

Remote Control Software

Take control of remote machines

Remote control software lets systems administrators exercise control over remote machines—even at 2:00 A.M. from home after being called by the night shift. In its infancy, remote control software was buggy and unsecure and often conflicted with other applications. Today, remote control software is much more mature, stable, and secure and includes Help desk and remote assistance functionality.

Choosing Remote Control Software

When considering remote control software, ask yourself how you will deploy it. Do you plan to connect to workstations and servers over the Internet, intranet, through a dial-up connection, or some combination of the three? Each connection method has its own set of requirements. Although a particular product might not support dial-up or dial-up with dial-back support, you might be able to run the software through a RAS connection.

You also need to examine the types of systems you plan to connect to. If you're running in a heterogeneous environment, you'll need software that will support all your platforms. Determine how you'll use the software. If administrators will use the software solely to control servers, your requirements will be different from those of an environment in which a Help desk staff would use the software to access users' desktops to resolve trouble tickets. You also should determine whether you'll require the remote control software to work with firewalls, proxy servers, or Network Address Translation (NAT). Some products might have difficulty establishing connections through firewalls or in environments that use NAT.

Security Basics

For network-based access through your corporate intranet, you might not be too worried about data encryption between the remote system and the client from which you control the remote system. For Internet connections, however, you likely want to encrypt all data that's sent back and forth. Be extremely cautious about remote control software that touts proprietary encryption methods, and stick with products that employ standard algorithms. IP Security (IPSec) or Secure Sockets Layer (SSL)

JOHN HOWIE
(jhowie@securitytoolkit.com) is the manager of Security Toolkit, a Los Angeles- and UK-based consulting group that specializes in system and network security.

functionality can dramatically reduce the likelihood of eavesdropping or the hijacking of remote control sessions. When you use a modem to connect to a server in a remote data center, you might want dial-back functionality to prevent intruders from successfully connecting to your server.

Pay attention to the remote control software's authentication and authorization features. Does the software make use of OS mechanisms, or does it rely on its own mechanisms for authentication? For products that use OS mechanisms, make sure you can limit authorizations to only those accounts that you want to

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use for remote control. For products that employ their own authentication mechanisms, verify that connection credentials are stored securely on the remote system. You might want to consider only those packages that provide an audit trail of connection attempts.

Desirable Features

After you're satisfied that a product fits your security needs, consider some of the other features that each package offers. At a minimum, you'll want the ability to transfer files between the client and the system you're controlling remotely. Also consider how the software maps client-side peripherals such as smart card readers, removable disk drives (i.e., CD-ROM drives, CompactFlash—CF—card readers), and printers to the remote system. Mapping features are especially useful for Help desk staff who need to install or update software on users' desktops from a CD-ROM in the Help desk staff member's local drive. Some of the products in this Buyer's Guide are specifically designed with Help desk functions. Last but not least, check for usability before settling on a particular product. Most vendors offer trial licenses.

