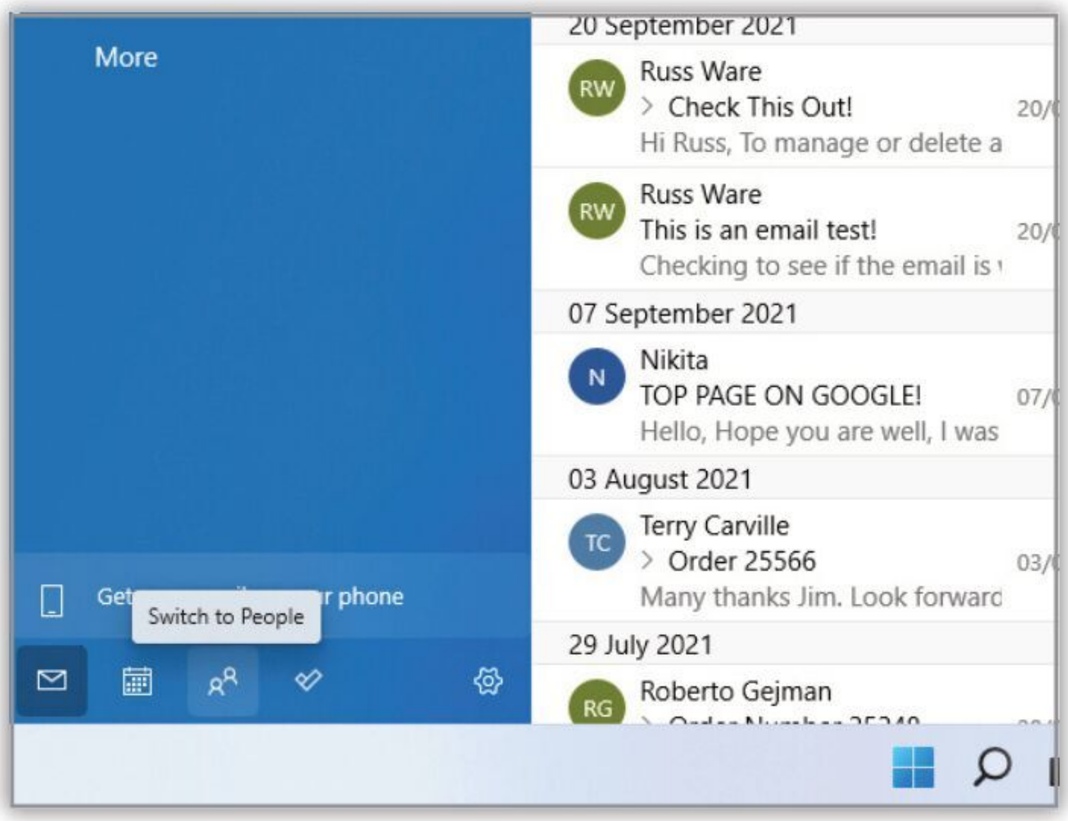
Step 1 If you've not done so already, you'll need to open the Mail app. Start the process by clicking on the Windows icon in the Windows 11 taskbar, or tapping the Windows Key on your keyboard. This will bring up the Apps menu and last used files.



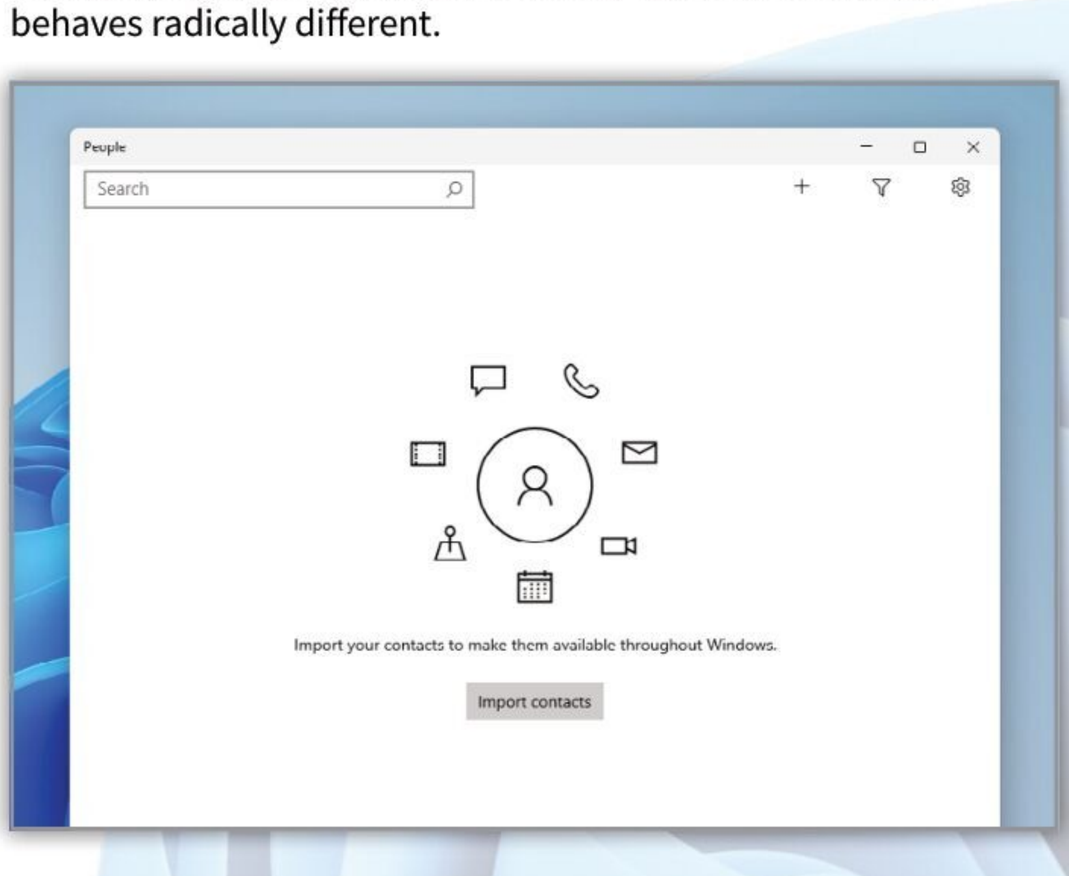
Step 2 Type 'mail' (without the quotes), and you'll see the Mail app icon appear on the list of available matching apps. Click on the Mail app to open, or click on the Open link from the list under the icon.



Step 3 Within the Mail app, you'll notice a row of icons along the bottom-left of the window. The third one in, from the left, is the People button. Click on it to switch the view to the new Windows 11 People app.

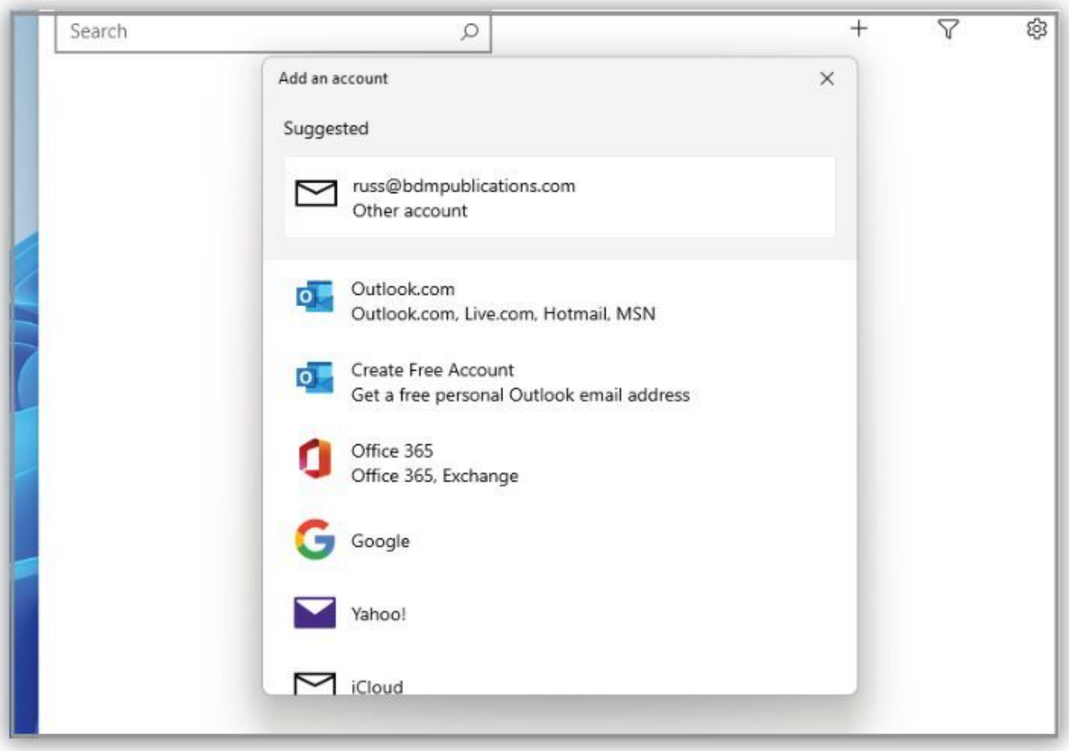


Step 4 The new People app is significantly different from its earlier appearances in Windows 10. It still connects to the various apps within Windows that utilise contacts, such as Skype, Teams and so on, but it looks and behaves radically different.

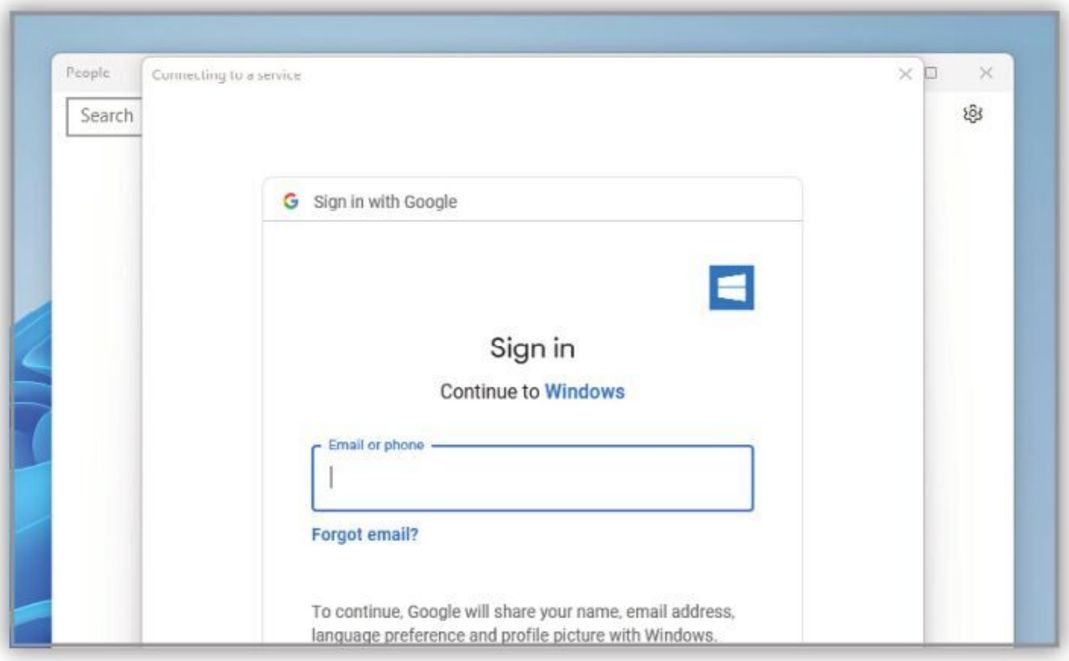


Manage Your Contacts in Windows 11

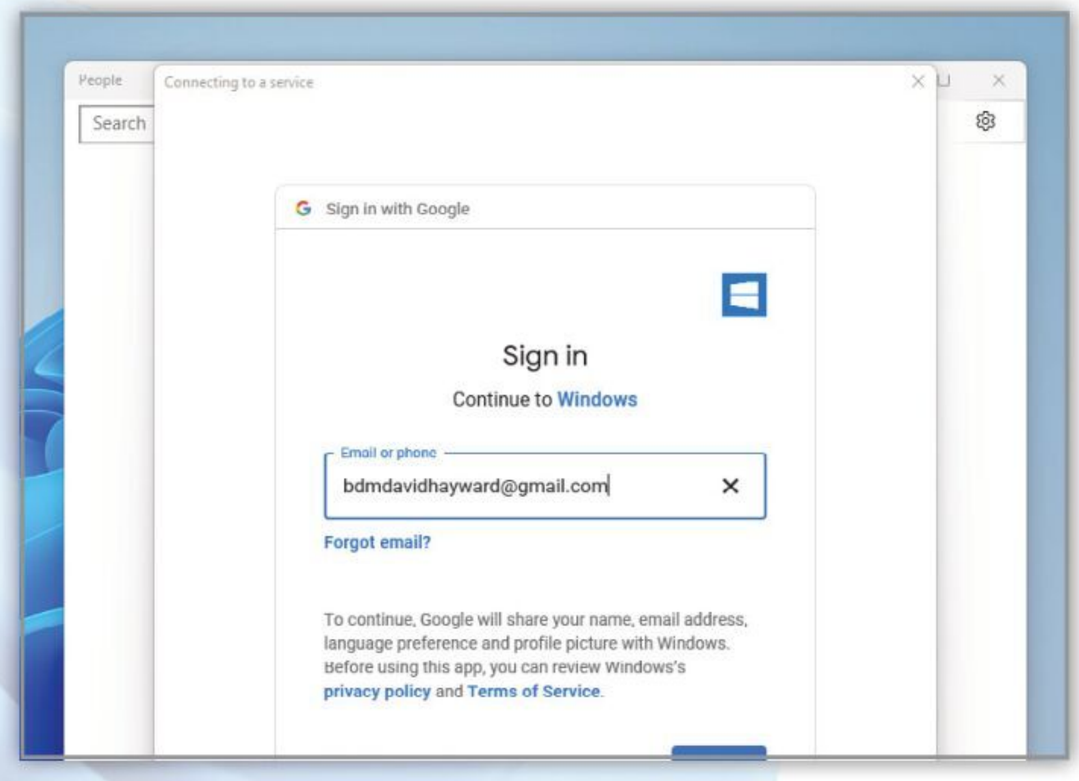
Step 5 The first things you'll probably want to do is import your contacts from other sources. As you'll no doubt notice, there's a handy Import Contacts button on the People app window. Click it, to begin the process.



