10 ingenious ways to use the Windows Command prompt

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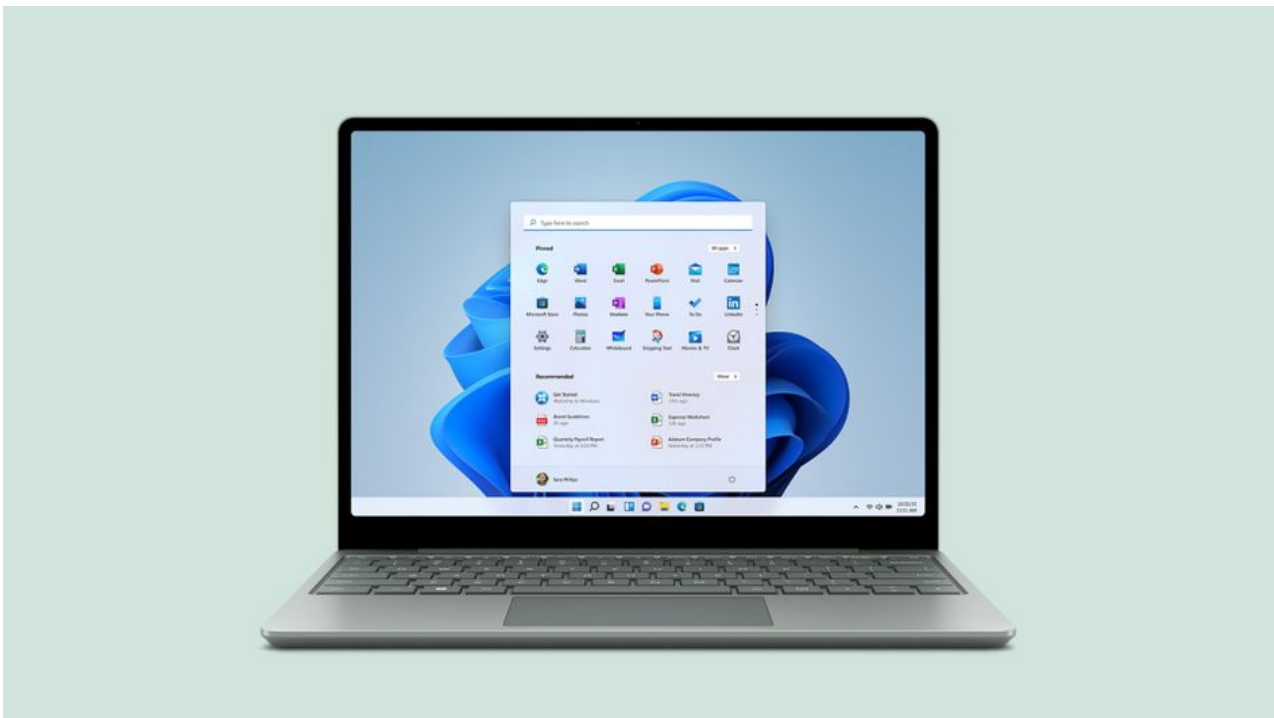
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By <u>Stephen Perkins</u>

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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
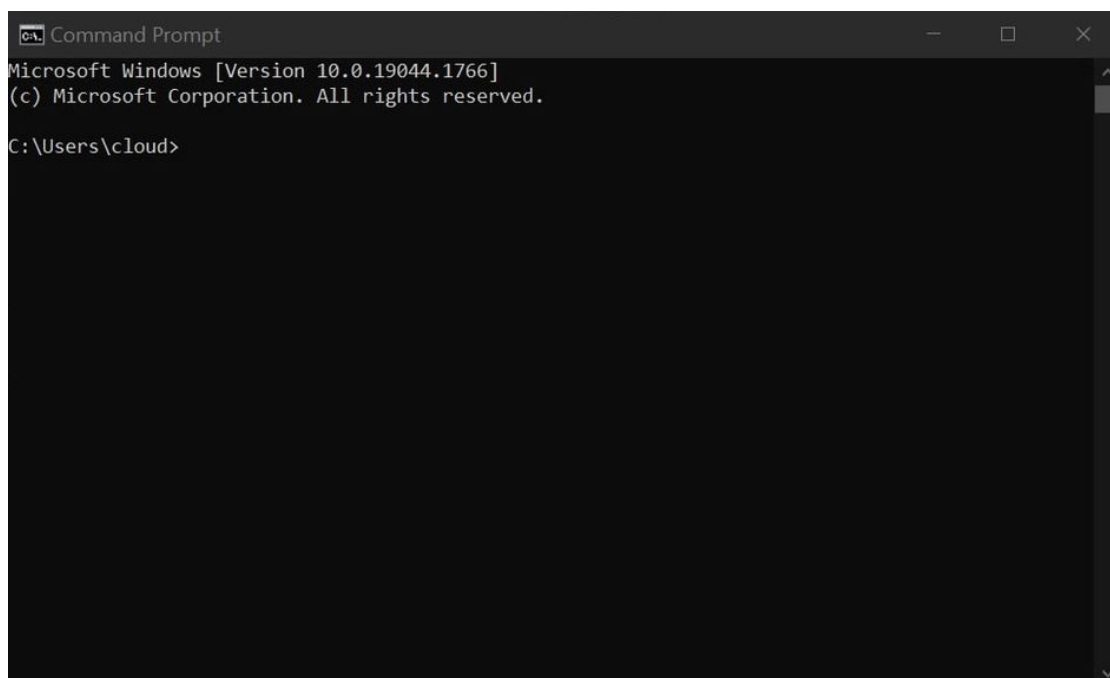
Launch the universal system command prompt

