Bits & Bytes

Arkansas' Premier Computer Club

October 2017

Bella Vista Computer Club - John Ruehle Center
Highlands Crossing Center, 1801 Forest Hills Blvd Suite 208 (lower level), Bella Vista, AR 72715

Website: http://www.BVCompClub.org   Email: editor@bvcompclub.org

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HOW TO FIND US

All meetings are on the lower level of the Highland Crossroads Center in Bella Vista. You may use entrance A on the West side or entrance C on the South side and take the elevator or stairs to the lower level. Turn left (West) to reach the General Meeting room, right for the John Ruehle Training Center. Additional information is on our web site.

The NE Village House entrance to the lower level is no longer available for access to our rooms.

MEETINGS

Board: October 9th, 5:30 pm, John Ruehle Training Center

General Meeting: October 9th (2nd Monday), 7:00 pm, Community Room A (Rm 1001).
Program: Luap McKeever of Ozark Computer Works will discuss Computer Security.
Bring a guest! New Members and Guests are always welcome

Genealogy SIG: October 21 (3rd Saturday, 10 am – noon, John Ruehle Training Center

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HELP CLINICS

Saturday, October 7, 9am – noon
Wednesday, October 18, 9am – noon
Saturday, November 4, 9am – noon

Help clinics are a free service held in the Training Center for BVCC club members

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

CLASSES

Be sure to check for class schedules and schedule changes on-line for classes of interest. **Don't wait until the last minute to sign up – decisions on whether to cancel a class for lack of interest are made prior to the day of class.**

Basic Router Configuration – Monday October 30, 9am – 11am

Classes are free to Computer Club members and are held at our John Ruehle Training Center. Class descriptions and schedules are posted at http://bvcompclub.org .

MEMBERSHIP

Single membership is $20; $10 for each additional family member. You may join by mailing a membership application (from web site) with check, or become a member at a meeting.

REMINDERS

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

RECYCLE CENTER HELP WANTED

The BVCC needs your help. If you have an hour or more you can give to the Recycling Center, they need greeters to assist people dropping off their recyclables. Our income is derived from dues and from grants from the Recycling Center based on hours donated and credited to BVCC.

DONATE TO BVCC VIA AMAZON

BVCC is an IRS 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and as such is eligible for charitable donations from amazon.com for Amazon purchases providing you shop at "smile.amazon.com" instead of "amazon.com". BVCC has been registered at Amazon to participate in this program.

An announcement of that has been placed on the "Announcements" page at our web site http://bvcompclub.org, including a link to smile.amazon.com which will allow you to approve whether to set your default charity to BVCC. Every purchase at smile.amazon.com with BVCC set as your charity will result in a donation of 0.5% of the purchase price to BVCC, payable to BVCC at the end of each quarter.

BVCC OFFICERS & VOLUNTEERS

President: Joel Ewing
Vice President: Woody Ogden
Treasurer: George Borkowski
Secretary: Kathy Fourt
Board: Marie Herr
Board (Sep'19):   Marilyn Russell
Board (Sep'19):   Mary Wynne
Education Chair: Marie Herr
Genealogy SIG Liaison: Bob Shewmake
Genealogy SIG Communications: Kathy Clark
Membership Chair: Geri Hoerner
Newsletter Editor: OPEN
Public Relations: Norman Farria
Training Center Administrator: Woody Ogden
Training Center Admin Backup: Don Hood
Webmaster: Joel Ewing
Program Committee: OPEN (the Board)

Contact information is available on our web site.

NEWSLETTER EDITOR NEEDED

Julie Storm has had to step down as Newsletter Editor because of other commitments. We thank Julie for her service, but now we are in need of a Newsletter Editor.

This edition of the Newsletter is a proof-of-concept to demonstrate that a reasonable Newsletter format can be created using only the tools available in the Writer application that is part of the LibreOffice suite,   LibreOffice is a completely-free, open-source software that is available for MS Windows, Linux, and Mac platforms.

We offer to install LibreOffice and train on the techniques used to generate this Newsletter for anyone volunteering for Editor.

