



# CODING HORROR

programming and human factors  
by Jeff Atwood

April 18, 2006

## Remote Desktop Tips and Tricks

I'm with [K. Scott Allen](#): the pervasiveness of [Remote Desktop](#) functionality in Windows has fundamentally changed the way I work.

The fact that it shipped in the Windows XP box-- and as a default component of all the server operating systems since Windows 2000-- has done wonders for its adoption. It's truly ubiquitous. And it doesn't hurt that it's actually the best performing remote control tool I've ever used; I have yet to try [any other remote control tool](#) that performs as well. It's so responsive that it almost makes the idea of physically sitting in front of a computer seem quaint.

Almost.

One thing you quickly learn with Remote Desktop is that **not all the windows shortcut keys work as you would expect them to**. The "Apply Windows key combinations" setting defaults to "full screen only", so you may see different behavior depending on whether or not you're running full-screen; use the Ctrl+Alt+Pause shortcut to switch back and forth.

The help file contains a list of the **special Remote Desktop key combinations**:

Alt + Page Up

Switches between programs from left to right.

Alt + Page Down

Switches between programs from right to left.

Alt + Insert

Cycles through the programs in the order they were started.

Alt + Home

Displays the Start menu.

Ctrl + Alt + Break

Switches the client between a window and full screen.

Ctrl + Alt + End

Brings up the Windows Security dialog box.

**Ctrl** + **Alt** + **Pause**

Toggles between fullscreen and windowed mode  
(note that this does not set the client desktop to the correct size)

**Alt** + **Del**

Displays the Windows menu

**Ctrl** + **Alt** + **Num -**

Places a snapshot of the client's active window on the clipboard

**Ctrl** + **Alt** + **Num +**

Places a snapshot of the client's entire desktop area on the clipboard

To **shut down or restart the remote computer**, either bring up the Windows Security dialog, or use Task Manager.

Scott also provides a great list of additional resources for hacking Remote Desktop:

- [Shadowing the current login session with Windows Server 2003](#)
- [Shadowing the current login session with Windows XP](#) (aka Remote Assistance)
- [A description of the .RDP file format](#)
- [Managing Remote Desktop Sessions Remotely](#) (or use [the GUI tool](#))
- [Connect to Remote Desktop via Linux](#)
- [Change the default Remote Desktop listening port](#)

I have two tips of my own. The first has to do with multiple monitors. Both my work and home computers have [three monitors](#). Before you laugh, [guess who else was on the three monitor tip back in the day?](#) Google's Larry Page. And Bill Gates. At any rate, I've gotten at least one email on this, so I know it's not easy to figure out.

**Here's how you run a remote desktop session maximized to a particular monitor:**

1. Start a windowed (non-fullscreen) remote desktop session
2. Drag the windowed session to the monitor you want
3. Close the remote desktop session
4. Set the properties for the connection to "full screen". It must be "full screen", *not* the actual resolution of your monitor (1280x1024, etc).
5. Start a remote desktop connection; it'll be full screen on the target monitor

I know it's convoluted. But at least it remembers which monitor it is full screen to. It'd be simpler if we had a way to change the client desktop size without closing and re-opening the connection, say via the display properties dialog. But we don't.

Here's my second tip: **if you're not on a fast LAN, drop the color depth down to either 256 or 15-bit color, and select "Modem" on the Experience tab**. Color depth is the single biggest contributor to performance over a slow connection. You may be tempted to go to 16-bit color or even 24-bit color to make things look prettier, but remember all those additional bits have to be transmitted across the wire. I know 256 colors can look desperately bad with most of today's websites and applications-- but 15-bit color is a good compromise.

[Remote IT Support](#)

Fully Customizable Remote Helpdesk Solution. Get Your Free Trial Today

[www.LogMeIn.com](http://www.LogMeIn.com)

Ads by Google

Posted by Jeff Atwood [View blog reactions](#)

« [Are You Following the Instructions on the Paint Can?](#)

[Windows Vista: Security Through Endless Warning Dialogs](#) »

## Comments

> Each additional bit DOUBLES the amount of data that has to be transmitted.

Only if you start with a 1-bit display. (Classic Macs, anyone?)

Either you or I have a fundamental misunderstanding on this one. I hope it's not me...

Roddy on April 19, 2006 1:57 PM

Ach, you're right. I was thinking of key space for some reason -- 256-bit keys versus 257-bit keys. The 257-bit key would take double the number of brute force attacks. Amended.