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.
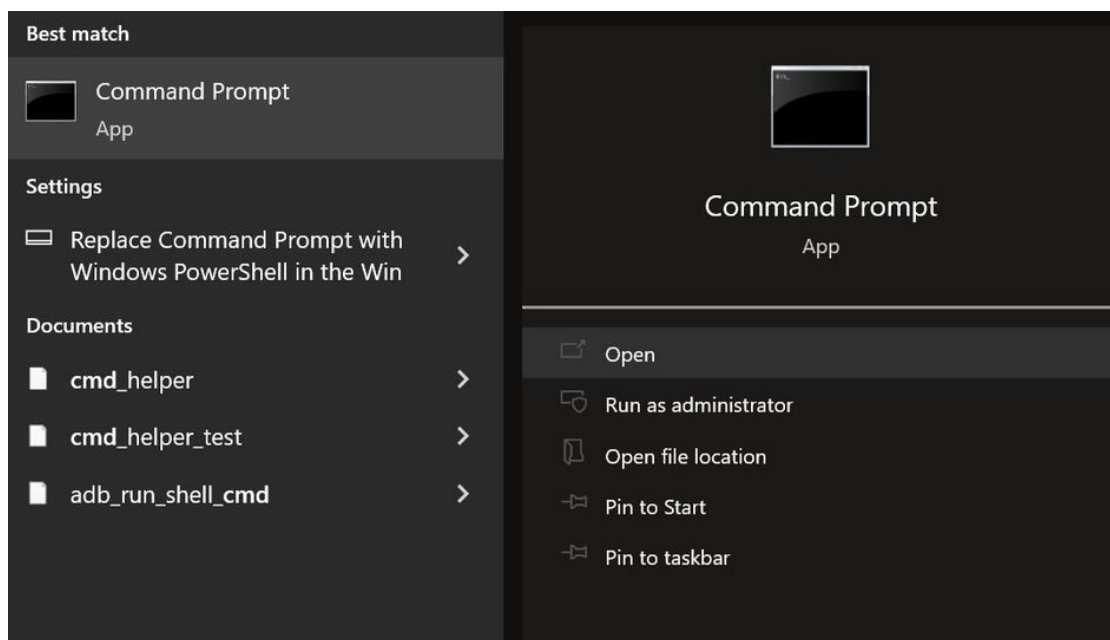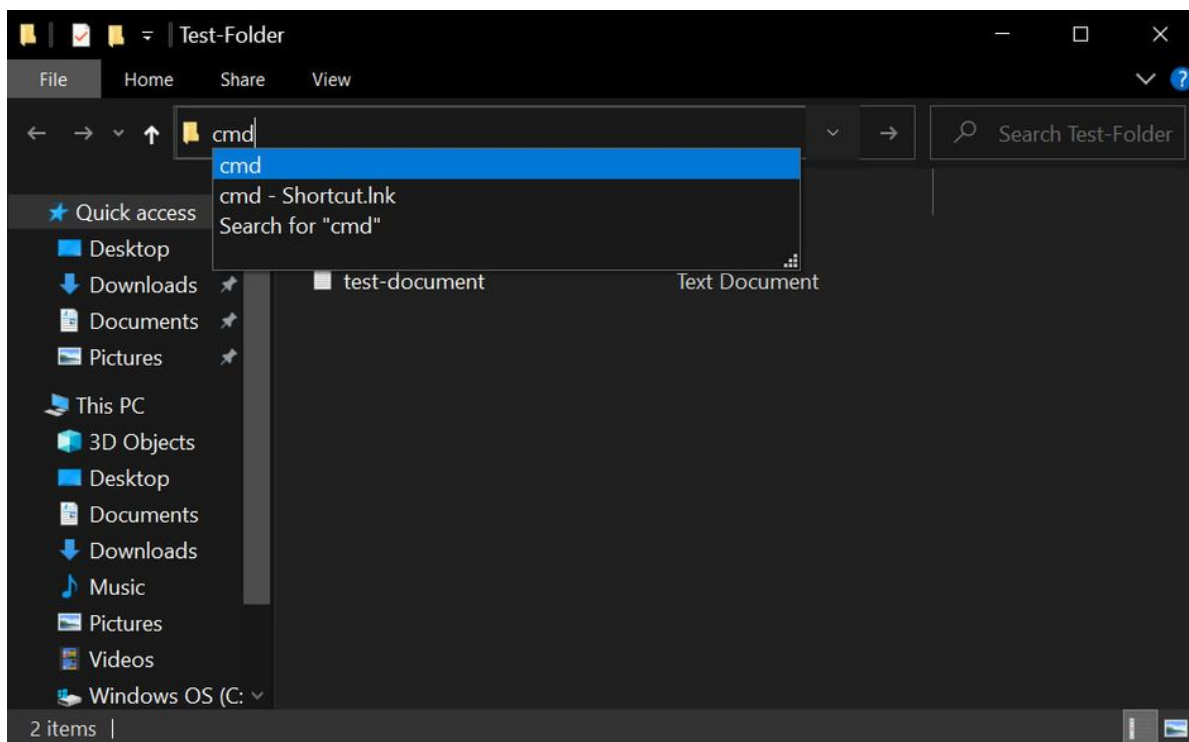

3. The command prompt window will open and is ready to go from here.
   > You can use the **Pin to Start** or **Pin to taskbar** options to bring up the Command Prompt app even faster if you plan on using it a lot.