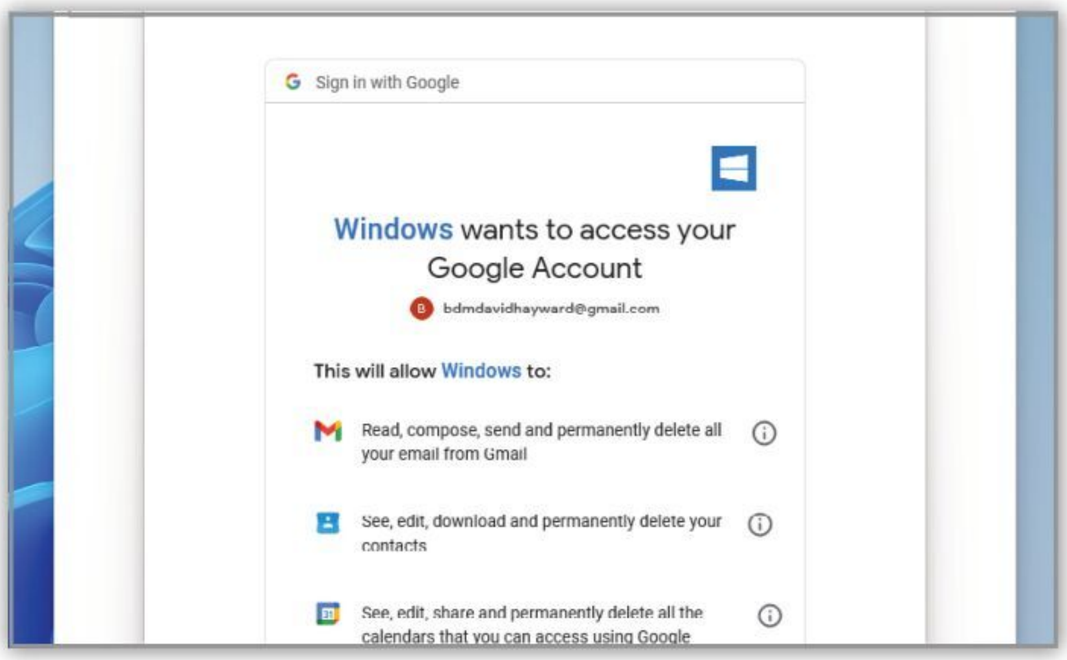
Step 6 You've got a selection of different sources from which you can import your list of contacts. From an already created account, through to Microsoft's Outlook.com, Office 365 Exchange, Google, Yahoo!, and even from your Apple iCloud. Click the source that applies to you.



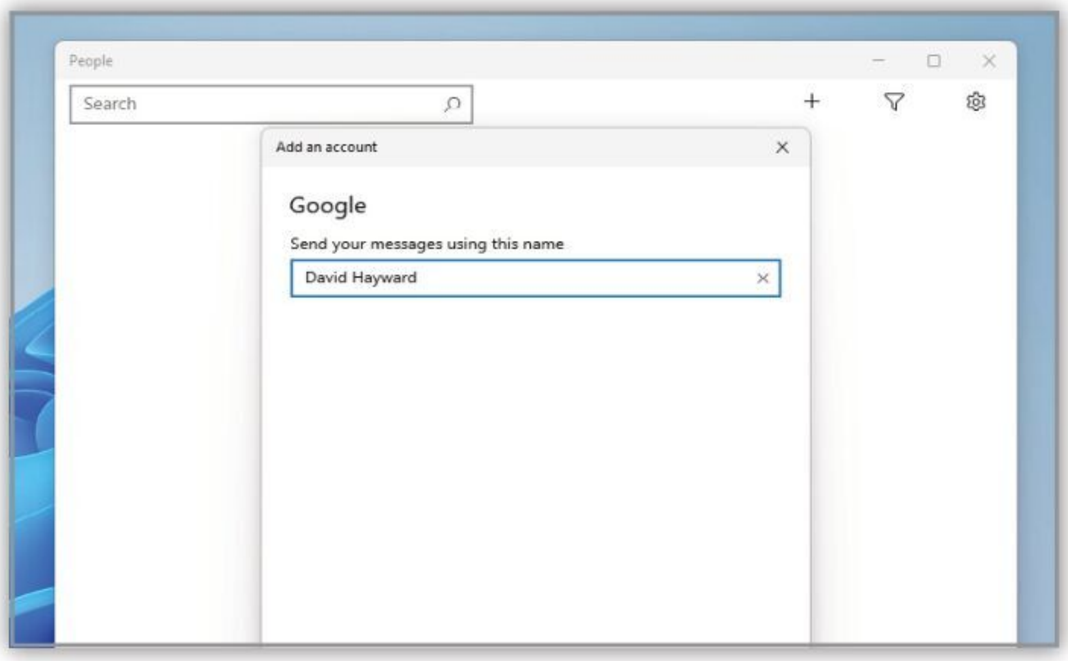
Step 7 In this example, we're connecting to a Google Account. The People app will open the connection services needed to link your Google account with the People app, all you'll need to do is enter the correct information into the available boxes to continue.



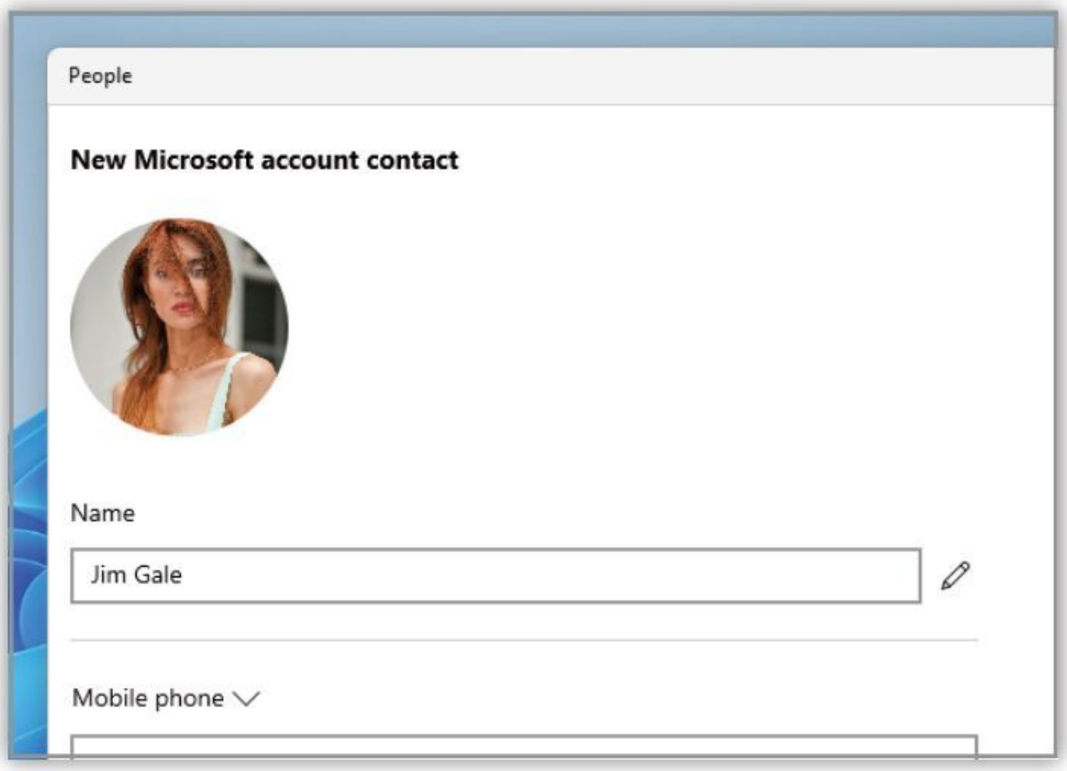
Step 8 The People app will notify you as to what access Windows 11 will need when you've setup the account. For most of us, the legal areas involved are part of the daily routine, we need access, so we have very little choice in the matter. If you want more information, though, scroll down to the Privacy Policy link to read more.



Step 9 If you're ready to go ahead with the connection to another service, then scroll down and click on the Allow button at the bottom of the page. This will open a new window, asking for the name in which to send messages as. Enter your name, then click Sign in at the bottom of the window.



Step 10 If you want to add individual contacts, click on the Plus sign in the upper-right of the People window. From there, you can their name, phone, email, address, add a photo and more. Click on the Save button when you're ready to add the new contact.



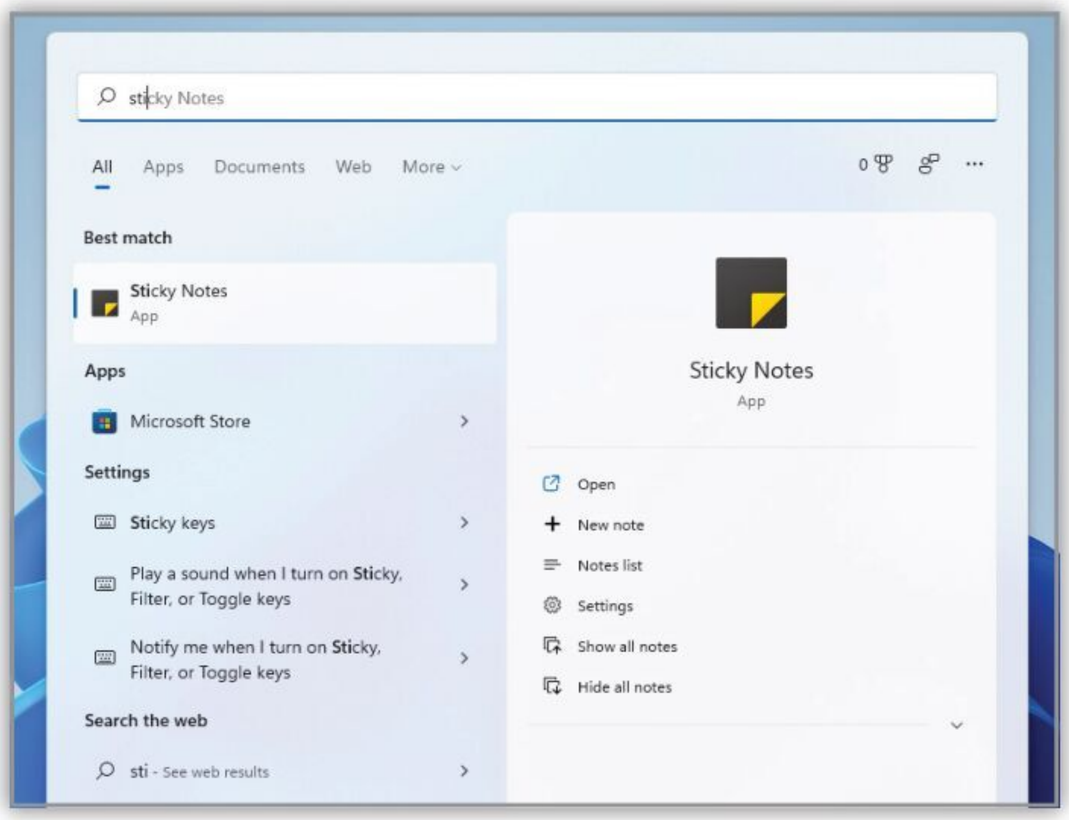
Using the Sticky Notes Tool

There are lots of Windows 11 apps for making reminder lists, but sometimes you just need a simple note to jog your memory. There is a simple, and often overlooked, piece of software in Windows that allows you to add sticky notes to your screen, quickly and easily.

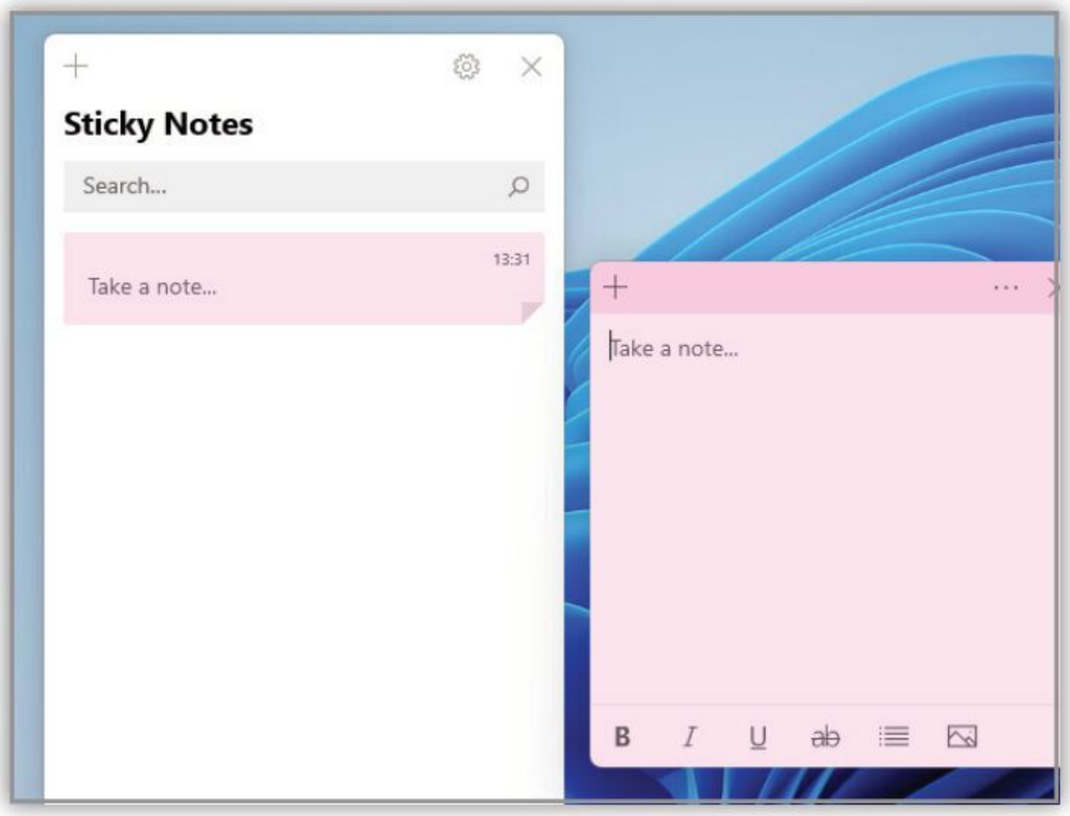
Getting Sticky

Sticky Notes has been around since the early days of Windows Vista, and has evolved over the years in line with the core operating system. It's surprisingly effective, so here's how it works.

