## Tails - Bug #14962

**Tor Browser >= 7.0.8 fails to render local pages correctly**

*11/13/2017 05:05 PM - anonym*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status:</th>
<th>Resolved</th>
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<td>Blueprint:</td>
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### Description

See: [https://trac.torproject.org/projects/tor/ticket/24243](https://trac.torproject.org/projects/tor/ticket/24243)

It certainly will not be fixed in time for Tails 3.3: [https://lists.torproject.org/pipermail/tor-qa/2017-November/000929.html](https://lists.torproject.org/pipermail/tor-qa/2017-November/000929.html)

Note that this also affects the Unsafe Browser (in fact, anything using Firefox).

### Related issues:

- Related to Tails - Bug #14940: Upgrade Tor Browser to 7.0.10
- Related to Tails - Feature #7409: Browse the offline documentation using Yelp
- Related to Tails - Bug #6570: Yelp freezes while searching the offline Tails...
- Related to Tails - Feature #6569: Make the Tails documentation searchable off...
- Related to Tails - Bug #15234: Make Tails Installer point to the offline webs...
- Related to Tails - Bug #15195: Document how to view a local build of the webs...
- Related to Tails - Bug #15195: Document how to view a local build of the webs...
- Related to Tails - Bug #15575: Point to /doc instead of /getting_started from...
- Related to Tails - Bug #15461: The homepage of the Unsafe Browser cannot be t...
- Blocks Tails - Feature #15392: Core work 2018Q2 → 2018Q3: User experience
- Blocked by Tails - Feature #15023: Upgrade to Tor Browser based on Firefox ESR60
- Blocks Tails - Feature #15334: Core work 2018Q3: Foundations Team

### Associated revisions

**Revision 74536c6a - 11/13/2017 06:40 PM - anonym**

tails-documentation: rewrite in Python + use WebKit for display.

... instead of using the Tor Browser: since version 7.0.8 it fails to render local pages (like our docs) due to #14962.

Refs: #14962

**Revision da835375 - 11/13/2017 06:47 PM - anonym**

Merge branch `feature/14940-torbrowser-7.0.10` into stable

This includes the workaround for refs: #14962.

Fix-committed: #14940
Revision 08259afa - 11/13/2017 11:30 PM - anonym
Replace the Unsafe Browser's warning pages with static, pure-HTML versions.

This is truly a temporary workaround for refs: #14962.

Revision a02aafef - 11/14/2017 03:45 AM - anonym
Prevent Ikiwiki from formatting the Unsafe Browser warning pages.

This is a follow-up on 08259afa449f3dcd9166e03db5775f3652f5a7e8.

Due to #14962 we really only want the simple text-only HTML page without all the Ikiwiki formatting added. I'm very ignorant of Ikiwiki, so this hack is the best I could come up with so I can quickly rebuild Tails 3.3. I'm also sloppy: I verified my assumption that those .html pages would be left unprocessed...

Refs: #14962

Revision 47df1d7f - 02/20/2018 02:51 PM - anonym
Test suite: use Dogtail instead of image.

This image was invalidated during our Donation campaign was running, and then by a Tor Browser bug (#14962). Bumping images is boring so let's rely on Dogtail instead.

To make this scenario more robust we also switch to something else than the start page, and restart the browser between save/open in order to prevent Dogtail e.g. finding the old page that we just saved instead of the saved version we just opened.

Refs: #14935, #14962

History
#1 - 11/13/2017 05:05 PM - anonym
- Related to Bug #14940: Upgrade Tor Browser to 7.0.10 added

#2 - 11/13/2017 05:05 PM - anonym
- Blocks Feature #13244: Core work 2017Q4: Foundations Team added

#3 - 11/13/2017 08:55 PM - anonym
- Status changed from Confirmed to In Progress
These are the commits implementing workarounds for this bug in Tails 3.3:

- 08259afa449f3dcd916fe03db5775f3652f5a7a8
- 74536c6a04c850db69686588723a9fec5060be7b with follow-ups:
  - 3971ae43c33d5072eb56a57f28e2178c5712f5a
  - 7d9be782a175ab3a3d583590422f4c6bf307f03a

We definitely want to have 08259afa reverted once upstream is fixed, but we might want to consider keeping 74536c6a & co.

Actually, 7d9be782a175ab3a3d583590422f4c6bf307f03a and friends should probably be "ported" back into the Greeter.

In Tails 3.3, the Python version doesn't have our sidebar and no "Back" button which makes the thing barely usable. So if Tor:#24243 can be fixed I'd rather go this way...