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.
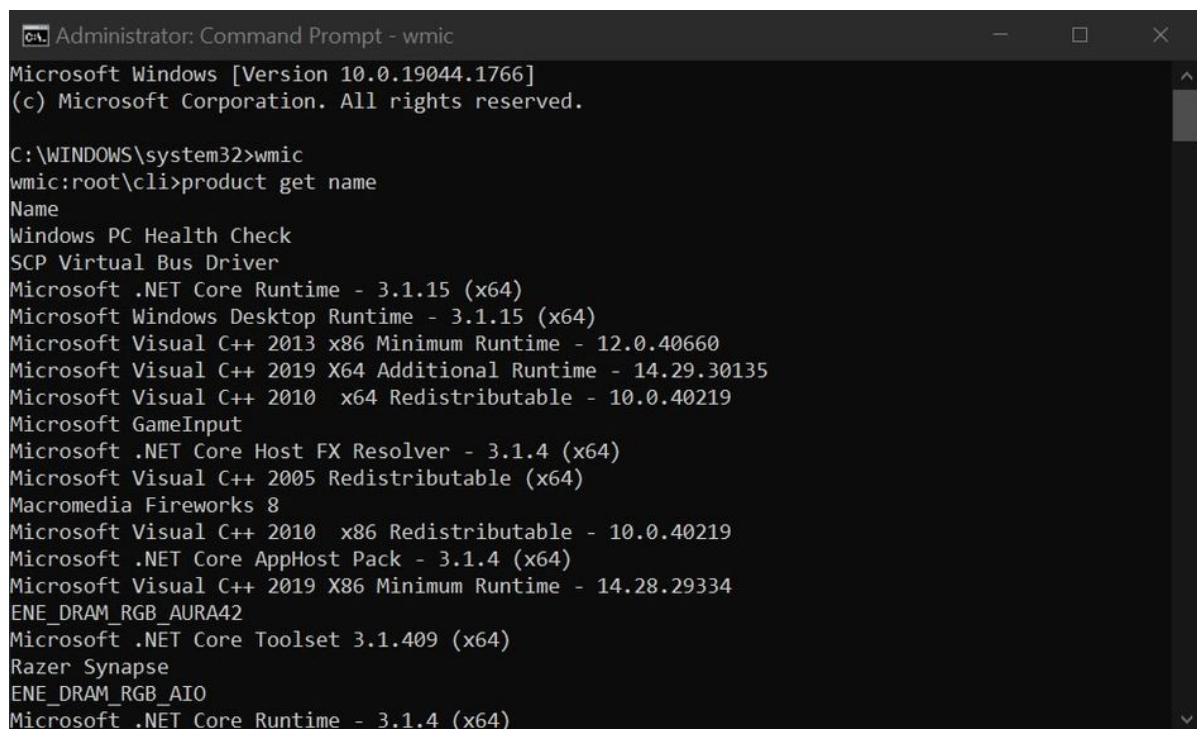
4. The command prompt window will open directly in that folder right away.
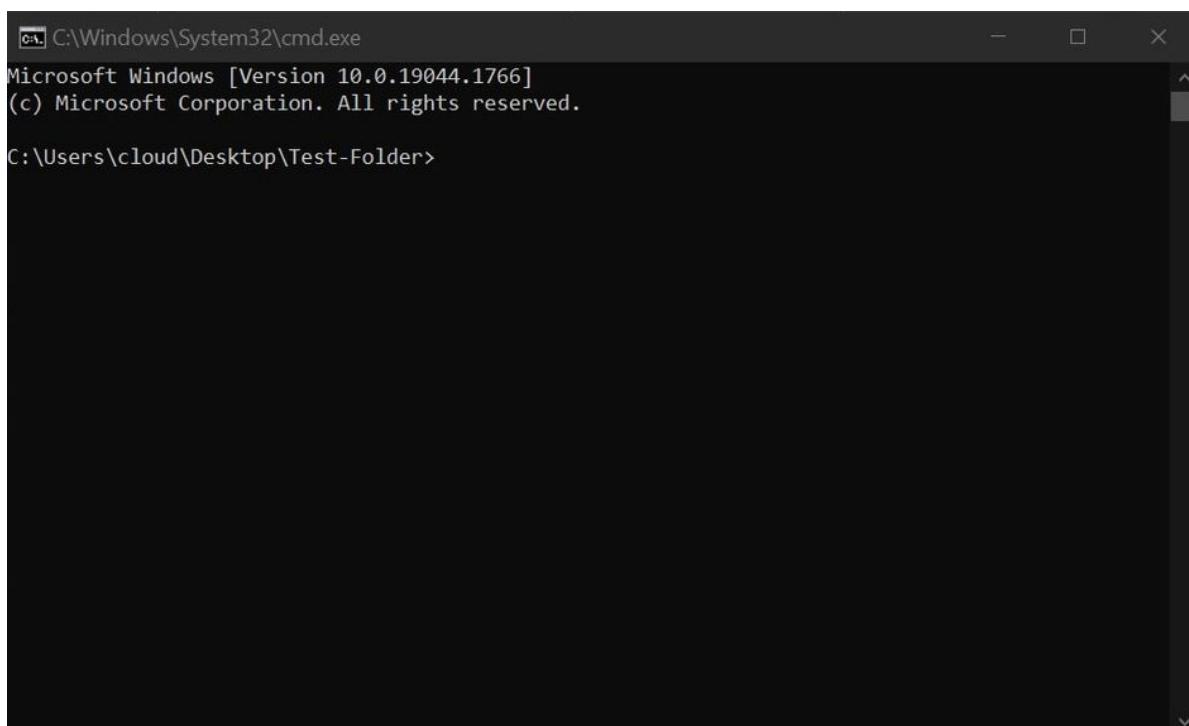
Removing a program that won't uninstall from your system

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**.