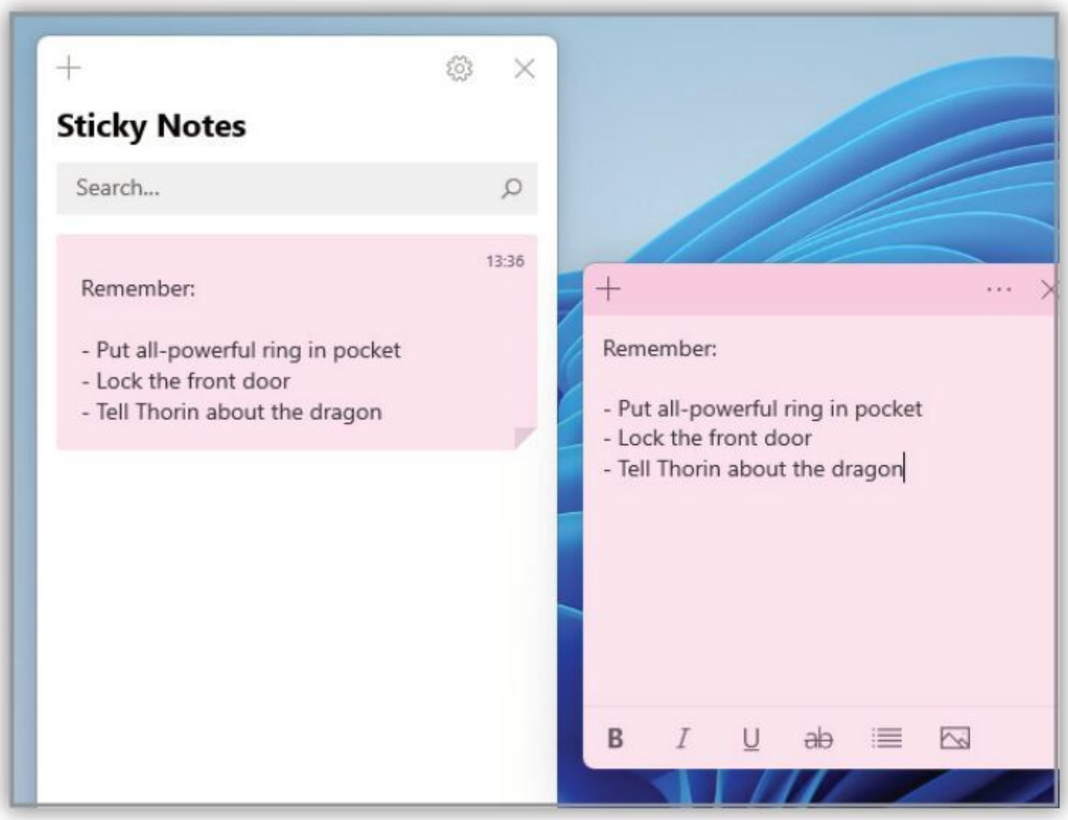
Step 1 Sticky Notes is available via the Windows Start button, or by pressing the Windows key on your keyboard, and typing in 'sticky notes' (without the quotes). Click on the Sticky Notes app that's listed in the search results.



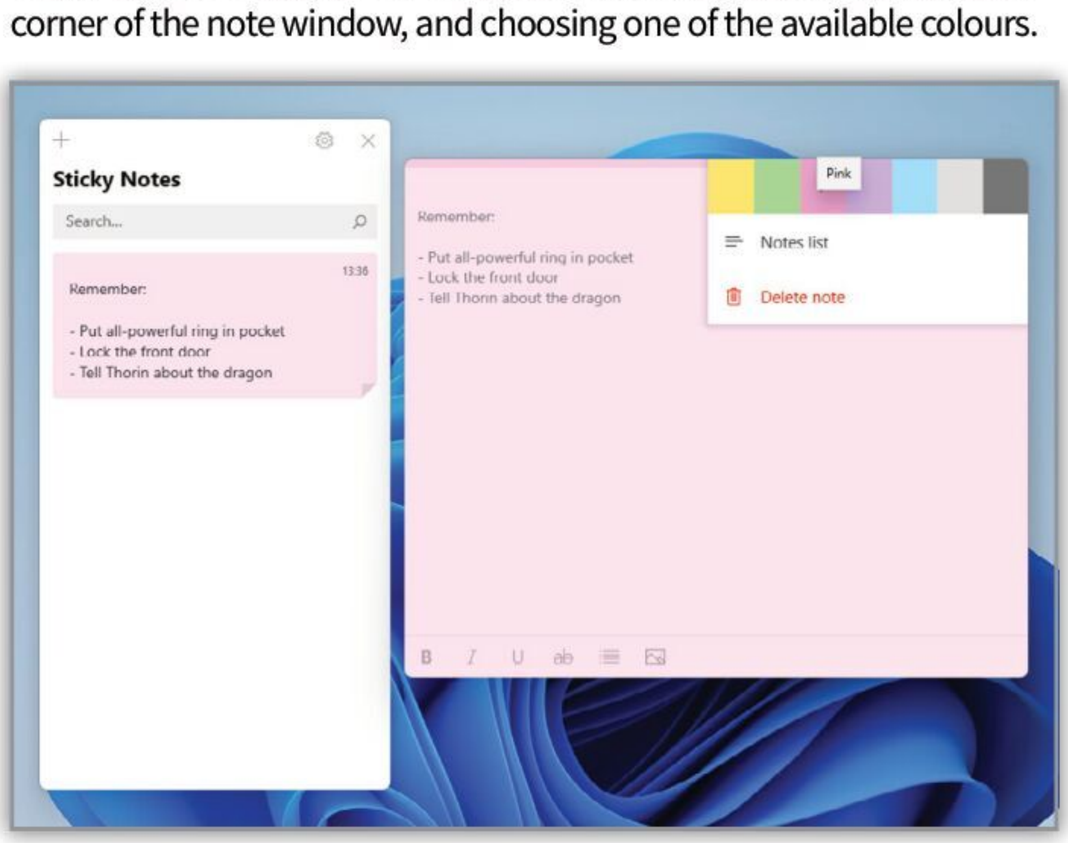
Step 2 Sticky Notes launches with two windows: one is the main Sticky Notes control window, and the other is a blank note, ready to be filled. As you create notes, these will be displayed when you start the app.



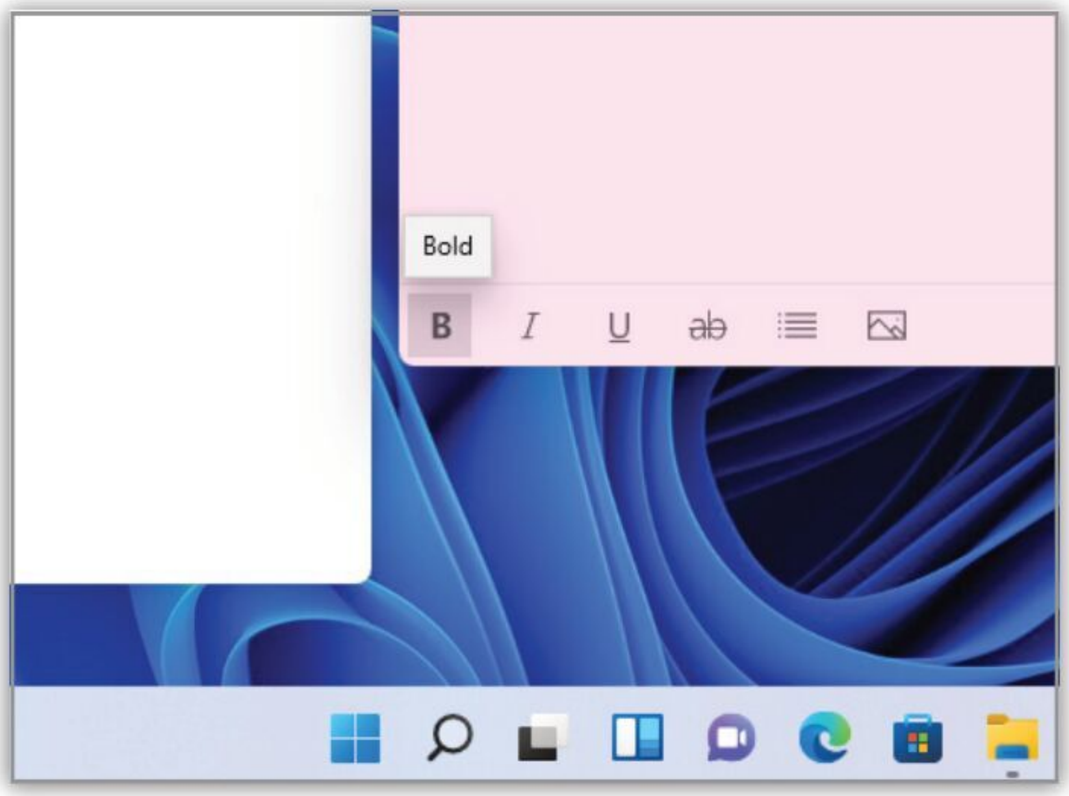
Step 3 To quickly create a new note, click on the smaller of the two windows; the new note window. The cursor will appear where the window says, 'Take a note…', and from there you can begin typing to create your note.



Step 4 As you type, the note will add scroll bars down the right-hand side. You can increase the size of the note by expanding the corners of the window, and you can change the colour of the Sticky Note by clicking on the three dots in the top-right corner of the note window, and choosing one of the available colours.

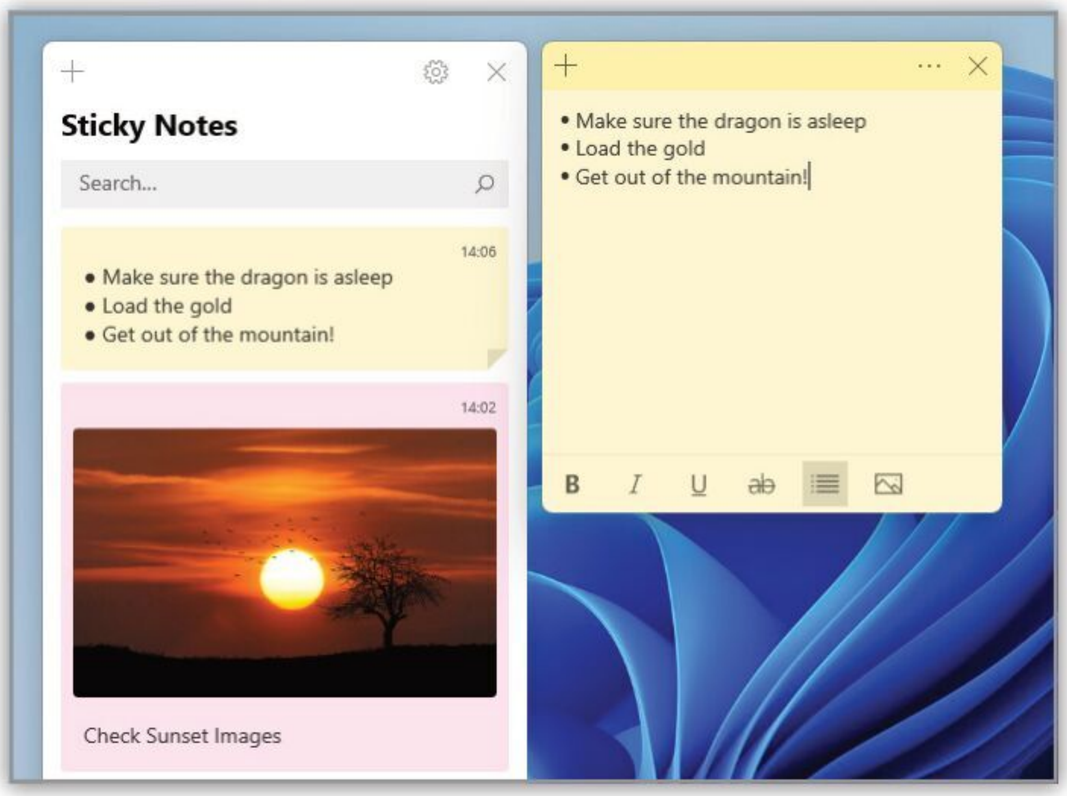


Step 5 If you look at the bottom of the note window, you'll notice a series of options. These change the text type to Bold, Italic, Underline or Strikethrough. You can also toggle bullets or even add an image.

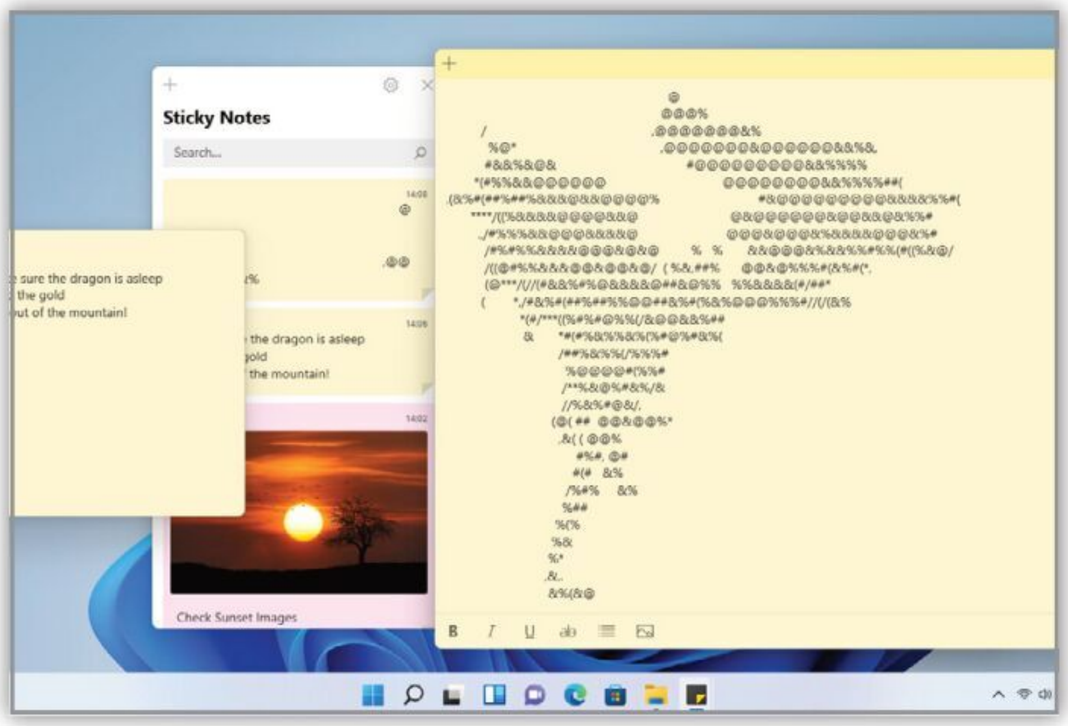


Step 6 You'll need to highlight existing text, then click on one of the text type options to apply the result, or click the option, then start new text. To add an image, simply click the image option then use the windows File Manager to locate the image. Click on the Image file itself.

