COMPUTING

How to partition your hard drive in Windows

Want to make one hard drive act like two? Here's how to partition in Windows

SHARE

Partitioning your hard drive is a great way to organize your files, folders, and applications into their own virtual drives. Although there are advantages to having multiple physical drives for the same purpose, with the rise in multi-terabyte hard drives

ADVERTISEMENT

, partitioning a single drive is a viable method to give your system that multi-drive functionality with plenty of space on each, without shelling out for a second drive.

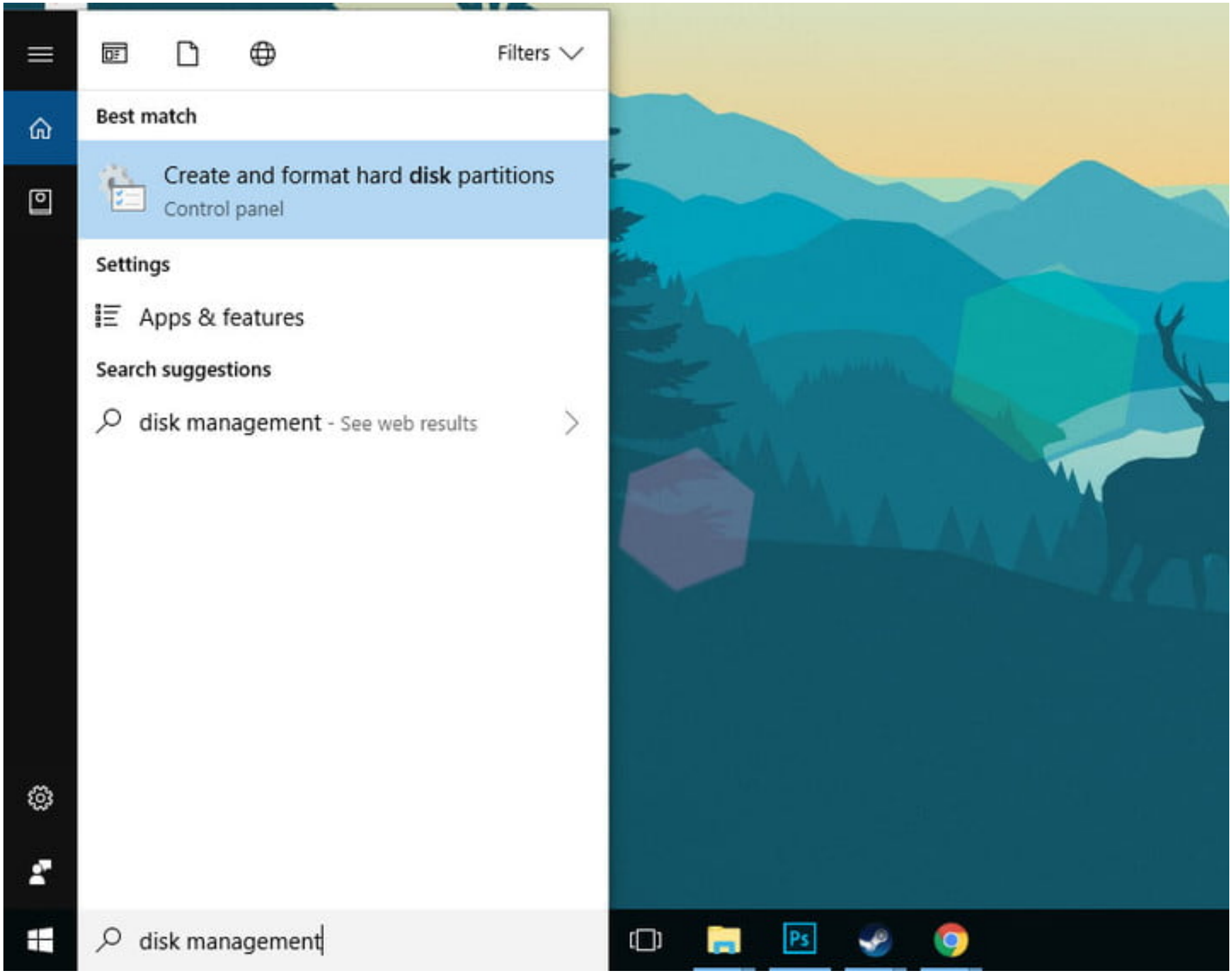
> If you have just bought a new drive and want to split it up, you'll need to partition it before using it. Whether you're working with a new drive, or just looking to partition an existing one though, the process is much the same. Fortunately, learning how to partition your hard drive in Windows 10 is quick and easy. If you follow the steps below, we'll help take you from a single drive system, to one with as many virtual drives as you want in just a few quick steps.
>
> If you're looking to create new volumes for backup purposes, we'd still recommend you use one of the best external hard drives instead. If you'd rather someone else handled the backup process for you, these are the best cloud providers.