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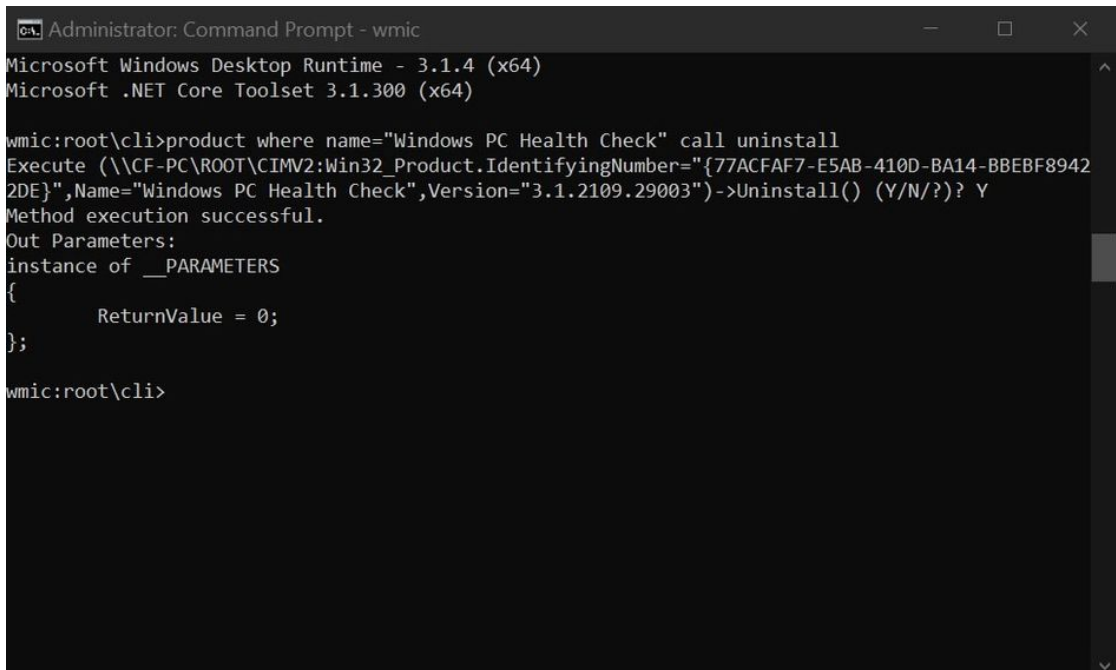
```
Administrator: Command Prompt - wmic
Microsoft Windows Desktop Runtime - 3.1.4 (x64)
Microsoft .NET Core Toolset 3.1.300 (x64)

wmic:root\cli>product where name="Windows PC Health Check" call uninstall
Execute (\\CF-PC\ROOT\CIMV2:Win32_Product.IdentifyingNumber="{77ACFAF7-E5AB-410D-BA14-BBEBF8942
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>
```
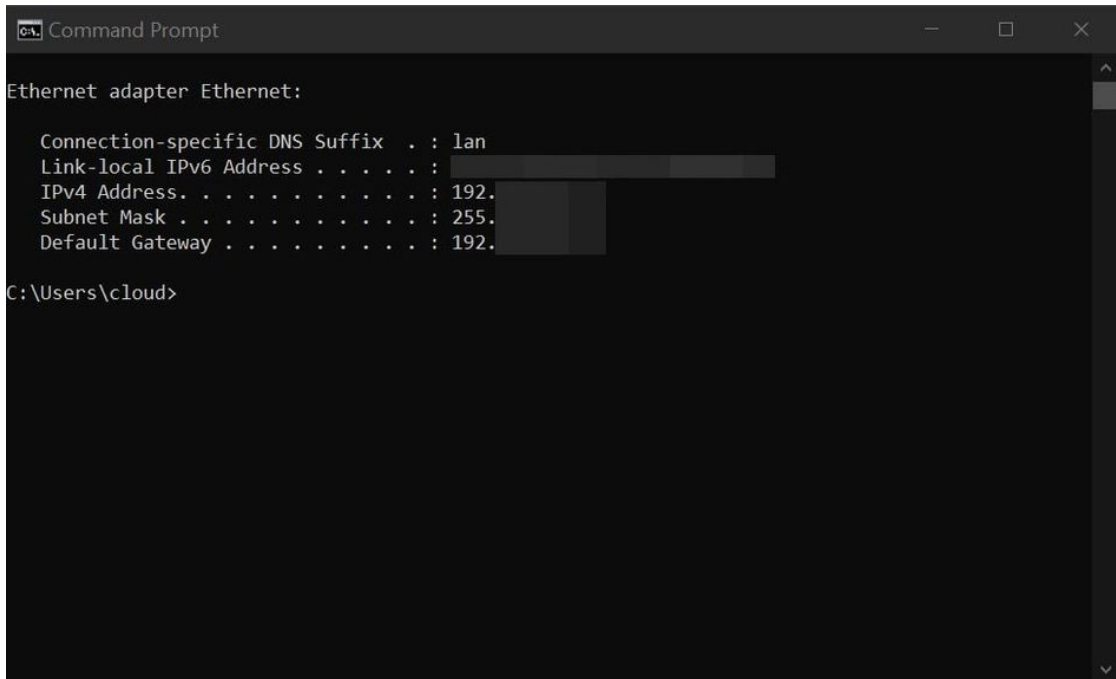
Check the local IP address on your computer's network card