That is intentional. The new doc viewer uses the same code as the Greeter's help viewer, and there we deliberately disable the sidebar, and I think we do that for good reasons that apply equally in this context. Hiding the sidebar is a great way to cheaply convert our website into something that is more like offline docs: the side bar otherwise distracts and confuses by showing things like

- "Install Tails", which they clearly already have done
- "News", which might be outdated
- "Contribute", which is for a very small set of users: if we want to expose this, we could provide a separate launcher somewhere

As long as you use the correct entry-point you'll find what you need without the sidebar:

- "Report an Error" launcher ⇒ "Support", which shows just what you need about the subject, not more
- "Tails documentation" ⇒ "Getting started...", which links to the all things of the sidebar which are relevant for users

To me it seems like the sidebar mostly is helpful if you want to reach some part of the documentation from the wrong entry-point. I suppose that isn't bad, since it is more forgiving, but I don't find it a "must have", and I certainly think the removal of the sidebar's distractions is more important.

Am I missing something? I thought I for once got UX a bit, but apparently it just lead us to controversy! :P just to be clear: I'm not defensive, just a wee bit disappointed that I apparently failed. ¯\_(ツ)_/¯

Huh. Either you just missed that there is one in the header bar (but only if there actually is history to go back to), or you found a bug. Can you provide steps to reproduce if the latter?

No "Forward" button is provided, but I thought adding one would just add bloat: if your history is "site A -> site B", and you click "back" then you end up at the place of site A that linked to site B, so going forward again is just a matter of clicking the same link again.
I agree with anonym on the sidebar, I don't think it is needed and would actually only add distraction to the doc viewer. And the back button works for me.

I really like the new doc viewer, primarily because it's so friggin fast :) So I'm in favor of keeping it even after Tor:#24243 is fixed.

Indeed, I missed the "Back" button when I first looked for it. The same might happen to others.

Something else I thought about is that we sometimes give file:/// URLs in our doc and code for people to visit and that's not possible to copy and paste in GNOME Help.

If speed of opening is the only argument in favor of GNOME Help, then I'm still pretty much against it. I think that being in the familiar environment of a browser is more important than speed of opening. Especially since people most likely already have a browser open or will open one later on.

But this ticket is about fixing the display of local pages in Tor Browser which is something we want to do independently from my opinion on GNOME Help, right?

I see no indication that this regression will be fixed any time soon so IMO we should move on, acknowledge this bug and decide what's the best workaround to it.

I don't see it mentioned here, so here we go: we still have the option to point to online URLs instead of file:/// ones, as I suggested back when we discovered this Tor Browser regression. Of course it would not work offline but at least it would work reliably online, we don't have to discover and fix bugs like #15160 along the way, the corresponding test suite regression is fixed, and sajolida's point about UX is addressed. I don't know what's best but I think this should be sajolida's call.
How crazy would it be to open the doc online if Tor is ready and in the help browser if Tor is not ready?

Otherwise, it will be hard for me to decide between:

- Having something that works offline but with a degraded UX (in my opinion).
- Having something that only works online but in the familiar environment of a browser.

But I can always toss a coin :)

diff --git a/config/chroot_local-includes/usr/local/bin/tails-documentation b/config/chroot_local-includes/usr/local/bin/tails-documentation
@@ -86,6 +86,12 @@ try:
     page = sys.argv[1]
 except IndexError:
     page = 'getting_started'
+    # If possible, let's hand-off to our website, which should be the most
+    # up-to-date option.
+    if os.system('/usr/local/sbin/tor-has-bootstrapped') == 0:
+        os.execv(['/usr/local/bin/tor-browser', 'https://tails.boum.org/' + page])
+    wiki_path = '/usr/share/doc/tails/website'
    lang_code = os.getenv('LANG', 'en')[0:2]
    trials = []

My only issue is that tor-has-bootstrapped != "tor is working", but this is a problem we have all over Tails, so => not a blocker.
The implicit question was: "With the change from #14962#note-19 our workaround is acceptable?"

(The real fix for this ticket will be when upstream fixes whatever bug is causing this.)

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#21 - 02/19/2018 05:58 PM - sajolida

- Assignee changed from sajolida to anonym
- QA Check changed from Info Needed to Dev Needed

I don't like being asked if something is acceptable or not because it's not "0" or "1". But I like #14962#note-19 and we should probably keep this code even after Tor Browser can read local files again :)

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#22 - 02/20/2018 09:14 AM - intrigeri

- Assignee changed from anonym to sajolida
- QA Check changed from Dev Needed to Info Needed

Hi sajolida!

sajolida wrote:

But I like #14962#note-19

Me too!

and we should probably keep this code even after Tor Browser can read local files again :)

I've re-read this ticket and while you've been given the technical info you've requested, I don't see a clear conclusion from you about what we should do. My understanding is:

- As I said last month, "IMO we should move on, acknowledge this bug and decide what's the best workaround to it".
- We now know that we can open a different doc browser depending on whether we're online or not.
- It seems we agree that when we're online we should open the online version of the doc, regardless of whether this Tor Browser bug about local pages is fixed or not (hint: I doubt it will be fixed); right?
- I don't understand what you prefer us to do when we're offline but likely you lack some information. What we are shipping right now is a Tail-specific restricted local browser called Tails Documentation; it's unclear if we should improve it or drop it. OTOH above I see you discussing GNOME Help (aka. Yelp) and we still have #7409 opened. So I'm confused. But wait, I don't think we should spend time on this right now, see below.

