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Remote Access

I have been very careful to separate and segregate work, from home...but it will soon be necessary for me to work from home, for a couple of one-week periods. Both the home and office computers have windows2k. My sense from other posts is that the two major options to access my work computer from home, are PC Anywhere, and Go to My PC. Is this correct? And if so, do people have a strong preference for one over the other?

Laurie Axinn Gienapp, Bradford, Massachusetts

I think there's an open source option too. I know it's been mentioned.

Jake London

I use GoToMyPc.com and it works great—

Paul W. Hamilton, Nashville, Georgia

I haven't tried PCAnywhere but use GoToMyPC and it works great.

Jane E. Tate, Kailua, Hawaii

I'm using GoToMyPC and am quite happy w/it. However, I'm also trying out LogMeIn, which works very much like GoToMyPC. The pro version of LogMeIn is cheaper than GoTo plus they have a free version. I'm currently using the free version to access a computer in Germany.

Others use PC Anywhere and may be happy w/it. However, for me, these other 2 seem to fit my needs. I may dump GoToMyPC and go exclusively w/LogMeIn. Both GoTo and Log have free trial periods. Both a snap to set up; you can start using it in 5 minutes.

Clarence Behrend, West Bend, Wisconsin

UltraVNC, available from <http://ultravnc.sourceforge.net/> is what I use; works terrifically well. There's also <http://www.tightvnc.com/>.

Both are free and do everything PC Anywhere or Go To My PC do. UltraVNC even has a Web browser option where you can log in to your



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computer from any Web browser: no remote software needed, just like GoToMyPC.

Mike Koenecke, Richardson, Texas

I love www.LogMeIn.com.

Danielle Keister, Legal Assistant, Tacoma Washington

I use the windows remote desktop connection. it's built in (or downloadable). only problem is with keeping track of your IP address. Although there are plenty of websites that offer dynamic ip forwarding. My home computer is on a comcast cable modem and the IP on that hasn't changed in months. the other option is one of the various VNC programs (tightVNC, ultraVNC, etc.). I'm perfectly happy with RDC though. Frankly, I don't have any clue what the value add is from things like gotomypc or pcityanywhere. There's loads of alternatives you can put together yourself with no skill whatsoever.

Read about it (and download it) here:

<http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/downloads/tools/rdclientdl.mspx>

Here's Microsoft's blurb. Also note that there's an idiot proof guide linked on that page.

Remote Desktop Connection Software Download Published: October 25, 2001

This software package will install the client portion of Remote Desktop on any of the following operating systems: Windows 95, Windows 98 and 98 Second Edition, Windows Me, Windows NT 4.0, or Windows 2000. (This is the same version of the client software as in Windows XP Service Pack 1.) When run, this software allows older Windows platforms to remotely connect to a computer running Windows XP Professional with Remote Desktop enabled.

This package provides flexible deployment options of the full Terminal Services Client, including auto-repair through Windows Installer technology and application publishing via IntelliMirror™ management technologies or Microsoft Systems Management Server (SMS).

Note The Remote Desktop Connection software is pre-installed with Windows XP. To run it, click ***Start***, click ***All Programs***, click ***Accessories***, click ***Communications***, and then click ***Remote Desktop Connection***. This software package can also be found on the Windows XP Professional and Windows XP Home Edition product CDs and can be installed on any supported Windows platform. To install from the CD, insert the disc into the target machine's CD-ROM drive, select ***Perform Additional Tasks***, and then click ***Install Remote Desktop Connection***.

Andrew Diaz-Matos

I've looked at VNC and TightVNC, both open source, and opted against them. I didn't want to spend the time learning the tech end. Security, especially on VNC, isn't as strong as the commercial versions.

With LogMeIn's free version, one can get commercial user-friendliness for free plus high security.

One concern I have w/LogMeIn's free version is that I'm not sure it allows blanking the remote computer's screen. I know the pro version does.

DISCLAIMER: I have no connection to or financial interest in any of these programs.