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.
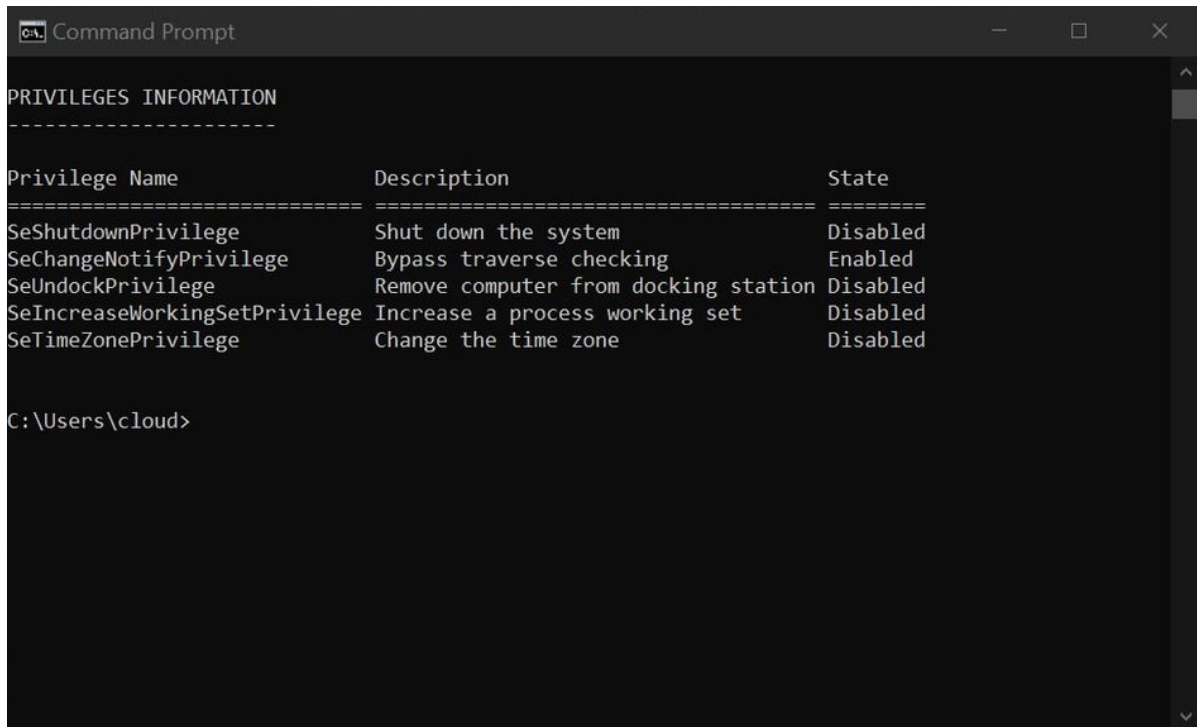

Check what user is currently logged on via the command prompt

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.


```
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>
```
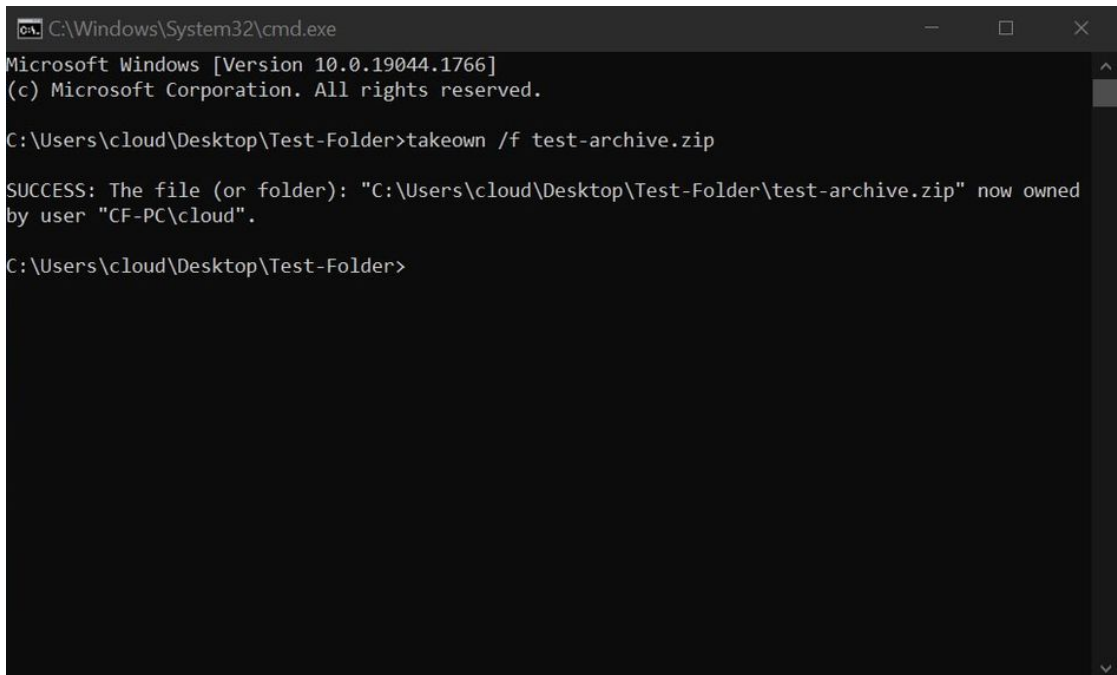
Reclaim ownership of any file or folder on your system

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.

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:
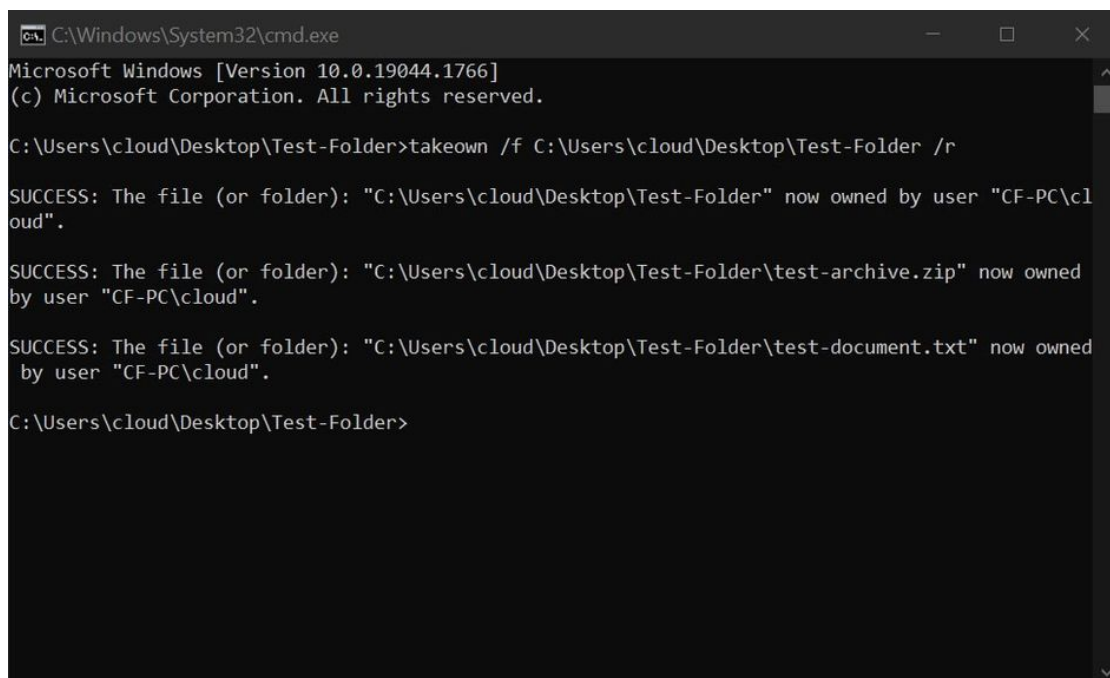
1. Navigate to the folder you want to reclaim.