Windows Disk Management

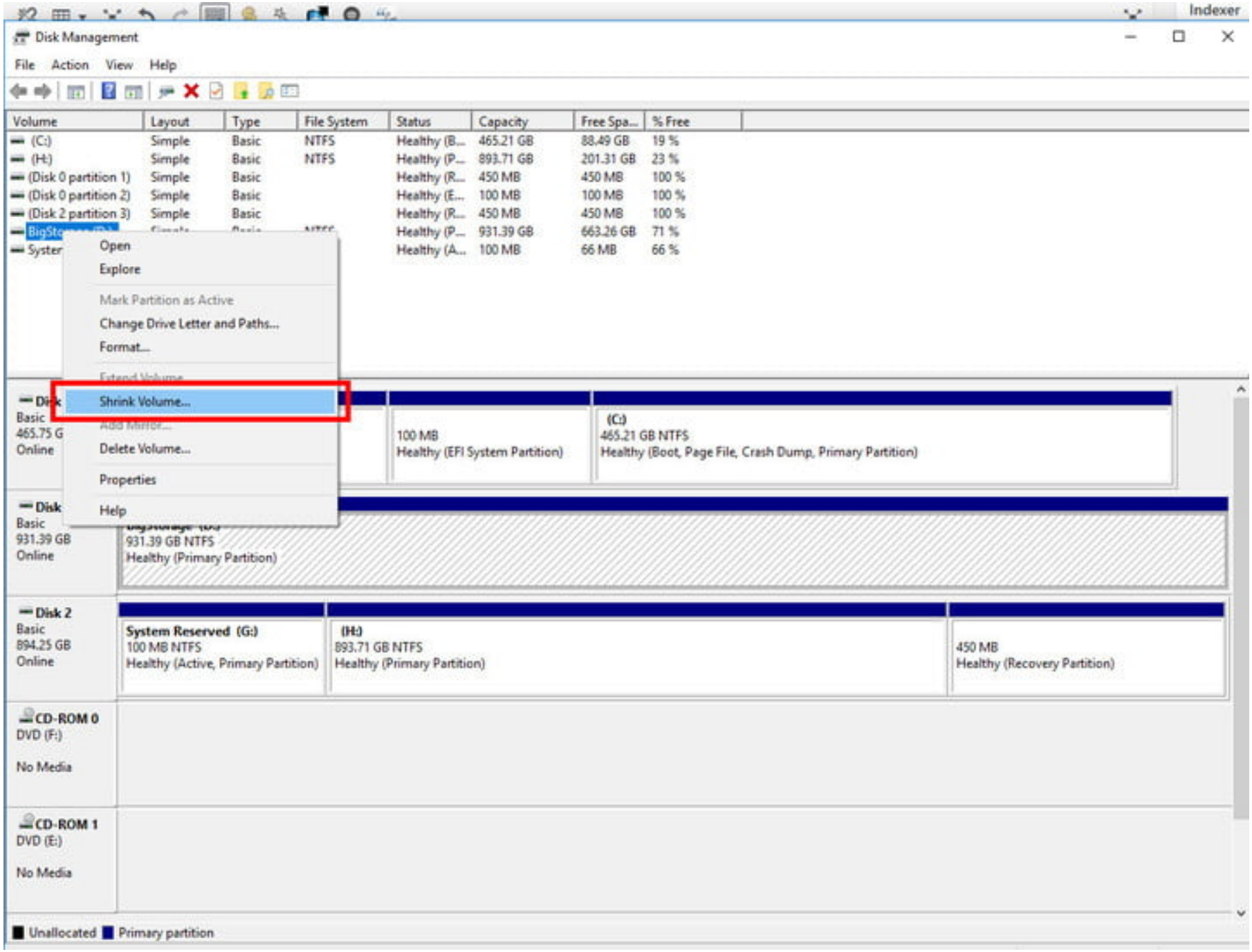
The simplest way to partition your new or existing hard drive is with Windows' built-in Disk Management tool. Although some third-party applications have slightly expanded feature sets, the standard Windows tool is perfectly capable of creating new partitions for you to work with.

Note: Although the below steps are specifically for Windows 10 systems, they are also applicable to Windows 7 and 8.1, where the process is much the same.

Step 1: Use the Windows search box to search for "Disk management" and select "Create and format hard disk partitions" from the results box. Alternatively, use the Windows "power user" menu (Win key + X) and click "Disk management."

