

THE COMPUTER CORNER
No. 254: IPv4 and IPv6 (revisited).

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Last month, our ORC Secretary Ben Evans (K9UZ) mentioned a problem he had recently with getting into a site he was supposed to have access to. It seems that the server that gives access was looking at his IPv6 address and not his IPv4 address. It turned out that server wanted an IP something like this: 198:103:99:16:33:100:17:3, an IPv6 number. Instead, the server got an IPv4 address, like 208.101.7.150. Basically, his computer just gave the wrong address to the server. Ben did some additional research and sent me the following in a recent email. This clears it up, partially, and gives us all a way to check our IPv6 connection (see below). Thanks, Ben, for the extra work. You deserve the by-line I have added for you.

Stan: Earlier this week, I was again prevented from accessing the administrator part of our ORC website because something changed my IPv6 address. Brian (N9LOO) suggested disabling IPv6 connections, which I did, and my connection was immediately restored.

I researched this problem as much as time allowed, and apparently IT administrators have run into internet connectivity problems ever since IPv6 began to be used. Their short-term solution is to disable IPv6 on their computers, just as I did on mine.

I don't know who or what is to blame. Microsoft Windows? My router? My ISP (which is Spectrum)? Or maybe the webhost?

Apparently, the computer user that uses the internet only to browse is unaffected. I should add that Microsoft discourages Windows computer users from outright disabling IPv6 connections because doing so might cause certain components of Windows not to function properly in addition to loosing access to websites that use only IPv6. Microsoft prefers that you download a fix from their website which tells your computer to "prefer IPv4 over IPv6". You can test your IPv6 connectivity and check your IPv6 address (if you have one) by going to this website: <https://test-ipv6.com/>.

Although most of us have dynamic IP addresses for the old Version 4 protocol, it sometimes happens that they don't change very often. My IPv4 address has been the same since I took over the club website administrator duties, 15 months ago. However, IPv6 addresses change regularly, as this evidently is a privacy feature of the new protocol. But what website administrator wants his/her connection to the webhost server to be constantly interrupted by IPv6 address changes? This requires changing the IP address specified in the administrator directory in order to maintain access to the administrator part of the website.

Before IPv6 takes over completely, although it may not get there for some years, we can only hope administrators get useful guidance from someone, anyone (be it Microsoft, our ISP or our webhost) to keep us connected. Ben

Happy Computing.