I propose we:

1. in order to solve the immediate UX regression: create a dedicated ticket about opening the online version of the doc when we're online i.e. the patch anonym proposed above; this could go into Tails 3.6
2. assess how urgent the next steps are and postpone this ticket accordingly (IMO once the immediate regression is fixed, there's no strong reason why we should direct resources here urgently; we have plenty of other UX improvements we may want to do and lack budget for)
3. regarding the Unsafe Browser homepage that can't be translated anymore if I get this right (08259afa449f3dcd916fe03db5775f3652f5a7e6, the truly temporary workaround): create a new ticket on the Foundations Team's plate; I think this should be tackled in 3.7 or 3.8
4. regarding browsing the doc offline:
   1. retitle this ticket "Decide what to do about browsing the documentation online in Tails"
   2. mark this ticket as blocking #7409
   3. evaluate what we would have to do in order to make the Tails Documentation app a suitable long-term thing, both in terms of UI (is the UI good enough or do is it something we have to improve now instead of working on other UX improvements that require design+code work?) and in terms of code (IIRC currently it duplicates code that we had in the Greeter, and more generally I understand this was written as a temporary workaround so if we want to keep it we may need to take a step back)
   4. evaluate the Yelp option (a few years ago it had plenty of bugs that made it not ideal for us, to say the least): some exploratory testing +

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testing the bugs we had identified back then

anonym, sajolida: what do you think about this proposed course of action?

#23 - 02/20/2018 09:19 AM - anonym
sajolida wrote:

I don't like being asked if something is acceptable or not because it's not "0" or "1".

Ok. How should I ask your opinion, then?

(Clarification: I was not asking your opinion on the code, just if the "crazy" change you asked for actually was something you want implemented.

But I like #14962#note-19 and we should probably keep this code even after Tor Browser can read local files again :)

Cool! I've opened #15332 to track this.

#24 - 02/20/2018 09:20 AM - anonym
intrigeri wrote:

anonym, sajolida: what do you think about this proposed course of action?

I like it, and it was in fact the direction I already had started moving (with #15332), sajolida?

#25 - 02/24/2018 12:07 PM - sajolida
- Related to Bug #15195: Document how to view a local build of the website in Tails 3.3 and later added

#26 - 02/24/2018 12:14 PM - sajolida
- Related to Bug #15195: Document how to view a local build of the website in Tails 3.3 and later added

#27 - 03/13/2018 01:07 PM - sajolida
- Target version changed from Tails_3.6 to Tails_3.7
From Tails 3.6:

- When online the documentation opens in Tor Browser (#15332).
- When offline the documentation opens in Yelp. I don't see what you mean by "the Tails Documentation app".

So the course of action that you are describing seems obsolete now.

Still:

- I created a ticket to translate the homepage of the Unsafe Browser → #15461.
- I pinged Tor regarding their plans on Tor:#24243.

Also note that this ticket as such is also important because it breaks the workflow of contributors working on our website from Tails (mostly me and translators). So I'm not renaming it but I'm removing the target version.

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I'm curious what made you draw this conclusion. I did not try on 3.6 but on Tails 3.6.1 after double-clicking the "Tails documentation" icon I see:

```
amnesia@amnesia:~$ ps aux | grep yelp
amnesia  7078  0.0  0.0 12724   952 pts/0 S+ 15:36   0:00 grep --color=auto yelp
```

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So the course of action that you are describing seems obsolete now.

I don't think so => I'd still like to know what you think about it => resetting metadata to the state before you erroneously concluded my proposal was obsolete :)  

- I created a ticket to translate the homepage of the Unsafe Browser → #15461.
- I pinged Tor regarding their plans on Tor:#24243.

Thanks!

