Bits & Bytes

Arkansas' Premier Computer Club

November 2023

The 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: November 13, 6pm, in John Ruehle Training Center, Highlands Crossing Center.

General Meeting: November 13, 7pm. Program: "Internet Auctions and Stuff, presented by Ginny Vance.

 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.

Consider attending by Zoom if you are unable to attend in-person.

HELP CLINICS

November 4, 9am - noon at John Ruehle center
November 15, 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 .

Genealogy SIG: November 17, 1pm-3pm, Training Center

MEMBERSHIP

Single membership is $30; $15 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, November 7, 9am-11am, "Recordings, Movies and More, Part 2", with Pete Opland.

Tuesday, November 16, 9am-10am, "Getting Started With a Computer" (interactive computer exercise).

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 as BVCC members after an absence:

Jan Dorsey   Susan Kelley   Eunice Howard

Carol Duckworth

"GETTING STARTED WITH A COMPUTER" CLASS

Those of us who have been using PC's for decades forget how confusing things were in the beginning.   Both the terminology and the physical skill involved to master the user interfaces – a "mouse" with buttons, and a keyboard with keys and conventions foreign to those new to a computer keyboard. Yet some level of comfort with these interfaces is essential to all other progress in learning how to use a personal computer.

One of our members found an on-line, interactive digital learning exercise created by AT&T which we hope may be useful to those using computers for the first time.   It is at a very basic beginning level.   It describes the names of the separate pieces of a computer, provides exercises on how to use a mouse and the computer keyboard, and describes the types of ports that may be found for connecting devices to your computer.

You can actually take this course on your own by visiting the AT&T course at this webpage; but if you are having problems with the basic computer interfaces, you might need help to get started.

If you prefer to go through the exercises with help to get you started and to answer any questions, you can sign up for the "Getting Started" class to be held in the BVCC Training center.   For the class, you can either use one of the Training Center computers, or you can elect to bring your own laptop (with power supply and any external mouse you prefer to use). Although laptops come with built-in alternative to a mouse, many users who have tried both touch pads and an external mouse find an external mouse easier to use.

USE OF ZOOM FOR MEETINGS

By Joel Ewing, President, Bella Vista Computer Club
Bits & Bytes, November 2023
https://bvcomputerclub.org

What is Zoom

Zoom is an application available for many different platforms and supported by an Internet service at https://zoom.us .   Zoom allows many users to simultaneously view or interactively participate over the Internet in a virtual meeting that contains video and audio content without having to travel to a physical meeting.

The Association of PC User Groups (APCUG) has been using Zoom for a number of years as a means of providing virtual conferences and presentations to its member organizations, which includes the Bella Vista

Computer Club (BVCC).   BVCC started using Zoom for Board Meetings, General Meetings, and classes in 2020 when COVID-19 made it necessary to restrict in-person meetings.   Now that those restrictions are no longer necessary, BVCC continues where possible to simulcast our monthly in-person General Meetings on Zoom for the benefit of members who are unable to participate in-person because of distance or health.

Zoom Meeting Setup By A Host With A Zoom Account

Zoom meetings are scheduled, started, and controlled by a Zoom meeting host person with a Zoom account.   The "host" provides by some means the meeting ID and password to those who are invited to participate in the meeting.   Other participants with the Zoom application installed may join a started meeting if they know the ID and password for the meeting, or if they are provided a link to the meeting that contains the meeting ID and password. All participants can see video and hear audio from the presenters at the meeting. Usually video from non-presenting participants is restricted to their image from a webcam, although the host can enable other participants to present video material. For small meetings individual participants may be allowed to enable their mic to speak; for larger meetings, mic use by non-presenters may be controlled by a host or co-host moderator to minimize interruptions at inappropriate times and prevent two people from speaking at the same time or allowing incidental noises in other participant's rooms from being a distraction.

What You Need To Just Watch Or Attend a Zoom Meeting

To just join and watch a Zoom meeting, all you need is a device on which you can install the Zoom application and which has a screen to view the video and audio output to speakers or headset to hear the presenter.   That means even a desktop or a laptop without a webcam or a mic will work just fine. You do NOT need to set up an account at Zoom to just be a meeting participant.

Laptop computers and even All-In-One computers are more likely to include a webcam and mic, but if not and you want those optional items to be able to show your face and speak to other participants, USB webcams with mics are not that expensive.   I've had good success with a relatively inexpensive Angetube 920 (about $40) on both Linux and Windows.

