

News & Tips

Features of Microsoft Edge

There's no doubt about it, Microsoft Edge is still trying to catch up with its rivals. Mozilla Firefox, Google Chrome and even Edge's predecessor Internet Explorer all have features that Edge still lacks.

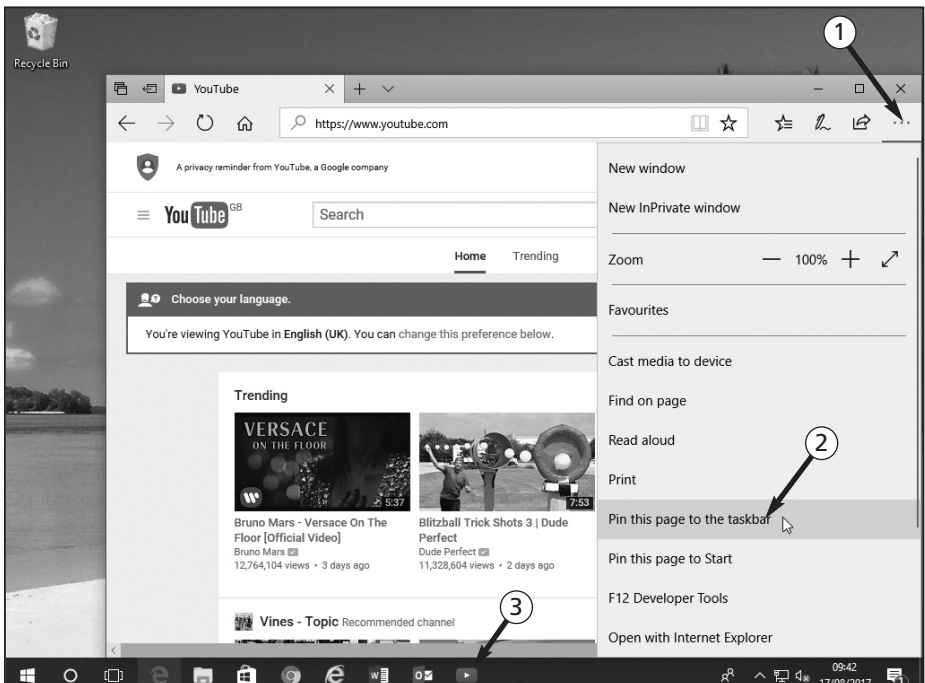
Edge still lags behind its rivals

However, with the Fall Creators Update which should be landing on the PCs of Windows 10 users anytime now, Microsoft Edge has gained a couple of very helpful features.

But it's gaining features

The first is that you can now 'pin' your favourite web pages to the Windows taskbar – the same place you pin your favourite programs:

Pin favourite web pages to the taskbar



The taskbar shows the site's own icon

When you arrive at a website, click the ... button at the right of Edge's toolbar ①, choose **Pin this page to the taskbar** ② and you've finished. An icon for this web page will appear on your taskbar ③, and that icon should match the website's own choice of icon.



Of course, this isn't a replacement for adding sites to the 'Favourites' section of Edge; your taskbar only offers limited space. However, it's ideal for the handful of websites you visit frequently – YouTube (as in the screenshot above) or BBC iPlayer, your webmail (email) website, the sign-in page of your online banking website, a favourite online newspaper...

When you click one of these web icons you've pinned to your taskbar, the web page opens in a new tab in the Microsoft Edge window that's currently open (or, if Edge isn't running, it will start and take you straight to this page).

Remove an unwanted icon

If you want to remove one of these icons from the taskbar, just right-click it and choose **Unpin from taskbar**.

View web pages in 'full screen' mode

The second feature is something that all web browsers have offered for years: a 'full screen' mode in which your entire screen is replaced by the web page. In this mode, the browser's address box and toolbars disappear, as does Windows' own taskbar. It's ideal for getting rid of distractions while watching a film on a web page, or devoting as much screen space as possible to a photo gallery or a long article.

Just press the F11 key

You switch to 'full screen' mode by pressing the **F11** key (and switch back to a normal window by pressing **F11** again), exactly as you do in all other web browsers. It turns out that Edge has had this feature all along, but Microsoft – in its infinite wisdom – decided to give it the key combination **Win+Shift+Enter** in earlier versions, so few people knew it was there!

Immerse Yourself in 3D Sound Through Your Earphones

Do you use Windows 10? And do you listen to music on your PC through earphones? If so, here's a new feature to try. It's called 'Spatial sound', and it produces a 3-dimensional surround-sound effect through your earphones.

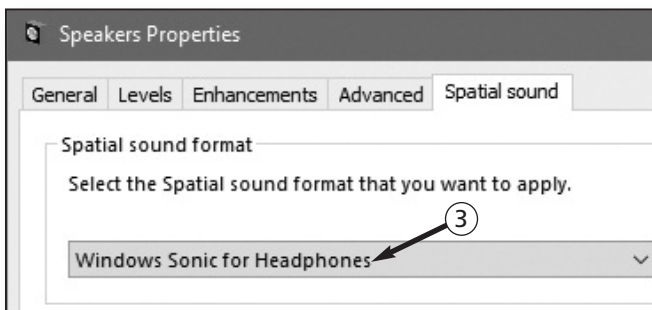
Try 'Spatial sound' with your earphones

To give it a whirl, plug in your earphones and then follow these steps:

1. Right-click the loudspeaker (audio volume) icon near the clock on the taskbar ①.
2. On the menu that appears, click on **Spatial sound (None)** ②. (The 'None' here simply means you haven't yet switched on this feature.)
3. In the dialog that appears, open the drop-down list and choose **Windows Sonic for Headphones** ③.



Switch it on...



4. Click the **Apply** button at the bottom of the window, and play some music to see what you think. If you hate the effect, choose **None** from that drop-down

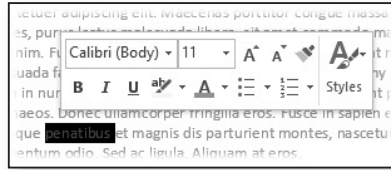
... and play some music

list to turn it off, then click **Apply** again. Otherwise, click **OK** to close the dialog. (Of course, whenever you like, you can repeat the steps to switch the feature on and off as needed.)

Word: 'Mini Toolbar' and How to Remove It

Irritated by this pop-up toolbar?

Whenever you select some text in Microsoft Word, you see the 'Mini Toolbar' pictured in the screenshot below, which hovers over the selection. It's intended to be useful, putting basic editing tools closer to hand (or mouse!) than the Ribbon, but for many it's just plain annoying: it covers part of the text you want to read, or you find you've accidentally clicked a button on this toolbar because you hadn't realised it had suddenly appeared.



Make it disappear for good!

If it gets on your nerves, you can prevent it appearing. Here's how:



1. Click the **File** tab at the far-left of the Ribbon and choose **Options**.
2. Near the top of the Word Options window that opens, remove the tick beside **Show Mini Toolbar on selection**.
3. Click **OK** to close this Options dialog, and you've finished.



If you do dislike this Mini Toolbar, you might like to get rid of it in Microsoft Outlook, Microsoft Excel and other Office programs. If so, the steps are identical in each.