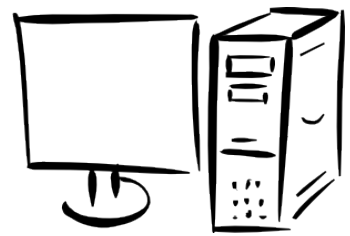


Bits & Bytes



Arkansas' Premier Computer Club

May 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

May 9th

BVCC Board Meeting

5:30 pm

Computer Club Meeting

Community Room at

Highlands Crossing 7 pm

HELP CLINICS

Wednesday, May 4 1-4 pm

Saturday, May 7 9 am -12 noon

Wednesday, May 18 9 am-12 noon

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

Meeting

At the 7 pm. May 9 meeting of the Bella Vista Computer Club, our featured speaker will be David Lee from MACH 1 financial.

Classes

Windows 10 Set-up Wednesday May 11 9 am-12

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

<http://bvcompclub.org/May2016.htm>

Welcome New Members

Alice Zelahy

Gail Cowdin

Vernella Hennington

Jack Hennington

Vivian Mathey

Pete Opland

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

WiFi + Cellular = Hybrid Phone

It's been a couple of years since I first discussed hybrid cell/WiFi phone services. At that time, the leader in this embryonic market was Republic Wireless and the major carriers were not in the game; they seemed to be hoping that hybrids would just go away. Things have changed rapidly, as usual, so let's take a look at what's new in hybrid services.

The big carriers are still dragging their feet, running up trial balloons that are duly reported by the trade press but not actually offering hybrid service. Verizon, AT&T, et. al., are understandably reluctant to sell a low-cost alternative to their pricey cellular voice and data plans. But they aren't above letting smaller players "re-brand" their services, if it's profitable.

Republic Wireless has used Sprint exclusively for cell service since Republic's inception over three years ago. But in January, 2016, Republic announced plans to offer a second carrier, so far unnamed. The smart money is betting on T-mobile, which offers WiFi calling on selected phones and has always been more open to working with innovators like Republic. Whoever the new carrier is, it will give Republic customers a choice between Sprint's CDMA network and the more widely used GSM technology. Verizon uses CDMA, so it's out of the running as Republic's new carrier.

Hybrid mobile phone service

Comcast is reportedly in talks with Verizon to offer a cell/WiFi hybrid mobile service. There can't be very many prospective customers for a phone service run by the two most hated companies in the USA, can there? But they're going to try it, apparently. Three years ago, the cable industry sold nationwide spectrum licenses to Verizon for \$3.6 billion and secured the rights to resell its wireless services. Now those cable companies, starting with Comcast, are looking to exercise those rights. Look for more Verizon-based hybrid services from Time-Warner Cable, Cox Communications, et. al.

The timing of cable's entry into hybrid phone service may be partly due to Google's Project Fi. I said in April, 2015, when Project Fi debuted, "This is BIG!" It certainly seems to have sunk a big spur into the slow horses of the cable and cellular companies. But I don't discount the competitive pressure exerted by the small, scrappy innovators who have pioneered hybrid phone service.

Slashing Your Mobile Phone Bill With Hybrid Plans

Republic Wireless still leads the pack in hybrid calling and money-saving deals. The company claims that its customers' average monthly bill is only \$13.51; I saw one testimonial that mentioned a \$33 phone bill for a family of three! Part of the savings comes in the form of cash rebates to your next month's bill for any unused data allowance; that's better than rolling over bytes you may never use!

Republic sells a limited number of Motorola phones because each phone is modified to use Republic's proprietary WiFi/cell circuitry. That secret sauce enables seamless hand-offs from WiFi to cellular network, depending on which offers the better call quality at a given moment. As a result, Republic customers get the lowest cost possible and the best call quality available.

In December 2014, I discussed FreedomPop and TextNow Wireless in my article Will Hybrid Phone Service Save You Money? Both of those companies are still around, and have their own spin on hybrid mobile phone service. Some of the details in that article have changed, but if you're currently a Sprint customer looking for hybrid service that lets you bring your own phone, both FreedomPop and TextNow have a "bring your own device" option.

One more option is the oddly-named Google Hangouts app, which enables WiFi calling on both Android and iPhone smartphones. (On Android, you'll need both the Hangouts and Hangouts Dialer app. On iPhone, both functions are rolled into the Hangouts app.) Hangouts will use your WiFi connection to dial out. If no WiFi is available, your 3G/4G cellular data will be used to call. There's no automatic switching between WiFi and cellular networks.

The sticking point for any hybrid phone service is the availability of free WiFi in your unique work-lifestyle. It doesn't have to be an unsecured WiFi network - in fact, I strongly advise against using an open network that requires no password! A hybrid phone can store your work, home, and other regularly used WiFi network profiles, automatically logging you on when you're in range of one. Given the time that we spend at home and at work, most of your phone calls can and should go over WiFi without any trouble.

Making a Wireless PC to TV Connection

If you have a laptop or desktop computer with an average sized screen, you've probably thought "Wouldn't it be great if I could magically beam my computer screen to my nice big flat panel HDTV in the living room?"

Poof... you can! Some computers can connect directly to a television set with an HDMI cable, effectively turning your HDTV into a second monitor. But this is practical only over relatively short distances, and the cables can be messy and expensive. Computers that don't have HDMI outputs can make a wired connection to an HDTV by using a converter box such as the [Manta VGA to HDMI with 1080p Scaler](#) by Sewell.