I guess I picked the wrong day to stop sniffing glue.

[Jeff Atwood](#) on April 19, 2006 2:16 PM

It's ok, we all have days like this! 16-bit is weird anyway, you get extra green.

Chris L on April 19, 2006 2:47 PM

Your argument at the end is still a bit silly. There would be no actual difference in bytes submitted for 15 bit vs. 16 bit display, but you recommend 15 in favor of 16.

Also, why is my captcha always the same (orange)? Doesn't that defeat the purpose?

RiXOR on April 19, 2006 2:49 PM

a (perhaps unrelated) note on UI...

whenever I see a list of text and images like the one you put with description and keys combination, I get messed up and I don't know if the description is at the top or the bottom of the image

another note... very few people use keyboard shortcuts (I'm one of those very few, I know)

and a third note

"Your comment could not be submitted due to questionable content: blogsp0t"

[Eber Irigoyen](#) on April 19, 2006 3:11 PM

ah... so your comments don't accept the word bl0gsp0t?

not even in the URL field =o(

[Eber Irigoyen](#) on April 19, 2006 3:12 PM

Is it at all possible to set up remote desktop to use multiple monitors?

I have three monitors at work (dual head + laptop + synergy), but remote dektop only allows a single monitor worth of transfer, which makes working from home not quite so great (I have my ide (eclipse) maximised to two windows).

Any ideas, or do I just have to get over it?

thanks.

[Ian Tyrrell](#) on April 19, 2006 3:38 PM

When using multiple monitors, why wouldn't you just un-maximize, drag it over to the target monitor, and maximize?

[Haacked](#) on April 19, 2006 3:52 PM

> There would be no actual difference in bytes submitted for 15 bit vs. 16 bit display

Sure there would-- the protocol is sending the video diffs over the wire. It wouldn't be a big size savings, admittedly. But as Chris L pointed out, 15-bit is not only slightly less data, it's more color-balanced: 5 bits of red, green, and blue. Compared to 5 6 5 for 16-bit.

> very few people use keyboard shortcuts

So you never press CTRL+ALT+DELETE? Your computer must get very lonely.. ;)

> why wouldn't you just un-maximize, drag it over to the target monitor, and maximize?

Because the client desktop does not get resized.

[Jeff Atwood](#) on April 19, 2006 4:25 PM

one thing about remote desktop that's been annoying me to no end. it doesn't support anything over 1600x1200 (or widescreen resolutions for the matter)! I have a dell 24" at home that runs at 1920x1200 ..

whats even more irritating? I also run the remote desktop client on my mac. the osx version has NO problems displaying whatever resolution i want!

Dave K. on April 19, 2006 4:30 PM

Hi!

I wanted to know if there is any alternative to remote desktop for using in XP Home. VNC is one option, but I don't really like it.

About Rem. Desktop, it's really a killer app in XP, imo it only lacks one thing, refresh time. If you've tried to watch a movie on a remote computer, you know what I'm talking about... even using the fastest connection. Maybe there's some way to change this...

CharlyChango on April 19, 2006 4:41 PM

What I'd like to know is how to fix the full screen bug when using a widescreen client machine.

When I would connect to my work machine (1600x1200) on my old laptop (1400x1050) it would full screen to a 1400x1050 desktop.

I now have a widescreen 1620x1050 laptop and when I connect to the 1600x1200 machine at work it punts and give me a 1400x1050 window instead of a full screen.

This in itself would not be too bad, but since the task bar on my client machine and the Title bar on the window both use up a few pixels, the full 1050 of the remote window won't display so I have to scroll. Even if I hide the task bar I'm still missing just enough of the remote window due to the Title Bar.

I love Remote desktop but this has been aggravating me lately.

Any ideas?

Geoff on April 19, 2006 5:10 PM

> I now have a widescreen 1620x1050 laptop and when I connect to the 1600x1200 machine at work it punts and give me a 1400x1050 window instead of a full screen.

The maximum resolution on any display I currently own is 1600x1200. Let me research this using a widescreen monitor at work and get back to you.

> VNC is one option, but I don't really like it.

UltraVNC is what I recommend-- I'm not sure if you consider that vanilla VNC or not, but it's the best of the alternatives IMO.

[Jeff Atwood](#) on April 19, 2006 11:12 PM

I had severe issues scrolling with the mouse wheel inside a remote desktop session: the window seemed to scroll continuously until I managed to click on some arrow..

This issue could be fixed by installing MS Intellimouse drivers on the client side.