Step 7 When you close the note, it will be automatically added to the Sticky Notes control window. If you want to create a new note, click on the Plus symbol in the Sticky Notes control window, located in the top-left.



Step 8 You will need to keep the app open for your notes to remain on the screen but as long as it is, you can shut down and reboot, and the notes will remain on the desktop. To close notes, you simply need to click on the trash icon in the top right corner. Close the last note and the software closes too.



Troubleshooting Sticky Notes Image Issues

While Sticky Notes for Windows 11 is a marked improvement over its predecessors, it can still yield one or two problems for those who use it. One of the main issues with Sticky Notes, and this is something that has appeared in earlier versions too, is adding images. Sometimes, Sticky Notes won't add PNG images, but JPGs will be added successfully. If this is the case, you can often get around this issue by copying the image, then pasting it directly into Sticky Notes with Ctrl+V.

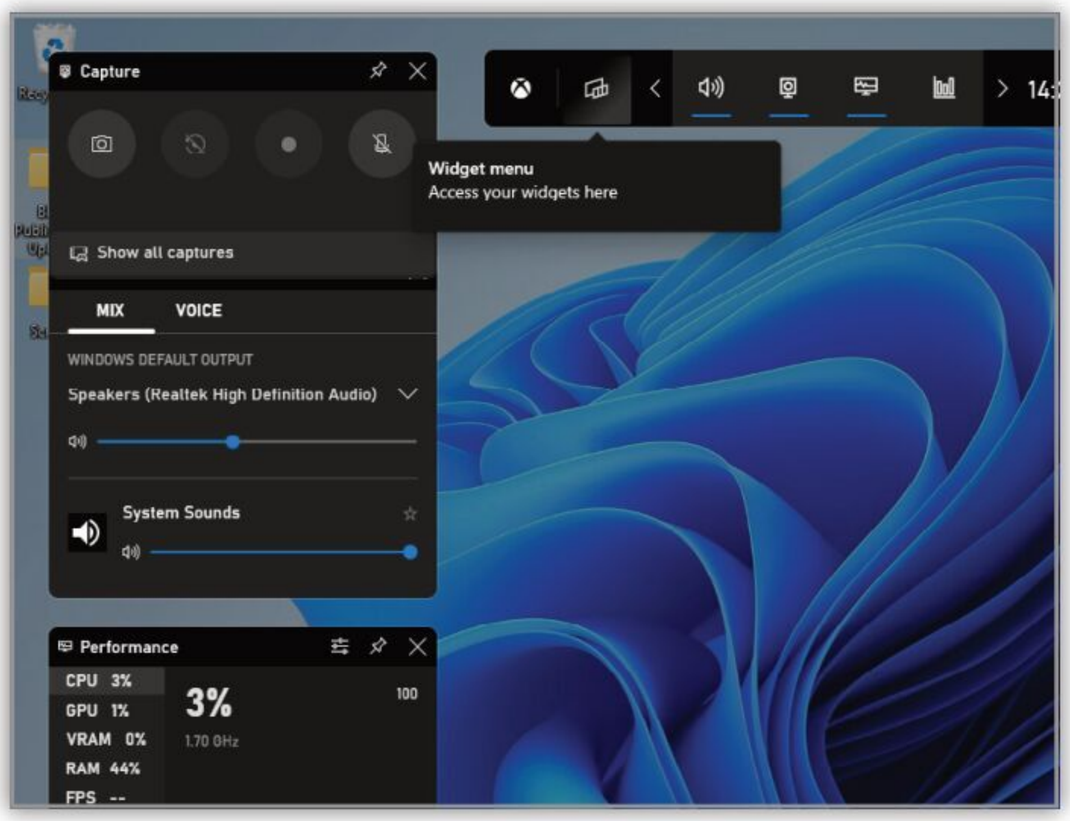
Using the Xbox Game Bar

Windows 11 has carried on the developmental work that its predecessor put in with regards to the Microsoft Xbox Game Bar. There are a wealth of sub-apps within the Game Bar app, and it's well worth looking into in more detail.

Game On!

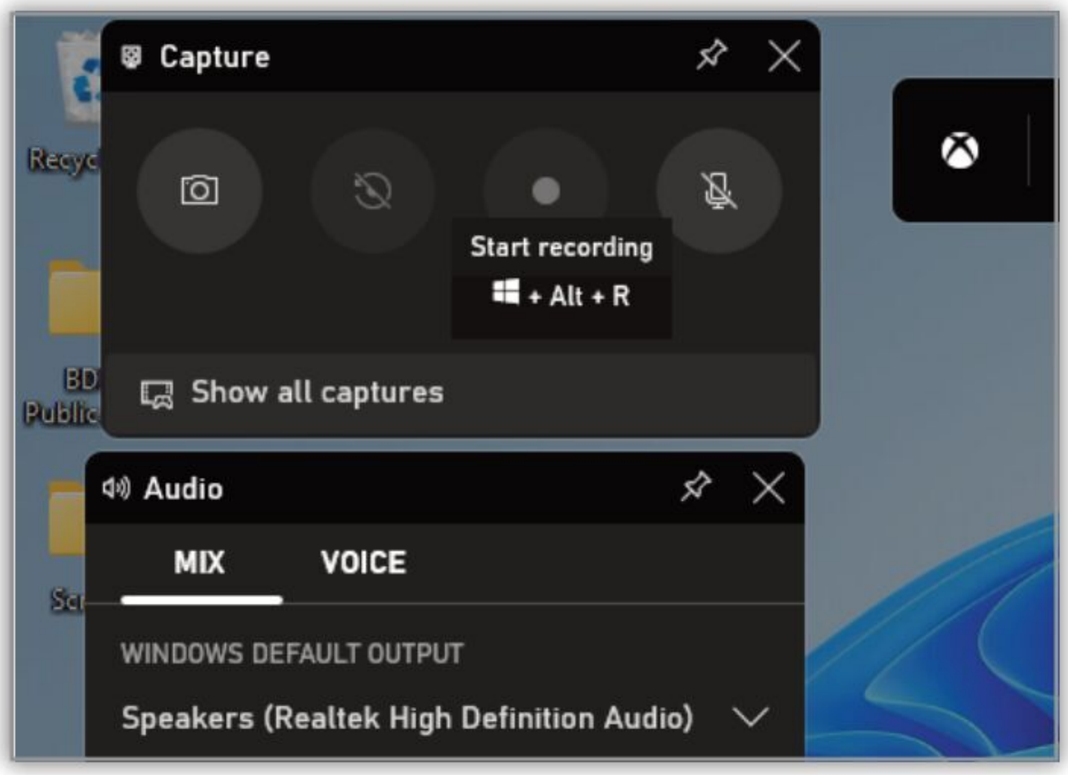
No longer solely about gaming tools, the Game Bar now includes quick panels for volume control, resource usage and even playing music.

Step 1 You can open the Xbox Game Bar simply pressing the Windows Key + G, or by searching for Xbox via the Windows button on the taskbar menu. When it loads it will dim the screen and present multiple windows.

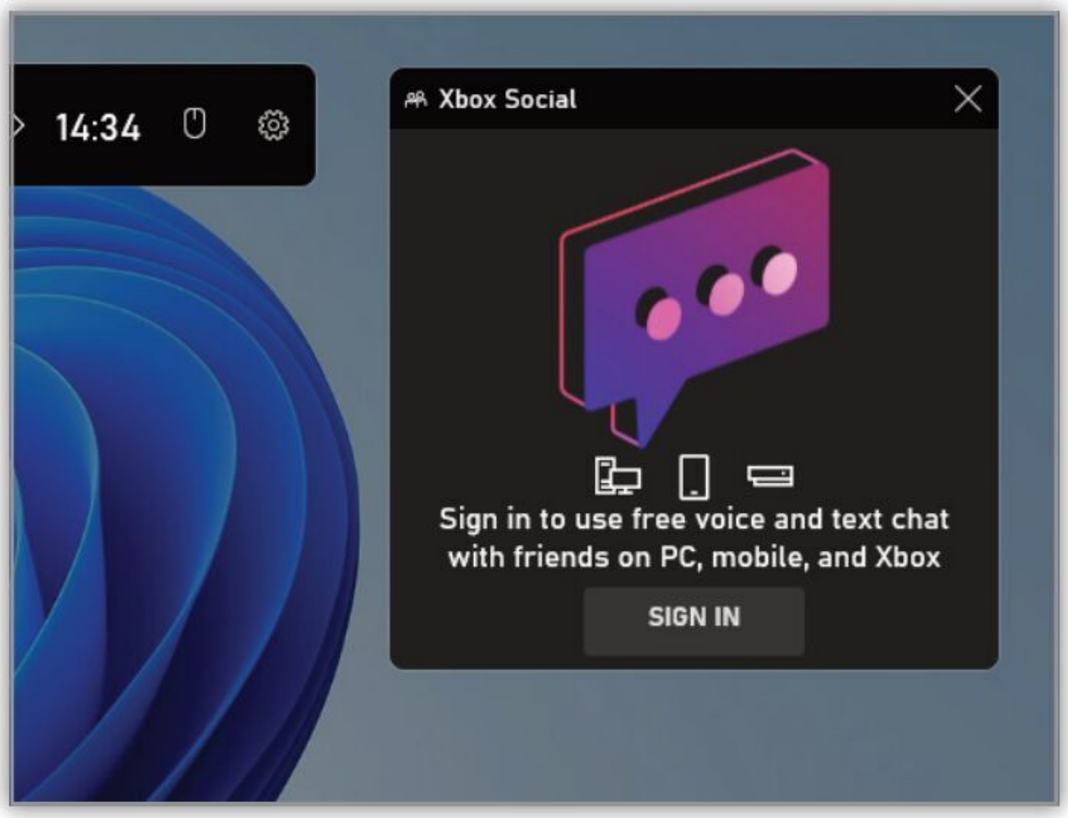


Step 2 The multiple windows can be managed by clicking on the Widgets icon; the 3D window icon located to the right of the Xbox icon on the top, thin window in the middle of the screen. Click the star next to each item to add or remove it from the Game Bar selection.

Step 3 By default, the top-left window is the Capture section. Here you can take screenshots, start recording video, record the last thirty seconds and activate the microphone during recording. You can also view any previous screen captures. All elements are displayed together with their keyboard shortcuts.

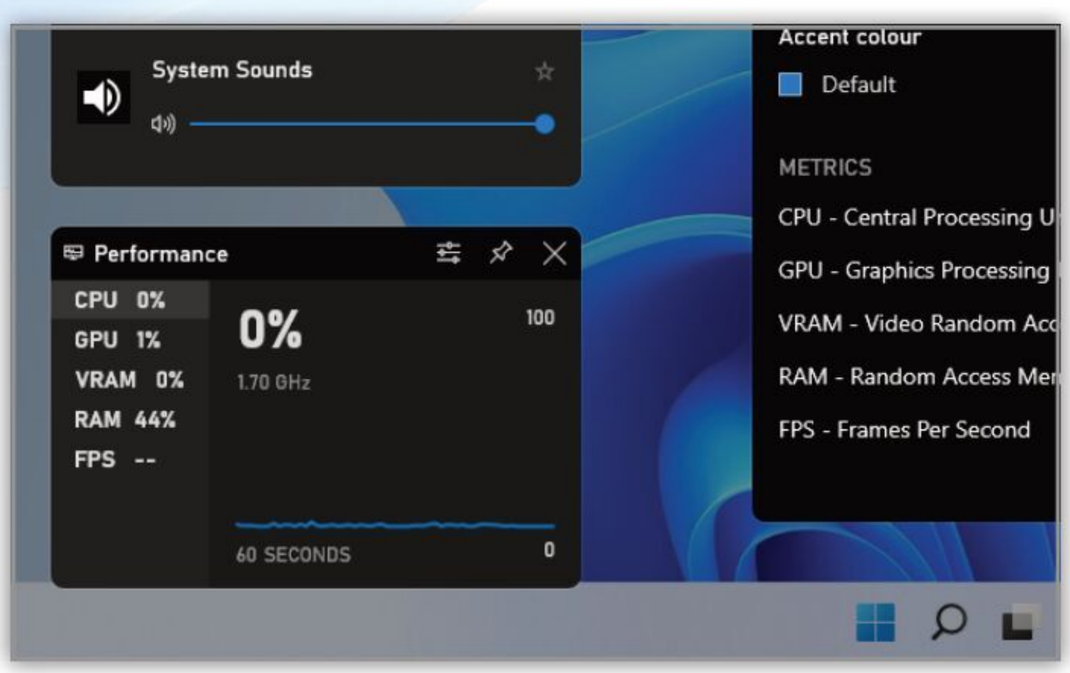


Step 4 Xbox Social is an element that lies in the top-right of the Game Bar windows. Here you can sign into your Microsoft Xbox account, and use voice and text chat across PC, mobile or Xbox with your friends.