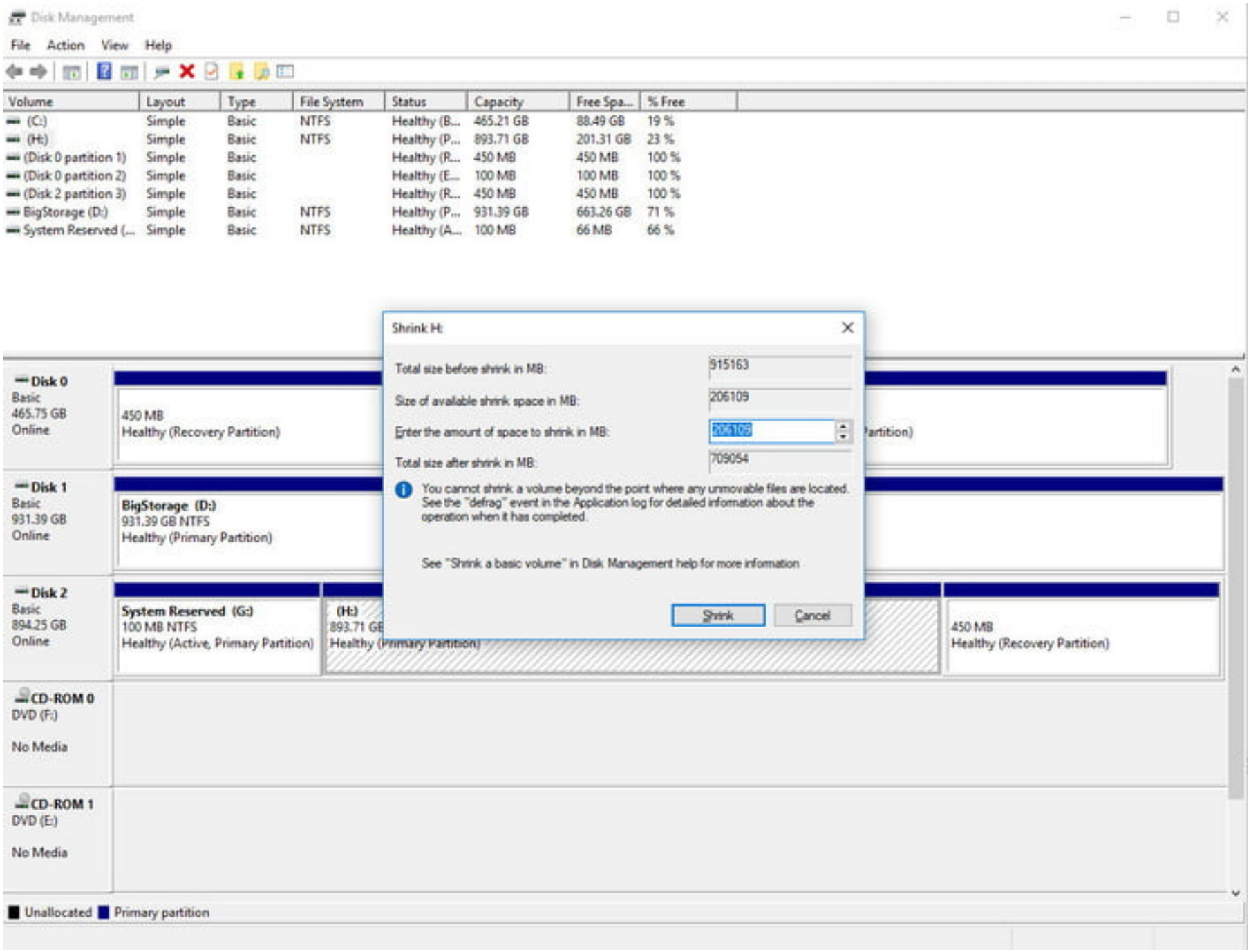

Filters
Best match
Create and format hard disk partitions
Control panel
Settings
Apps & features
Search suggestions
disk management - See web results
disk management

Step 2: Select the hard drive you want to partition from the list of available drives. If it is a new drive, skip to **Step 4**. If it is an existing drive with files and even your operating system installed on it, you'll need to create some "unallocated space" before you can partition it. Right-click it and select "shrink volume" from the resulting drop-down menu.