The Association of PC User Groups, to which we belong, supplies us with a source of additional articles from other user groups.

MEETUP.COM

The Bella Vista Computer Club now has a presence as a group on meetup.com: https://www.meetup.com/Bella-Vista-Computer-Club/

Individuals can become members of meetup.com for free. If you are a member, you will be advised of groups near your location that have events scheduled soon, and if you choose to "join" a group you will be advised whenever that group schedules a new event.   Meetup.com gives us very cheap advertising among all meetup.com members in NWA: a way of reaching people who might not think to search for our other media presence.

The plan is to advertise all our future General Meetings as meetup group events.

HOW TO DESTROY YOUR COMPUTER IN JUST MINUTES:

Why You Should Avoid Installing PUPS (Potentially Unwanted Programs)

By David Kretchmar
April 2017 issue, GigiBytes Gazette, Sun City Summerlin Computer Club, http://www.scs-cc.com/ . Reprinted by permission via APCUG.

There are plenty of new computers being used that are performing much more slowly than they should. One of the quickest ways to turn a fast, new computer into a slow system crippled by malware is to start downloading software from the wrong sites. Or by downloading the wrong software from what appears to be the right site.

Newer computers being slowed by unwanted programs is a bother, but the damage done by PUPs can be much more serious; PUPs can be responsible for programs that make it impossible to access any of your files, or otherwise ruin your system.

Every time you download anything from the Internet you first issue permissions that enable the opening of a conduit or vector between the Internet and your computer. The series of complex events is mostly invisible to you, except for your clicking on that virtual button that starts the whole process.

Bing and Google searches often can take you where you don't want to go. When searching for popular software, sponsored search results (which result in unwanted programs) often appear at the top of the search results page, along with links from the actual software source sites. Often those ad links try to install software on your computer that you do not want. It could be anything; it could be a fake driver update program or a scam system cleaning program. Note that my Bing search for VLC media player (below) first showed 4 sites NOT associated with VLC – bad sites.
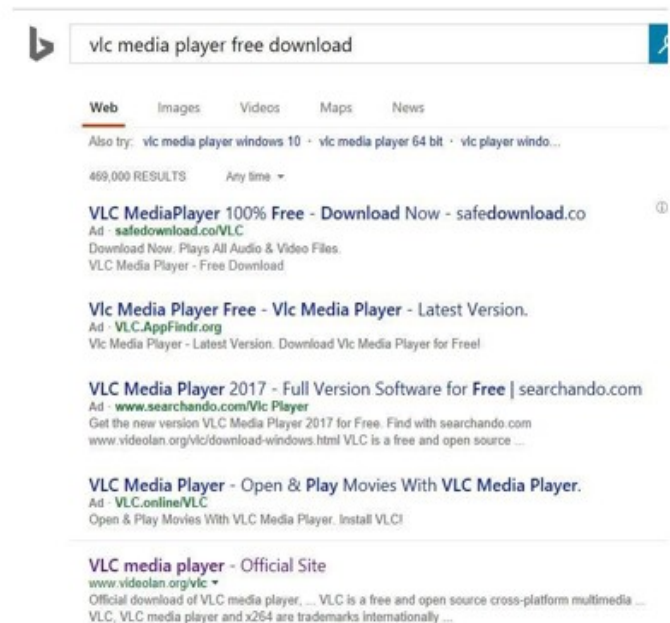
Testing Misleading Advertisement links
How bad is it? To find out, I installed a fresh Windows 10, plus all Windows updates, on a freshly formatted hard drive. I downloaded and installed the free version of Avast! Antivirus software that brought a hitchhiker of its own - Google Chrome. OK, I wanted Chrome, but not every user would, so I considered this an invasive act by a program I downloaded for protection.

I used Edge, Firefox, and Google Chrome and started using Google and Bing search engines to start searching for popular free programs. The programs I sought are often the first programs that get installed on a PC; Firefox, Google Chrome, OpenOffice, iTunes, Adobe Flash, Java, Adobe Acrobat, VLC, and WinZip. Then, I carelessly

clicked on ad results, which appeared above or on the same first page as "real" search results. These paid ads were identified by notes and highlighted in a very pale color to differentiate them (slightly) from the actual search links that appeared nearby.