Clarence Behrend, West Bend, Wisconsin

I understand that RDC is faster than any of the others, but reading MS's page implies that it only allows older machines to access ones w/WinXP. It doesn't seem to work for those of us still using Win2K on all of our machines. Unless I'm missing something....

Clarence Behrend, West Bend, Wisconsin

I'm pretty sure it's built in to the Windows 2000 Terminal Services package. Unfortunately, I no longer have a w2k machine (great O/S that was) so I can't hunt around to find the settings. WinXP, as with most of the rest of its features, just ported the w2k tool. It's probably somewhere in the control panel under network settings or system (xp has a "remote" tab on the system properties popup, so check there)

Andrew Diaz-Matos


I've used GoToMyPc for years. No issues, no problems. And the new version 5.0 is even faster than before.

Total thumbs up.

Charlie Abut, New Jersey

If WIN2003 is used on the server, doesn't a port need to be opened for access to terminal? Secondly, how does one locate and identify the domain to plug into the RDC dialog box? Does remote access include Outlook and e-mail functionality?

Craig McLaughlin, Irvine, California

The answer is it depends . First, the disclaimer - I resell GoToMyPC on my www.lawofficetech.com website and I am partial to it using both the GoToMyPC service and the GoToMeeting service. Before that, I was a long time LapLink user. PCAnywhere, LapLink and others all provide some type of remote access, however, unless you use there on line services, you must have the software installed on the host machine and the machine you are going to be accessing the host from. There are also the free utilities already mentioned, but require some technical knowledge and skill to properly implement.

LogMeIn (www.logmein.com) offers similar services to GoToMyPC and include a free version. The difference between the free version and the paid version is that the free version only gives you remote control with no file transfer capabilities. This is a big issue for some folks since they want to be able to transfer files and sometimes files are too large to just send via email. The commercial services are all extremely simple to implement and use. They work from behind your firewall without you having to change any configuration settings (usually that is).

Additionally, you can access your system from any other computer, not just one that has PCAnywhere or LapLink installed, through a web browser. You can get a free trial of GoToMyPC or sign up for the free LogMeIn service and see if that works for you.

Nerino J. Petro, Jr., Wisconsin

I just use Remote Desktop. It is part of XP Pro, and works much better than any of the other solutions I've found. One caveat is that you need to know your IP address (especially if it's a dynamic IP address) and you might need to do some minor configuration to your firewall if you use an external one.

Remote Desktop Guide: <http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/using/mobility/getstarted/remotintro.msp> Discussion of different methods of remote access: <http://episteme.arstechnica.com/groupee/forums/a/tpc/f/469092836/m/27500> 0867731

Mark Lyon

Thank you, thank you, thank you (I love this list!) I still have some research to do, but the responses were all very helpful, and have certainly narrowed the list to a manageable one. Getting personal reports, and knowing whether it's coming from a techie or a real person <g>, is so much better than reading the reviews on each website.

Laurie Axinn Gienapp, Bradford, Massachusetts

Thanks once again, to all those who responded to my original post. I've now installed LogMeIn on the office computer, and accessed it (successfully!) from both home, and my husband's office. Right now, I have the full feature version, bc it comes free, the first 30 days...after that, I either switch to the free version, or purchase the full version, either monthly, or annually -- and it's pretty inexpensive. I will probably use the free version briefly, just to confirm that I want the full version -- but I really like the fact that I can subscribe to the full version, just a month at a time.

Btw -- I thought I'd ask...has anyone discovered any drawbacks, with either this, or any other remote access software?

Laurie Axinn Gienapp, Bradford, Massachusetts

No drawbacks to that software. My reading indicates it to be a good package.

Generalized question raises all types of risk. Safety and security issues are very much a concern in using remote access across the public Internet. Some are the virtual equivalent of hanging a key in the middle of your door on the outside, where anyone that desires may use it to enter.

Darrell G. Stewart, San Antonio, Texas

I use LogMeIn to access my desktop from home.