But hey, we were trying to do this wirelessly. So enter the age of the wireless video sending device. By connecting a wireless video transmitter to your computer, and a wireless receiver to your television, the problem is neatly solved. So how does it work, and which device is best for wirelessly sending websites, YouTube videos, photos, games and other content from your computer screen to the TV?

Let's look at several wireless PC to TV devices to determine which is right for you. Some of them will even send what's on your smartphone or tablet to your living room television screen!

Wireless PC to TV Options

[WiDi](#) (also called WWi-Fi Direct) is a technology from Intel that lets you stream HD 1080p content wirelessly from a WiDi-enabled computer to an HDTV. If the HDTV also has the WiDi feature, no cables or extra software are needed. Other HDTVs can be used by adding a WiDi adapter such as the [Actiontec ScreenBeam Pro](#) (\$69), or the [HP's Wireless TV Connect Kit](#) (\$159).

You can stream videos, music, photos and games from PC to TV, in high definition with surround sound. WiDi has low latency, which minimizes screen lag for interactive applications like videos and games. If you have WiDi on both your computer and your HDTV, this is an excellent solution.

[Chromecast](#) is a new gadget from Google that lets you wirelessly beam content from a PC or (or an Android smartphone or tablet) to an HDTV set. Stream internet content such as Netflix, YouTube, HBO GO, Hulu Plus, or Google Play Movies. You can beam web content via the Chrome browser, or use the screen mirroring capability to send whatever is on your PC screen to your HDTV. With a price tag of just \$35, this has become a very popular device for bringing the small screen to the big screen.

A recently-announced streaming TV gadget is Amazon's [Fire TV Stick](#). Like Chromecast, it's a convenient way to pipe online video content to your big-screen TV screen, instead of gathering the family around a laptop or tablet with a small screen and tinny speakers. Amazon offers a huge library of movies, TV shows and music for streaming.

[Sewell Direct's Wireless PC to TV Converter](#) connects to any PC, video game console or other VGA source with the included cable. The SW-28760 sends both audio and video signals to your TV from up to 150' away. Connect the receiver to your TV via video/audio cables. In addition, this unit can be utilized as a wired VGA to TV converter box with S-video, RGB and composite outputs. This unit is 480i VGA (not HD), so it's not recommended for text based applications such as email, unless you use a font of 14 points or larger. And although it'll send whatever is on your screen to your TV, the relatively low-res VGA signal may result in grainy videos. The Sewell Converter is very

The [Veebeam HD](#) wireless PC to TV link, priced at \$99, promises that anything you see on your PC can be sent to your TV. Surf the web, or stream from Hulu, Netflix, or YouTube to your HDTV over a wireless link. Simply plug the USB antenna into your computer and "Veebeam it" to your TV in HD 1080p (high-def) video. The Veebeam is for in-room use, and cannot transmit through walls, making it best suited for laptops. Works with Windows Vista/Win7 and Mac OS X (10.5 or higher)

[Altek's ProPC/TV Wireless Converter](#) not only looks good, it does more than just conversion. Connect your laptop, desktop or Media Center PC to a TV up to 100 feet away, through walls, floors, ceilings and doors. With this device you can play a DVD, see what your kids are up to, display presentations and even send a greeting from your cubicle at work to the lobby, all from your PC. Add more receivers and send the media to multiple TVs. The ProPC/TV needs no software and has a price of \$171.95, cables included.

Grandtec USA calls their converter [Ultimate Wireless](#). Use it for gaming, presentations or just browsing on your Mac or PC. With four channels, it has a range of 125 - 150', needs no software and has menu controls as well as zoom. Although the Ultimate's sending module has composite, S-video and RGB output, only composite video is available on the receiver. So you won't be getting HD quality video. But hey, you can always connect that composite output to a VCR or a video camera if you want to record what's happening on your computer screen. The Ultimate Wireless includes a battery pack for portable usage of the transmitter and has a price of \$89.95.

Another option from Grandtec is the [YFi2TV HD](#) media streamer. This unit can connect to your PC (or your smartphone or tablet) over a wireless network, and stream music, photos and videos to your TV, in HD quality.

For completeness, I'll also mention the [ROKU box](#), which I have previously reviewed. Priced from \$59 to \$99, it's a great solution for streaming HD quality movies from the Internet to your TV, using a wired or wireless connection. But it's not a general purpose "send your PC screen to your TV" device, either. ROKU connects to your Internet router, and pulls content from ROKU partners such as Netflix, Amazon Instant Video, Hulu Plus, and a variety of

Other devices such as the Netgear NeoTV, Sony NSZ, Vizio CoStar, WD TV Play, Panasonic DMP, and the D-Link Movie Night all offer similar streaming options. Some support online content, while others can stream local content such as movies, music and photos stored on the hard drive. Like Roku, none of these offer full screen-

If you're looking for the best device for a Mac, iPad or iPhone, get the Apple TV. If your Mac is newer than mid-2011, then you can use Apple TV using AirPlay mirroring. It should also work on all iPhones or iPads that can run iOS6 or higher. Apple TV has Hulu Plus and Netflix out of the box. If you use iTunes, then your entire library is

For Sale

The Computer Club has 11
19” monitors for sale
\$25.00 each

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, 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****