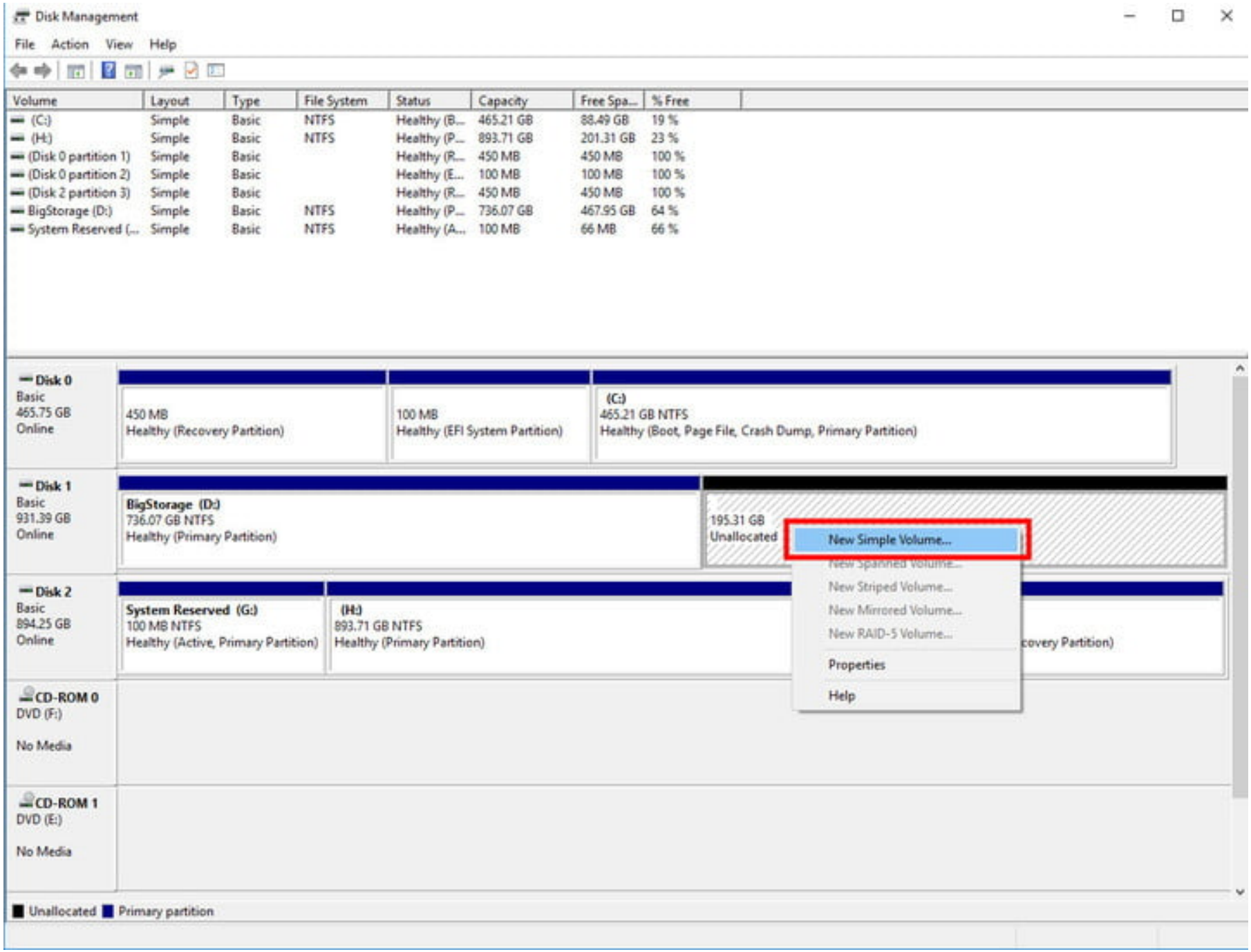

Indexer
Disk Management
File Action View Help
Volume Layout Type File System Status Capacity Free Spa... % Free
(C:) Simple Basic NTFS Healthy (B... 465.21 GB 88.49 GB 19 %
(H:) Simple Basic NTFS Healthy (P... 893.71 GB 201.31 GB 23 %
(Disk 0 partition 1) Simple Basic Healthy (R... 450 MB 450 MB 100 %
(Disk 0 partition 2) Simple Basic Healthy (E... 100 MB 100 MB 100 %
(Disk 2 partition 3) Simple Basic Healthy (R... 450 MB 450 MB 100 %
Healthy (P... 931.39 GB 663.26 GB 71 %
Healthy (A... 100 MB 66 MB 66 %
Open
Explore
Mark Partition as Active
Change Drive Letter and Paths...
Format...
Shrink Volume...
Delete Volume...
Properties
Help
100 MB
Healthy (EFI System Partition)
(C:)
465.21 GB NTFS
Healthy (Boot, Page File, Crash Dump, Primary Partition)
Basic
465.75 G
Online
Disk
Basic
931.39 GB
Online
931.39 GB NTFS
Healthy (Primary Partition)
Disk 2
Basic
894.25 GB
Online
System Reserved (G:)
100 MB NTFS
Healthy (Active, Primary Partition)
(H:)
893.71 GB NTFS
Healthy (Primary Partition)
450 MB
Healthy (Recovery Partition)
CD-ROM 0
DVD (F:)
No Media
CD-ROM 1
DVD (E:)
No Media
Unallocated
Primary partition

Step 3: Your PC will then calculate how much free space you can allocate to the new partition. Once completed, it will ask you how much of it you want to use. If you want to use all the free space on the hard drive, simply click the “Shrink” button. If you want to specify the size of the eventual partition, input it in megabytes in the respective field, before hitting Shrink.

