

10 ingenious ways to use the Windows Command prompt

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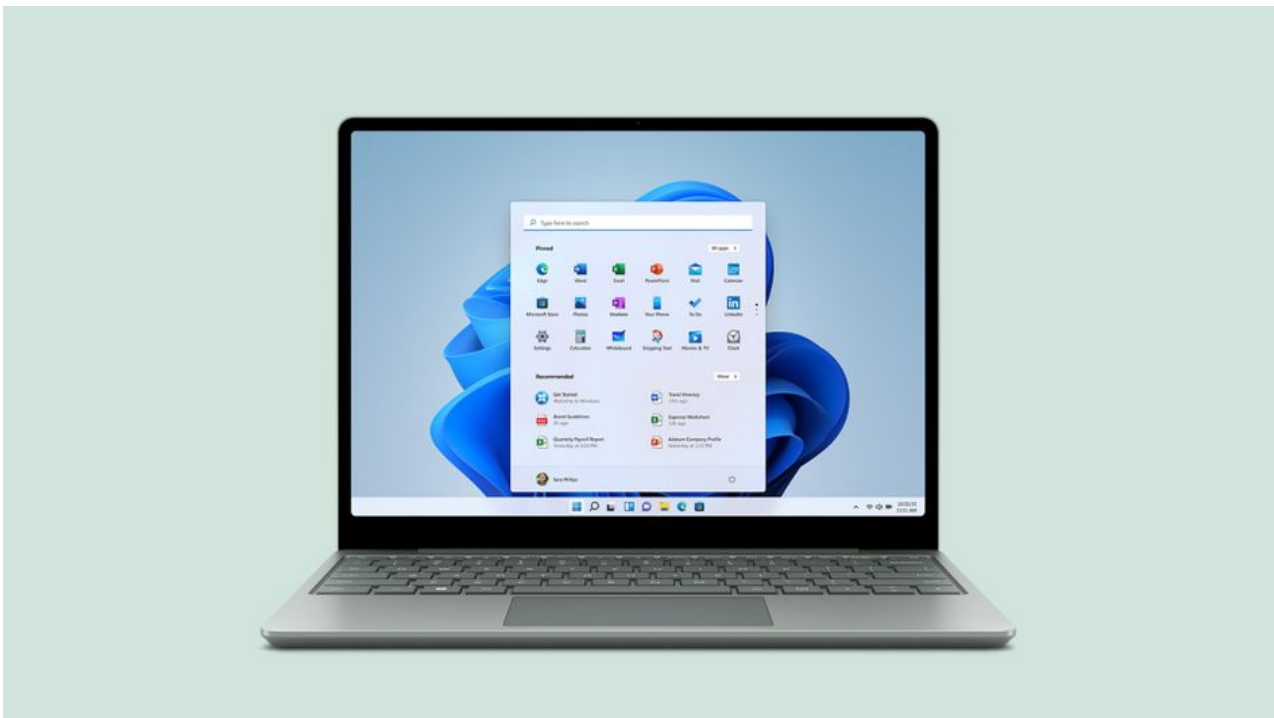
June 26, 2022

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Published Jun 26, 2022

There might be a few methods that you didn't know about



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The Windows Command prompt is a tool that has been around for a long time, yet not everyone has tried it before. It can be challenging for new users to get up the courage to learn how the command line environment works. If you can manage it, the command prompt offers various extra features you maybe weren't totally aware of. The best part is you don't have to download anything else — it's included in the Windows operating system. This guide will highlight some interesting commands you might find helpful for your personal computer needs.

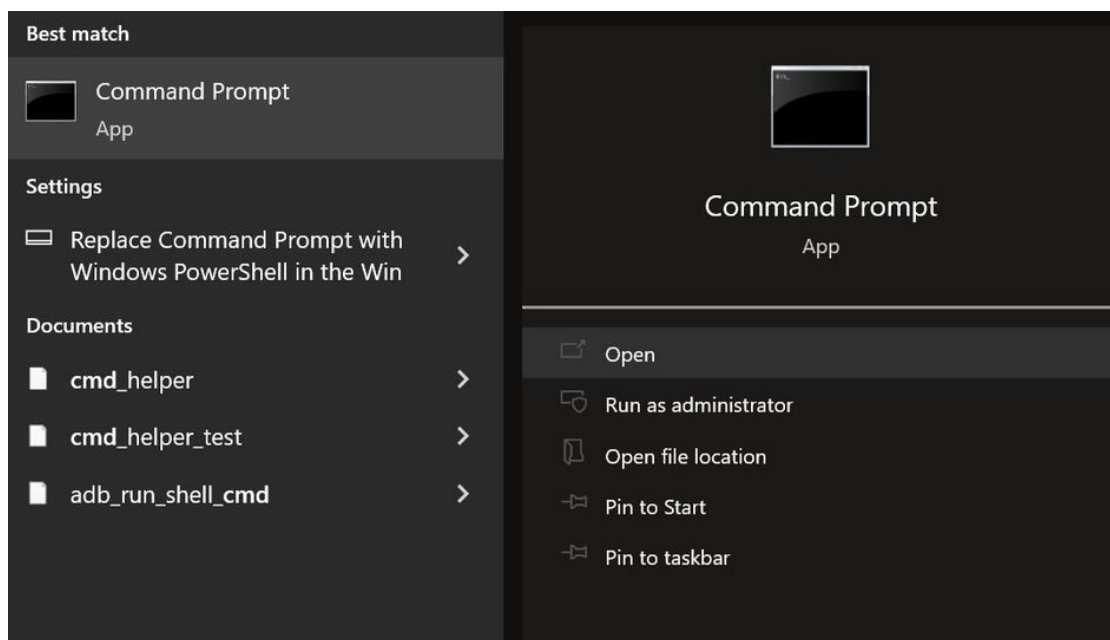
How to open a Windows Command prompt

Launch the universal system command prompt

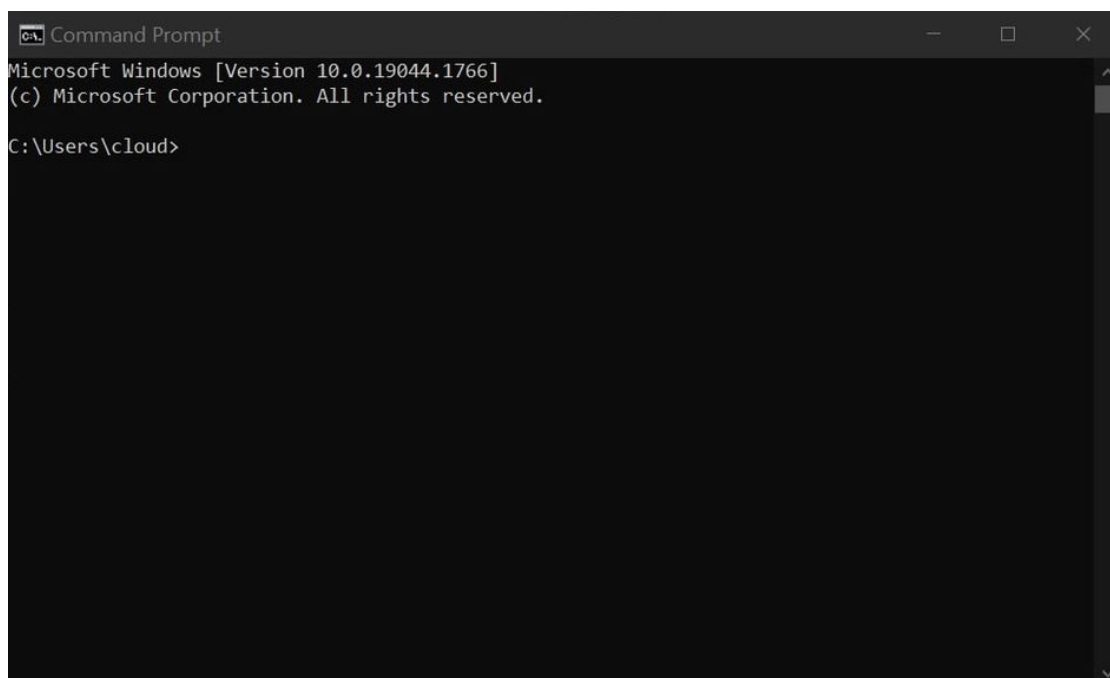
You'll likely use this method the most for general purposes when working with the Windows Command prompt environment. To launch the universal system command prompt, check out the following steps:

1. Click the **Windows** icon to bring up your start menu and type the term **cmd** into the search box.
2. Press the **Command Prompt** entry and click **Open** to bring up the universal system command prompt.