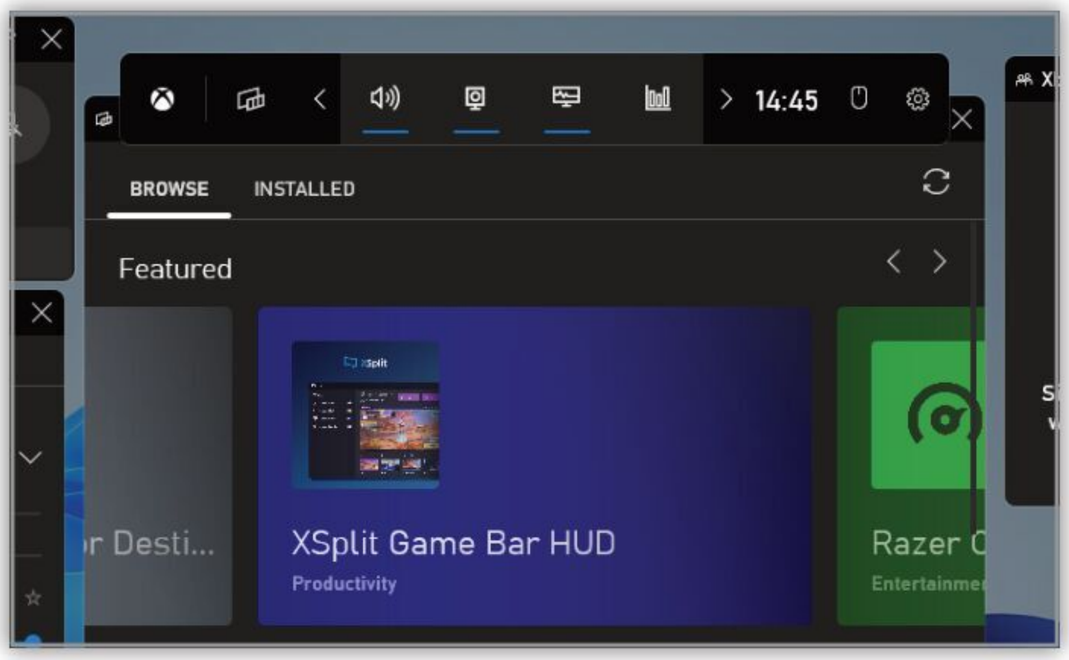


Using the Xbox Game Bar

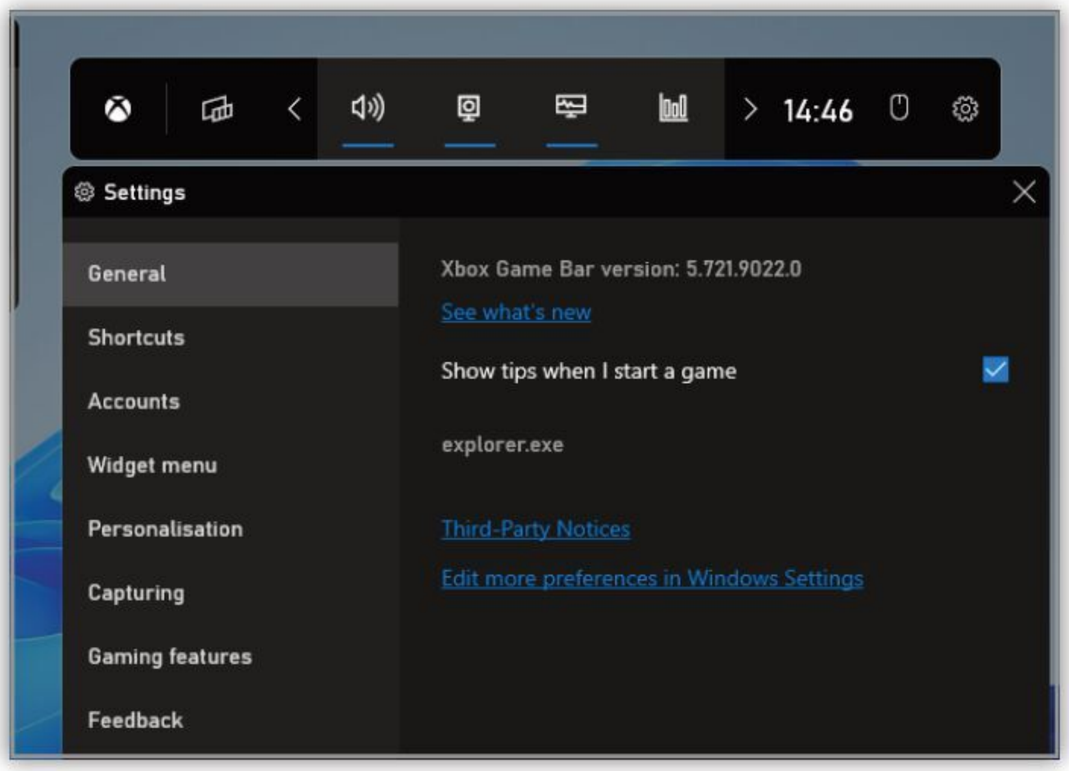
Step 5 In the bottom-left of the Game Bar windows, there's the Performance element. This is a really useful component, not just for gaming, as it details various metrics regarding your system. CPU, GPU, available memory and more can all be viewed as a handy graph. Click the icon next to the pin, within the Performance window, and you can customise the view.



Step 6 If you want more widgets available, click on the Widget Menu, then scroll down the menu to the Widget Store. Click this, and you can choose from a selection of available widgets to install and use whenever you open the Xbox Game Bar.

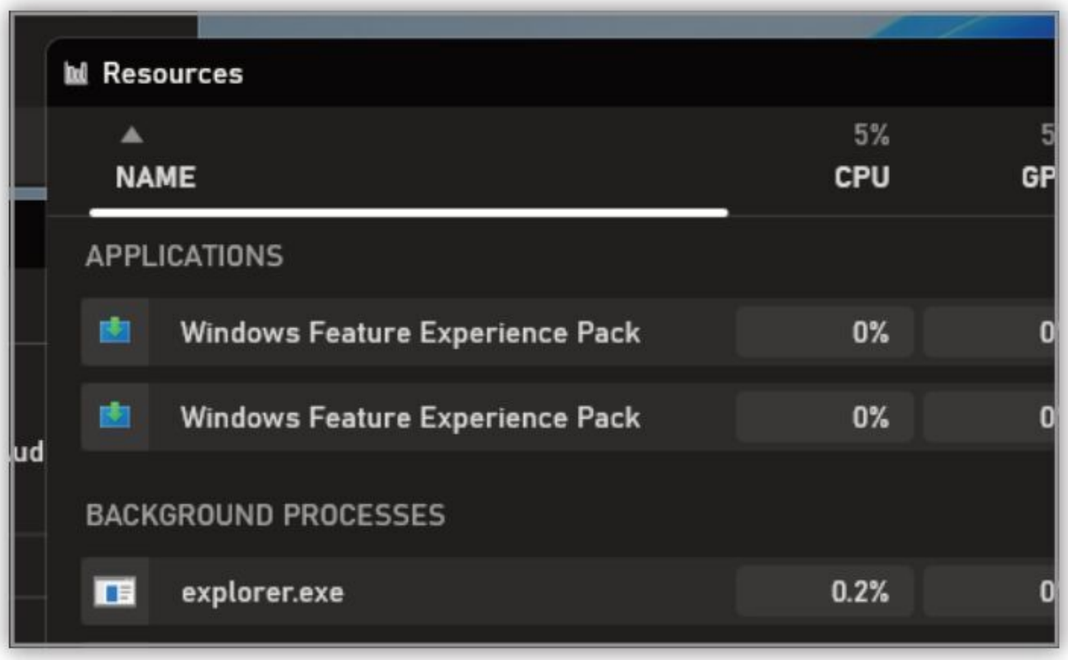


Step 7 You can fine-tune the Xbox Game Bar by clicking on the cog icon in the top, slim, main window section. This open the Game Bar's Settings page, where you can alter the shortcuts, create and sign in with different accounts and change other features of the app.



Step 8 You can rearrange the position of all of the overlay panels by clicking on their top bars and dragging them into the desired position. Several of the panels can be pinned, meaning that they will remain visible on screen even after the Game Bar is hidden. Just click the Pin icon in the top bar.

Step 9 The Resources window, found by clicking on the bar graph icon in the top, slim, window, details the currently open tasks within Windows 11. If you find the game you're playing is slowing down, you can open this and find where the majority of your system's resources are being used.



Step 10 You can close the Game Bar overlay screen by clicking anywhere else on the screen, or by pressing Windows Key + G again. If you want to disable the Game Bar completely, open the Main settings, go to the Gaming section, and use the slider to disable the tool.

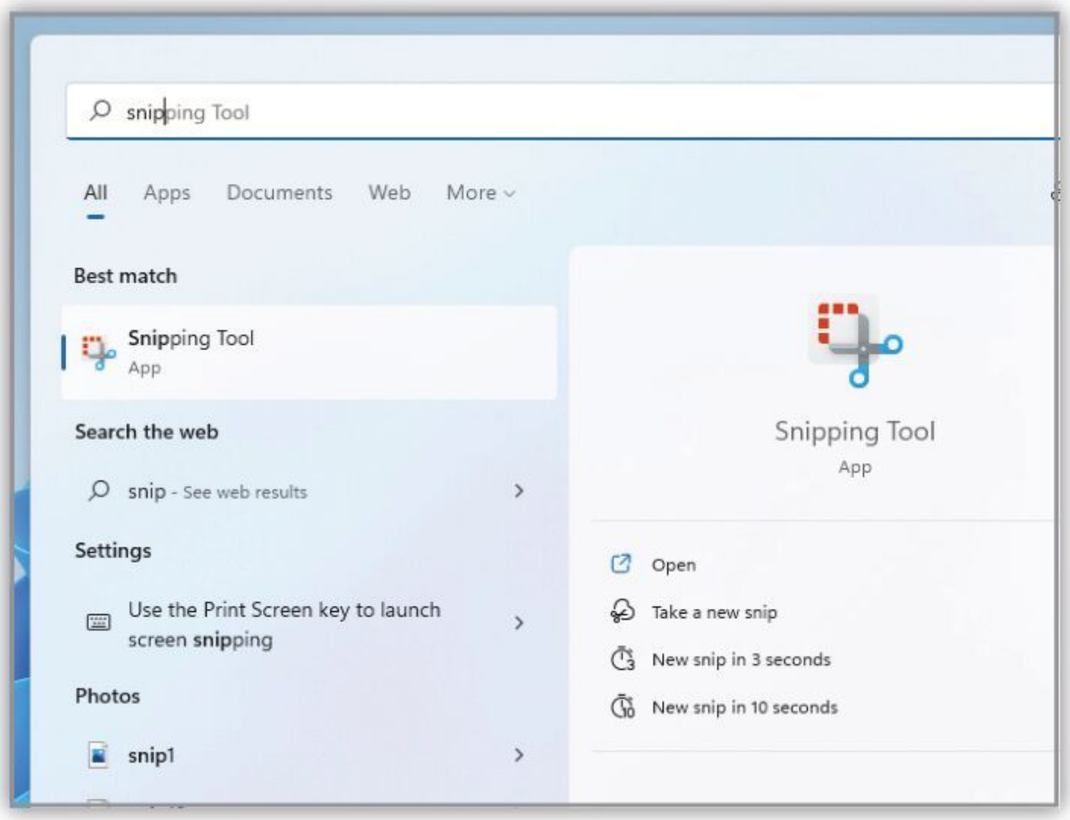
Screenshots with the Snipping Tool

In 2018 Microsoft announced that it was abandoning the much-loved Snipping Tool in favour of a new tool called Snip & Sketch. However, with Windows 11, Microsoft has reversed that decision and has merged both apps into the new Snipping Tool.

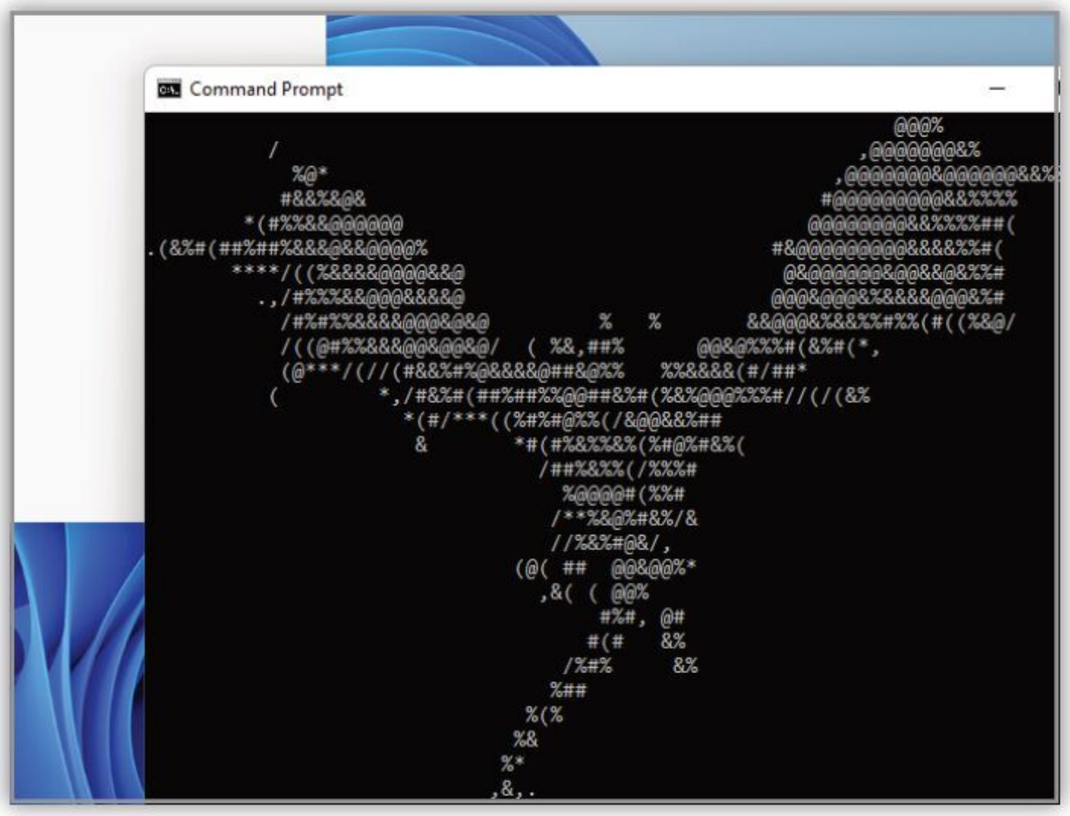
Snip, Snip!

