

# Newsletter

## Have You UPDATED Your Device Lately?

### Microsoft—Patch Tuesday February 2026

58 vulnerabilities including six zero-day flaws were fixed.

The second Tuesday of the month is referred to as Patch Tuesday when Microsoft releases security fixes for vulnerabilities in its products.

<https://winbuzzer.com/2026/02/11/patch-tuesday-microsoft-fixes-6-active-zero-days-xcxwbn/>

*Reference: WinBuzzer*



### Samsung Updates Galaxy phones and tablets

The January 2026 security patch fixes a total of 53 security vulnerabilities.

*Reference: sammobile*



### Google Chrome

#### Security Update Patches Vulnerabilities

Chrome version 145.0.7632.45 patches Windows, Mac, and Linux and addresses 11 critical security flaws. <https://2cm.es/1jQpE>

*Reference: Cyberpress.org*

## Apple Patches Actively Exploited Zero Day Flaw

**The quickest way to jailbreak your iPhone is by not patching**

Update immediately is Apple's advice, after patching a vulnerability described as "extremely sophisticated" attacks against specific individuals.

Multiple systems affected. Are; iOS, iPadOS, macOS, tvOS, watchOS and visionOS. .

Devices include iPhone 11 and later models, iPad pro (3rd generation and later), iPad Air (3rd generation and later); iPad (8th generation and later) iPad mini (5th generation and later) Mac systems running macOS Tahoe.

*Reference: eSecurity Planet*



Image created with ChatGPT

Most browsers Edge, Chrome, Mozilla Firefox and others are incorporating AI. However Mozilla Firefox is giving users a way of shutting AI off using a “kill switch”.

From February 24 Firefox version 148 has a kill switch that will disable all AI features.

A dedicated AI controls section on the browser’s desktop settings menu will allow you to Block all generative AI features at once, enable only specific AI tools and prevent future features from being activated automatically.



(Image credit: Microsoft | Mozilla | Edited with Gemini)

<https://www.ghacks.net/2026/02/03/firefox-will-let-you-block-all-built-in-ai-features/>

Reference: *ghacks.net*



## Mozilla Thunderbird vs Webmail

Researching this topic was like purchasing a new computer. It depends on YOUR requirements. The pros and cons would take up most of this newsletter if all the detailed explanations were provided here. So if you require the full details contact me. I used the AI programs Copilot and Perplexity for this article with result below from Perplexity. Perplexity offered a personal recommendation if I advised how I currently use email, my devices, and number of email accounts.

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### Use Thunderbird if

- Handle multiple accounts heavily.
- Need strong offline access and deep filtering/organization.
- Care a lot about privacy and want more control over encryption and local storage.

### Use Webmail if

- Want zero setup and access from any device.
- Have light to moderate email use.
- Prefer to let the provider handle updates, storage, and backups.

## Annoyed with Survey Emails

Actions you can take

1. Unsubscribe safely
2. Mark as spam or junk
3. Create simple filters
4. Opt out at the source
5. Use a “throwaway” address for surveys

### Blacked out text in an email How do you fix it?

Try this one.

Appologies for the delay, I needed to arrange access through Gate 3 for 9:30am on the 4 March for our meeting. See below.



Recently I received an email with blacked out text. I requested another email and that was the same result. I tried sending it to my Gmail account. Same result. Opening the email on my smartphone I could read the text. I did work out reading the text on my Laptop by CTRL + A



Data breaches are common these days, don't always appear in local media, and in some cases when your details are managed by a third party, you may not realise your email address and password has been breached.

Check this website

<https://haveibeenpwned.com>

from time to time and see if your email address appears. Alternatively receive notifications.

#### Get Breach notifications

1. Enter your email address
2. Verify your email
3. Stay protected

### Android Email Option (new)

Gmail Android app now allows you to create a label.

By tapping the three line menu in top left hand corner then Scroll down to "Manage subscriptions" and tap "Create Label"



## Apple and Google partner to power future Apple Intelligence features

Google's Gemini artificial intelligence models will be used to power Apple's AI revamp of Siri voice assistant.

The AI driven Siri upgrade featuring new and improved features is likely to be spread over iOS 26.5 planned for May and iOS 27 to launch in September.

<https://www.macrumors.com/2026/02/11/siri-features-delayed-ios-26-4/>

## Microsoft stored Data for 10,000 years in Glass

Microsoft Research has published in Nature that their Project Silicia can store data in glass for 10,000 years. It also now works on ordinary borosilicate glass (like kitchen cookware).

The movie Superman (Warner Bros) is stored using this technology.

Modern AI depends on huge datasets and long term records and glass storage offers a durable, tamper resistant archive for datasets and model checkpoints.

<https://shorturl.at/keK5B> Reference: AI Fire

## Problem with your DVDs?

Time to check your DVDs. An article in PC Mag commented on DVDs manufactured by Warner Bros between 2006 and 2008 being hit with an issue known as 'laser rot' where the DVDs sd imply stop working due to rotting layers.

Warner Bros will provide a replacement but the movie may not be the same movie as originally purchased.

More information on this topic is available by searching *disc rot*.

Reference: PCMag



## Have you used Olive?

Woolworths's digital assistant, answers questions, resolves problems and directs shoppers to information.

Woolworths has announced a partnership with Google and later this year this agentic artificial intelligence will be incorporated into its Olive (chatbot) for shoppers.

Olive will be able to plan meals, interpret handwritten recipes, apply loyalty discounts and place suggested items directly into a customer's online shopping basket. Fortunately purchases will not be completed automatically as customers will need to give their permission and approve and pay for orders.

This technology is being adopted by Walmart, Kroger and Lowe's, all US retailers.

The new system is described by Google as a "proactive digital concierge" as it

- Understands customer intent
- Reasons through multi-step tasks
- Executes actions

Decision making will likely move from the customer to the system.

What do you think?

*Reference: The New Daily*

## Google's AI Overviews Do you like them?

Not happy with AI overviews?  
i.e. the summary when you do a Google search.

By adding **-AI** at the end of your search words the summary will not be displayed in the results.

<https://shorturl.at/tLGFO>

*Reference: PCMag*

# BeConnected

## ChatGPT rolls out Ads

Free users can opt out of ads, but OpenAI will restrict their messaging limits  
limit your back and forth chats with AI

<https://au.pcmag.com/ai/115818/chatgpt-now-shows-you-ads-but-theres-a-free-way-to-avoid-them>

*Reference: PCMag*

## Are Your Friends Sharing Your Number on ChatGPT

A new feature allows you to sync your contacts to see if your friends are using the chatbot or other OpenAI product.

When you upload your contacts and OpenAI finds the number of someone you know it will suggest you connect to that person. Choosing to follow them results in the person receiving a notification. With an option to follow back..

You can probably see where this is going and what it may mean for the future.

ChatGPT supports group chats of up to 20 people who can discuss and research using the chatbot..

*Reference: PCMag*

## AI Free Search using Google

Go to the page at link to do your search  
<https://udm14.com/>

Past Sands Tech Group Newsletters can be found  
at this link. <https://sandslifestylebfs.wixsite.com/scgbfs>

### Disclaimer:

The information contained in this newsletter is of a general nature. Always do your own research and seek advice before acting on the information provided.