On occasion, you'll need to select the **Run as administrator** option to use higher-level system commands.



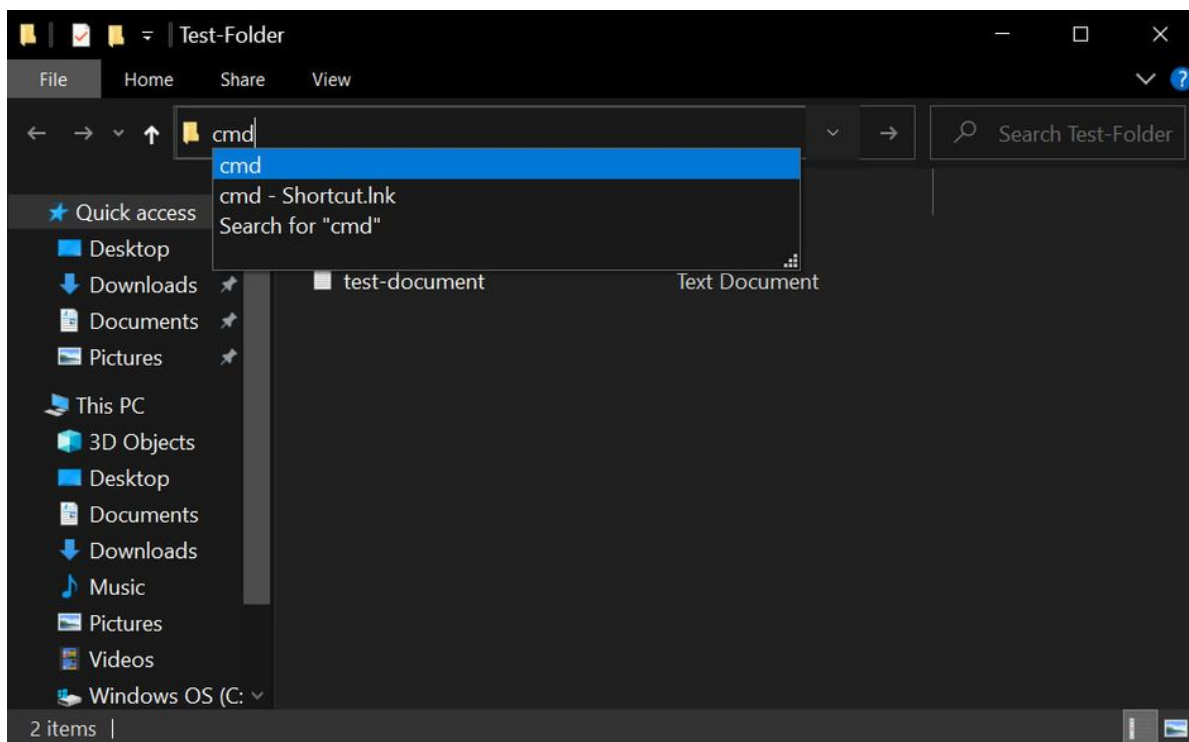
3. The command prompt window will open and is ready to go from here. You can use the **Pin to Start** or **Pin to taskbar** options to bring up the Command Prompt app even faster if you plan on using it a lot.



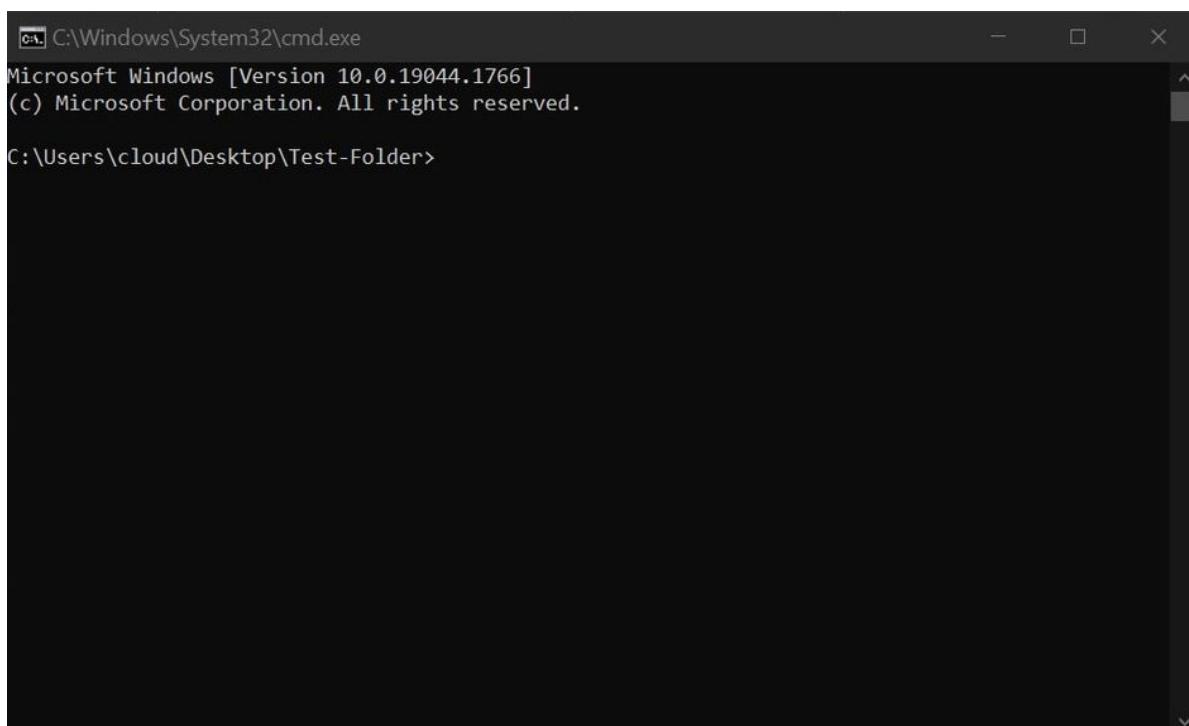
Open the command prompt in a folder of your choosing

Rather than using the universal system command prompt for general purposes, you can open it directly in whatever folder you want. This can make it much easier to run commands without knowing exact file locations. To launch a Windows Command prompt from any folder of your choosing, you can do the following:

1. Navigate to the folder you wish to open a command prompt in.
2. Click the address bar at the top of the window.
3. Type **cmd** into the address text box followed by the **Enter** key.



