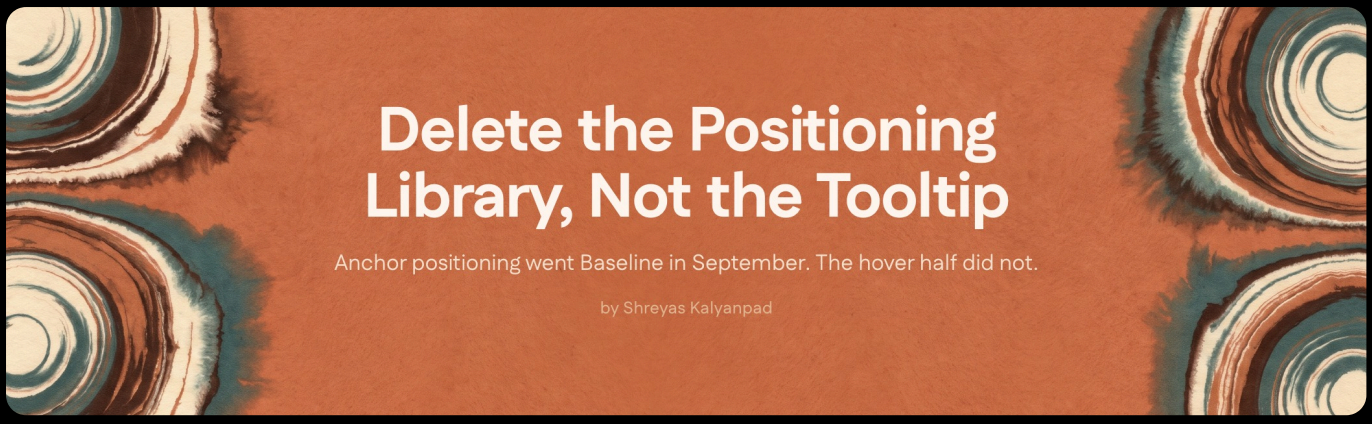


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Anchor positioning = CSS that pins one element to the edges of another, with no JavaScript doing the maths.

The problem: back in January the internet decided this was finished and told everyone to delete their tooltip library. Half of that advice was right.

Here is the honest split. The placing is done. The hovering is not.

> *You can drop the library that puts the box in the right place. You cannot yet drop the code that decides when the box shows up.*



The red string is the part you finally get to throw away.

1. The popover half has been safe for nearly two years

What it does: the `popover` attribute plus a `popovertarget` button opens a box in the top layer. Escape closes it. A click outside closes it. `:popover-open` styles it while it is open.

Why it matters: not bundle size. Focus and dismissal. Your library faked a stacking context and guessed at a z-index. It could never actually be the top layer, because that is not a thing scripts can join.

Status: Baseline since January 2025. Chrome 114, Firefox 125, Safari 17.

2. The positioning half only landed in September

What it does: `anchor-name` on the trigger, `position-anchor` on the box, `position-area` to say which side it sits on. That is the whole setup.

The date people get wrong: MDN dates `position-anchor` to September 2026, not January. Chrome and Safari had most of the pieces long before that. The last corners were only filled in this autumn.

Why the wait: the Baseline call was argued over in the open for ten months. The objection was that this is dozens of separate properties wearing one name, and some of them were still broken.

3. Flip to fit is a CSS rule now, not a scroll listener

Write a `@position-try` block, name it in `position-try-fallbacks`, and the browser moves the box when it would fall off the screen. `position-visibility` hides it once the thing it points at has scrolled away. That is the part of the library most teams never got working properly anyway.

4. The hover tooltip is still Chrome only

A tooltip appears on hover, not on click. The native answer is the `interestfor` attribute, which also handles keyboard and long press. Chrome shipped it in version 142. Firefox and Safari have not shipped it at all.

The `hint` popover state is the same story. That is the one tooltips want, so a tooltip does not slam your open menu shut. Chrome and Firefox have it. Safari has it in preview only, and Safari on iOS does not have it.

5. One rename will bite you

`position-area` used to be called `inset-area`. Both names still work for now. If a tutorial uses the old one, it was written before the rename, which tells you how fresh the rest of its advice is.

Who does each job now

THE JOB	WHO DOES IT TODAY
Put the box beside the trigger	CSS, every browser
Flip it when it hits an edge	CSS, every browser
Draw it above everything else	The popover top layer
Close on Escape or an outside click	The browser
Hide it when the anchor scrolls off	CSS, position-visibility
Show it on hover	Your code, outside Chrome

Run this on your own code

1. Open one tooltip using only the keyboard. If you cannot reach it or close it, the library was never the accessible choice.
2. Count the lines of positioning maths you own. CSS does that for free now.
3. Check what triggers it. Click means you can switch today. Hover means you keep a small piece of script.
4. Search your styles for `inset-area`. If it is there, the snippet is out of date.

The library is not the villain. It is doing a job the browser now does better, apart from one job it still does alone.

Checked against

Read on 11 November 2026.

- MDN, Popover API: Baseline since January 2025, and the hint state is Safari preview only
- MDN, position-anchor: available since September 2026
- MDN, CSS anchor positioning module: the property and at-rule names
- MDN, position-area: the property formerly called inset-area
- web.dev, New to the web platform in October: interestfor ships in Chrome 142, not in Firefox or Safari
- web-features issue 3558, the ten-month argument over whether anchor positioning was ready for Baseline

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