

Bits & Bytes



Arkansas' Premier Computer Club

January 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

Taxes will be done at Computer Lab

The Board has approved the request to taxes to be done here. *Care Community Center*, Kimberly Porter, will be in charge of the details. She is asking for volunteers and may be reached at **479-903-3217**

Meetings

January 11th

BVCC Board Meeting

5:30 pm

Computer Club Meeting

Community Room at

Highlands Crossing 7 pm

The Bella Vista Computer Club will host a panel of experts on Monday, January 11, 2016, at 7 P.M. to answer your technology questions: hardware, software, applications, programs, etc. Make a New Years' Resolution - become more technology literate. The Computer Club can help you reach your goal. This public meeting is in the Community Room of Highlands Crossing Center (lower level), 1801 Forest Hills Blvd., Bella Vista.

HELP CLINICS

Help Clinic has been rescheduled for a week later on **Jan 9 10 am to 1pm**. The Clinics on **January 6, 1 - 4 pm** and **January 20, 10 am to 1 pm** are as normally scheduled.

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

We are in the process of re-vamping our class schedules. Please check frequently on the website for scheduling and re-scheduling.

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.

Genealogy SIG 10 AM John Ruehle Center

3rd Saturday 10-12 am

Tame Your Inbox With Filters

Is your email inbox overflowing? It's likely you're not using filters to direct the flow of incoming emails, and spending more time than you should managing your inbox. Learn how to automatically file messages in folders, forward them to someone else, or dump them straight into the trash. Oh, and if your Spam folder is gobbling up messages that don't belong there, I'll also show you how to solve that problem...

A lot of time is spent sorting, moving, forwarding and deleting email instead of reading and acting upon it. Email filters, also called rules, relieve users of some of this administrative burden. Today I'll explain how they work, and how they can work for you!

Creating Email Filters

To create a filter in GMail, log in to your account and click the down-arrow inside the search box at the top of the page. (See image below) A window displaying search options appears. Parts of a message that can be searched include the From, To, and Subject fields, and the message body. You can optionally select messages that have attachments, or are part of chat sessions. You can also filter based on the size or date of the message.

To find all mail from a specific contact, start typing his/her name or email address in the "From" field. Select the desired contact from those that appear .

Some actions that can be applied to matching messages are obvious: Skip the Inbox (archive), delete (move to trash), and forward to another address. One action that I find very useful is "Never send to Spam." I subscribe to a few newsletters that would occasionally end up in the Spam bucket, so this ensures they always make it to my inbox. When you've entered all your criteria, click the "create filter with this search" link in the bottom-right corner of the window.

Creating a Gmail Filter

Gmail does not have user-defined folders; instead, "labels" can be created and attached to messages. You can think of them as folders, because they work in much the same way. With a filter, you can funnel all messages that match your criteria into a label. Combining this with "Skip the Inbox" is a useful trick.

IMPORTANT: If you check the box "Also apply filter to matching conversations" your new filter will be applied to existing messages, as well as new messages as they arrive. This lets you apply your filter retroactively, which can help to organize the messages you've already accumulated.

Outlook.com (formerly called Hotmail, and not to be confused with the Microsoft Outlook or Outlook Express desktop email programs) calls its filters "rules." To create a custom rule, start by clicking the gear icon near the top right on Outlook.com's main menu; then select "Manage Rules" in the dropdown window. Click the "New" button to begin creating a rule.

You can filter messages based on the sender's name or email address, words in the message's subject, whether it has attachments or not, and who the message was sent to. It's not obvious, but you can search the body of a message by specifying "Keywords contains." Matched messages can be moved to another folder, marked as jnk mail, labeled with a category name, deleted immediately, flagged for followup later, or forwarded to another email address.

Outlook.com lets you create rules to automatically handle email as it comes in, but doesn't give you the option to apply your new rule to messages that have already arrived.

Yahoo! Mail's filtering procedure is similar to Outlook.com. Start at the main menu and select the gear icon found at the top right of the window, then Settings. Click the Filters link and then click "Add" to create a new filter.

Areas you can search include From, To/CC, and Subject fields, and the body of messages. Operators that can be applied to the target text (search keywords) include Contains, Does Not Contain, Begins With, and Ends With. You can specify whether the filter should be case-sensitive or not. For example, if you specify "banana" as a word to look for in the Body, and you check the "Match case" box, then messages containing "banana" will match, but those with "Banana" or "BANANA" will not.

Options are somewhat limited here. You can move messages that match filter criteria to other folders (including Trash, Spam, or a filter you create), but you cannot forward a message to another email address, or apply your filter to existing messages.

To create filters in Apple's iCloud Mail, log in to your iCloud.com account and select the Mail app. Click the gear icon at the bottom-left corner and select "Rules" from the pop-up menu. Select "Add a Rule" to get started.

iCloud Mail's filtering options are limited compared to those in the OS X desktop Mail client. (So are Outlook.com's compared to the MS Office Outlook client.) But creating a filter is dead easy. Using drop-down menus, select a condition to be met, i.e., "If a message is from..." Second, complete the condition statement by entering text, i.e., "me@mymail.com." Third, specify the action to be taken, i.e., "Move it to..." trash, spam, some other folder, etc.

AOL Mail filters can divert incoming messages to specified folders or send an alert to your AIM or mobile phone (not the whole message, just an alert that you have an email from so-and-so waiting).

To create a filter in AOL Mail, start by clicking the down-arrow next to your Username in the upper-right corner of the AOL Mail screen. Click Mail Settings and then select "Filters and Alerts." Name the new rule, then set up the condition(s) and action to be performed on messages that meet the condition(s) Check the AIM or mobile phone alert box if desired.