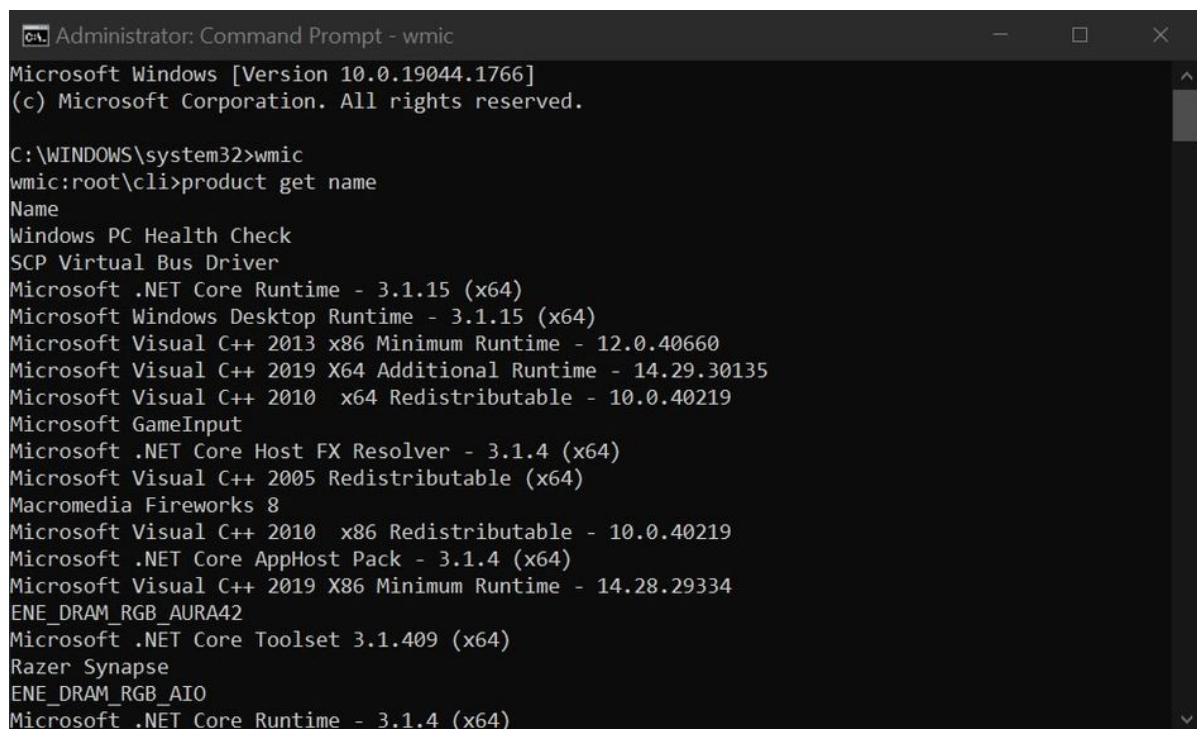
4. The command prompt window will open directly in that folder right away.



Removing a program that won't uninstall from your system

Sometimes you might run into a situation where the default uninstaller from a third-party application simply refuses to work. It could just be a simple bug with the uninstaller itself; however, this doesn't make removing it from your system any easier. You might consider looking into the official alternative method using a command prompt rather than downloading a third-party uninstaller. If you want to use the command prompt to quickly remove a stubborn program from Windows, you can do the following:

1. Open a universal command prompt with the **Run as administrator** option.
2. Type **wmic** into the command window, then press **Enter**.
3. Use the **product get name** command followed by **Enter**.



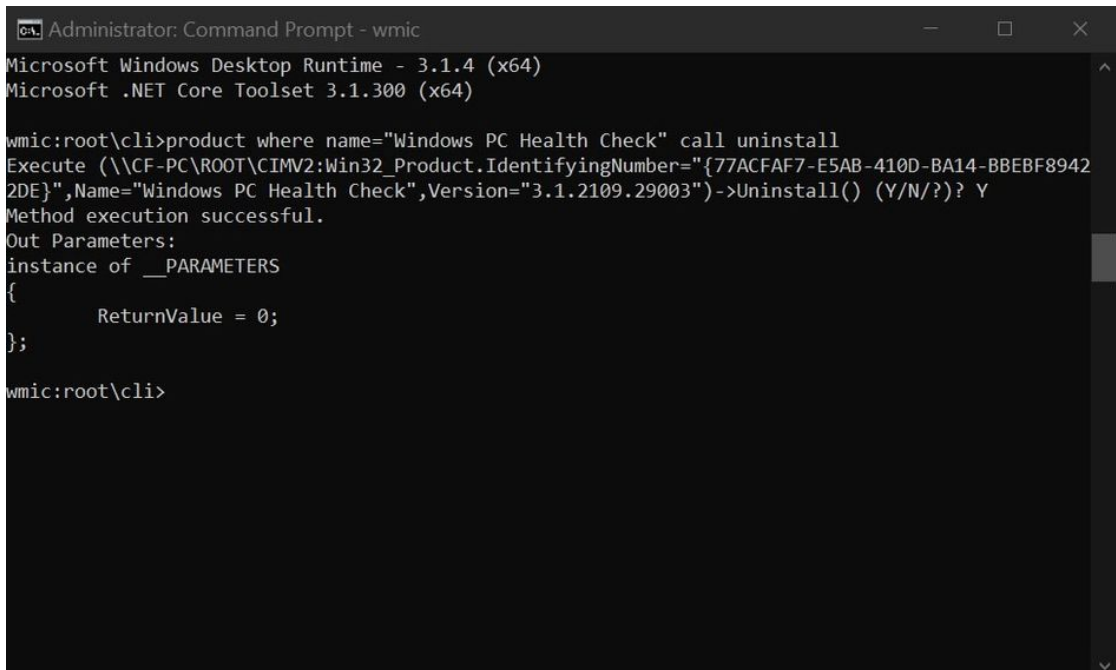
```
Administrator: Command Prompt - wmic
Microsoft Windows [Version 10.0.19044.1766]
(c) Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

C:\WINDOWS\system32>wmic
wmic:root\cli>product get name
Name
Windows PC Health Check
SCP Virtual Bus Driver
Microsoft .NET Core Runtime - 3.1.15 (x64)
Microsoft Windows Desktop Runtime - 3.1.15 (x64)
Microsoft Visual C++ 2013 x86 Minimum Runtime - 12.0.40660
Microsoft Visual C++ 2019 X64 Additional Runtime - 14.29.30135
Microsoft Visual C++ 2010 x64 Redistributable - 10.0.40219
Microsoft GameInput
Microsoft .NET Core Host FX Resolver - 3.1.4 (x64)
Microsoft Visual C++ 2005 Redistributable (x64)
Macromedia Fireworks 8
Microsoft Visual C++ 2010 x86 Redistributable - 10.0.40219
Microsoft .NET Core AppHost Pack - 3.1.4 (x64)
Microsoft Visual C++ 2019 X86 Minimum Runtime - 14.28.29334
ENE_DRAM_RGB_AURA42
Microsoft .NET Core Toolset 3.1.409 (x64)
Razer Synapse
ENE_DRAM_RGB_AIO
Microsoft .NET Core Runtime - 3.1.4 (x64)
```

4. Type **product where name="program name" call uninstall**.

5. Type **Y** followed by **Enter** to confirm and remove the selected program from your computer.

If you see a **ReturnValue = 0** towards the end, that means the action was successful.



```
Administrator: Command Prompt - wmic
Microsoft Windows Desktop Runtime - 3.1.4 (x64)
Microsoft .NET Core Toolset 3.1.300 (x64)

wmic:root\cli>product where name="Windows PC Health Check" call uninstall
Execute (\\CF-PC\ROOT\CIMV2:Win32_Product.IdentifyingNumber="{77ACFAF7-E5AB-410D-BA14-BBE8F8942
2DE}",Name="Windows PC Health Check",Version="3.1.2109.29003")->Uninstall() (Y/N/?)? Y
Method execution successful.
Out Parameters:
instance of __PARAMETERS
{
    ReturnValue = 0;
};

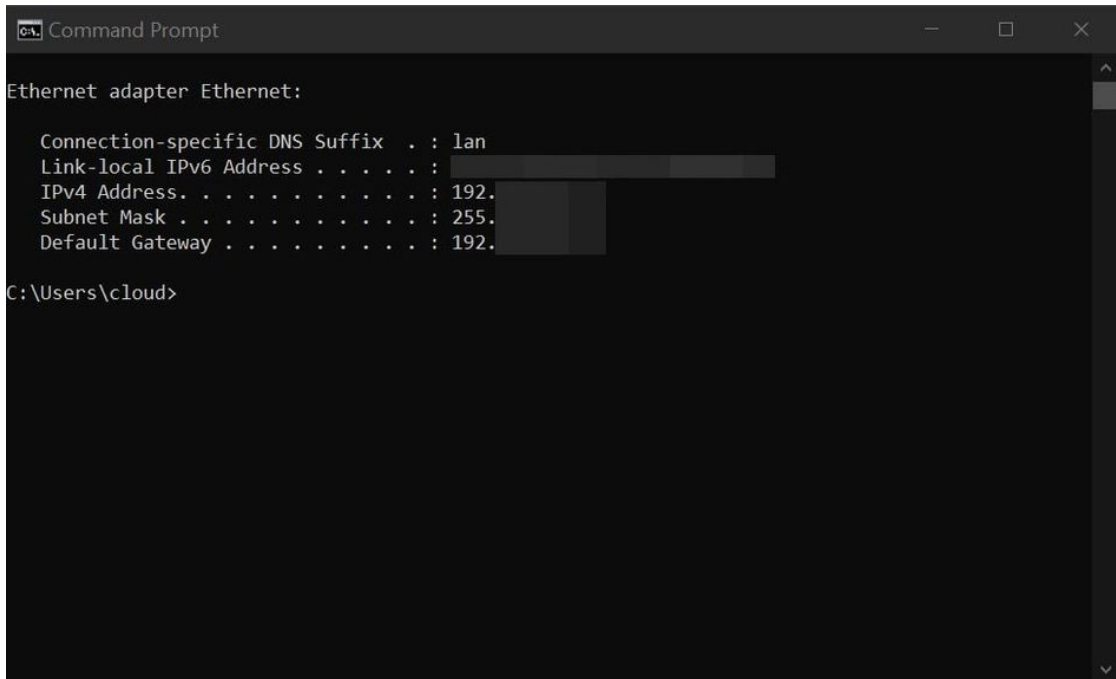
wmic:root\cli>
```