Installing Zoom

If you have a desktop or laptop computer, you need to download the Zoom application from the Zoom Download Center at https://zoom.us/download (or search for "zoom download"). It should automatically detect whether your operating system is Windows, macOS, or Linux and suggest an appropriate download. After the download is complete you should see an option to "Open file" for Zoominstaller.exe to initiate the install.   You DO NOT need to "Sign Up" for a Zoom account just to participate in meetings. You may however want to select the "Opt-Out" button on the download page for making information available to third parties or various advertising activities (the default is of course to "Accept"). When running the install file you will have to approve ("Yes") for the Zoom Video Communications app to make changes to your device before it will proceed with installation.   After installation, if you search for Zoom it will find "Start Zoom App" which may be selected to start Zoom. If you plan to use it frequently, you can right click on "Start Zoom App" and pin it to your Taskbar. The Zoom icon looks like this:
You may need to restart the computer after

installation to make Zoom functional.   If you want to see an example of installing Zoom on Windows 10, see this video.

If you have an iPhone or iPad, or an Android mobile device you simply download the Zoom application from the corresponding App Store. On these devices you have a built-in mic and a camera that are accessible to Zoom, so you can fully participate by speaking (if the host allows it) and showing your image to other participants. Because of the small display size, I wouldn't recommend trying to use a smart phone for a meeting presentation that expects you to be able to view a large number of presentation slides.

Joining a Meeting

When the host of a meeting schedules a Zoom meeting, he sets the planned start time and duration for the meeting; but not unlike an in-person meeting, the exact start time depends on when the host "arrives".   Generally the host would attempt to initiate the Zoom session and the participants would attempt to join several minutes before the planned time to give time to verify they can connect before the actual meeting begins. If a participant attempts to join a meeting that has not yet been initiated by the host, usually the default is to receive a message indicating the connection is waiting on the host to start; but once the host initiates the meeting the joining process will complete.

Once Zoom has been installed, the simplest way to join a meeting as a participant is to click on a URL link supplied in advance by the host. Clicking on that link starts a two step process of using your default web browser application to supply parameters to the Zoom website that will then cause the Zoom application to be started on your device and passed the meeting ID and password.   An alternate way (involving more work) is to start the Zoom application manually, type in the meeting ID and password, and click on "Join".

For an example of using an APCUG post-registration email for joining a Zoom meeting, see this video. For an example of the process for joining an in-progress BVCC General Meeting uses Zoom using the link on the BVCC website, see this video.

Controlling Zoom While Attending a Meeting

If you request to join a meeting before the host has started it, you may get a message indicating Zoom is waiting for the host. Once the host starts the meeting, Zoom will proceed to initiate your attendance. Depending on how the meeting was set up, it may be necessary for the meeting host or a co-host to explicitly admit you to the meeting.   If that is the case there may be a message about waiting to be admitted.

When Zoom starts from a meeting link close to the meeting time, you will be asked if you want to "Join" the meeting (you do).   After responding to that, you will be asked if you want to "Join with Computer Audio" (you do).   If you also check "Automatically join audio by computer when joining", I think it will bypass this Join Audio question next time.

There are various icons and buttons along the bottom of the screen for controlling Zoom – to toggle your mic on/off (if you have one), to toggle your video feed on/off (if you have a webcam), and various other options, not

all of which are active depending on how the meeting was defined.   If the Zoom window is not wide enough to display all the controls, some will be accessed using the "More" icon.

You generally want to keep your mic muted except when you need to speak.   In larger meetings, you may need to get permission to speak by "raising your hand", as having multiple speakers at the same time doesn't work. If you need to temporarily leave the room or engage in some activity you don't want to broadcast (like eating dinner), you should also toggle your video feed off so unsupervised and possibly unintended video is not broadcast to all attendees.

In the upper right corner is a "View" icon, which may be used to switch between speaker view and gallery view. In speaker view, most of the Zoom window will be taken up by the current speaker's webcam feed and above that will be thumbnail views from the webcam feeds of other attendees (as many as will fit), the first of which should be your own webcam feed (so you can see what image you are broadcasting).   With "gallery view" you can see thumbnail webcam video feeds for all attendees, spread over multiple screens depending on how many will fit on the Zoom window area. Speaker view is most useful for presentations, possibly with Q & A from the audience. Gallery view is useful for small interactive groups where you can see all the parties at once and use visual clues to improve the interaction -- not that useful for larger groups as you tend to forget the presence of those you can't see on one screen.

If the presenter shares his screen, most of the Zoom window will be taken up with his shared screen.

To see an example of use of some of Zoom's controls, see [this video](#).