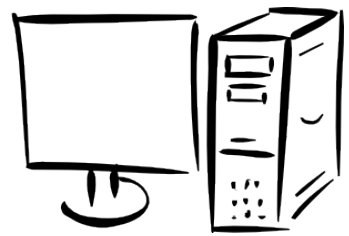


Bits & Bytes



Arkansas' Premier Computer Club

July 2016

Bella Vista Computer Club - John Ruehle Center

Highlands Crossing Center 1801 Forest Hills Blvd Suite 208 (lower level) Bella Vista, AR 72715

Website: www.bvCompClub.org

Email: jrc@bvcc.arcoxmail.com

Meetings

June 13th

BVCC Board Meeting

5:30 pm

Computer Club Meeting

Community Room at

Highlands Crossing 7 pm

HELP CLINICS

Saturday, July 2 9 am -12 noon

Wednesday, July 6 1-4 pm

Wednesday, July 20 9 am-12 noon

Bring your tower, laptop, tablet or smartphone for problem solving.

ALL THINGS APPLE will be the presentation topic at the July 11 meeting of the Bella Vista Computer Club. Mike Crawford of Simply Mac will be the speaker. Mike will introduce the new IOS 10 program and advances in Apple products. Apple users are encouraged to bring their devices to the meeting.

July 12 Using Windows 10

10 am-noon part 1

July 19 part 2

July 26 part 3

<http://bvcompclub.org/July2016.htm>

Be sure to check the class schedules at the meeting and sign-up for the ones you are interested in. There is no charge for classes to Club members.

Welcome New Member

Will Butler

We are glad you came!

Genealogy SIG 10 AM John Ruehle Center

3rd Saturday 10-12 am

What Can You Do With PDF Files?

Most people just print or view a PDF file, but they are more versatile than you think. Today, PDF files can have “fillable forms,” allowing you to complete a neatly typeset tax return, insurance claim form, voter’s registration, or other form with boxes for names, addresses, amounts, etc., even when you don’t have a typewriter or word processor. PDFs have a number of other tricks, such as the ability to sum a column of numbers in a form. They can even contain animated or audio content.

Acrobat, the professional software for PDF management and editing is sold by Adobe for a pretty penny. But the PDF format is open-source, so a host of third-party utilities have sprung up. Here are some of the best PDF tools, most of them free.

[Not Another PDF Scanner 2 \(NAPS2\)](#) is designed to replace the horrible, no-good, very-bad scanning software that comes bundled with multifunction printers and other scanner devices. Once installed, NAPS2 is easy to use. Click Profiles and then New to add your scanner, then edit the settings like Page size and Resolution. Click Scan when you’re ready, and an image of your document will slowly unfurl on the screen until the scan is complete. Now you can Save it in PDF format, print it, or both. An optional OCR (Optical Character Recognition) module converts images of alphanumeric characters into ASCII text.

[PDF Multi-Tool](#) extracts images, video, and audio content from PDF files, and saves each bundle of extracted content to an appropriate file (e. G., .jpg, .mp4, etc.) You can export tables of data from a PDF to CSV files, or import table data directly into an Excel spreadsheet. Split a PDF file into multiple parts, or merge multiple files into one PDF. There are many other handy functions in PDF Multi-Tool and its add-ons.

[PDFill Free PDF Tools](#) is a similar utility that I like. You can use it to merge, split, reorder, delete, encrypt, decrypt, rotate, crop and reformat PDF pages; add information, header, footer and watermark, to convert images to PDF, PDF to images or PostScript to PDF; delete, flatten and list form fields, and more. PDFill does not add watermarks and is free for personal or commercial use.

More PDF Tools

[Foxit Reader](#) is a long-time favorite for simply reading PDFs. It can also save your PDF collection to the cloud - Microsoft OneDrive and Google Drive integration is built in - and find the right PDF again when you need it. Like NAPS2, Foxit Reader can scan documents from your scanner to PDF files. You can annotate PDFs with Foxit Reader. It even reads PDF text aloud, a boon to the visually impaired.

[Rapid Redact](#) is handy if you need to redact (black out) portions of a page to protect sensitive information. RapidRedact can find and automatically redact text strings you specify, such as Social Security Numbers, credit card numbers, names, email addresses and anything else you need to remove. You can also use the 'Rectangle' tool to block out portions of a page.

How to Boost or Extend Your WiFi Signal

If the WiFi signal is weak in certain parts of your home (or out back in the hammock), there are some clever ways to boost or extend your WiFi signal, and most of them won't cost a penny. Here are my ten ways to boost your wifi signal:

- 1. Position The Router** - Yes, where you place your router does matter. If your wireless laptop or tablet is in another room, the signal has to go through walls and other interference before it reaches you. You can change the positioning and give everyone equal access. For example, in an open office room setting, instead of placing the router in a corner, try putting it in the middle of the room, where the signal should extend out more evenly, giving better coverage to the entire office.