[Laurent](#) on April 20, 2006 12:16 AM

> Sure there would-- the protocol is sending the video diffs over the wire.

Sure, but that's irrelevant for the amount of data per pixel, which is what we're talking about.

> It wouldn't be a big size savings, admittedly.

Somehow, I doubt they'll send over 15 bits and go through the trouble of using a shifting bitmask. My guess is they'll just send the 2 bytes.

On the other hand, they're probably using compression and I guess 15-bit data will compress better than 16-bit data, so you may be right after all.

[RiXOR](#) on April 20, 2006 3:46 AM

DameWare is pretty slick too. I don't remember the cost, but it isn't bad.

I usually use UltraVNC or RemoteDesktop, depending on if I want to control an existing session, or just use the machine.

[Eric D. Burdo](#) on April 20, 2006 5:18 AM

Your post is so well written, Jeff. My post will now hide in shame.

[Scott](#) on April 20, 2006 6:44 AM

> very few people use keyboard shortcuts

So you never press CTRL+ALT+DELETE? Your computer must get very lonely.. ;)

so you didn't read the whole comment:

"another note... very few people use keyboard shortcuts (I'm one of those very few, I know)"

I do use shortcuts, and now that you mention it, I'm the ONLY ONE in the office who blocks the computer everytime I walk away

[Eber Irigoyen](#) on April 20, 2006 9:56 AM

> I do use shortcuts

Sorry, you're right-- I didn't read closely enough! Mea culpa.

> My post will now hide in shame.

Not at all! Your post was so good I had to steal it!

> I now have a widescreen 1620x1050 laptop and when I connect to the 1600x1200 machine at work it punts and give me a 1400x1050 window instead of a full screen.

We tested this with one of the Apple 1920x1200 widescreen LCD displays here at work, and you're right. Remote desktop just doesn't support any widescreen resolutions! We tried a few quick hacks to get full-screen 1920x1200 but nothing worked. We had black bars on the side (effective 1600x1200) no matter what we tried.

[Jeff Atwood](#) on April 20, 2006 1:11 PM

Here is how I reboot/shutdown when in a Remote Desktop connection:

From the run box:

```
shutdown -r -t 2
```

-r for reboot

-t for time to reboot, gives a buffer for some apps to close.

I remote desktop to and from my Media Center machine on my widescreen Dell monitor, always seems to work for me, as long as I always run full screen.

[Shawn Oster](#) on April 20, 2006 2:19 PM

Thanks for this info...super helpful. Can't count how many times I go to alt-tab and, of course, utterly fail to do what I plan on doing.

> I do use shortcuts, and now that you mention it, I'm the ONLY ONE in the office who blocks the computer everytime I walk away

I'm in the same boat. Note, though, that Win + L is a much faster way to lock your workstation. OK, not \*much\* faster, but at least somewhat faster :).

[David](#) on April 20, 2006 8:15 PM

I have an idea: 14-bit color!

foobar on April 20, 2006 11:10 PM

> And it doesn't hurt that it's actually the best performing remote control tool I've ever used

You should try Nomachine NX! That is fast. And I mean *\*fast\**.

[florisla](#) on April 21, 2006 12:48 AM

Additional tips:

- You can remote desktop into localhost, very useful to test something (e.g. security) under a different user account.
- With Virtual Server, use remote desktop to get into the VMs, more functional and easier than the VMRC ActiveX in IE.
- Use the "Remote Desktops" MMC snapin to run/manage multiple connections, includes running at (seemingly) arbitrary screen sizes (on XP you may need to install the Win2k3 admin pack to get this).

Richard on April 21, 2006 4:10 AM

Thanks. I sometimes tunnel using Putty and secure the line using SSH by CopSSH. The tutorial that I used is here, <http://theillustratednetwork.mvps.org/Ssh/RemoteDesktopSSH.html>

[Ben Jones](#) on April 21, 2006 5:53 AM

Any idea if you can you have Remote Desk Top switch you left/right mouse buttons?

As is, if have to do it manually for each server that I log into....

Thanks for the tips!

Alex

[alex](#) on April 21, 2006 5:55 AM

This full screen method does not work for me. my 2nd monitor is 1900 x 1200. Full screen only gets me 1600 x 1200 no matter what I do. Works fine for everything except a remote desktop session.

byram sewell on April 27, 2006 1:34 PM

> my 2nd monitor is 1900 x 1200. Full screen only gets me 1600 x 1200 no matter what I do

That's right, the 1600x1200 limitation is a known issue with RD.