2. Copy the location **from the address bar** at the top.
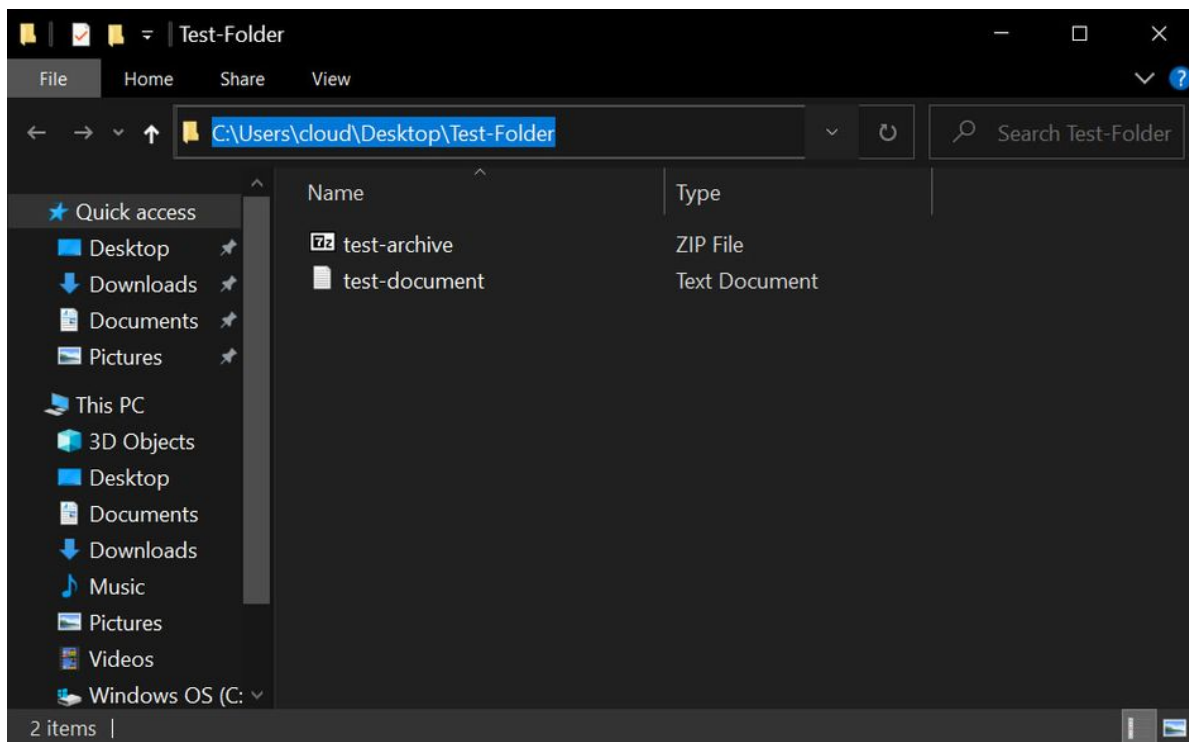
3. Open a **command prompt** directly in the folder.
4. Type **takeown /f yourfolderlocation /r** into the command window, then press **Enter.**

You can paste and replace **yourfolderlocation** with the appropriate address you copied earlier.
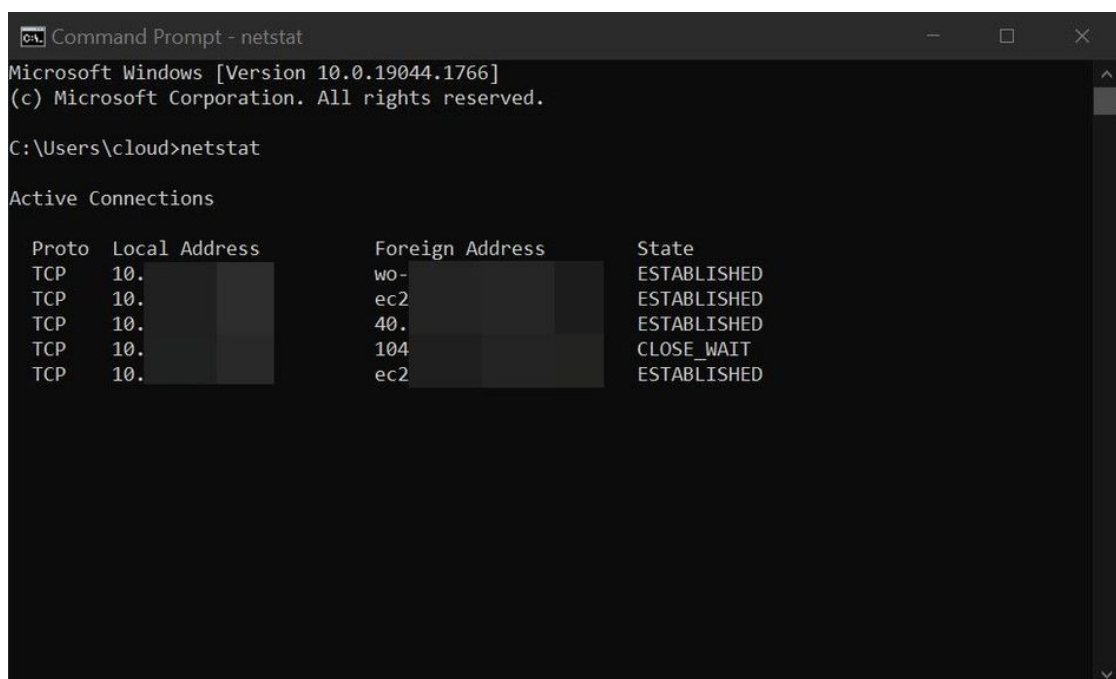
5. You can now fully access the selected folder and its files as the new owner.