Check the local IP address on your computer's network card

There might be times when you'll want to know the IP address that your computer is using to connect to your home network. You might even be thinking about setting up a static IP address for Windows, allowing you to create a unique number for your computer. A static IP puts more control in your hands rather than having the router assign a random address. To view the IP address from a Windows command prompt, you can check out the following:

1. Open a universal **command prompt**.
2. Type **ipconfig** into the command window, then press **Enter**.

3. You should now see your current network adapter's IP address and other stats. You can also use **ipconfig /all** to show all network adapters if you need more details.



```
Command Prompt

Ethernet adapter Ethernet:

    Connection-specific DNS Suffix  . : lan
    Link-local IPv6 Address . . . . . : 
    IPv4 Address. . . . . : 192.
    Subnet Mask . . . . . : 255.
    Default Gateway . . . . . : 192.

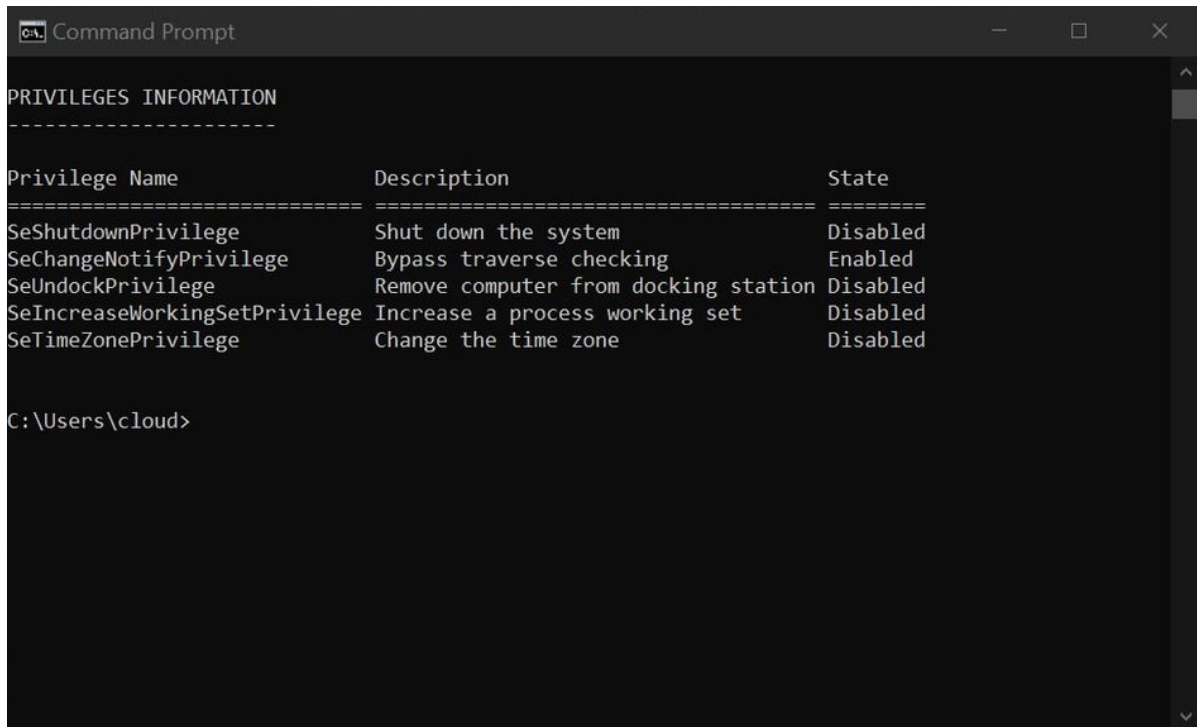
C:\Users\cloud>
```

Check what user is currently logged on via the command prompt

Using a Windows command prompt to view information about what user is logged into the computer can be handy in some situations. You can see the user's name, email address, and even the system permissions they can access on that computer. This allows you to keep track of each logged-in account without digging through extra menus, which is particularly helpful for users with system administration privileges. If you're interested in checking these stats out for yourself, you can do the following:

1. Open a universal **command prompt**.
2. Type **whoami /all** into the command window, then press **Enter**.

3. Now you can scroll through the list and find more details about any other user logged into the computer.



```
Command Prompt

PRIVILEGES INFORMATION
-----
Privilege Name      Description              State
=====
SeShutdownPrivilege Shut down the system     Disabled
SeChangeNotifyPrivilege Bypass traverse checking Enabled
SeUndockPrivilege    Remove computer from docking station Disabled
SeIncreaseWorkingSetPrivilege Increase a process working set Disabled
SeTimeZonePrivilege  Change the time zone     Disabled

C:\Users\cloud>
```

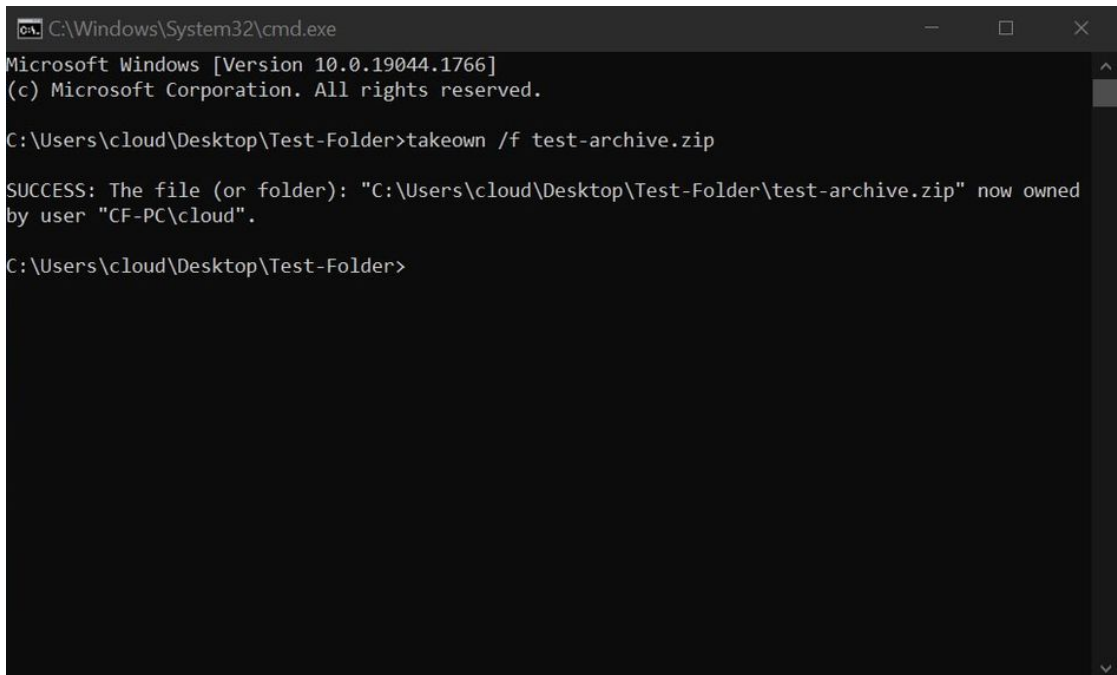
Reclaim ownership of any file or folder on your system