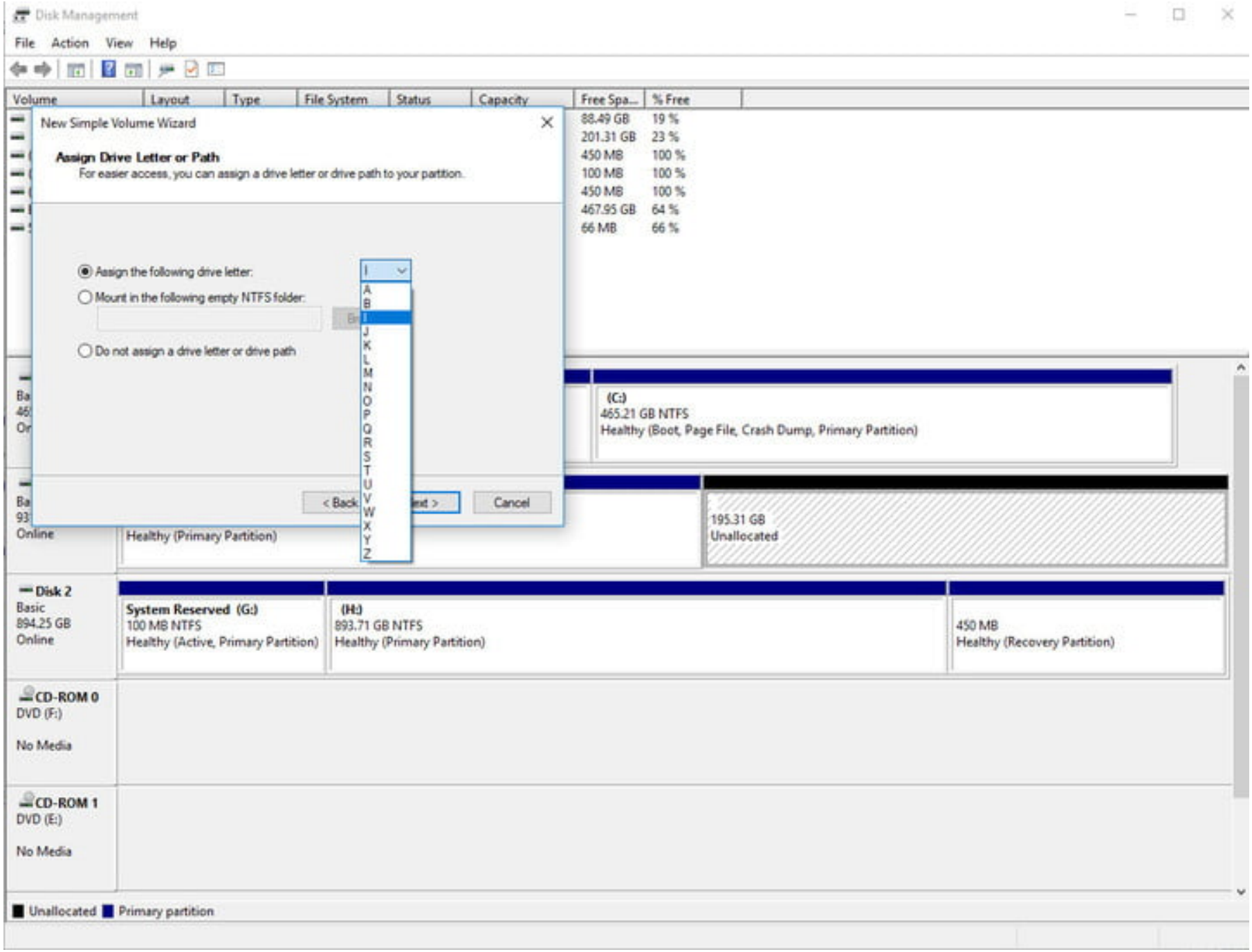
The process can take a minute depending on the speed of your drive but when complete, you’ll have a new “unallocated” space shown next to the corresponding physical drive in the bottom-half of the Disk Management screen.