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Contact Information	Product Name	Price	Description
3AM Labs 866-600-7205 http://remotelyanywhere.com	RemotelyAnywhere	\$99 for one license; volume and education discounts available	Supports network access, encryption, file transfer, and Windows authentication; will support remote printing in a future release; runs on Windows Server 2003, Windows XP, Windows 2000, Windows NT, Windows Me, and Windows 98 servers; supports access through wireless devices
Altiris 801-226-8500 888-252-5551 http://www.altiris.com	Carbon Copy Solution	\$42 per node for 100 to 499 nodes	Features client deployment and configuration integration, Web-based management console, handheld-device support, network and dial-up access (including dial-back), Windows authentication and proprietary access security, bidirectional transfer, remote document printing, encryption, and client/server support on XP, Win2K, NT, Windows Me, and Win9x; integrates with Altiris systems management tools
Computer Associates 631-342-6000 http://www.ca.com	Unicenter Remote Control	\$60 per node	Combines remote control, file transfer, encryption, chat, and management features; uses Triple DES (3DES) to secure single or multiple sessions through TCP, HTTP, SPX, and CryptoAPI; authentication leverages Active Directory (AD), NT local and domain security, Novell Directory Services (NDS), and Unicenter Remote Control proprietary security; runs on Windows 2003, XP, Win2K, NT, Windows Me, and Win9x
CrossTec 561-391-6560 800-675-0729 http://www.netopusa.com	NetOp Remote Control 7.5	\$179	Lets you reach any Windows, Linux, Sun Microsystems' Solaris, or legacy OS/2 or DOS PC from your desktop; you can view the remote PC's screen, control its keyboard and mouse, synchronize files, inventory hardware and software, launch applications, and chat with someone at the remote PC; supports network and dial-up (including dial-back) connections, Windows and proprietary mechanisms, file transfers, and encryption; runs on XP, Win2K Server Terminal Services, Win2K Professional, Win2K Server, Win2K Advanced Server, NT Server 4.0 Terminal Server Edition (WTS), and NT
Emco Software emco@emco.is http://www.emco.is	Remote Desktop	\$395	Automatically installs the client remotely on XP, Win2K, and NT machines; supports Windows authentication, ADSL dial-up, and LAN discovery; features view-only mode, full-screen mode, encryption capability, and remote resolution support; records remote display to AVI file; features a logoff, restart, and shutdown connected host; can capture Windows hotkeys and remote displays to .jpg file; supports file transfers
Expertcity 805-690-5750 888-259-3826 http://www.gotomypc.com	GoToMyPC	\$14.95 per month for the annual plan; \$19.95 per month for the monthly plan	Web-based remote access service lets users access and control their PC from any computer with Internet access; you can access files, programs, and network resources remotely; supports Windows and proprietary mechanisms, file transfers, and encryption; supports XP, Win2K, NT, Windows Me, and Win9x on the host computer

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Famatech sales@admin.com http://www.famatech.com	Remote Administrator 2.1	\$35 per license	Supports network and dial-up access, Windows authentication (including smart card support), file transfer, remote printing, and encryption; runs on Win2K, NT, and Win9x systems
LapLink 425-483-8088 800-343-8080 http://www.laplink.com	LapLink Everywhere 2.0	\$119.95 for 1 year	Lets you access your PC from any Web browser; includes LapLink Secure VNC, which works with all connection types and supports SSL encryption; supports network access and multiple file transfer with the standard LapLink style window; uses proprietary mechanisms
	LapLink Gold 11	\$109.95	Lets you remotely access your desktop PC's files and network resources, synchronize data between PCs, run database applications, and operate, maintain, and reboot PCs or servers; Surf Up feature lets you remotely send and retrieve files; supports network and dial-up access, file transfers, and encryption; uses proprietary mechanisms
Linktivity 520-670-7100 800-809-1245 http://www.linktivity.com	WebInteractive	Starts at \$1499 per agent license	Web-based server software lets you view a user's screen; provides tools to manage a queue of online requests, communicate with customers online, monitor a remote PC, and remotely control a customer's PC; uses proprietary mechanisms; supports file transfers and encryption
Micro2000 818-547-0125 800-864-8008 http://www.micro2000.com	RemoteScope	\$10 to \$60 per seat	Lets you control an entire network from a central location; from one console you can distribute software, manage software and hardware inventories, and streamline technical support throughout the enterprise; features bidirectional file transfer through TCP/IP; can also distribute files to multiple clients by using the same engine as the software deployment feature; supports LAN, WAN, and VPN network access including dial-up but doesn't currently provide for dial-back; has proprietary encrypted authentication separate from and in addition to Windows authentication; doesn't support smart cards outside of Windows; encrypts traffic between the client and the server; supports most Windows OSs
Microsoft http://www.microsoft.com	Remote Assistance	Remote Administration mode is free	Available in XP and Win2K; supports network access and Windows authentication and authorization methods (including smart cards); doesn't support file transfers; encrypts traffic between client and server
	Terminal Services	Contact vendor for pricing	Included in XP (as Remote Desktop), Win2K Server, and Win2K AS
NetSupport 770-205-4456 888-665-0808 http://www.netsupport-inc.com	NetSupport Manager 8.0	\$99 for one user	Lets you perform remote support and management simultaneously on multiple systems over a LAN, WAN, or the Internet; provides secure 256-bit remote PC access, dynamic inventory, automated scripting and scheduling, file transfer, remote deployment, and system monitoring; runs on XP, Win2K, NT, Windows Me, and Win9x systems; integrates into NT security; supports network access and dial-up access; supports dial-back for dial-up systems
Omniquad info@omniquad.com http://www.omniquad.com	Omniquad Instant Remote Control (OIRC)	\$39	Supports only network access; automatically sends a preconfigured OIRC host to XP, Win2K, and NT systems on your LAN and domain; controls any number of systems; lets you use remote lock, Ctrl+Alt+Del, stealth view, and FTP-based file transfer; lets you access PCs that aren't logged on; uses Windows security