Let's say you remove your internal hard drive from an old laptop and hook it up to your new computer with an external storage dock. When you transfer those files to the new computer by copying and pasting them, you might lose access to their rights as the original owner. Should that happen, you can use a Windows command prompt to regain control of your files as the rightful owner. If you need to reclaim ownership over any file on your system, you can do the following:

1. Open a command prompt directly in the folder with the files you want to reclaim as the owner.

2. Type **takeown /f yourfilename.extension** into the command window, then press **Enter**.

Make sure to type the file extension precisely as it appears, or else it won't be found.



```
C:\Windows\System32\cmd.exe
Microsoft Windows [Version 10.0.19044.1766]
(c) Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

C:\Users\ccloud\Desktop\Test-Folder>takeown /f test-archive.zip

SUCCESS: The file (or folder): "C:\Users\ccloud\Desktop\Test-Folder\test-archive.zip" now owned
by user "CF-PC\ccloud".

C:\Users\ccloud\Desktop\Test-Folder>
```

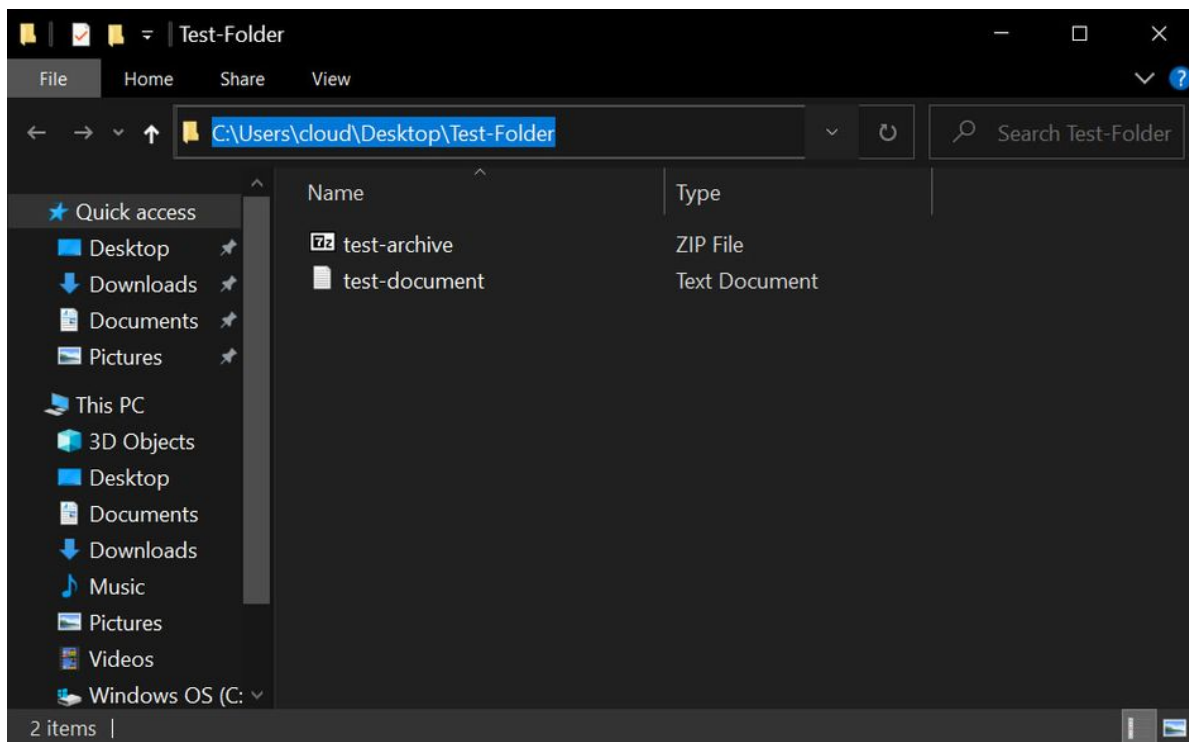
3. You can now fully access the selected file as the new owner.

Reclaim ownership of an entire folder and its files

If you want to reclaim ownership of an entire folder and the files within, you can do so by doing the following:

1. Navigate to the folder you want to reclaim.

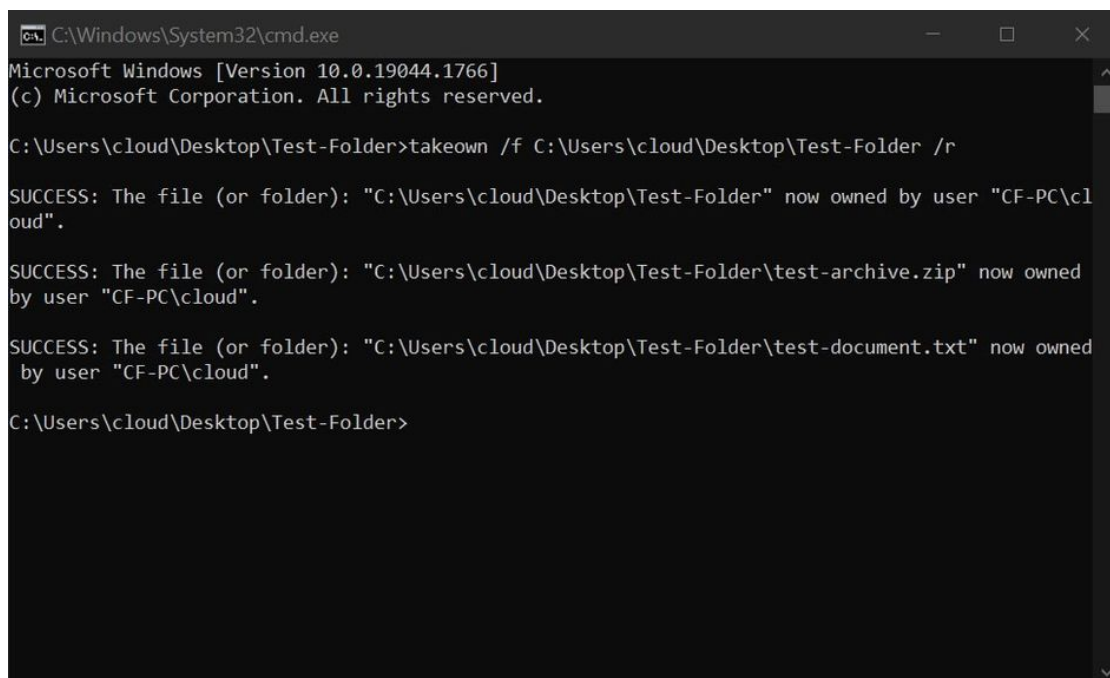
2. Copy the location **from the address bar** at the top.



3. Open a **command prompt** directly in the folder.

4. Type **takeown /f yourfolderlocation /r** into the command window, then press **Enter**.

You can paste and replace **yourfolderlocation** with the appropriate address you copied earlier.