Disk Management
File Action View Help
Volume Layout Type File System Status Capacity Free Spa... % Free
(C:) Simple Basic NTFS Healthy (B... 465.21 GB 88.49 GB 19 %
(H:) Simple Basic NTFS Healthy (P... 893.71 GB 201.31 GB 23 %
(Disk 0 partition 1) Simple Basic Healthy (R... 450 MB 450 MB 100 %
(Disk 0 partition 2) Simple Basic Healthy (E... 100 MB 100 MB 100 %
(Disk 2 partition 3) Simple Basic Healthy (R... 450 MB 450 MB 100 %
BigStorage (D:) Simple Basic NTFS Healthy (P... 931.39 GB 663.26 GB 71 %
System Reserved (... Simple Basic NTFS Healthy (A... 100 MB 66 MB 66 %
Shrink H:
Total size before shrink in MB: 915163
Size of available shrink space in MB: 206109
Enter the amount of space to shrink in MB: 206109
Total size after shrink in MB: 709054
You cannot shrink a volume beyond the point where any unmovable files are located. See the "defrag" event in the Application log for detailed information about the operation when it has completed.
See "Shrink a basic volume" in Disk Management help for more information
Shrink
Cancel
Disk 0
Basic
465.75 GB
Online
450 MB
Healthy (Recovery Partition)
Disk 1
Basic
931.39 GB
Online
BigStorage (D:)
931.39 GB NTFS
Healthy (Primary Partition)
Disk 2
Basic
894.25 GB
Online
System Reserved (G:)
100 MB NTFS
Healthy (Active, Primary Partition)
(H:)
893.71 GB
Healthy (Primary Partition)
450 MB
Healthy (Recovery Partition)
CD-ROM 0
DVD (F:)
No Media
CD-ROM 1
DVD (E:)
No Media
Unallocated
Primary partition

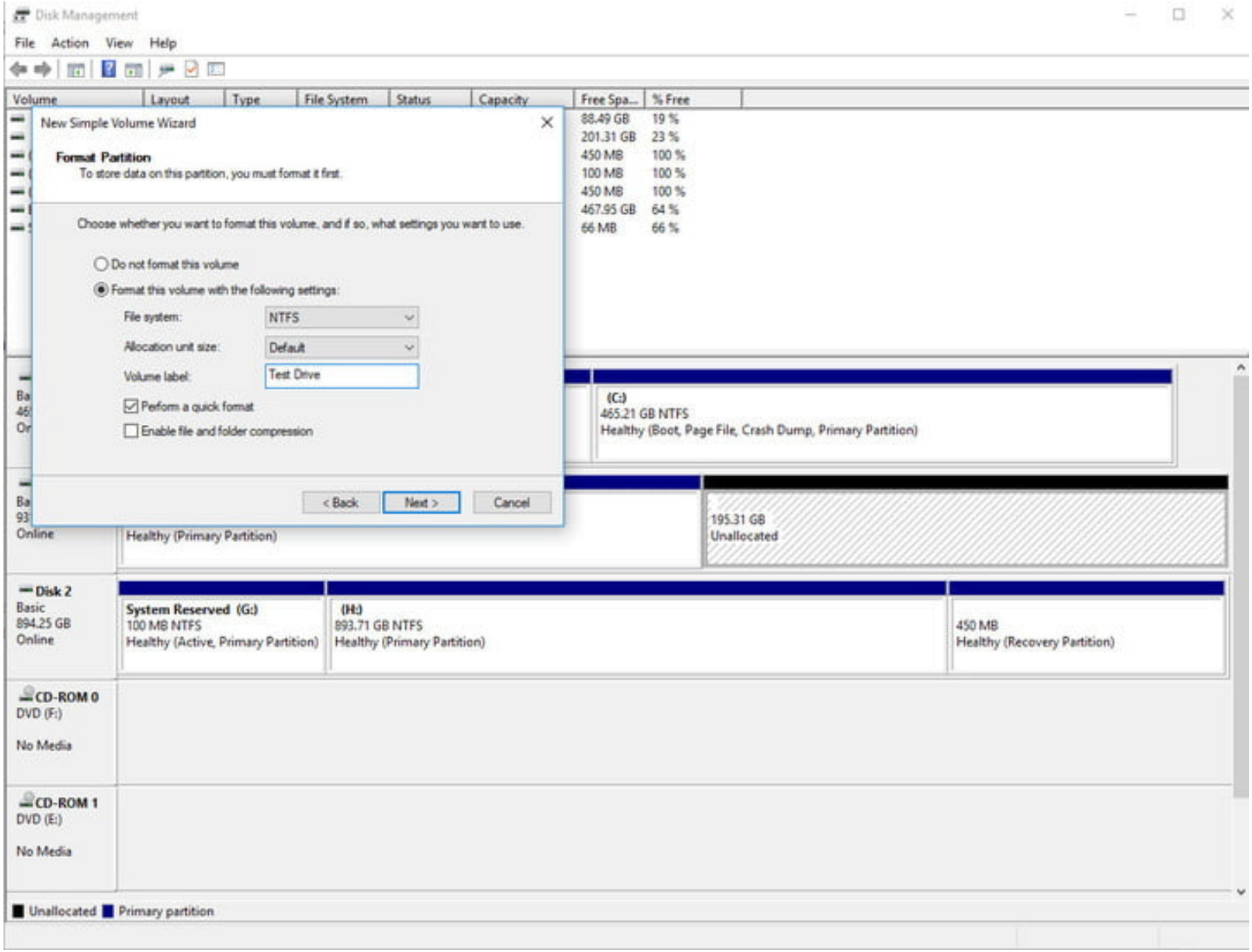
Step 4: Right-click the “Unallocated” space and select “New Simple Volume” from the resulting menu.