I heard the Vista version of RD supports multimon and high resolutions. I also heard the Vista RD binaries work on XP. Hmmmmmm. ;)

[Jeff Atwood](#) on April 27, 2006 2:05 PM

We use Remote Desktop at work ALL the time since many machine we need access to are behind locked doors. We have refresh problems where an image of a window you closed does not get removed. If you minimize the "unrefreshed" window or move it below the screen and back up then it is refresh properly. Anybody else every have this problem, and if so, anybody know how to fix it?

Gene S on May 2, 2006 4:22 PM

On a different note, starting about a month ago my remote desktop started going REALLY slowly (when I type text into an open word document, it shows up about 1 letter a second). As far as I can tell, my network speed on both sides is good (gigabit at work, cable modem at home). I've tried setting everything down (256 colors, etc) with no noticeable change. I've checked background processes on both machines and the loads are normal (low). I've disabled virus protection on both machines because I heard that sometimes they try to check networked drives and can slow things down. I'm out of ideas and very frustrated. I'd really appreciate any suggestions.

Thanks

Eric H on May 14, 2006 3:58 PM

I'll agree that RD is very nice, however my main issue with it is that it always messes up my icons.

I too run multiple monitors for my desktop computer. The issue is that I don't use Remote Desktop to access other destops, I use it from my laptop to get to my home machine when I'm away. This ALWAYS messes up the icons on my destop. Any icons that were on the secondary monitor all get moved and crammed onto the primary after I've connected with the lappy.

I'd prefer for it to retain the rez that the desktop has and force me to scroll, instead of forcing my to reorganize my icons everytime I connect from afar.

Any suggestions?

Here's my setup (well close, I've moved since then)

<http://www.sootahcris.com/2005/09/x-radiation-anyone.html>

[Souter](#) on May 17, 2006 7:14 PM

Maybe I'm missing a special command here, but this is one thing that drives me loopy:

When you remote into a machine you get that bar at the top that gives you the name of the computer - take off the pushpin, and it goes away. Nice. But now from THAT machine remote into another machine, then I've got 2 of the bars at the top that how the HECK (I'm being polite) do I easily cycle between bars??? For years I've been playing this hand-eye action game every time to get the CURRENT bar to come down so I can minimize the session ... is there a way to do that?

THANKS.

[Chris](#) on June 6, 2006 6:07 PM

> But now from THAT machine remote into another machine

Oh no-- I've gone crosseyed!

But seriously, at the point where you're remoting from machine A into machine B, and then remoting from machine B to machine C, isn't it time to stop and ask yourself.. why?

[Jeff Atwood](#) on June 7, 2006 12:15 AM

To shut down the computer you can also click the start button and then hit alt + F4 this will bring up the normal windows shutdown dialog.

Just a thought.

[Shayne](#) on June 7, 2006 1:36 AM

I know that the Remote Desktop Web Connection uses ActiveX, but does the Remote Desktop Client that would be used with XP to connect via a NON Web connection use ActiveX?? and if so, does Citrix have the same issue.

My problem is that my customer isn't allowed to use any ActiveX controls, so I want to know if I can use RDP? If you have an answer and can provide documentation to that affect, that would be fantastic.

Thanks,

Alan Sawyer

Alan Sawyer on June 16, 2006 2:45 PM

It seems if you're a fan of swapping the Control and Caps Lock Keys via the Registry, these tips won't work as well because the RDP client side doesn't send the remapped keys to the other side. (For example Control + Alt + Pause to windowize a Full Screen). Keep your original Control key handy!

[piyo](#) on June 20, 2006 7:29 PM

Widescreen works for me if i drop the resolution to 1600x900. To bad because I can use 1920x1200.

Cheers,  
Harry

Harry on July 1, 2006 1:38 AM

I have been right-clicking on the task bar and selecting taask manager then selecting shut down from the options. Now the option to shutdown is missing - anybody know why?

sam on July 8, 2006 9:15 PM

I have a dual screen computer at work, and I regularly work on other people's single screen computers. When using RDP I can only see the primary screen. How can I switch to my second screen in RDP. I currently use the "Extend my windows desktop" onto the second monitor. I could use Log Me In to do this, but it seems a waste to send all that data outside the building and back.

Thanks.

alfred.