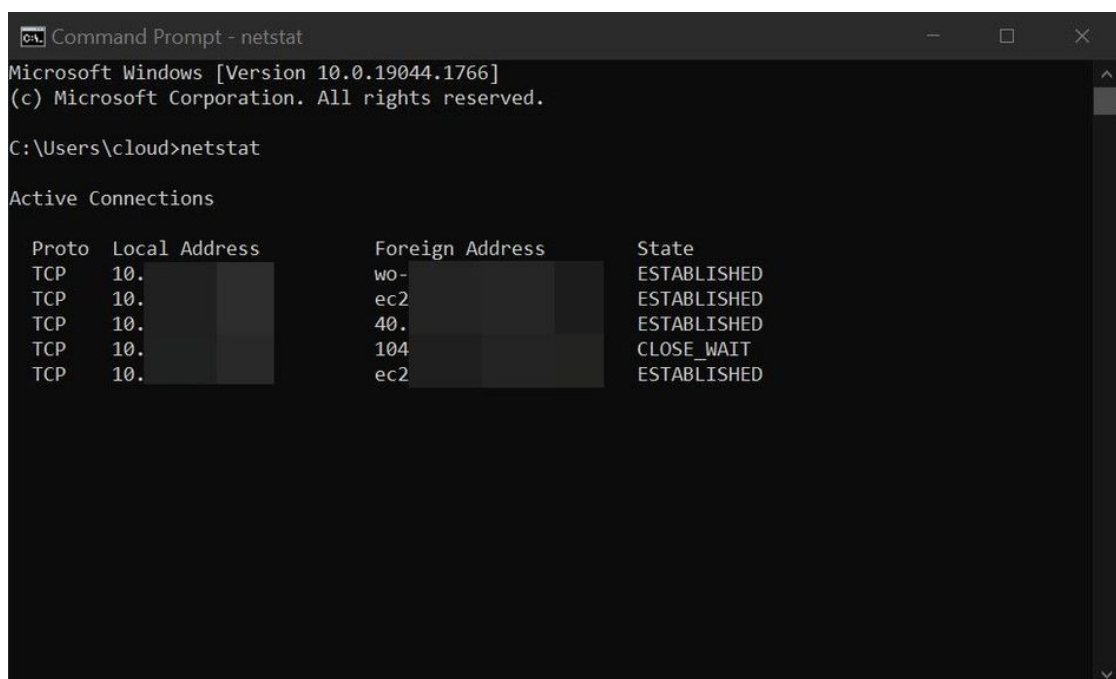
5. You can now fully access the selected folder and its files as the new owner.

Check which devices are connected to your system or network

Say you have administrator access to your computer and network; viewing all active connections on your network is extremely helpful. With more wireless devices being added to our home networks as the years go by, it's good to know which ones are connected and active in real-time. Along with tracking the local IP addresses, you can see which ports are being used to help keep an eye on their activity. To check out the online devices on your network using a Windows command prompt, you can do the following:

1. Open a universal **command prompt**.
2. Type **netstat** into the command window, then press **Enter**.
3. It'll scan for active connections on your computer and show you the ports they're using.

You can also use the **netstat -a** command to view even more details about all connections on your computer.



```
Microsoft Windows [Version 10.0.19044.1766]
(c) Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

C:\Users\cloud>netstat

Active Connections

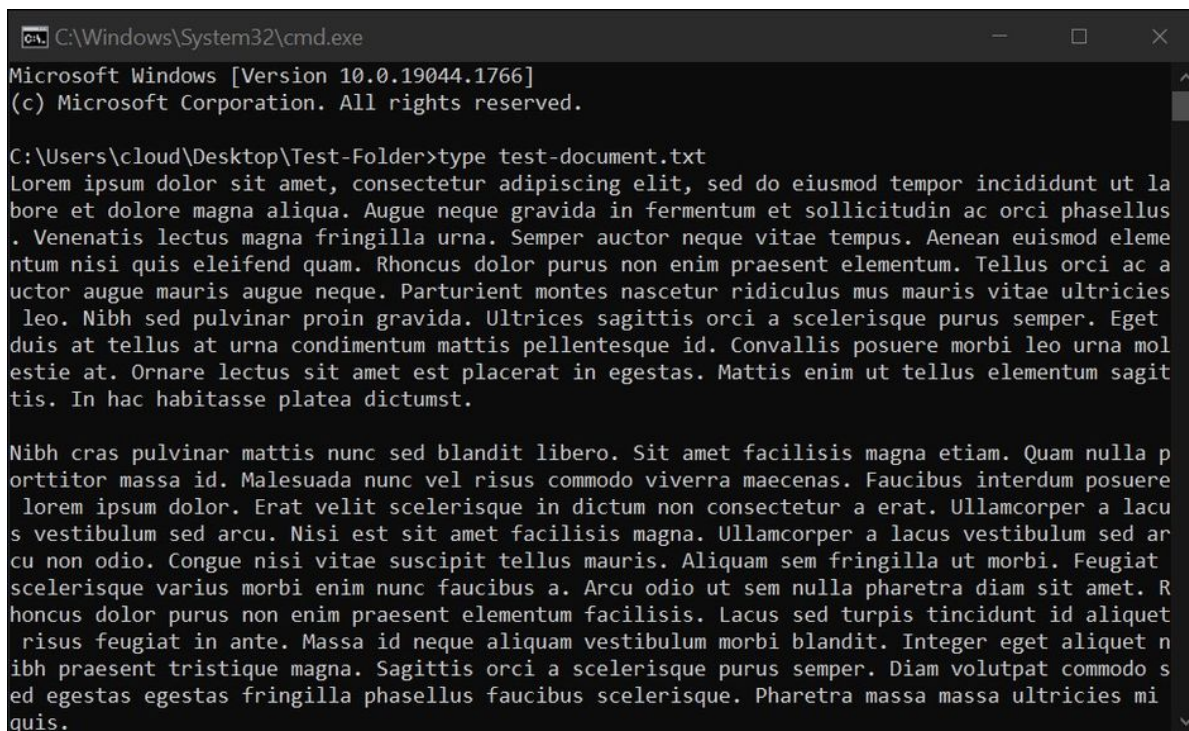
Proto Local Address           Foreign Address         State
TCP   10.0.0.1:4444            wo-10.0.0.1:4444       ESTABLISHED
TCP   10.0.0.1:4444            ec2-10.0.0.1:4444     ESTABLISHED
TCP   10.0.0.1:4444            40.100.100.100:4444   ESTABLISHED
TCP   10.0.0.1:4444            104.100.100.100:4444  CLOSE_WAIT
TCP   10.0.0.1:4444            ec2-10.0.0.1:4444     ESTABLISHED
```

Open and display contents of a text doc in the command prompt

A feature not mentioned a lot is that you can open text files directly in a Windows command prompt. It doesn't launch a program; it opens and allows you to view the document right from the command window itself. This little-known feature is fun and can be helpful if you want to read a long text file using a method you maybe never knew existed. To view a text file through the Windows command prompt, you can do the following:

1. Open a command prompt directly in the folder containing the text document you want to view.
2. Use the **type filename.extension** command, then press **Enter**.
Make sure to type the file extension precisely as it appears, or else it won't be found.

3. The text document will now open right in the command window.



```
C:\Windows\System32\cmd.exe
Microsoft Windows [Version 10.0.19044.1766]
(c) Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

C:\Users\cloud\Desktop\Test-Folder>type test-document.txt
Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut la
bore et dolore magna aliqua. Augue neque gravida in fermentum et sollicitudin ac orci phasellus
. Venenatis lectus magna fringilla urna. Semper auctor neque vitae tempus. Aenean euismod eleme
ntum nisi quis eleifend quam. Rhoncus dolor purus non enim praesent elementum. Tellus orci ac a
uctor augue mauris augue neque. Parturient montes nascetur ridiculus mus mauris vitae ultricies
 leo. Nibh sed pulvinar proin gravida. Ultrices sagittis orci a scelerisque purus semper. Eget
duis at tellus at urna condimentum mattis pellentesque id. Convallis posuere morbi leo urna mol
estie at. Ornare lectus sit amet est placerat in egestas. Mattis enim ut tellus elementum sagit
tis. In hac habitasse platea dictumst.

Nibh cras pulvinar mattis nunc sed blandit libero. Sit amet facilisis magna etiam. Quam nulla p
orttitor massa id. Malesuada nunc vel risus commodo viverra maecenas. Faucibus interdum posuere
lorem ipsum dolor. Erat velit scelerisque in dictum non consectetur a erat. Ullamcorper a lacu
s vestibulum sed arcu. Nisi est sit amet facilisis magna. Ullamcorper a lacus vestibulum sed ar
cu non odio. Congue nisi vitae suscipit tellus mauris. Aliquam sem fringilla ut morbi. Feugiat
scelerisque varius morbi enim nunc faucibus a. Arcu odio ut sem nulla pharetra diam sit amet. R
honcus dolor purus non enim praesent elementum facilisis. Lacus sed turpis tincidunt id aliquet
risus feugiat in ante. Massa id neque aliquam vestibulum morbi blandit. Integer eget aliquet n
ibh praesent tristique magna. Sagittis orci a scelerisque purus semper. Diam volutpat commodo s
ed egestas egestas fringilla phasellus faucibus scelerisque. Pharetra massa massa ultricies mi
quis.
```