If you're looking for optimal wireless coverage in various parts of your home, position the router in the middle of the house. Moving it up off the floor, to a bookcase or shelf, should also help. If you only have one wireless computer, and it's always in the same place (ie: your office, the kitchen, or the hammock) then it makes more sense to place the router closer to the computer, rather than in the center of the house. But experiment -- I've heard of cases where there was a very weak signal, and the problem was that the router was TOO close to the computer.
- 2. Avoid Bad Neighbors** - Remember, wifi is a radio signal, so the signals from microwave ovens, cordless phones and even fluorescent lights may cause interference and signal degradation. Other things that can wreak havoc on wireless networks are bluetooth devices, wireless game controllers, your neighbor's wireless router, and powerful WiMAX signals in your area. Even poorly wired electrical connections in a home can interfere with wireless signals due to broad radio-frequency emissions. Steering clear of as many of these problems as possible may provide a boost to your wifi.
- 3. Extend the Antenna** - There are some decent wireless antenna boosters available that you can purchase as add-ons to your current wifi router to help the signal extend out further. You just plug them directly into the router base (sometimes called the Wireless Access Point, or WAP) and it can give you that boost in the signal that you need. [Hawking](#) makes several types of wireless antenna boosters. One of the most powerful indoor models is the Hawking Technologies HAI15SC, which can boost the strength of your wireless signal from the typical 2dBi up to 15dBi! The HAI15SC's hi-gain "corner antenna" replaces the external antenna of your wireless router, significantly improving signal strength, distance, and wireless performance. This unit sells for about \$40, and can be found at Amazon and many other online retailers.
- 4. Repeaters and Range Extenders** - This little gizmo just takes in the wireless signal, boosts it up to full strength, and spits it back out again. Place the repeater within range of the router, and near the computer that needs a wireless signal. Linksys, D-Link, and other vendors offer wireless repeaters, also called range extenders. I recently bought a [TP-Link N300](#) range expander (under \$30), which is performing well in my home. Typically, installation of these things is very easy. Just plug it into a wall socket, connect it to your wireless router, and you're done. If you have an Apple computer, look into the [Airport Express](#) as a signal repeater.
- 5. Gettin' Geeky** - Some DIY geeks have come up with interesting ways to extend or boost your WiFi signal. One example is the [Pringle Cantenna](#) method. This may seem like a hoax, but the technique actually appeared in an O'Reilly book titled Building Wireless Community Networks. Another method that works is adding a [home-made parabolic wifi extender](#) to your router's antenna. Other techniques, such as the [satellite dish using a cell phone](#) are elaborate hoaxes, and I'll admit I fell for this one before a kind reader set me straight.
- 6. Wired Wifi?** - One idea that sounds counter-intuitive is to use the existing wiring in your home to extend a wireless signal. My article [One Cool Solution to Weak Wifi Signals](#) discusses how to eliminate wifi dead zones with powerline ethernet. In a nutshell, this technique uses your home's electrical wiring to transmit an Internet signal to another room, where it can be "rebroadcasted" as wifi.
- 7. Upgrade Your Router** - If you've owned the same router for several years, it might be good to go pick up a new one if you want to enhance your wireless network performance. Some of the latest models have a stronger signal. The newer "N routers" generally have a stronger broadcast signal, and they'll work even if you have an older 802.11B or G adapter in your computer. One caveat... if you have a router supplied by your Internet service provider, and you've got a tv/phone/internet bundle, you may have difficulty duplicating all your router settings on a new off-the-shelf router. Using a wireless extender or repeater would be a better idea in such cases.
- 8. Tweak Your Settings** - Your wireless router has special features that you may or may not want. Read the manual that comes with your router (or Google it) and tweak it to fit your needs. Most modern ones are "just plug it in" though there might be ways to boost signals or to make sure it is sending out signals that are optimized for your computer's wireless adapter. For example, most routers are set to broadcast on channel 6, but it's possible there may be less congestion or noise on a different channel. Try switching the channel to 1 or 11 and see if it makes a difference.
- 9. Is Your Wireless Router Secured?** - Make sure your neighbor isn't hogging all the juice from YOUR wireless router, or doing illegal stuff that could get YOU into trouble. Get your network secured so only you are using the signal. Tap into your router's security features and make sure you use secure passwords. See my [Wireless Network Security Checklist](#) for help with this. And if you're not convinced about the need to secure your wifi, read about [The WiFi Security Mistake You MUST Avoid](#).
- 10. Upgrade Your Router Software** - Another thing you can do without spending any cash is to make sure your router software is up to date. To do this, visit the website of the maker of your router, whether it is Linksys, D-Link, or some other brand. Check for your model number and make any updates necessary. Another option is to use alternative firmware. While your router's original software (aka firmware) should be all you need, some routers do not output the signal at the maximum possible strength. You might want to check into alternative firmware, like [OpenWRT](#), which promise to boost the wireless signal. But be careful with firmware updates -- if you load the wrong code for your router, you can foul it up with no recourse. I'd recommend this option only for tech-savvy tinkerers.

Reminders

Be sure to check the class schedules at the meeting and sign-up for the ones you are interested in. There is no charge for classes to Club members.

Check your Membership to see if it is renewal time. We value each one of you!



Have a safe and great
4th of July. Remember
those that preserve our
Freedom.

Club Officers:

Bob Shewmake: President

Rich Clark: Past-President

Vice-President: Sylvia Hill

Secretary: Joe Tropansky

Treasurer: Joel Ewing

Board Members:

Marie Herr, Ken Nelson, Marilyn Russell

Committee Chairs:

Jim Prince, Membership

Julie Storm, Newsletter Editor

Marilyn Russell, Programs

Earl Cummings, Librarian

Nancy Jones, Public Relations

Ryan Smith, Webmaster

Marie Herr, Education

Bob Shewmake, Genealogy Liaison

Kathy Clark, Genealogy Communications

The **Bits & Bytes** will be updated as new information comes.

Please check often!

Classes and open house clinics are free to Computer Club members. Club membership fee-\$20; ½ price additional family member. Classes and help clinics are held at the John Ruehle Center located in the Highlands Crossings Center, 1801 Forest Hills Blvd., Suite 208, Bella Vista. Class descriptions at bvcompclub.org