Alfred on July 18, 2006 12:25 PM

I also have the same problem as Alfred. I have dual monitors at work but only a single wide screen monitor at home. I leave Outlook open on my second monitor so when I log in I have no way to get to that monitor to see my email. How do we get to the second monitor?

Curtis on July 30, 2006 12:27 PM

args, i have to use a rdp client tool on a machine that have a resolution of 3072x768 and the windows xp client only support 1600x1200. redesktop on unix can more, so it is not a problem of the server. does anyone

have another application running but using rdp ?

regards

Breiti on August 2, 2006 7:33 AM

Hi there,

I am having problems with using Remote desktop that you might be able to help me with.

I can connect from my laptop to my media centre machine using remote desktop. But my TV on my media centre goes blank. I cannot now, after disconnecting the laptop from remote desktop, get the TV to work. It seems to have reset the resolution. How can i reverse what the remote desktop has done

Many thanks

Mark Wiltshire  
markjwiltshire@yahoo.com

[Mark Wiltshire](#) on August 2, 2006 3:02 PM

Nice site. Regarding multiple monitors - check iShadow Desktop - <http://www.ishadow.com/dload/MultiDisplay>

Along with RDP the app supports even ICA and VNC.

[Masha](#) on August 4, 2006 10:44 PM

Vista Remote Desktop now has dual monitor support, see <http://ryan-technorabble.blogspot.com/2006/07/dual-monitor-remote-desktop-goodness.html>

And the last comment contains the link to the Vista RDC software required

Cheers,  
Menno

[Menno](#) on August 25, 2006 11:53 AM

Note that the link above has an extra space in it that you need to remove, this blog censor wouldn't let me post the link otherwise, odd.

[Menno](#) on August 25, 2006 11:54 AM

New version of remote desktop released-- supports multiple monitors, 32-bit color, font smoothing, and higher resolutions. Sweet.

<http://support.microsoft.com/kb/925876>

Jeff Atwood on November 29, 2006 11:08 PM

Please help - I have setup a HTPC which is connected to my TV to play music and video. I had to remove the PC monitor and now I use remote desktop to connect to it.

Music works fine but I can't get the TV out of my ATI 9200 graphics card to output to the TV any more. It just displays the log in (or screensaver) that usually appears on the remote PC.

Is controlling the PC via RDesktop possible whilst allowing the TV out to play DVDs? I previously could just swap between monitors to push the video signal out of the S-Video jack.

It would be a tad painful if I had to again connect a monitor up and again clutter up the entertainment system!

Thanks

Help!

Help me! on December 4, 2006 8:21 PM

Just trying to get a saved .rdp connection to remember to goto my second monitor at full screen. Using the latest RDP client from MSoft...

But for the life of me I can't get it to remember to goto the other monitor. Used the trick above, but it continues to goto the primary at full screen...

Any ideas?

Skit on December 11, 2006 9:18 PM

I also use multiple monitors and tried to get it to "stick" full screen to a different monitor - no luck.

Bryan Klumpp on January 6, 2007 8:15 PM

did anyone resolve the widescreen RDP issue or solve why some can and some can't. We have 2 servers which are accessed via RDP on widescreen one appears to work ok with widescreen, put it to full screen on RDP and

it works no problem, the other, doesn't seem to want to play. both Dell PE servers, dell pc's btw.

Help!!!

TIA

Jusme on January 22, 2007 6:50 AM

Is there any way to use RD without it locking the client machine. I am wanting the client to be able to watch what I am doing and/or show me what is happening to them. I do not however want to do this using remote assistance as this is too much of a hassle. Thanks..

BrentW on January 29, 2007 7:02 AM

To make Vista RDP go full screen on a second monitor....

add step 2.5: before closing the windows rdp session, un maximize the window.

i noticed that even though it was windowed, it was "maximized".

[Me](#) on January 31, 2007 8:35 PM

My multiple monitor solution:

<http://www.realtimesoft.com/ultramon/>

Simply awesome.

:)

SuperRFOneWatt

[RFOneWatt](#) on February 15, 2007 10:42 AM

I use a single monitor at home and RD to my work XP pro system which has dual monitors. If i could just bring up the remote's Display Properties dialog and on the Setings Tab swtich the remote back to single monitor it would be great.

Also, to whoever said they remote from A->B and then from B->C Jeff responded (paraphrasing here)"its time to ask yourself why?" Well I do that also and the reason is: only PC\_B is allowed to cross the firewall to PC\_C so to access PC\_C from my home PC\_A i have to go A->B->C no other way around it

Eric on March 26, 2007 2:54 PM

Hi,

I have a problem with a remote PC that I wonder if anyone else has had and if anybody know of a solution.