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#31 - 03/28/2018 01:36 PM - intrigeri
- Blocks Feature #15139: Core work 2018Q2: Foundations Team added

#32 - 03/28/2018 01:36 PM - intrigeri
- Blocks deleted (Feature #13245: Core work 2018Q1: Foundations Team)

#33 - 04/16/2018 11:04 AM - sajolida
- Blocks Feature #15392: Core work 2018Q2 → 2018Q3: User experience added

#34 - 04/30/2018 06:23 PM - sajolida
Something else against the dumb browser: it has no tab. Using many tabs is very common amongst millennials:

#35 - 05/03/2018 05:16 PM - emmapeel
- Blocks Bug #15461: The homepage of the Unsafe Browser cannot be translated added

#36 - 05/05/2018 02:59 PM - sajolida
- Related to Feature #15576: Add back the sidebar on the offline documentation browser added
And here you go! Two days after I wrote #14962#note-35 I saw two millennials trying to open tabs in the offline documentation browser and failed → #15577.

Target version changed from Tails_3.7 to Tails_3.8

Related to Bug #15575: Point to /doc instead of /getting_started from "Tails documentation" desktop launcher added

Assignee changed from sajolida to intrigeri

Following up on intrigeri's summary from #14962#note-22:

- I created #15612 to improve the "Tails documentation" browser and make it as consistent as possible with the online doc.
- I created subtickets for #15612 to fix each of the usability issues that I identified during the user testing of the Additional Software feature: missing sidebar and tabs.
- I asked for clarification on why Yelp would be better than the "Tails documentation" browser in #7409#note-9.

I think we should keep the title of this ticket because this bug affects other aspects of Tails than our offline documentation: at least the Unsafe Browser and the workflow of many contributors. But if people prefer a different Redmine semantics, I really don't mind.

QA Check deleted (Info Needed)

Blocks deleted (Feature #15139: Core work 2018Q2: Foundations Team)

Following up on intrigeri's summary from #14962#note-22:

- I created #15612 to improve the "Tails documentation" browser and make it as consistent as possible with the online doc.
- I created subtickets for #15612 to fix each of the usability issues that I identified during the user testing of the Additional Software feature: missing sidebar and tabs.
- I asked for clarification on why Yelp would be better than the "Tails documentation" browser in #7409#note-9.

OK, so it seems you've decided that improving our custom "Tails documentation" is better than using the Unsafe Browser for browsing the doc offline.

Fine by me. Thanks!

I think we should keep the title of this ticket because this bug affects other aspects of Tails than our offline documentation: at least the Unsafe Browser and the workflow of many contributors.
Makes sense to me!

#45 - 05/25/2018 02:29 PM - intrigeri
- Target version changed from Tails_3.8 to Tails_3.10.1
- Type of work changed from Wait to Communicate

(There's nothing we can expect poking Tor Browser people so that they poke Mozilla people.)

#46 - 05/25/2018 02:29 PM - intrigeri
- Blocks Feature #15506: Core work 2018Q4: Foundations Team added

#47 - 06/01/2018 06:06 PM - sajolida

OK, so it seems you've decided that improving our custom "Tails documentation" is better than using the Unsafe Browser for browsing the doc offline. Fine by me. Thanks!

I don't understand this comment of yours... I didn't think that using the Unsafe Browser to browse the doc offline was an option because:

- Searching for "Unsafe" on this ticket doesn't make this clear.
- The description of this tickets says that the Unsafe Browser is affected by the same bug: it can't render local pages correctly.

Did I miss something?

#48 - 06/02/2018 09:56 AM - intrigeri

Did I miss something?

No, I was confused. Sorry for wasting your time!
#49 - 06/25/2018 05:04 PM - sajolida
GeKo said on Tor#24243 that it should be fixed in Tor Browser 8.0a9.

When will this land in Tails?

#50 - 06/25/2018 05:05 PM - sajolida

#51 - 06/25/2018 06:27 PM - intrigeri

GeKo said on Tor#24243 that it should be fixed in Tor Browser 8.0a9.

Great!

When will this land in Tails?

When we get Tor Browser 8.0, in Tails 3.9.

#52 - 06/25/2018 06:43 PM - intrigeri
- Blocked by Feature #15023: Upgrade to Tor Browser based on Firefox ESR60 added

#53 - 06/26/2018 04:25 PM - intrigeri
- Blocks deleted (Bug #15461: The homepage of the Unsafe Browser cannot be translated)

#54 - 06/26/2018 04:25 PM - intrigeri
- Related to Bug #15461: The homepage of the Unsafe Browser cannot be translated added

#55 - 07/03/2018 08:47 PM - intrigeri
- Target version changed from Tails_3.10.1 to Tails_3.9

I confirm this is fixed with Tor Browser 8.0a9 :)
#58 - 07/06/2018 08:47 AM - intrigeri
- Feature Branch set to feature/15023-tor-browser-8

#59 - 07/08/2018 07:35 AM - intrigeri
- QA Check set to Pass

#60 - 08/14/2018 06:06 AM - intrigeri
- Status changed from In Progress to 11
- Assignee deleted (intrigeri)

#61 - 09/05/2018 04:22 PM - intrigeri
- Status changed from 11 to Resolved