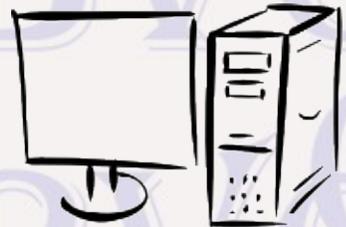# Bits & Bytes

Arkansas' Premier Computer Club

April 2022

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

Website: http://BVComputerClub.org   Email: editor@bvcomputerclub.org

MEETINGS

Board Meeting: April 11, 6pm, in John Ruehle Training Center, Highlands Crossing Center.

General Meeting: April 11, 7pm, "Digital Video Editing Fundamentals Plus", a presentation by John Krout, given for APCUG on Feb 12, 2022. This demonstrates some basics of Digital Video Editing using Movie Studio Platinum by Magix.

We will meet in-person in Room 1001 on the lower level of The Highlands Crossing Center, 1801 Forest Hills Blvd, Bella Vista, or you may attend the meeting on-line via Zoom. Zoom access information is published on our website.

Visitors or Guests are welcome.

Because of COVID-19, we recommend observing any current masking and social-distancing guidelines that may be in effect at the time of the meeting. Consider attending by Zoom if you or others in your family are in a high risk category.

Genealogy SIG: **No meeting** (3rd Saturday).

HELP CLINICS

April 2, 9am - noon at John Ruehle center
April 20, 9am - noon at John Ruehle center
Members may request Remote Help on our website at https://bvcomputerclub.org at menu path Member Benefits ►Remote Help .

MEMBERSHIP

Single membership is $25; $10 for each additional family member in the same household.

Join on our website at https://bvcomputerclub.org at menu path Get Involved ►Join/Renew, by mailing an application (from the web site) with check, or complete an application and pay in person at any meeting.

CLASSES

(At BVCC Training Center)

Tuesday, April 12, 9am-11am, "Why, When and How to Backup Your C Drive", with Pete Opland.

Tuesday, April 26, 9am-11am, "Data: Where Is It and What To Do With It", with Pete Opland.

Wednesday April 27, 4pm-6pm, "Computer Security for Regular People, Part 1", with Justin Sell.

Advance sign up required for each listed class: For reservations: email to edu@bvcomputerclub.org, or sign up at the General Meeting. Classes are **free to Computer Club members.**

Check the monthly calendar and announcements for any last minute schedule changes at https://bvcomputerclub.org .

NEW OR RETURNING BVCC MEMBERS

We are pleased to welcome the following new members or members returning to BVCC after an absence since last month's newsletter:

Jerri Adams   Daniel Sherman   Claudia Lawson

THE WEB BROWSER VERSION 100 PROBLEM

By Joel Ewing, President Bella Vista Computer Club
president (at) bvcomputerclub.org
April 2022, Bits & Bytes

APCUG recently sent out a warning of a potential problems that may become visible with some websites in 2022. Several popular web browsers will reach version level 100 this year. With Chrome, that is scheduled for March 29, with Firefox on May 3. You can find discussions of this potential problem at ZDNet, Malwarebytes Labs, 9to5google.com, and other places. You can check the current version of your Firefox browser from "Help -> About Firefox" and the current version of your Chrome browser from "Help -> About Google Chrome". The version level of Microsoft Edge can be checked with "Help and feedback -> About Microsoft Edge" .

A website can detect what browser type and version is being used to access it by examining "User Agent" information sent by the browser, which identifies both the browser type and version. For example, on my primary desktop my Firefox browser identifies itself as "**Mozilla/5.0 (X11; Fedora; Linux x86_64; rv:98.0) Gecko/20100101 Firefox/98.0**". My current Chrome browser identifies itself as User_Agent "**Mozilla/5.0 (X11; Fedora; Linux x86_64) AppleWebKit/537.36 (KHTML, like Gecko) Chrome/99.0.4844.51 Safari/537.36**". This shows my Firefox browser at version 98.0 and Chrome at version 99.0. On my Windows 10 system, The Edge browser identifies itself as User Agent "**Mozilla/5.0 (Windows NT 10.0; Win64; x64) AppleWebKit/537.36 (KHTML, like Gecko) Chrome/99.0.4844.74 Safari/537.36 Edg/99.0.1150.55**". So even though Edge hasn't been around as long as the Chrome browser, its version number is now in sync with the version level of Chrome, because Edge's HTML rendering engine is Chrome-based. One could expect to see problems in both Chrome and Edge browsers at about the same time for websites that depend on browser version numbers and handle a version number of 100 incorrectly.