The Snipping Tool is a surprisingly powerful ally in the Windows 11 arsenal. Capturing your screen is an important element in Windows, and the Snipping Tool does exactly that, and more.

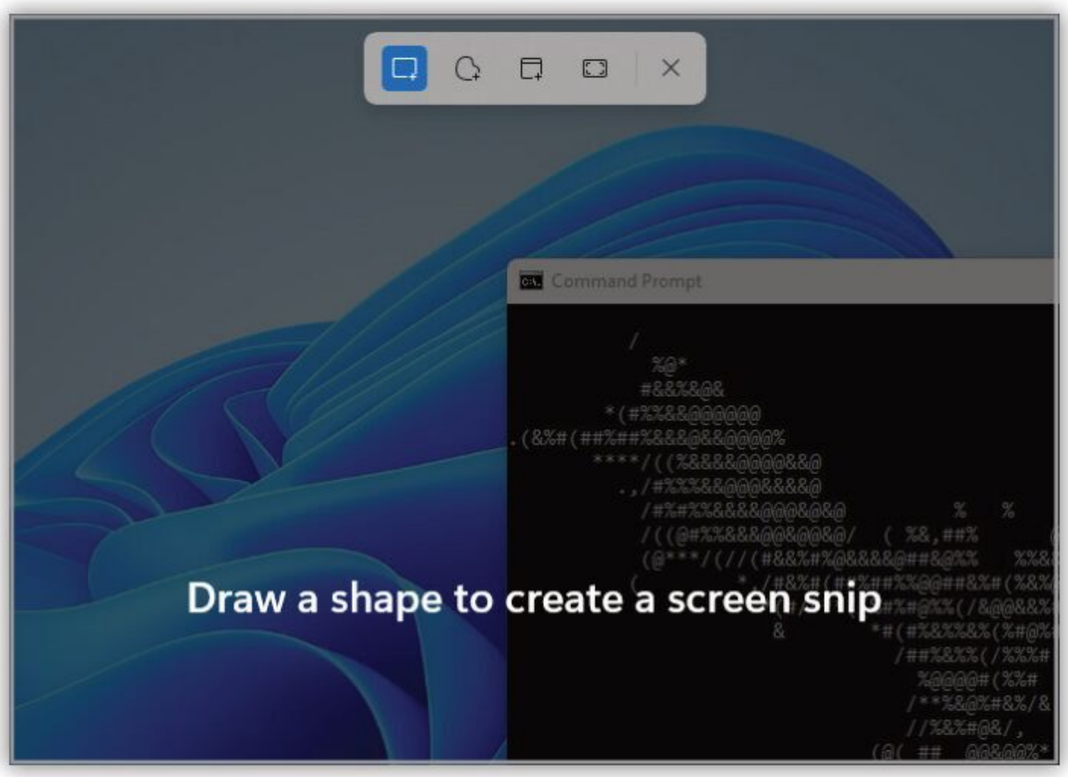
Step 1 To open the Snipping Tool, you can click on the Windows Start button and type 'snip', then click on the Snipping Tool app as listed in the results. Or, you can press the Windows Logo Key + Shift + S to start a new Snip.



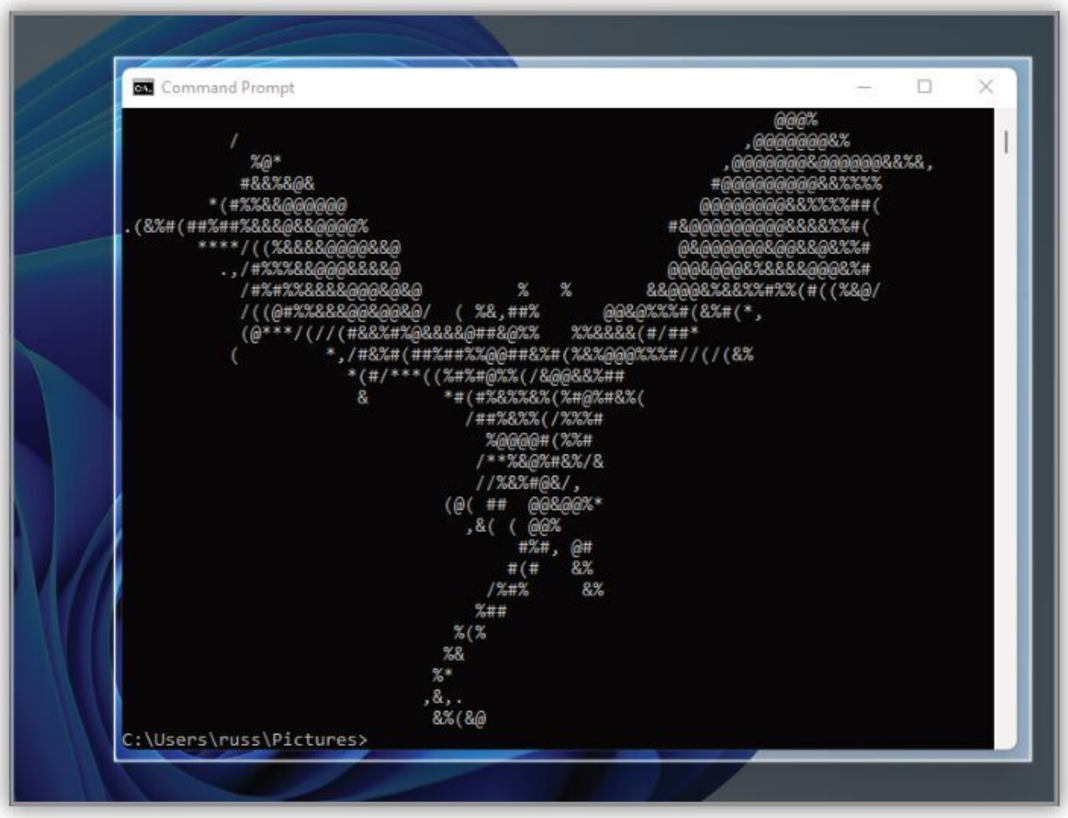
Step 2 As you will see, the Snipping Tool is a merger of the two former screenshot apps. To begin with, let's open something so we can take a screenshot of it. Remember to keep the Snipping Tool open in the background while you do this.



Step 3 To take a Snip screenshot, click on the +New button in the Snipping Tool window. This will darken the screen, and display an overlay reading 'Draw a shape to create a screen snip'. There are some options at the top of the screen, which represent the shape of the area you want to snip.

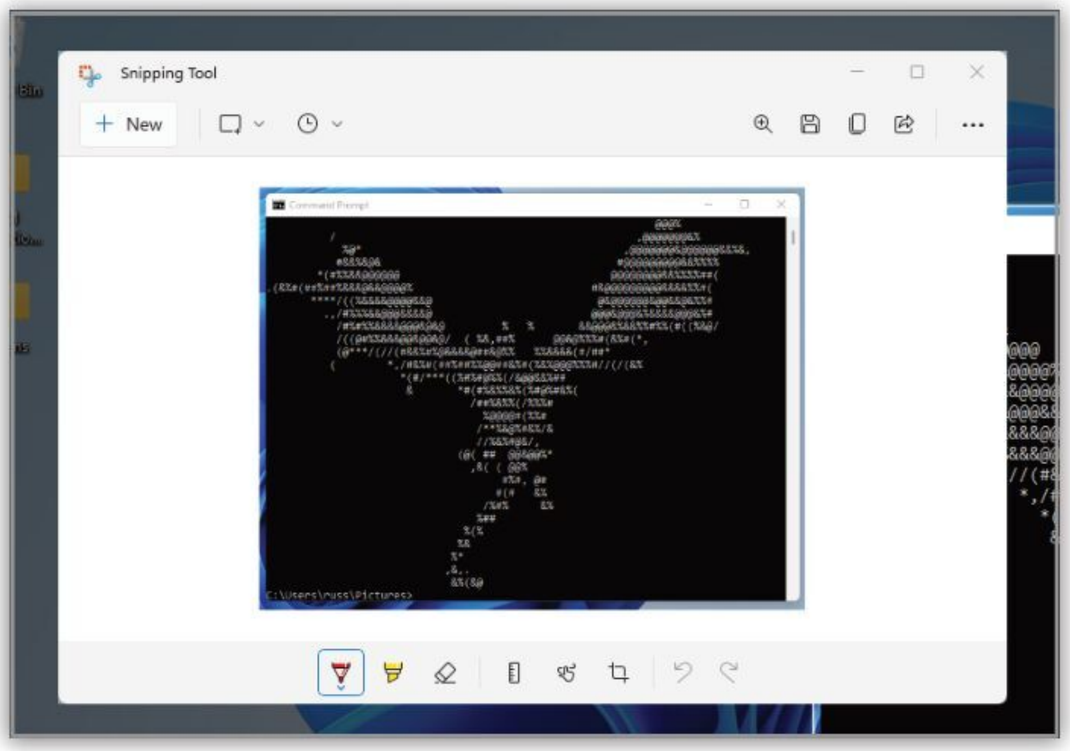


Step 4 Now, using the mouse, and assuming we're opting for the default shape of a rectangle, draw around the area where you want the screenshot to capture. Press and hold the left mouse button while you draw, and release it when you're done.

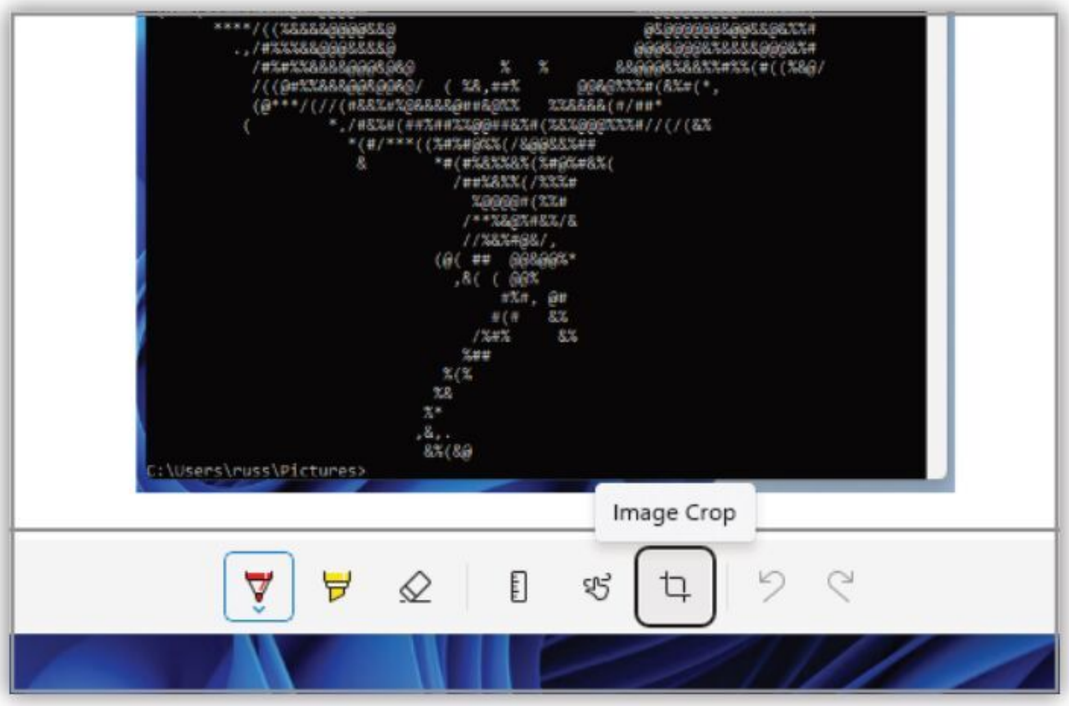


Screenshots with the Snipping Tool

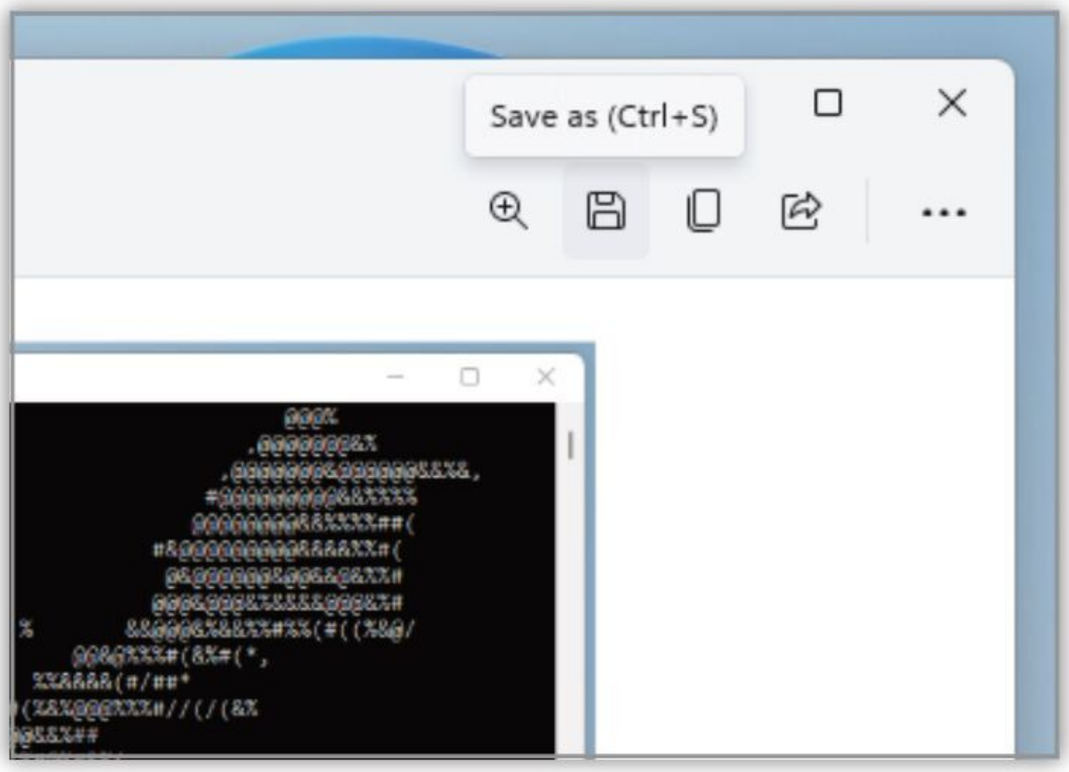
Step 5 The screen area you are capturing will be highlighted – which means it simply returns that portion of the screen back to its normal colours. This is the area that will be made available to the Snipping Tool.