Disk Management
File Action View Help
Volume Layout Type File System Status Capacity Free Spa... % Free
(C:) Simple Basic NTFS Healthy (B... 465.21 GB 88.49 GB 19 %
(H:) Simple Basic NTFS Healthy (P... 893.71 GB 201.31 GB 23 %
(Disk 0 partition 1) Simple Basic Healthy (R... 450 MB 450 MB 100 %
(Disk 0 partition 2) Simple Basic Healthy (E... 100 MB 100 MB 100 %
(Disk 2 partition 3) Simple Basic Healthy (R... 450 MB 450 MB 100 %
BigStorage (D:) Simple Basic NTFS Healthy (P... 736.07 GB 467.95 GB 64 %
System Reserved (... Simple Basic NTFS Healthy (A... 100 MB 66 MB 66 %
Disk 0
Basic
465.75 GB
Online
450 MB
Healthy (Recovery Partition)
100 MB
Healthy (EFI System Partition)
(C:)
465.21 GB NTFS
Healthy (Boot, Page File, Crash Dump, Primary Partition)
Disk 1
Basic
931.39 GB
Online
BigStorage (D:)
736.07 GB NTFS
Healthy (Primary Partition)
195.31 GB
Unallocated
New Simple Volume...
New Striped Volume...
New Mirrored Volume...
New RAID-5 Volume...
Properties
Help
Disk 2
Basic
894.25 GB
Online
System Reserved (G:)
100 MB NTFS
Healthy (Active, Primary Partition)
(H:)
893.71 GB NTFS
Healthy (Primary Partition)
CD-ROM 0
DVD (F:)
No Media
CD-ROM 1
DVD (E:)
No Media
Unallocated
Primary partition

Step 5: Follow the on-screen instructions and select the size of the volume (the default will use all unallocated space) and the drive letter.


Disk Management
File Action View Help
Volume Layout Type File System Status Capacity Free Spa... % Free
88.49 GB 19 %
201.31 GB 23 %
450 MB 100 %
100 MB 100 %
450 MB 100 %
467.95 GB 64 %
66 MB 66 %
New Simple Volume Wizard
Assign Drive Letter or Path
For easier access, you can assign a drive letter or drive path to your partition.
Assign the following drive letter:
Mount in the following empty NTFS folder:
Do not assign a drive letter or drive path
A B I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z
< Back
Cancel
(C:)
465.21 GB NTFS
Healthy (Boot, Page File, Crash Dump, Primary Partition)
Online
Healthy (Primary Partition)
195.31 GB
Unallocated
Disk 2
Basic
894.25 GB
Online
System Reserved (G:)
100 MB NTFS
Healthy (Active, Primary Partition)
(H:)
893.71 GB NTFS
Healthy (Primary Partition)
450 MB
Healthy (Recovery Partition)
CD-ROM 0
DVD (F:)
No Media
CD-ROM 1
DVD (E:)
No Media
Unallocated
Primary partition

Step 6: It's wise to format new and old drives when creating a new partition. When given the option, select to do so. For "file system" select "NTFS." The "exFAT" option is more commonly used for portable devices. You can also add a volume label — name — if you want. You can leave the "allocation unit size" at default. Select "quick format" if you are short on time. A full format is rarely required.