The only drawback I found is when synchronizing files. I tried to do it intuitively. However, I had deleted some files from one of the computers (I try to keep them fairly well mirrored for both work and backup purposes). After I ran the synch, the process "restored" the deleted files. Also, I wasn't paying attention when doing the one-way synch, and wound up overwriting a couple of newer files with some older files, undoing about 4 days work setting up a bridge tournament. If you pay sufficient attention, it's not really a problem.

However, I don't really use LogMeIn to synch as a rule; I use about 4 large thumb drives, and use a file manager program with a synch tool built in.

Barry Lippitt, Southfield, Michigan

I think if you read more closely you will discover that the trial period is for 30 days OR 120 minutes, whichever occurs first. I didn't notice it when I registered last week but just found out today.

Clarence Behrend, West Bend, Wisconsin

We use GoToMyPC.com. No problems with the program. Only one word of caution. From time to time I have to reboot my office computer, so it is important that the office computer is set to restart automatically so it comes back on line afterwards.

Robert Schrage

Clarence is absolutely right...and I discovered that yesterday when I went back into Log me in, and discovered that my free trial period of the pro version had now ended...the language is VERY clear-- I simply had not bothered to read it closely enough, because I was just doing this on a trial basis, anyway. At the moment, I'm trying to decide whether to buy the pro version or stick with the free one ...and if I buy the pro version, do I go for the monthly, or annual...decisions, decisions, decisions. I'm rather inclined to stick with the free, for a bit, and see how much I miss the extra features...and perhaps then try the pro on a monthly basis...the cost savings justifying an annual subscription kicks in if you use the pro version more than 5 months a year. I've heard rumors of discount coupons for this, but can't seem to locate them.

one more comment, if using this, and you also have Zone Alarm...you need to tweak a couple of settings -- check the forum, or the FAQ

Laurie Axinn Gienapp, Bradford, Massachusetts

Just out of curiosity, to those of y'all who are using stuff like GoToMyPC and LogMeIn: what value do these services add to make it worth spending money on when you can do the same thing for free with UltraVNC or TightVNC (including access from any Web browser)? Just ease of configuration, or is there something else?

Mike Koenecke, Richardson, Texas

I started this thread, with my inquiry regarding what people were presently using. based on my interpretation of the responses, seemed to me that UltraVNC and TightVNC might require more technological knowledge than I have. LogMeIn has a free version, got the most votes from fellow sezzers, seemed - and was - extremely easy to sign up for, and has been very easy to use---I've used it from both of the remote locations I would typically use, without a problem. Now that I've used it, and am familiar with it -- yes, I am considering getting the pro version for \$12.95/month -- but it would only be for a very few and occasional months -- the rest of the time, I'd stick with the free version, because it mostly does what I need.

and keep in mind...I've only been using this for about a week..so get out your BIG grain of salt!

Laurie Axinn Gienapp, Bradford, Massachusetts

Good question. I often like to use products that are not mainstream or use programs that are free. But in this case, there were several reasons I went the commercial route.

1. Ease of setup. I'm fairly good (computer-wise) in some areas but totally clueless in others. Dealing w/ports or IP addresses is something I didn't want to learn at this moment (this may be very simple if someone explained it to me, but that's where I am right now). The idea of downloading a commercial program that has a free introductory period and be using the product in less than 10 minutes was very nice.
2. Security. I believe both Ultra and Tight VNC are now more secure, but nothing in the (admitted brief) reading I did made me feel very comfortable w/the level of security. This may be a misunderstanding on my part b/c of the port issue.
3. Easy access. By this I mean I can access the host computer from any computer which as a high speed internet connection. The accessing computer does not need anything downloaded onto it.

For all of this, I'm willing to pay what I consider a fair price. I currently access 3 different computers from multiple other computers, 2 with LogMeIn free version, one w/GoToMyPC which will be switched to LogMeIn Pro, which I got for a year at \$50. Well worth if for my purposes.

Clarence Behrend, West Bend, Wisconsin

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