

Remote Access to a Computer: Good and Free

Anyone know of a good, and preferably free, program to access a computer remotely?

I was using Logmein, but its been some time since I used and was not sure if there was another, maybe better, option. I rarely need to remotely access my office computer, but would like to be able to do so if there is a need and a cost effective option.

Chrome Remote Desktop.

Michael Koenecke, Texas

I love TeamViewer.

Glen Kurtzrock

I think you use Chrome, right? So why wouldn't you use Chrome Remote Desktop?

Laurie Axinn Gienapp, Massachusetts

Honest question: why free? I'm always concerned about free software for several reasons:

1. Why is it free? Are you giving up some privacy features in exchange for it being free?
2. If it is free, is it really going to be around when you need it, or is it likely to close up shop because they weren't making any money to maintain it?
3. If it is free, it may not work very well.
4. Why not invest in those willing to create a product that you really need?

Just thinking out loud.

That being said, I use Splashtop. It is \$60 per year. That is \$5.00 a month for professional, reliable remote access when I need it.

Nick A. Ortiz, Florida

Yes, the server runs in the background. Another option is the open source UltraVNC, which I used for years and really liked, but it doesn't have an iPad or Android option.

Michael Koenecke

I do not see a need to use it often, or even rely on it for regular use. I want it in place in case IU need it.

As for the other concerns, such as privacy, those are valid. Often a provider will grant a limited license to get you to use their product in some manner without all the features. That is what I am looking for. The software is maintained by the heavy, frequent, larger users and us little guys get to tag along while the company hopes we see the need for more if the features and then pay.

Phil A. Taylor, Massachusetts

Curious what browser you paid for.

Seriously, there's all sorts of good free software out there, often better than the paid variants. Lots of folks swear by some of our privacy-enhancing software, all of which is free.

James S. Tyre, California

And just to add to what Michael said... I use CDR on my PC desktop at the office, my PC laptop at home, and my iPad. Sometimes I just need to look at a document, but frequently, I'm locating a document, throwing it into dropbox, and then accessing it from the other device via dropbox.

Laurie Axinn Gienapp

Is this your best analogy? Classic apples and oranges.

Two responses:

1. What browser does anyone pay for?
2. If there were a premium browser that I could pay for to get the features I would like, I would.

Nick A. Ortiz

Not necessarily apples and oranges at all. Doesn't sound to me like you are very familiar with things like GNU or open source software in general. Consider software like Libre Office, an open source and free alternative to Microsoft Office or Corel Office. UltraVNC is a very capable open source alternative to Real VNC. The GIMP is a very capable alternative to Photoshop. There are tons of additional examples. Sure, there are certain features that you can get via commercial software that are worth paying for - but not always*. There are legions of passionate programmers who like creating and enhancing these sorts of things just for the love of the art.

* E.g., I do not know of commercial software that has more features I would want than KeePass.

Michael Koenecke

Consider using the remote desktop connection that is built into Windows.

You probably need to leave the remote computer on but if you can get its IP address it should work for you.

Michael Boli, California

Absolutely. I used RDP every day. That being said, it's necessary to know your public IP address on the "host" computer.

Plus, you will need for forward TCP and UDP ports through your router to internal port 3389 on the host computer. Plus, the host computer must have Remote Desktop enabled (Right click on Computer, Properties, Remote. Check "Allow connections from computers running any version of Remote Desktop (less secure)" unless you know how to set up security.) You will need to reboot the computer after enabling Remote Desktop.

Mike Phillips, North Carolina

Our office uses LogMeIn. We've had good luck with it for the past several years.

Jennifer Norris, Illinois