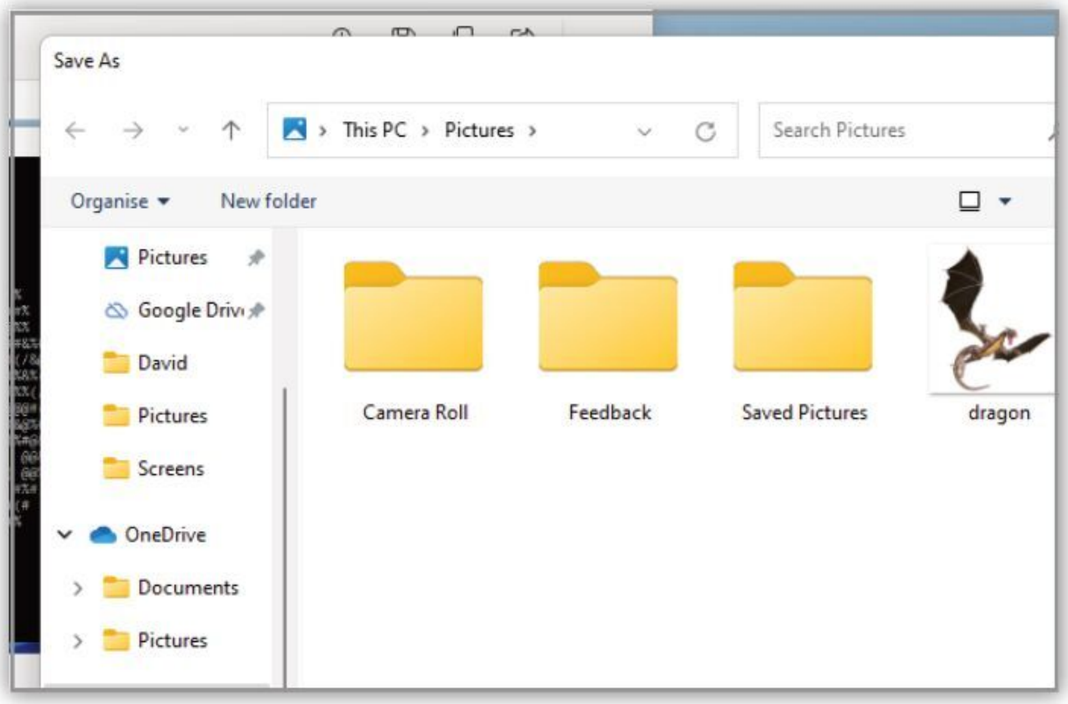
Step 6 There are a number of options available along the bottom of the Snipping Tool window to further edit the screenshot. From left to right, you'll find: Ballpoint Pen, Highlighter, Eraser, Ruler, Touch Writing, Crop, Undo and Redo.



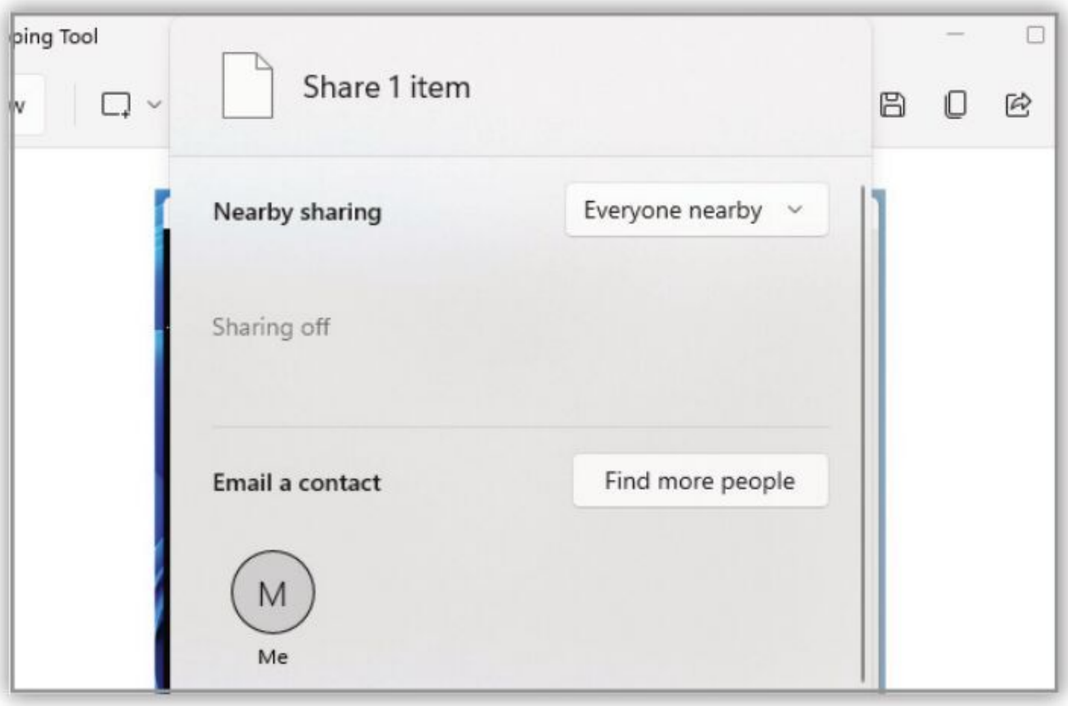
Step 7 There are also options along the top-right of the Snipping Tool window: Zoom, Save As, Copy and Share. The top-left options will have you create a New snip, change the Shape of the snipped area and create a Time Delay for when the snip will take place.



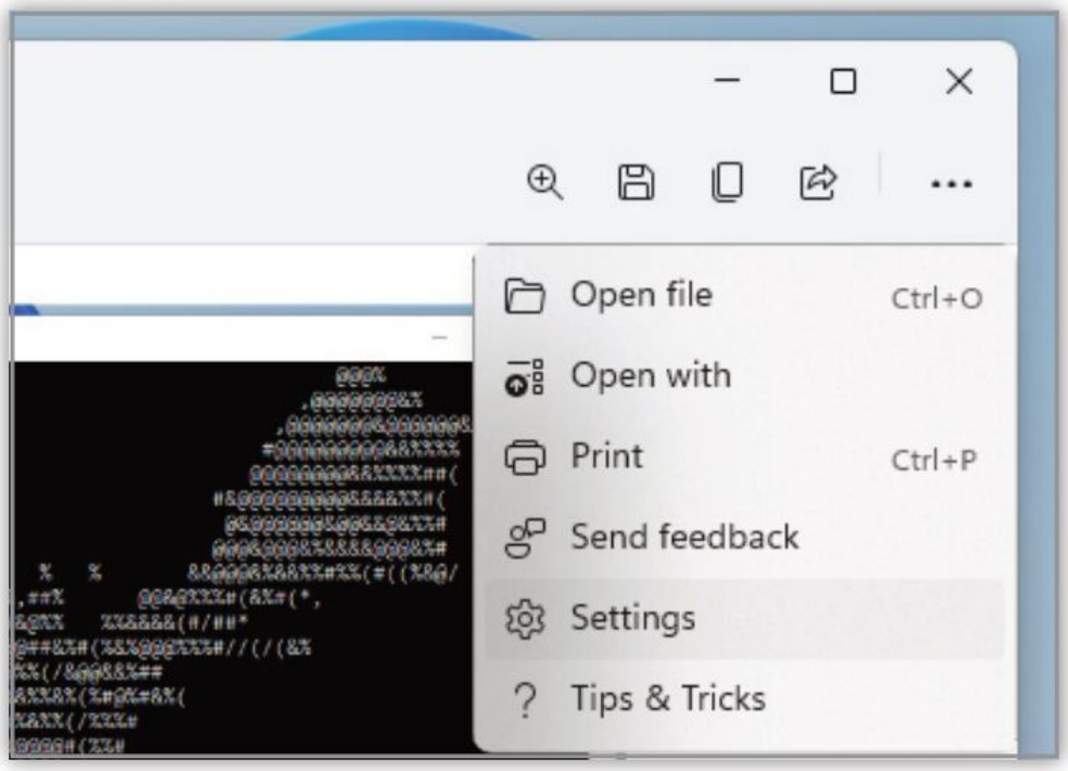
Step 8 Save the captured screenshot by clicking on the Save As button, located in the top-right of the Snipping Tool window. This will open a familiar File Manager window, where you can locate a folder or area to save the image. You can save images as PNG, JPG or GIF.



Step 9 The Share option will enable you to send the captured image as a file to a number of different sources. You can utilise Nearby Sharing, send it as an Email or share it via an installed app – such as Mail or Teams.



Step 10 Clicking on the three dots in the upper-right of the Snipping Tool window will open a sub-menu where you can open files, print, send feedback and call upon tips and tricks from the Microsoft website. There's also a Settings option, which allows to further enhance the Snipping Tool experience.



Installing a Printer in Windows 11

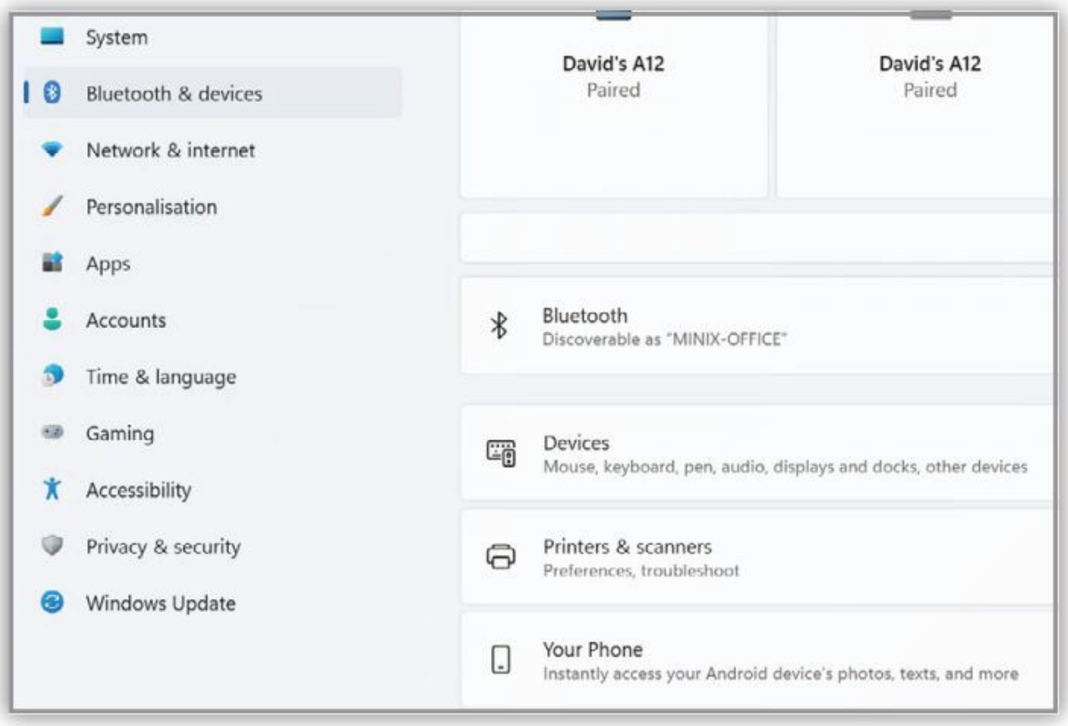
When you connect a printer to your PC or add a new one to your home network, you can usually start printing straight away. Windows 11 supports most printers, so you probably won't have to install special software. Here's how to install printers in Windows 11.

Install a Local Printer

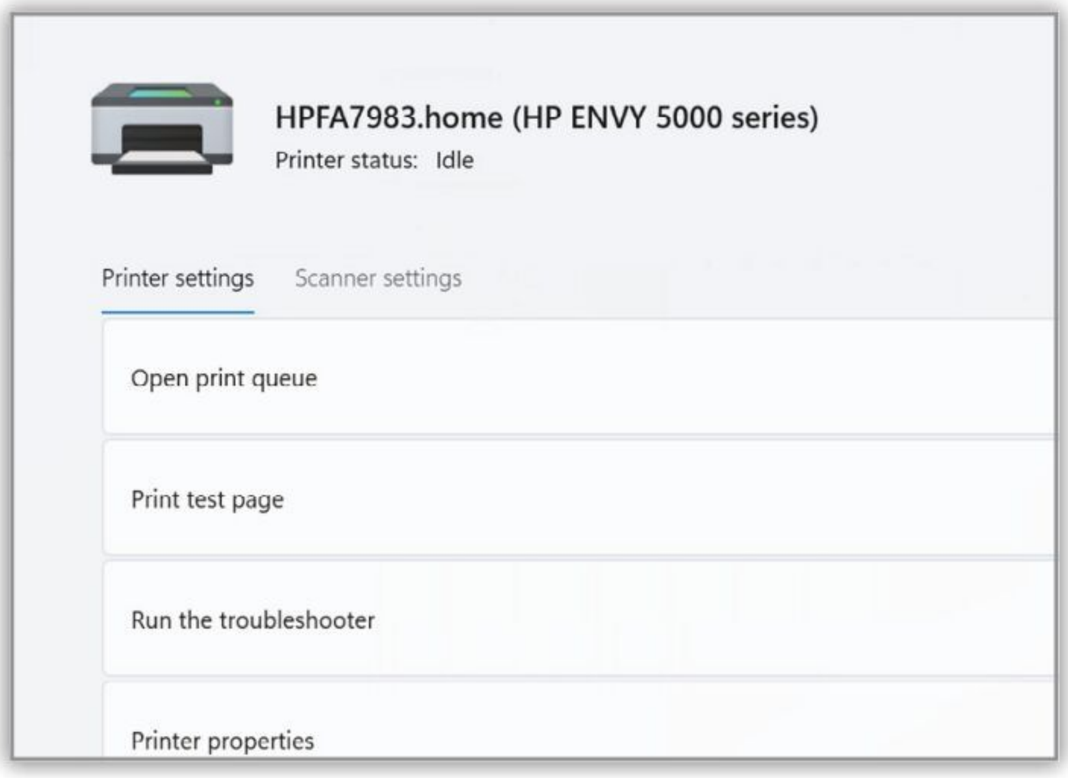
A local printer simply means one that is physically connected to your laptop or desktop computer via a USB data cable, rather than being connected wirelessly.