Although it has long been recognized as a questionable practice, some websites are sensitive to browser version numbers in the User Agent info and use it as an indication of browser support for specific HTML features and may use that information to vary the web page presented. If the comparison of minimal desired browser version to the current browser version is not done properly in a way that accommodates the transition from two- to three-digit version numbers, the website may erroneously interpret version 100 as being earlier rather than later than some two-digit version number.

During early testing of Chrome version 100, it was found that websites developed using the Duda web design toolkit had problems and mis-interpreted browser version 100 as version "10". That problem was quickly fixed

by Duda in December 2021, but it's possible there could still be websites that are down-level on maintenance, or there could be similar errors in other website development tools or in independent code associated with a website.

The problem is similar to the Y2K issue in that it is a sensitivity to the number of digits used to represent a value. The scope of the problem should be minor compared to Y2K for several reasons, not the least of which is that it would would be a strategic error for a website to create a web page that would be non-functional without a specific HTML feature unless the browser support for that feature has become nearly universal. If a feature is widely supported, it may reasonable, and certainly easier, to assume that users will be using browsers sufficiently up to date to include the required functional support.

A properly designed web page that tests for a minimal browser version before generating a web page using a newer HTML feature should be designed to still generate a reasonably functional web page without using that feature rather than just completely fail. That would mean in such cases there is still a chance that a mistake in interpreting the version number should produce a web page that functions to some extent rather than a page that fails completely.

A strong case can be made for not designing sensitivity to or dependency on specific browser versions into a website.   Given the large number of browser choices available today, it makes more sense to closely adhere to HTML standards that have been in effect long enough to be completely supported for at least a year by all popular browsers and expect that users will have updated their browser at least once in the last year. This not an unreasonable burden to place on users as multiple updates to a browser occur every year, and failure to install at least some of these is bad for other reasons, such as security exposures. If there is reason for concern that some browsers don't properly support the HTML features needed by the website, it might be reasonable to add a comment to the website to the effect that "This website has been tested with web browser X and should function for other browsers with compatible HTML support". If the website fails to function as expected, this should at least suggest to the user that his choices are to try another browser or look for browser updates.

The first user response to such browser compatibility warnings is to assume the website has not made the mistake of being on the bleeding edge of the HTML standards and continue with reasonable hope that if you are using an up-to-date version of your browser, things should work.

If your browser is unable to handle the website, the next response is to try a different browser.   This is one of the reasons everyone should have at least one alternative to their primary browser. That solution can address a temporary version 100 problem as well as many other browser bugs.

Another reason for having an alternative browser is that you will sometimes come across a website that serves a web page that violates some part of the HTML standards.   The way different browsers respond to invalid HTML usage can vary, so this is a case where one browser may do a better job displaying the page than another browser, and yet both be correct for HTML code meeting the standards.

Both Chrome and Firefox will be monitoring their version 100 roll outs for serious problems and will make some work-around available if the number of problem websites is found to be an issue.   Firefox has an option to "lie" about its identity, which would be one way to circumvent the version 100 problem. There are no doubt some similar tricks that may be used with Chrome for a quick circumvention as well.

The ultimate fix for version 100 problems should be changes at any problem websites, not action by the individual users of web browsers.   Just be aware that you may see some strangeness during the transition, and may have to work around a problem if a needed website does not resolve issues in a reasonable time frame.