The ads didn't appear after every search and the ones that appeared varied among searches and were different for different browsers. Sometimes, the first paid ad link actually took me to the software's true source site (i.e. searching for Google offered www.google.com first). Often Avast would block a download it recognized as harmful, but Avast did not catch many problems.

For all of the searched for programs, I was able to bring up more questionable sponsored search results within seconds of repeated searching. Misleading results showed up in all search engines and I could not determine that any browser offered better or worse protection than others.

For each ad link, I clicked through and installed the respective programs via the link or button provided. Instead of delivering just the application I was looking for, all of the paid links attempted to tack on unwanted programs. In some cases, if I was careful to read all of the fine print and uncheck boxes, I could get the files I was looking for without a bunch of extra "added value" software, but it was very difficult.

For the purposes of this article, I acted as an inexperienced user (or an experienced user who's not paying attention), and clicked my way through ads and dialogue boxes that looked like the End User License Agreement (EULA) we're used to seeing through when installing software.

And … They Got Me!

After installing just a few programs this way, I started accumulating browser toolbars (Bing, Yahoo, and Google), and noticed my search engine and home page had been hijacked to something unwanted. As I continued the process, Windows started slowing down to a crawl.
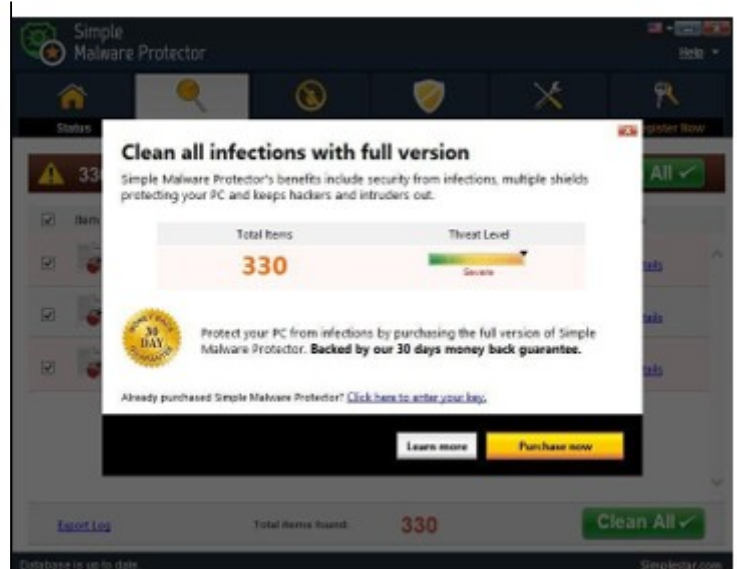
After installing all of the programs on my list, I opened Windows 10's Programs and Features and each browser's extensions and add-ons and counted 39 items that had been installed in addition to the programs I intended to get. On rebooting, three new programs launched popup windows at startup, including two that started running virus/registry scans as soon as they launched, and a couple that flashed warnings windows and offered fixes if I registered and/or upgraded to the full paid version.

Remember this was originally a clean install of Windows 10 that needed nothing.

Within a few minutes my computer became noticeably slower, plagued by numerous popups, and was becoming essentially unusable.
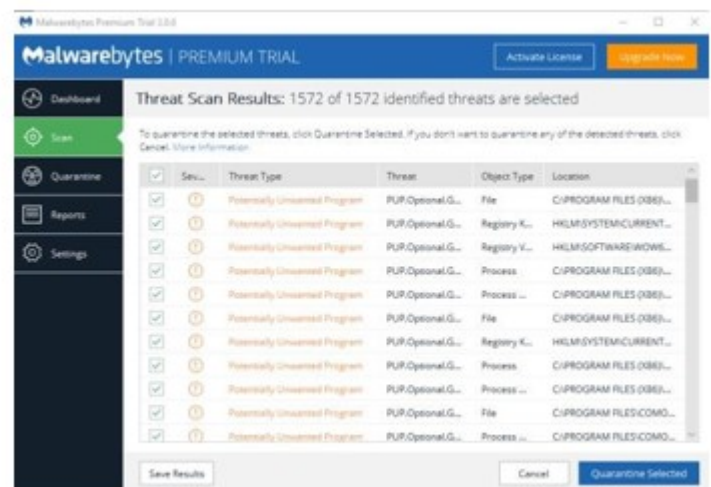
All of these were nasty, but if even a small fraction of them were, I would be in real trouble.