Step 1 In most cases, all you have to do to set up a printer is to connect it to your PC and let the plug and play software do its work. Plug the USB cable from your printer into an available USB port on your PC and turn the printer on. If nothing happens, try restarting your PC with the printer connected.

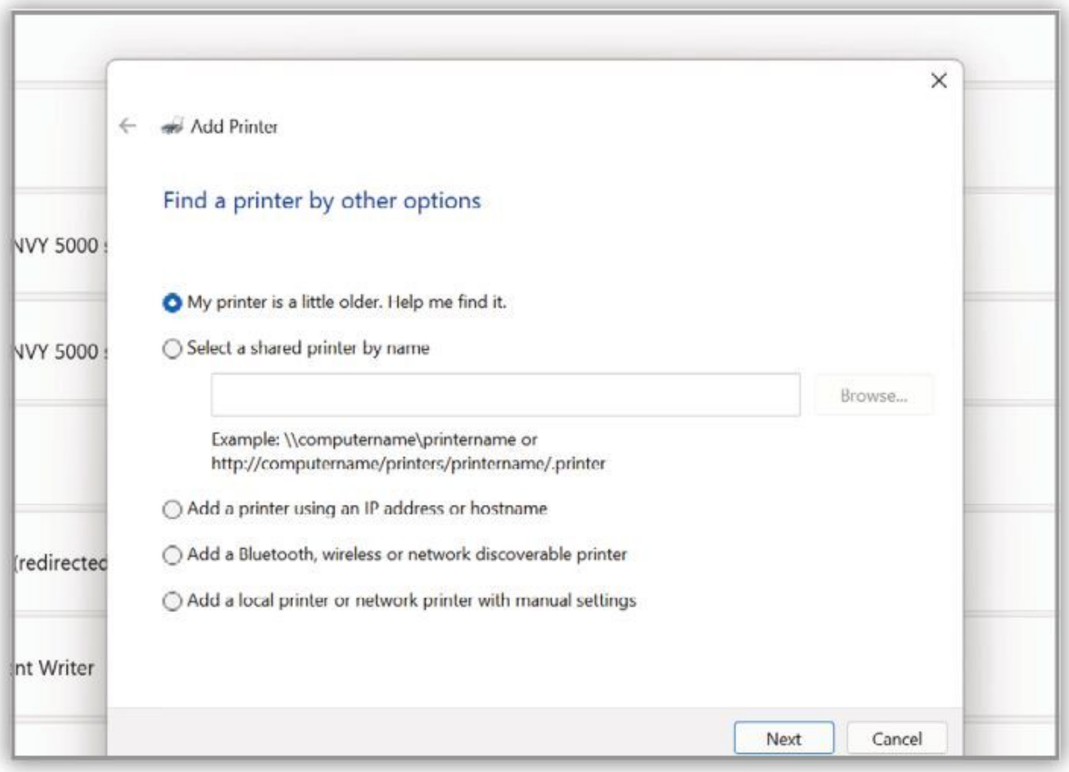
Step 2 If the printer does not set up automatically, you will need to do it yourself. Click the Start menu button and head into Settings. Look for Bluetooth & Devices from the list on the left-hand pane, and click it. Next, expand Printers & Scanners. You should see a list of available devices, hopefully with your printer's name shown.



Step 3 If so, click on it and then click Add Printer. The printer should then be installed and ready to use. If you don't see your device in the list, click 'Add Device' and see if the scan finds it. If it still does not appear, click the 'Add Manually' link that appears with, 'The printer I want isn't listed'.



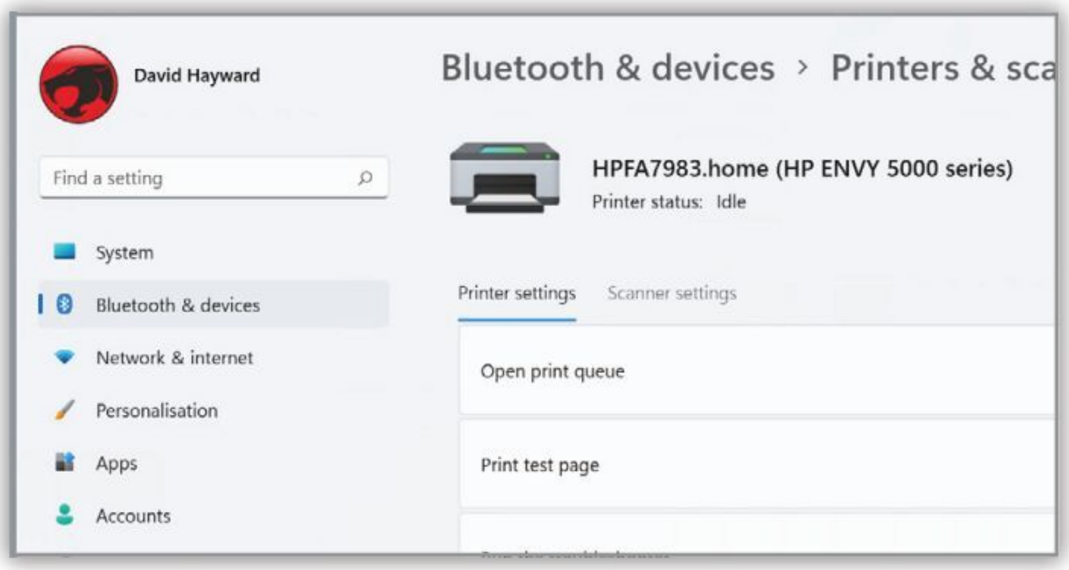
Step 4 This opens a step-by-step tool that will show you how to find and install software for an older printer, or one which is not yet supported by drivers pre-installed with Windows 11. If that still fails, try going to the printer manufacturer's website and download an installer or drivers.



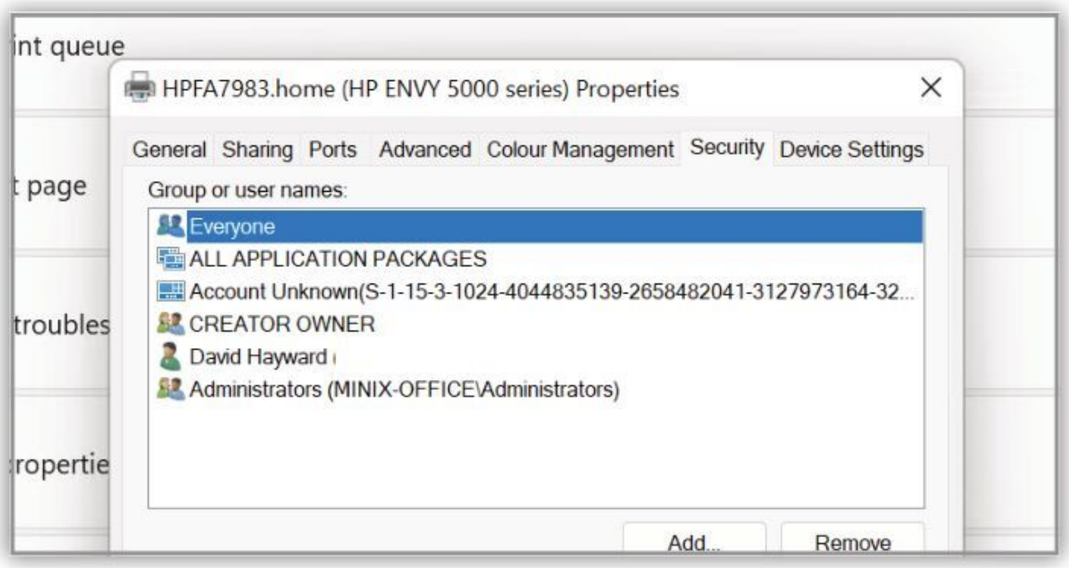
Install a Wireless Printer

A wireless printer is one that is connected via Wi-Fi, Bluetooth or by means other than a USB data cable. This can also include a printer connected to another PC on the network.

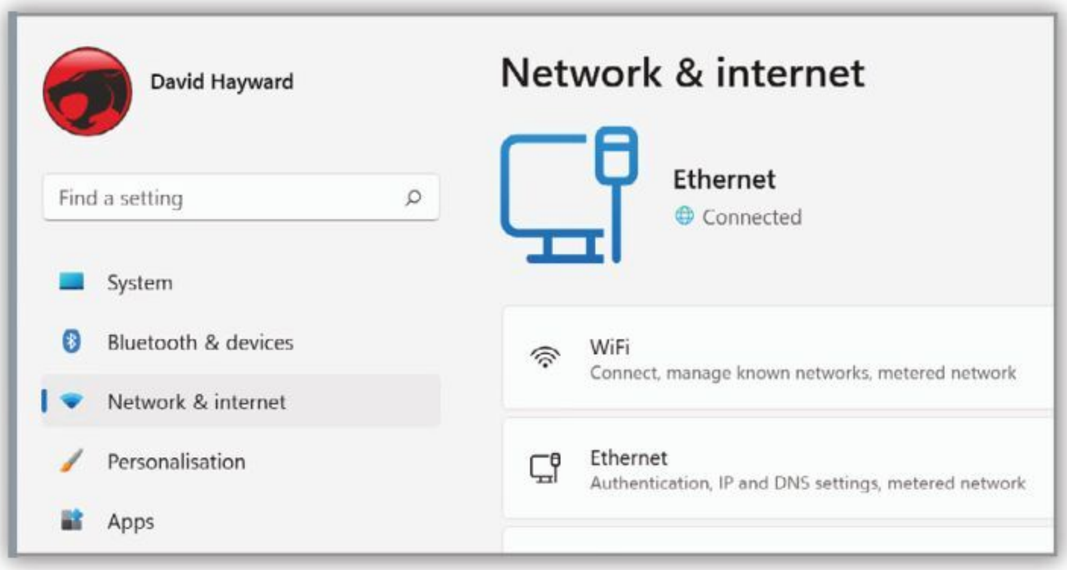
Step 1 Open the settings, followed by Bluetooth & Devices, then Printer & Scanners. Look for your printer in the list of available devices and if it is there, click on it and then click 'Add Device'. If your printer is switched on and connected to the network, Windows 11 should find it easily.



Step 2 Available printers can include all such devices on a network, such as Bluetooth and wireless printers or those that are plugged into another computer and shared on the network. You might need permission to install some printers, depending on the type of network you are connected to.



Step 3 If you use wireless access points, extenders or multiple wireless routers with separate SSIDs, you'll need to ensure that you're connected to the same network as the printer for your PC to find and install it. If the printer does not appear in the list you may need to add it manually.

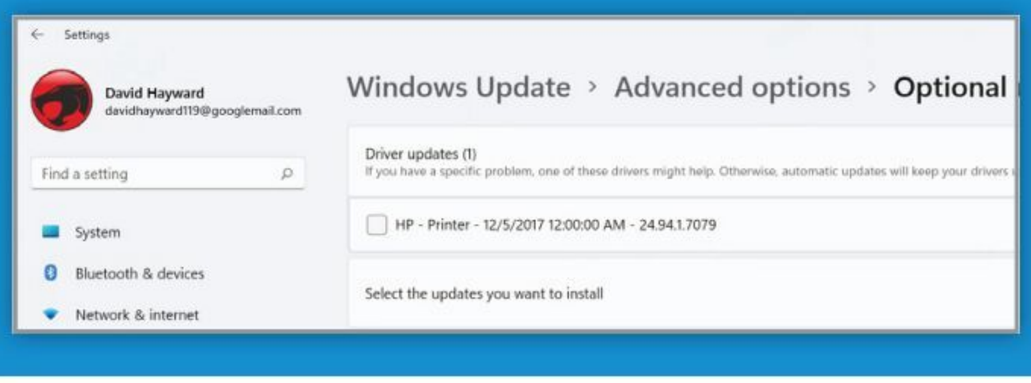
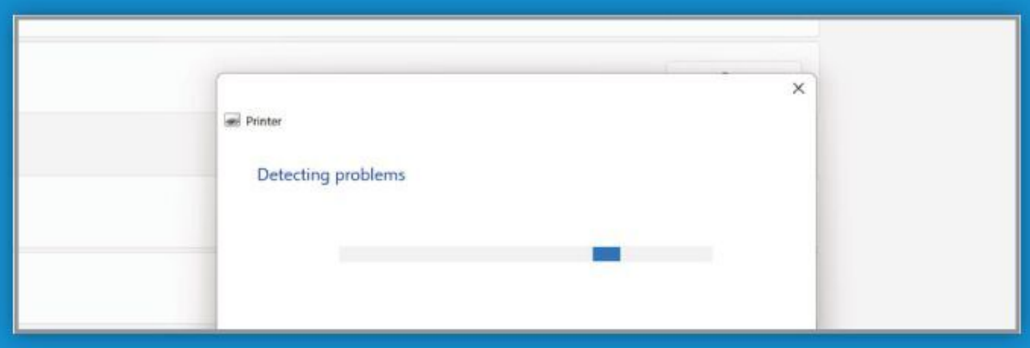


Step 4 Click on the 'Add Manually' link when 'The printer I want isn't listed' appears. This opens a tool that will show you, step-by-step, how to find and install software for an older printer, or one which is not supported by Windows 11 drivers. If this fails, try looking for the software on the manufacturer's website.

Common Printer Problems

Printers are getting easier and easier to install, thanks to plug and play software, but if you are having problems do these two things first.

Check for Old Drivers Most printers require driver software to work properly. If you recently upgraded from one version of Windows to another, it's possible that the current printer driver is for the previous version of Windows and may not work (or work well) with Windows 11. Check Windows Update for new drivers.



Run the Troubleshooter Head in to settings > Update & Security > Troubleshoot and run the Printer Troubleshooter. You can also type 'Printing problem' into the search box, select the search result labelled 'Help from Microsoft' and then select the troubleshooter to download it.