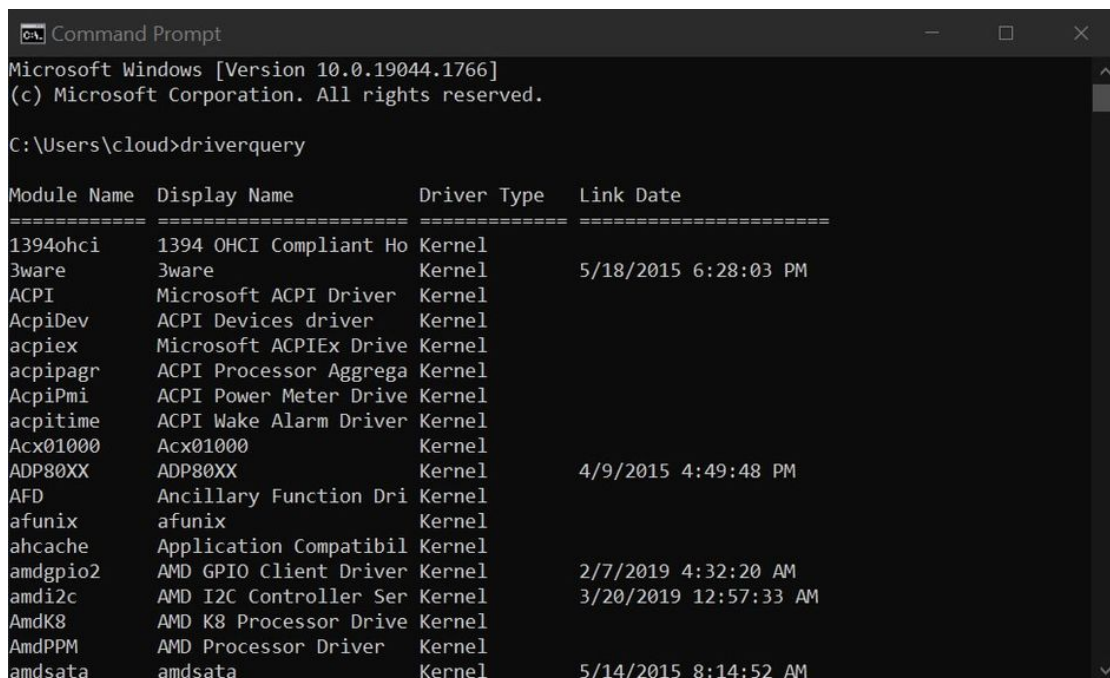
Check all currently installed drivers via the command prompt

Since drivers tell your hardware, such as the mouse and keyboard, how to communicate with Windows, they need to work and be reliable at all times. Weird driver issues can cause a computer to have performance hiccups or even outright crash in the worst-case scenarios. When using a command prompt to check your drivers, you can quickly find out everything you need to know instantly. To view all of your currently installed drivers through a Windows command prompt, you can do the following:

1. Open a universal **command prompt**.
2. Type **driverquery** into the command window, then press **Enter**.

3. Now you can scroll back up and check the details about every driver installed on your system.

The **Link Date** would show you when the driver was last updated, which can be helpful when manually installing driver updates.



```
Microsoft Windows [Version 10.0.19044.1766]
(c) Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

C:\Users\cloud>driverquery

Module Name      Display Name      Driver Type      Link Date
=====
1394ohci         1394 OHCI Compli Kernel
3ware            3ware             Kernel           5/18/2015 6:28:03 PM
ACPI             Microsoft ACPI Driver Kernel
AcpiDev         ACPI Devices driver Kernel
acpiex          Microsoft ACPIEx Drive Kernel
acpipagr        ACPI Processor Aggrega Kernel
AcpiPmi         ACPI Power Meter Drive Kernel
acpitime        ACPI Wake Alarm Driver Kernel
Acx01000        Acx01000          Kernel
ADP80XX         ADP80XX           Kernel           4/9/2015 4:49:48 PM
AFD             Ancillary Function Dri Kernel
afunix          afunix            Kernel
ahcache         Application Compatibil Kernel
amdgpio2        AMD GPIO Client Driver Kernel           2/7/2019 4:32:20 AM
amdi2c          AMD I2C Controller Ser Kernel           3/20/2019 12:57:33 AM
AmdK8           AMD K8 Processor Drive Kernel
AmdPPM          AMD Processor Driver Kernel
amdsata         amsata            Kernel           5/14/2015 8:14:52 AM
```

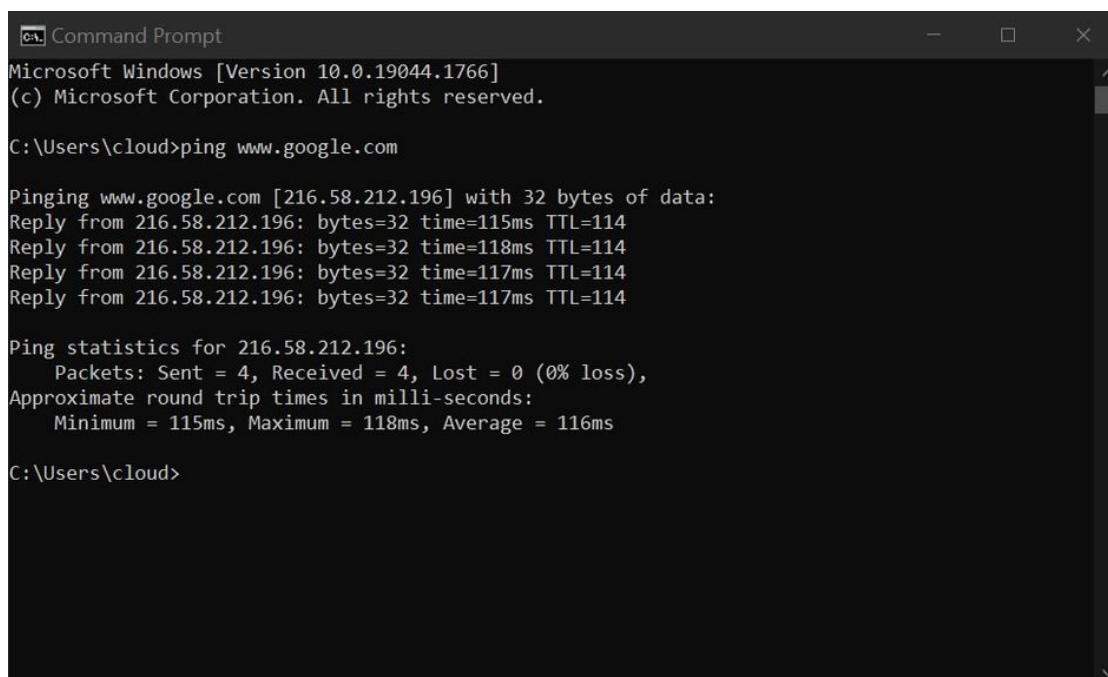
Use command prompt to check any website for service issues

Various online services allow you to view server outages or potential slow response times on your favorite websites. It helps you identify if the connection issues you're having are on your end or an issue with the website itself. However, you can do this outside of a web browser using a local Windows command prompt just as quickly. To manually check the status of any website of your choosing, you can do the following:

1. Open a universal **command prompt**.
2. Type **ping www.yourwebsite.com** into the command window, then press **Enter**.
3. Now it'll send some small packets of data to that server and back as a test.