Conclusions and Recommendations
Most of us will have to download some third-party (non-Microsoft) software from the Internet. This does not have to be dangerous if you pay attention that the software is being offered from the true home site of that product. NEVER download software from any sponsored link, unless the desired software creator is the sponsor.

Do not depend on your anti-malware program to protect you. It will catch some issues, but not all.

CREATING A NEWSLETTER WITH WRITER

By Joel Ewing, Bella Vista Computer Club
Permission to reprint this article is granted to other member groups of APCUG.

There are software applications designed explicitly for creating formal publications, but many small organizations don't require newsletters with highly professional formats, and secondly, many such groups depend on volunteer editors who lack the time to produce such a document, even if they were able to afford the software. The purpose of this article is to demonstrate that a few simple techniques with a completely-free, open-source word processor, LibreOffice Writer, can be used to create a newsletter in 8.5x11 format which looks reasonable with minimal effort. These same techniques could no doubt be applied using MS Word, since there is considerable overlap in functionality between MS Word and LO Writer, despite major differences in the user interfaces. But, if the object is to encourage someone who might not have access to MS Office to become an "editor", the availability of free alternatives is a definite plus.

The most common newsletter format is to have a full-width header at the top of the first page, followed by content on that and following pages. Many people seem to find it easier to visually follow an article that is not full page width, so typically the article content uses a multi-column

format with two or more columns. There is multi-column-format support in LO Writer and also support for "frames", which facilitates creation of a header that follows different conventions.

My personal preference is to go with two columns for content. Dividing into more than two columns complicates fitting larger images within an article, and makes it more likely that long words or long URLs will cause visual problems with line justification and line splits.

The Header

This is the place to start. Although it will take some experimentation and time to create, this is also the part of the Newsletter that will be relatively constant, with possible exception of date, and can be cloned for future Newsletters. I like the header to dominate and be a little wider than the default margins. I find a width of 7.65" will still print reliably, but you may want to verify that width will work if you have a specific printer you use to make hard copies of the Newsletter.

Start with a blank document. Then Insert→Frame… Type: Set Width 7.65", Height "AutoSize", Position Horizontal "Center" , Vertical "Top", Anchor "To page"; Borders: "all", Line Width "1.0 pt (adjust to taste-- you may want to adjust "Spacing to Contents" as this determines the light-gray inset from the borders where heading contents may be placed); Area: may want to adjust Fill later; Columns: should default to "1". This will give you an empty frame, almost

full page width, high enough for one line of text, but it will expand as content is added.

Start typing information into the frame. Which lines come first, font used, font size, left-right alignment are variable and subjective. This text should include Title, various organization information, date of newsletter, etc. Keep text that you might want to position/size separately as

separate paragraphs (followed by "Enter"). Just keying in the basic information using default font and size choices gives the result that follows – not particularly impressive.
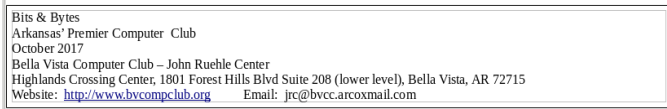
Now comes the experimentation part – trying out different fonts, font sizes, font effects (bold, shadow, etc.) until you find some combinations that appeals to you. Starting from nothing may take some false starts and an evolving design. In my case I was trying to come as close as possible to some historical versions of the Newsletter that had been produced with other tools, and used those as a guide. I finally settled on Title: "URW Chancery L" size 60, bold, with shadow; 2nd line: "Liberation Sans", size 11'; the date: "Liberation Sans", size 24, bold; Bella Vista… line: "Liberation Sans" size 14, bold; Highlands… line: "Liberation Sans" size 11, bold; website line: "Liberation Sans" size 10   After right-justifying the date and adding several trailing blanks, and centering the next two lines, this gave the effect:

On the final line I want the Website left justified and the Email right-justified, which can't be done automatically. The simple solution is to insert enough blanks to put the Email in the desired location. This is getting close. I would like to have just a little more space above the Website line.   Select that line and format the paragraph: add 0.06 spacing above the paragraph.