On March 31 my Chrome browser updated to version 100.   I quickly tried out Chrome 100 on some of the websites I care about most, and so far have not seen any problems.   Based on that admittedly limited sample, I suspect any problems will most likely be confined to websites that are less critical to most users.

GAVE UP MY MOUSE LONG AGO AND I'M HAPPY I DID
IF YOU HATE YOUR MOUSE, TRY A TRACKBALL INSTEAD

By Kurt Jefferson, Editor, CKCS Newsletter
October 2022 Issue
https://ckcs.org/
lextown2 (at) gmail.com

The article in Gizmodo doesn't mince words with the headline: "With its big roly-poly ball and huge hand rest,

the venerable trackball mouse looks like a holdover from 1996. Or maybe 1946 – that's the first time a trackball was used as an input device in a computer," writes Alex Cranz in his 2017 article.

He asserts the waning popularity of the lowly trackball after more of us began using the mouse and then the trackpad. Cranz adds, "But here's the thing: The trackball is still good. Not just good—the trackball is great. So great that Logitech is introducing its first trackball in many years is a cause for celebration—even if I have some issues with my new favorite input device."

So, in 2017, Switzerland–based Logitech introduced its first new trackball in years. Guess what? The MX Ergo was a major hit. And sales are still climbing. Last fall, Logitech reported a 26% increase in mice and trackball sales. (Logitech sells plenty of mice – but it's also discovering many people insist on trackballs instead.)

Then, last October, Logitech introduced yet another trackball: the Ergo M575. The user can connect to a desktop or laptop, Mac or PC via a USB interface with a small transceiver or Bluetooth. It will also connect to an iPad using the Bluetooth option.

As more of us began working and teaching school from home in 2020 because of the pandemic, more of us are actively ditching our mice. (Plenty of us are still working and teaching from home via Zoom and other software.)

Make Tech Easier explains why trackballs are better for you: "More workers are aware of the health risks and problems associated with long periods of sitting daily. It's supremely unhealthy, and many companies have made a serious effort to help modern office workers reduce the risks of desk-bound work.

While standing up will help your health, more ergonomic input devices can protect you from an RSI or repetitive strain injury.

These injuries are caused by repeatedly straining your body in the same way, over and over again. These injuries can cause numbness, tingling, and pain, and they won't go away until you stop the stressor.

Trackball mice can be a blessing for workers suffering from a wrist-based RSI or carpal tunnel. The benefit comes from the trackball's stable position. While you move your wrist and arm to manipulate a traditional mouse, you only need to move your fingers to use a trackball. If you use a wrist rest with your trackball, your wrist will be at a healthier angle. This frees it from the strain associated with sliding your mouse around. Because your hand stays in one place, your arm and wrist won't be strained by the constant back and forth movement of a mouse."

As Popular Mechanics [wrote](#) in June, "A trackball mouse is a great way to make endless mouse movement less strenuous." It's proven that trackballs reduce wrist stress and grip fatigue.

While the best–selling Logitech trackballs are thumb-operated, Kensington, which might be called the "king of trackballs," sells at least seven trackballs on its website, on Amazon, Newegg, and other online sellers.

 Because of growing demand, Kensington has released several new trackballs in recent years, including the:

  • Expert Mouse Wireless Trackball

  • Pro Fit® Ergo Vertical Wireless Trackball (White & Black)

  • Orbit® Fusion Wireless Trackball

  • Wired Orbit® Trackball with Scroll Ring

  • Orbit® Optical Trackball.

The popular Expert Mouse Wireless Trackball often tops the ratings when reviewers put trackballs through their paces. The [Wirecutter](#) (a review website purchased by The New York Times), [trackballmouse.org](#), [gadgetreviews.com](#), and [iMore](#) all praise that finger-operated device.

A Japanese trackball maker, Elecom, has also earned a steady but growing market share in the States. Elecom currently makes the only trackball especially designed for left-handed users. It's the Elecom M–XT4DRBK model. (Read about it here at [amazon.com](#)).

Popular Mechanic's [website](#) tells what to look for as you decide whether or not to opt for the benefits of a trackball.