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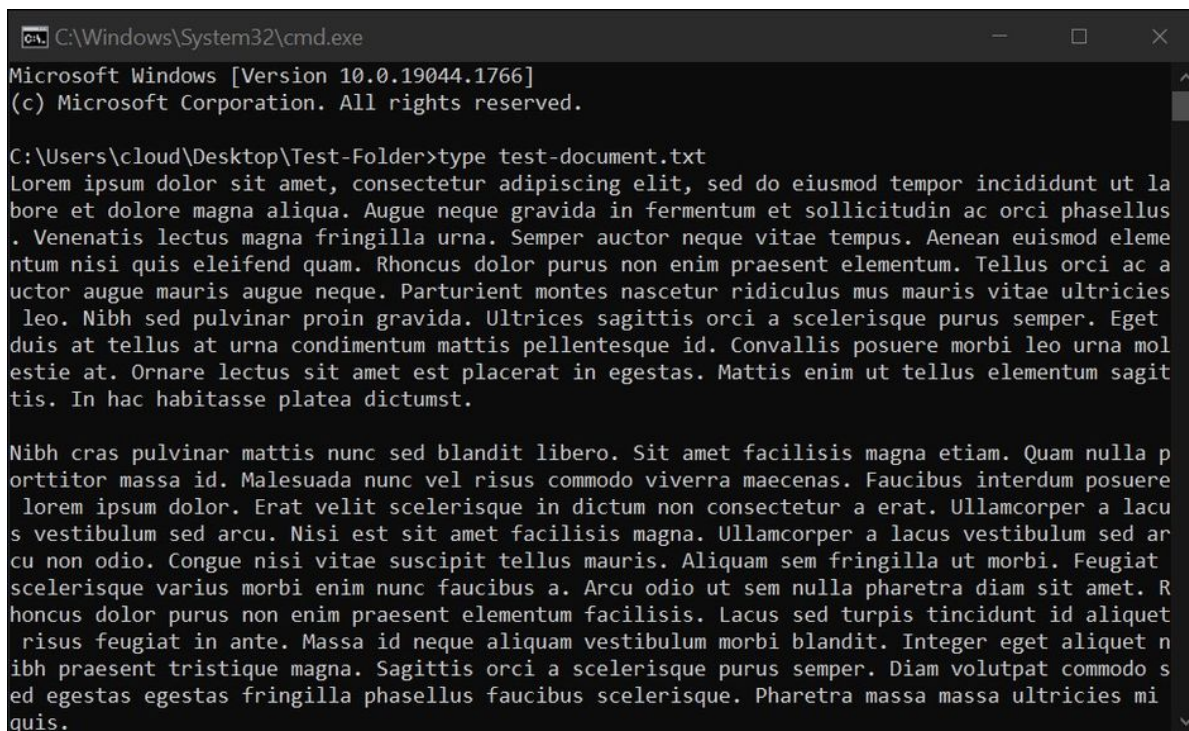
Open and display contents of a text doc in the command prompt

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.
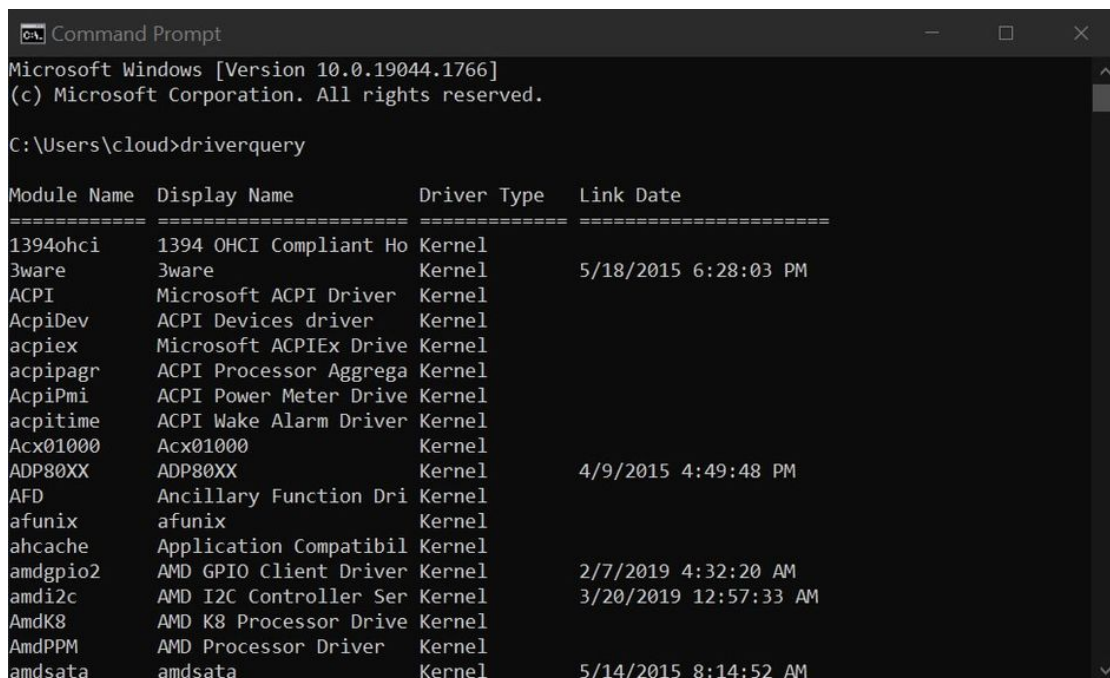