We have an image that normally goes in the upper right corner of the heading that has black lines on

a white background. Set the cursor at the end of the Title and insert the image. It won't go in the right place, but manually click and drag it to the upper right corner of the heading frame. To make things slightly more elaborate you can choose to modify the "Area" properties of the frame to include a light color fill, or in our case we actually have a lightly-colored bitmap background of our logo that we use on the web site which can be specified, resulting in the following:

Notice the white rectangle background around the image is not what was intended. We need to instead use a version of the image where all the white areas are transparent.   This can be done easily with the free GIMP image manipulation utility (a tale for another day), by selecting all the white areas, inverting the selection, copying the selected pixels, pasting as a new image and exporting that as a PNG image. Deleting the original image from the heading frame and inserting the new version gives us the final version shown below. The fine guide lines showing the borders of the image will not be in printed or PDF versions of the document.

As one final observation on the header, the easiest way to update the Date in the header without upsetting the formatting is to insert the cursor somewhere in the middle of the existing date (to get the same formatting) type the new date, then

deleted the unwanted characters from the old date. If you delete the old date first, you will likely have to re-do all the font and size customization that was done for the date.

The Content

Set the cursor below the heading frame, right click, select Page…, set the Page Style for left/right margins of 0.75" (or possibly as low as 0.5"); set Columns to "2". I like a black Separator Line of 0.25pt, but that's personal preference. You should probably also set a "Spacing" of at least 0.1" between columns to get some visual separation.

Articles may either be copied and pasted from some other source or manually typed into the newsletter starting with the left column. I would recommend using a consistent article heading style and a consistent font type and size – although it is sometimes useful to play with inter-line or inter-paragraph spacing, and perhaps even with font size to get an article to fit in the available space.

I would find a heading style that is close to what you want for article headings, modify the style to force the desired font, font size, and other heading options, and then consistently use that style for all headings.

For separating articles I would recommend inserting a horizontal line (Insert → Horizontal Line). The action name is a little misleading because what it actually does is mark the current paragraph with a "horizontal line" style which causes the paragraph to have a bottom border drawn. That style can also affect paragraph font and size and line spacing, which is not usually what you want for a paragraph of text. So, the proper usage of the horizontal line (from painful experience) is: at the end of an article, press Enter, type one space (to get a non-visible paragraph of one space), and then Insert the Horizontal line at that point so it is the bottom of that invisible

"space" paragraph.   You can edit the "Horizontal Line" style to increase the width of the horizontal line (its bottom Border) to make it more pronounced or a different line style, and you can adjust the amount of vertical space before and after the "Horizontal Line" paragraph.

If you want to begin work on the right column of a page before finishing the left, or if you just want to force the column break to occur at a better separation point, you can use Insert → Manual Break… and select "Column Break" .   You can similarly use Insert → Page Break to force text to begin a new page before the current page is full.

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

Force a column bradk

Working with articles with images can be tricky, because LO Writer likes to "anchor" the images to a paragraph which can limit how it can be moved. If necessary you can alter the properties of the image to change how it is anchored.   When the image is selected, the anchor point is displayed (an anchor icon) and it may be moved to a different point in the article.   Sometime attempting to move the image makes it fly to unexpected locations or even disappear, at which point "undo" is your friend. You can find a number of suggestions on-line about how to deal with images in Writer, but none of the solutions are very elegant or foolproof.

Experience with this article showed that copying and pasting a single-column document into into a two-column target does not handle embedded images well. You are better off saving the images separately, deleting any images copied with the document, and manually re-inserting the images at

an appropriate point so that they get properly sized for the narrower columns.