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PJ Technologies 212-375-8098 http://www.pjtec.com	GoverLAN 5.0	\$549 for an administrator license and unlimited client nodes	Part of the GoverLAN Remote Administration suite; supports network and dial-up access; manages user's drive and printer maps; uses native Windows security for authentication and authorization; features security and auditing options for the enterprise; doesn't require software preinstallation and maintenance on client machines; doesn't support file transfers or encryption capabilities; supports XP, Win2K, and NT
SOESoft sales@soesoft.com http://www.soesoft.com	RDMC XVNC	Contact vendor for pricing	Provides a wrapper for managing, deploying, and using Virtual Network Computing (VNC); detects whether the VNC service exists; will remotely deploy and connect VNC service; can remove remote control service when session completes; uses proprietary mechanisms; supports network access and XP, Win2K, and NT systems
Symantec 408-253-9600 http://www.symantec.com	Symantec pcAnywhere 11.0	\$179.95	Consists of a remote control solution, file-transfer capability, and a suite of remote management tools; resolves Help desk and server support problems by providing multiple ways to remotely troubleshoot problems; supports network and dial-up (including dial-back) connections, remote printing, and encryption; uses proprietary mechanisms; runs on XP, Win2K, NT, Windows Me, and Win98
Tridia 770-428-5000 800-582-9337 http://www.tridia.com	DoubleVision for Windows	\$44 to \$79 per seat depending on quantity	Windows remote control software provides remote file transfers, SSL-compatible encryption, and dial-up, network, and Internet access; supports NT LAN Manager (NTLM), Lightweight Directory Access Protocol (LDAP), and network device interface specification (NDIS) centralized access control; supports Windows authentication (including smart card support); features complete VNC compatibility and firewall-friendly Internet access; runs on XP, Win2K, NT, Windows Me, and Win9x systems
TWD Industries info@twd-industries.com http://www.twd-industries.com	Remote-Anything (RA) + Directory Server (DS)	Contact vendor for pricing	Lets you control remote PCs over TCP/IP; finds PCs and users by name, without the IP address; features secure zero-configuration firewall traversal, centralized administration, and SOS calls
Vector Networks 770-622-2850 800-330-5035 http://www.vector-networks.com	PC-Duo Enterprise Remote Control	\$61.50 per license for 50 seats	Features PC-Duo Internet Gateway to channel multiple secure remote control connections through firewalls; features desktop integration with Microsoft Internet Explorer (IE) for direct remote control, chat, and inventory functionality; connects through network, dial-up, and dial-back connections; supports XP, Win2K, NT, Windows Me, Win9x, Windows 3.x, DOS, Linux, and Macintosh platforms; supports file transfer to and from the client over TCP/IP, IPX, and NetBIOS; features Windows-based and proprietary password security and encryption capability; uses native Windows and proprietary mechanisms
WiredRed Software 858-715-0970 888-665-3767 http://www.wiredred.com	e/pop Remote Control	\$495 for 25 users	Provides remote access for monitoring and maintenance, end-to-end encryption, and proxy-friendly support for firewall, NAT, and proxy negotiation; supports local and remote clipboard and FTP file transfers; compatible with XP, Win2K, NT, and Win9x servers; supports network access, Windows and proprietary mechanisms, and encryption