

# tagName vs nodeName

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`tagName` and `nodeName` are both useful Javascript properties for checking the name of an html element. For most purposes, either will do fine but `nodeName` is preferred if you are supporting only A-grade browsers and `tagName` is preferred if you intend to support IE5.5 as well.

There are two issues with `tagName`:

- In all versions of IE, `tagName` returns `!` when called on a comment node
- For text nodes, `tagName` returns `undefined` where as `nodeName` returns `#text`

`nodeName` has it's own set of [issues \(http://www.quirksmode.org/dom/w3c\\_core.html#t20\)](http://www.quirksmode.org/dom/w3c_core.html#t20) but they are less severe:

- IE 5.5 returns `!` when called on a comment node. This is less harmful than `tagName` which suffers from this behaviour across *all* versions of IE
- IE 5.5 doesn't support `nodeName` for the `document` element or for attributes. Neither of these should be a concern for most practical purposes but should be kept in mind in any case
- Konqueror ignores comment nodes when using this property. But then again, Konqueror, along with IE 5.5 is not an [A-grade browser \(http://developer.yahoo.com/yui/articles/gbs/\)](http://developer.yahoo.com/yui/articles/gbs/)

So for most practical purposes stick to `nodeName` due to its support for a wider range of scenarios and potentially better forward compatibility. Not to mention that it doesn't hiccup on a comment node, which has a tendency to creep into code unannounced. Don't worry about IE 5.5 or Konqueror as their market share is near 0%.