Check all currently installed drivers via the command prompt

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.
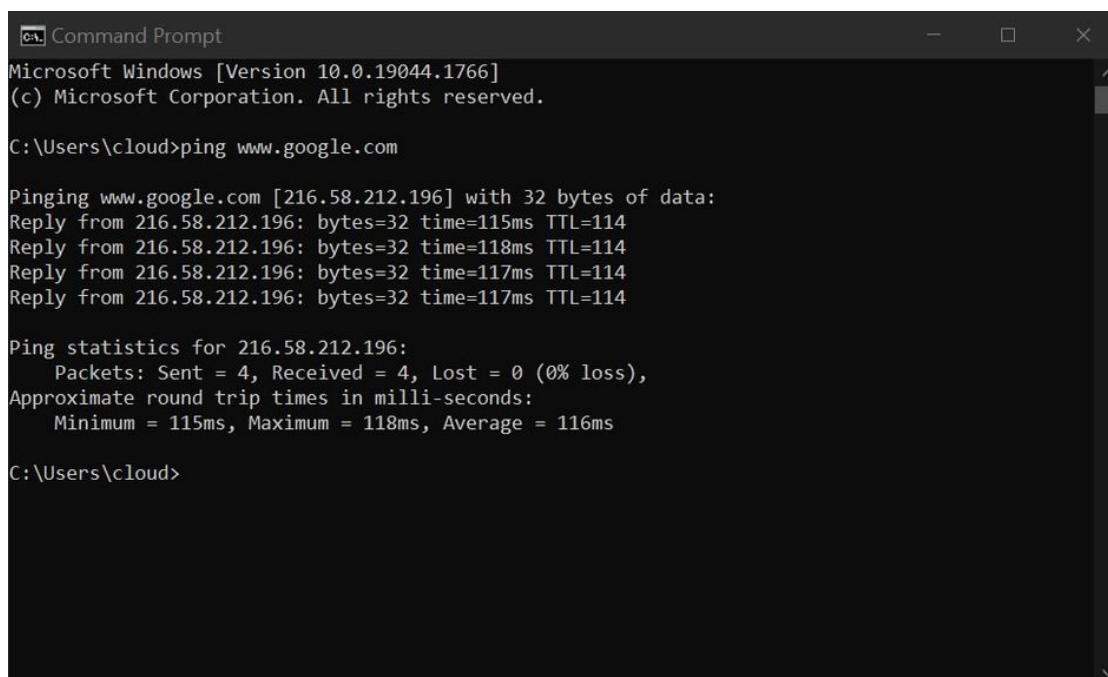

Use command prompt to check any website for service issues

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.

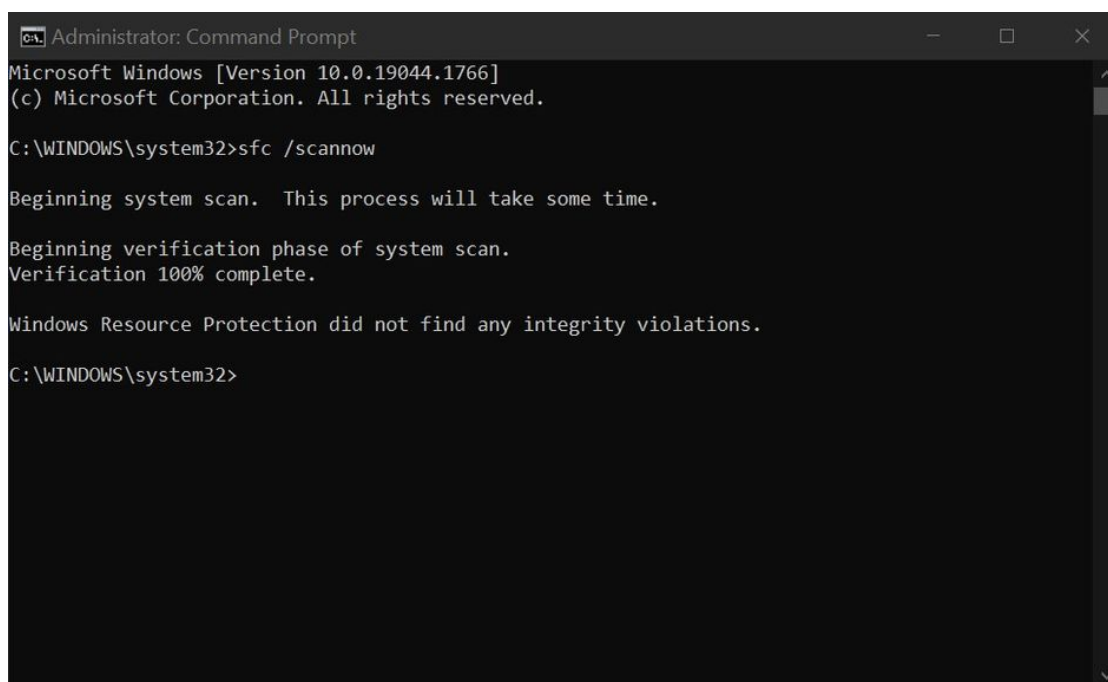Likewise, you'll see an increase in packet loss % and longer response times if a website is currently experiencing issues on its end.

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.

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.

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.

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?