4. If everything is good, you should hopefully see a 0% packet loss and a reasonably low ms response time. The lower the response time, the better.

Likewise, you'll see an increase in packet loss % and longer response times if a website is currently experiencing issues on its end.



```
Command Prompt
Microsoft Windows [Version 10.0.19044.1766]
(c) Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

C:\Users\cloud>ping www.google.com

Pinging www.google.com [216.58.212.196] with 32 bytes of data:
Reply from 216.58.212.196: bytes=32 time=115ms TTL=114
Reply from 216.58.212.196: bytes=32 time=118ms TTL=114
Reply from 216.58.212.196: bytes=32 time=117ms TTL=114
Reply from 216.58.212.196: bytes=32 time=117ms TTL=114

Ping statistics for 216.58.212.196:
    Packets: Sent = 4, Received = 4, Lost = 0 (0% loss),
    Approximate round trip times in milli-seconds:
        Minimum = 115ms, Maximum = 118ms, Average = 116ms

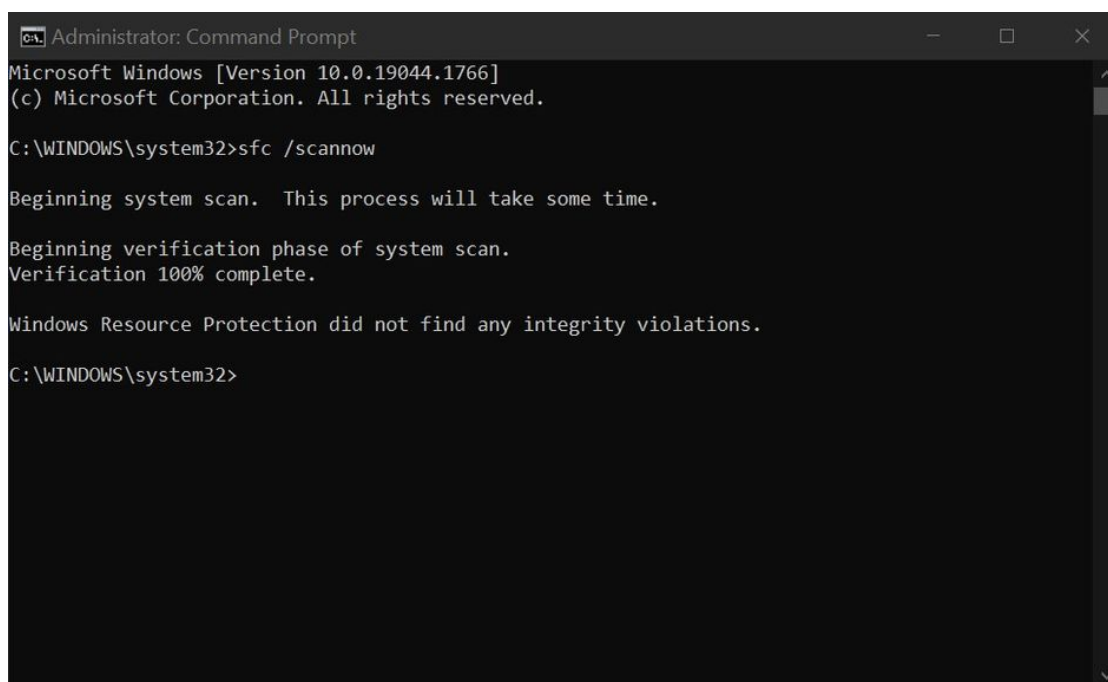
C:\Users\cloud>
```

Scan your Windows system files using the command prompt to repair issues

Sometimes your Windows files can get corrupted or go missing for various reasons. This can create error messages or cause the computer to crash, so it's essential to avoid it at all costs. Windows has a built-in scanner to repair your computer if something were to go wrong with the core system files. To learn how to fix your Windows installation using a command prompt, you can check out the following steps:

1. Open a universal command prompt with the **Run as administrator** option.
2. Type **sfc /scannow** into the command window, then press **Enter**.
3. The scanner will now go through your entire system and check for any issues that it might have.

4. Once the scan is finished, it'll automatically fix the issues it found for you as needed. If no issues are found, you'll see the **Windows Resource Protection did not find any integrity violations** message.



```
Administrator: Command Prompt
Microsoft Windows [Version 10.0.19044.1766]
(c) Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

C:\WINDOWS\system32>sfc /scannow

Beginning system scan. This process will take some time.

Beginning verification phase of system scan.
Verification 100% complete.

Windows Resource Protection did not find any integrity violations.

C:\WINDOWS\system32>
```

View and close any running process or tasks on your system

You can use Windows's traditional built-in Task Manager to manage your running processes, but that may not always work well in some instances. The Task Manager monitors items in real time; however, you can use a command prompt to create a static list that doesn't auto update. This means you can casually scroll through the list of processes as needed, which can help you pinpoint and close stubborn programs in a pinch. To manage your system processes with a Windows command prompt, you can do the following:

1. Open a universal **command prompt**.
2. Type **tasklist** into the command window, then press **Enter**.

3. It'll generate a list of your system's running programs and tasks.

```
Command Prompt
Microsoft Windows [Version 10.0.19044.1766]
(c) Microsoft Corporation. All rights reserved.

C:\Users\cloud>tasklist

Image Name                PID Session Name        Session#    Mem Usage
-----
System Idle Process       0 Services            0           8 K
System                    4 Services            0          9,196 K
Registry                  124 Services           0         46,708 K
smss.exe                  484 Services           0           508 K
csrss.exe                 648 Services           0         2,528 K
wininit.exe              744 Services           0          1,760 K
csrss.exe                 752 Console             1         3,660 K
services.exe             816 Services           0          9,792 K
lsass.exe                828 Services           0         20,860 K
svchost.exe              968 Services           0         21,748 K
fontdrvhost.exe         996 Services           0          2,200 K
winlogon.exe             572 Console             1          6,788 K
fontdrvhost.exe         568 Console             1          5,560 K
svchost.exe              740 Services           0         14,092 K
svchost.exe             1068 Services           0          4,708 K
dwm.exe                  1152 Console             1         77,784 K
svchost.exe              1260 Services           0          1,536 K
svchost.exe              1308 Services           0         10,668 K
```

4. Scroll through the list to find a task you want to shut down.

5. Take note of the **Image Name** for that task to be used in the next step.

6. Use the **taskkill /im imagename.exe** command, then press **Enter**.

Alternatively, you can use the **taskkill /pid** command and input the **PID** for the task rather than the **Image Name**. An example of this would be **taskkill /pid 7708**.

7. The termination request will be sent, and that task or process will close immediately.

```
Command Prompt

svchost.exe              5744 Console             1         14,096 K
chrome.exe              7800 Console             1         72,624 K
chrome.exe              9012 Console             1        116,132 K
chrome.exe              8436 Console             1         30,484 K
svchost.exe             10440 Services             0          7,616 K
smartscreen.exe        11396 Console             1         24,624 K
hid.exe                  9112 Console             1         12,376 K
audiodg.exe             4688 Services            0         10,492 K
cmd.exe                 2548 Console             1          4,636 K
conhost.exe             11568 Console             1         19,508 K
tasklist.exe            2128 Console             1          9,284 K

C:\Users\cloud>taskkill /im hid.exe
SUCCESS: Sent termination signal to the process "hid.exe" with PID 9112.

C:\Users\cloud>
```

Maybe it's time to say goodbye to Windows

Now that you know a handful of helpful methods for the Windows command prompt, it might be more beneficial to you than before. You'll only use some of these occasionally; however, they're still good to be aware of. If you combine a few of the commands in this guide, your Windows experience should get even better. If you're thinking about jumping off the Windows bandwagon, we can help you decide [if you should buy a Chromebook](#).

Poll

What was your favorite gadget at MWC 2023?