Are you still using a desktop email client such as Windows Live Mail, Outlook or Thunderbird? If so, a bit of Googling (or the Help screens in those programs) will point you to the instructions for creating filters there. The concepts should be very similar to what I've discussed above. I've been using Gmail since 2004, and I can't imagine being tied to a single desktop for my email. Webmail services such as Gmail, Yahoo and Outlook.com allow you to manage your email from any computer (or mobile device) with an Internet connection.

It's worthwhile learning the capabilities of the filters or rules in your email client. Doing so will keep your inbox tidy and organized, and will save you time and tedium. GMail has the most flexible and powerful filtering options of all the ones I've worked with, which is one of the reasons I use it manage my inbox.

Here's one final tip: If your email doesn't have the type of filtering you want, create a free GMail account and forward all your messages to that address, where they can be filtered according to your needs. You can even configure Gmail to send outgoing messages with your old address in the "From" line, so your friends will never know the difference.

How Fast Is Your High-Speed Internet?

Americans enjoyed a 360% increase in Internet download speeds between March, 2011, and September, 2014, according to the FCC's 2015 "Measuring Broadband America: Fixed Broadband Report." ("Fixed" broadband included cable, DSL, satellite, and fiber optic connections.) The latest measurements, in September, 2014, showed an average download speed for all ISPs of 32 Mbps; in 2011, it was only 9 Mbps.

But wait! The only other broad measure of U. S. Internet speeds, Akamai Technology's "State of the Internet" report, shows an increase of only 290% over the same time period. Yet Akamai reports an average overall U. S. download speed of 48.8 Mbps in Q3 2014, more than 16 Mbps faster than the FCC's figure. What's going on here?

The differences arise from different ways of measuring different populations. The FCC uses SamKnows, a measurement system developed by the FCC's counterpart in the UK, OfCom. It involves putting boxes in selected consumers' homes that measure the actual speed of Internet traffic where it really matters to the average American family. Akamai's figures are based upon the speed of connections to Akamai's global network of content-caching servers.

Internet Speeds Increasing

Households, businesses, universities, government offices, and military units are included in Akamai's measurements; many of those entities have Internet connections that are much faster than the typical household's. So for you and me, the FCC's figures are probably more relevant. Still, the FCC and Akamai agree that broadband average speeds have increased by about three times during the three-and-a-half years measured.

Most home Internet subscribers got actual download speeds that were pretty close to the speeds advertised by broadband ISPs, the FCC found. More than 90% of subscribers to Comcast, Cablevision, and Hughes Networks got average download speeds of at least 95% of the advertised speeds. Cablevision, Comcast and Verizon FiOS performed well under stress, delivering advertised speeds or faster to 80% of their subscribers during 80% of more of peak usage hours.

How Fast is Fast Enough?

There are quite a few definitions of internet speed and several free ways to test it. Get the scoop on Internet speed tests, and why you definitely should check your speed every once in a while. See [HOWTO: Measure Your Internet Speed](#).

Cablevision subscribers saw the fastest average speed (60 Mbps), followed by Verizon and Charter at 50 Mbps, Cox at 40 Mbps, and Comcast at 35 Mbps.

DSL average speeds remained stuck at about 12 Mbps. As I warned in, "Are Landlines Doomed To Extinction?" the century-old copper wire network upon which DSL and plain old telephones depend is on its way out. Don't expect significant upgrades there.

The good news (sort of) for DSL subscribers is that they may not need faster connections, if all they do is surf the Web. The FCC found that the average speed at which Web pages download maxes out at about 15 Mbps no matter how fast a household's connection is. (See chart below) This limit is due mainly to Web servers that can't keep up with demand; consumers and ISPs can't do much about it.

My own experience indicates this is correct. After upgrading my Verizon FiOS connection from 25 to 50 Mbps, I didn't notice any appreciable increase in web page loading time. It's like trying to drive a Ferrari in a traffic jam.

Average web page download times

The fastest States were New Jersey (57 Mbps) and Connecticut (47 Mbps). Idaho, Ohio and Arkansas were at the bottom with average speeds around 14 Mbps.

While domestic ISPs have made dramatic strides, the U. S. still ranked 12th among nations in terms of average download speed in Akamai's global rankings for 2014. The UK's OfCom reported a 22.8 Mbps average download speed in 2014, using the same household-focused methodology that the FCC used. If Internet speed is your top priority, you should consider moving to South Korea, Hong Kong or Japan. Those are the top three countries on the Akamai chart

I'm not sure how much faster we really need to get, given the FCC's findings on web speed mentioned above. If taxpayer dollars are to be used to improve the digital infrastructure, I think the U. S. should focus more on faster and more reliable Internet speeds in rural areas. There are still many areas where only temperamental satellite or (gasp!) super-slow dialup access is available. For those folks, things like Netflix, Skype and VoIP calling are out of reach.

Your thoughts on these subjects, as well as your personal Internet experience, are welcome.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Annette Allsup
 Sylvia Hill
 William Hill
 Gene Linzey
 Carol Linzey
 Lynne Snodgrass
 Sandra Thomas
 Ellen Creekbaum
 Henry Hernandez

Lorne Turner
 Jerry Tienter
 Pat Viskocil
 Charley Brewer
 Robert Iltzsch
 Jerry Gilkey

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!

**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, Sylvia Hill

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
 Chuck Billman, Training Center Admin.
 Bob Shewmake, Genealogy Liaison
 Kathy Clark, Genealogy Communications

As a Courtesy to our Club Members

We are happy to list your computer related articles

that you wish to sell.

There is no charge, but it will be on space available.

Chuck Billman

It was with great sadness the Computer Club heard of the passing of our Lab. Director, instructor and a vital part of our organization.

It would please Chuck greatly to know the Computer Club will still exist by all the support from the Board and members. Thank you, Chuck, for your legacy.

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