

# Easy when you **Know How**



Robert Irvine is neither the messiah nor a naughty boy – he just wants to....

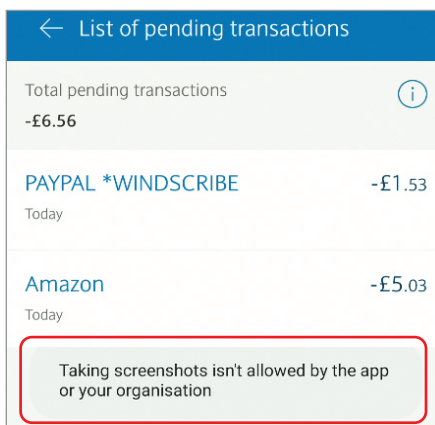
## Unlock screenshot restrictions

Back when the ‘new normal’ had yet to become the nightmare that seemingly never ends, I attended a performance of Handel’s *Messiah* at the Royal Albert Hall. Keen to show off my opulent surroundings to friends, I whipped out my phone and took a couple of photos.

Big mistake. Immediately, an usher (or ‘front of house operative’, if that’s their official name) came charging over to scold me that “we don’t allow cameras here, sir”. Although pleased to be called “sir” and tempted to point out that the concert hadn’t started yet and I was merely snapping pics of the lovely balconies, I obediently put my handset away. The shame of being ejected from the Albert Hall was too great a risk to take.

“Hey Google, take a screenshot”, I ordered and was hopeful when the nice robot lady replied: “Okay, taking a screenshot”

I was reminded of this incident while trying to capture a screenshot of the Barclays bank app on my Android phone, only to be told that “taking screenshots isn’t allowed by the app or your organisation” (see screenshot above right). I should add that the purpose of this wasn’t a “look at how rich I am!” brag, but to record and share an unauthorised transaction for a service I’d previously cancelled.



Don’t bank on it: Robert was prevented from taking a grab of his Barclays app

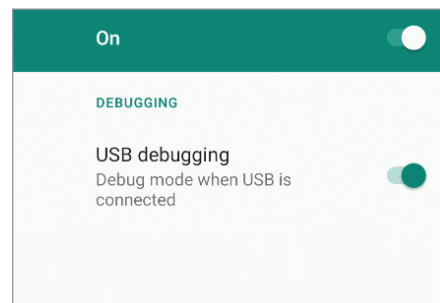
The screenshot function is also disabled in several other data-sensitive mobile apps, presumably for security reasons. For example, it won’t work in incognito mode in Chrome, although this may change in an imminent update ([www.snipca.com/37043](http://www.snipca.com/37043)).

The fiddly, old-fashioned method of pressing the power and volume-down buttons at the same time failed to bypass the block, so I was forced to seek an alternative screenshot solution.

One suggestion I found online was to use my voice instead of my fingers, via the magic of Google Assistant. “Hey Google, take a screenshot”, I ordered and was hopeful when the nice robot lady replied: “Okay, taking a screenshot”. Sadly, the result was an empty black rectangle, Barclays Bank proving too savvy for this vocal workaround.

Dismissing articles that said the only answer was to root my Android device, which would potentially open a whole world of pain, I kept looking until I discovered a tool called Scrcpy. Free to download from GitHub ([www.snipca.com/37034](http://www.snipca.com/37034)), this lets you beat in-app restrictions by capturing Android screenshots from your PC. Despite its name bringing to mind Scrappy Doo and his annoying “Hey, Uncle Scoob!” witterings, I decided to give Scrcpy a go.

After locating the download link on the



Turn on USB debugging to mirror your Android screen on your Windows desktop

typically baffling GitHub page, I extracted the contents of the ZIP file and ran the program by double-clicking the ‘scrcpy.exe’ file. Microsoft Defender’s SmartScreen displayed a warning, but I ignored this by clicking ‘More info’ then ‘Run anyway’.

Nothing happened at first, so I connected my phone to my PC with a USB cable and tried again. Still nothing happened, and I was about to dismiss Scrcpy as being as useless as its cartoon near-namesake.

But on checking the GitHub page, I noticed that Scrcpy requires ‘USB debugging’ to be enabled on your Android device. To do this, I followed the instructions to go to Settings, ‘About phone’ and tap ‘Build number’ seven times to unlock Android’s secret ‘Developer options’. I then went to System, Advanced, ‘Developer options’ and turned on USB debugging there (see screenshot above).

When I reconnected my phone to my PC, a message appeared asking me to allow USB debugging. I did so, ran Scrcpy again and my Android screen was miraculously mirrored on my Windows desktop. I was then able to capture a screenshot of the restricted banking app using the excellent image editor IrfanView ([www.irfanview.com](http://www.irfanview.com)).

“Hallelujah!” I proclaimed, which brought me full circle to Handel’s *Messiah*.

Need help with taking screenshots on your PC, phone or tablet? Let us know: [noproblem@computeractive.co.uk](mailto:noproblem@computeractive.co.uk)