Disk Management
File Action View Help
Volume Layout Type File System Status Capacity Free Spa... % Free
88.49 GB 19 %
201.31 GB 23 %
450 MB 100 %
100 MB 100 %
450 MB 100 %
467.95 GB 64 %
66 MB 66 %
New Simple Volume Wizard
Format Partition
To store data on this partition, you must format it first.
Choose whether you want to format this volume, and if so, what settings you want to use.
Do not format this volume
Format this volume with the following settings:
File system: NTFS
Allocation unit size: Default
Volume label: Test Drive
Perform a quick format
Enable file and folder compression
< Back Next > Cancel
(C:)
465.21 GB NTFS
Healthy (Boot, Page File, Crash Dump, Primary Partition)
Online
Healthy (Primary Partition)
195.31 GB
Unallocated
Disk 2
Basic
894.25 GB
Online
System Reserved (G:)
100 MB NTFS
Healthy (Active, Primary Partition)
(H:)
893.71 GB NTFS
Healthy (Primary Partition)
450 MB
Healthy (Recovery Partition)
CD-ROM 0
DVD (F:)
No Media
CD-ROM 1
DVD (E:)
No Media
Unallocated
Primary partition

Step 7: Continue to click through “Next” buttons and finally, hit “Finish” to create the volume. Your hard drive will now have a brand new partition with its very own designation. You’ll be able to see it, and all the information about it, on the Disk Management page.

Third party alternatives

If you'd rather use a specific third-party tool to partition your hard drive in Windows 10, there are a few out there worth considering. These are some we can recommend:

EaseUS Partition Master Free

With tools for moving and resizing partitions, wiping them clean, and altering labels and designations, EaseUS's Partition Master Free is a great tool enjoyed by millions of users around the world. It even comes with a "Partition Recovery Wizard," which can help you recover lost or deleted partitions after a hard-drive failure.

Mini Tool Partition Wizard Free

Mini Tool's partitioning application is fully featured, even in the free version, and adds the ability to convert file systems without formatting a drive and even test the stability of your hard drive to see if there are any bad sectors.

GParted

Incredibly lightweight, GParted isn't the prettiest of partition managers, but it has broad support for file systems and formats and has a full suite of partitioning creation, resizing and deletion abilities.

Editors' Recommendations

- How to move Windows 10 to an SSD
- How to run Android apps in Windows
- Windows update not working? Here's how to fix it
- How to download YouTube videos
- Buzzfeed Tasty One Top review

DON'T MISS

How to send a text message from a computer

UP NEXT

Here's how to restore contacts on an iPhone from iCloud

Show Comments

Cooler Master's new $79 mechanical keyboard lights up your desk like Christmas

Cooler Master launched a new mechanical keyboard packing more features per dollar than the competition. It's a highly attractive, visually sturdy peripheral sporting a curved brushed aluminum design and raised, floating keys.

Posted 9 hours ago — By Kevin Parrish

If Windows update isn't working, here's a few things you can try to fix it

Windows update not working? It's a more common problem than you might think. Fortunately, there are a few steps you can take to troubleshoot it and in this guide we'll break them down for you, step by step.

5 days ago — By Mark Coppock

Tight on space? Here's how to transfer photos from an iPhone to a computer

Never lose any of your cherished selfies or family vacation photos from your iPhone again by learning how to transfer photos from your iPhone to a computer in a just a few simple steps.

3 days ago — By Gannon Burgett

DEAL

HP is slashing 20% off the Omen gaming line powering this year's Fortnite Pro-AM

Our favorite fitness trackers make it fun to keep moving

Looking for your first fitness tracker, or an upgrade to the one you're already wearing? There are plenty of the wrist-worn gadgets available that are capable of doing more than just tracking daily steps, so here's our pick of the best...

2 days ago — By Rick Stella

Changing a PDF into an EPUB file is easier than you might think

If you like to read on a tablet or ebook reader, you'll find that ePUB files offer a number of advantages over PDFs. With this guide, we'll show you how to convert a PDF to EPUB in a few quick steps.

at E3

20% off with code

BUY NOW SEE DETAILS

Expires in 4 days, 18 hours

TRENDING RIGHT NOW

How to send a text message from a computer

Nvidia could debut GTX 11 Series graphics cards after September

How to save a webpage as a PDF

You'll find bargains galore with the best Amazon Prime Day 2018 deals

Google's Android Messages for web finally lets you text on your computer

2 days ago — By Jon Martindale

Show More

Digital Trends helps readers keep tabs on the fast-paced world of tech with all the latest news, fun product reviews, insightful editorials, and one-of-a-kind sneak peeks.

Upgrade your lifestyle

MUST READS

Best Netflix Movies Best Netflix Original Series

Best Hulu Shows Best Hulu Movies

Best Amazon Prime Shows

Best Amazon Prime Movies Best iPhone Games

WHO WE ARE

About Advertise Contact Us Privacy Policy

Terms of Use Corrections Careers The Manual

Best Amazon Prime Movies Best iPhone Games

Best TVs Best Amazon Prime Day deals

Best Amazon Coupon Codes

RELATED COVERAGE

DT Deals Best Products DT Shop DT Español

The Manual Giveaways

ADD US TO YOUR SOCIAL CHANNELS

SUBSCRIBE TO OUR NEWSLETTER

Copyright ©2018 Designtechnica Corporation. All rights reserved.