I have a remote PC that I mainly use for data storage, and which is always left switched on and always logged in (I 'disconnect' rather than 'log off'). I subscribe to a data service that needs to run once a day. I am trying to run the update program from Scheduler.

The update program will only work when I am connected to the remote PC. If I don't connect at the time that Scheduler should run, the update is not done, but the Scheduler log shows that the program has run.

I think the problem has something to do with windows applications having to open in an active window. Other programs that do not require an active window, or where an active window has previously been left open have no problem running from Scheduler on this PC.

Any ideas or advice?

Royston on April 17, 2007 5:16 AM

Biggest Problem: Is there any way to control which shortcuts are intercepted by RDC in full-screen mode? I want Ctrl-TAB to cycle through the list of windows on the RDC connection, but I want Alt-2, Alt-3, to cycle to other local Virtual desktops.

So far, I've had to give up Ctrl-Tab within my remote desktops, for the privilege of mixing full-screen local and remote desktops.

Biggest Solution: Shutdown and/or Reboot. Somehow, the Windows Security menu is a well-kept secret. I have known people who wrote programs to reboot a remote machine. All you have to do is start the Windows Security menu, either from the Start Menu, or using the Ctrl-Alt-End shortcut this article just taught me. You then have all the Ctrl-Alt-Del menu choices at your home away from home.

Miles on April 30, 2007 3:28 PM

Had the same widescreen problem (using my Dell 22" 1680x1050). Remote Desktop Connection 6.0 client update (<http://support.microsoft.com/kb/925876>) fixes this issue.

When launching the new client, before you hit the Connect button, click "Options >>" and then "Display" tab. Here you can choose your choice of resolution that your local widescreen monitor supports well or Full Screen. Enjoy your server with the Big and Wide screen!

Thanks to the tips from SharpStyle!

<http://blog.sharpstyle.com/2007/03/16/remote-desktop-and-widescreen-monitors/>

Tony Chen on April 30, 2007 5:47 PM

Excellent. Thank you. My RD would'nt go fullscreen anymore :) Now it does...

[domagoj](#) on May 15, 2007 12:29 AM

This is a bit of a pain and not nearly perfect, but here's a way to get a remote desktop session to span multiple monitors of different sizes:

1) Invoke remote desktop with the width and height arguments instead of span. Set the width to the combined width of your monitors, and set the height to the smallest monitor's height. For example, if one monitor 1280 x 1024 and the other is 1600 x 1200, use the following on the command line:

```
mstsc.exe /W:2880 /H:1000 <path-to-your-rdp>
```

\* You might notice this is actually a little shorter than it could be. In my setup, the smaller monitor is where I keep the taskbar, so this is to account for the taskbar's height on the local system.

2) If the session came up maximized, un-maximize it.

3) stretch the window to it's full size and position it to fill the smaller monitor from top to bottom. It should fill the width of the larger screen and some portion of the height.

This has several limitations:

\* It requires the Remote Desktop Connection 6.0 client.

\* It doesn't allow you the option of choosing "Apply Windows key combinations in Full Screen only".

\* The point where your two monitors meet is not in the middle, so software like SplitView or GridVista don't work as well.

\* You can't easily save this setup. You basically have to do the whole "stretch and reposition" exercise every time. (You can make a shortcut to mstsc.exe that passes in your arguments.)

Mike on May 23, 2007 10:30 AM

How do I remove the x from the connection bar of the RDC. I want to display my application only and force the user to log out of the app, not click the x on the connection bar.

[Outlaw](#) on June 1, 2007 2:09 PM

Any feedback on this previous post????Is there any way to use RD without it locking the client machine. I am wanting the client to be able to watch what I am doing and/or show me what is happening to them. I do not however want to do this using remote assistance as this is too much of a hassle. Thanks..

JJ on June 19, 2007 1:46 PM

JJ: use UltraVNC. Not as smooth as RemoteDesktop, but easier as a support-tool.

[Boqs](#) on June 28, 2007 1:36 PM

You can use netmeeting instead of remote assistance. You can enable a machine to automatically accept incoming calls. (Location because there is no shortcut on a default windows installation: C:\Program Files\NetMeeting\conf.exe)

Marc on July 12, 2007 12:04 AM

Hey guys.

I've noticed a very annoying and semi-regular issue using RDP from Windows Xp to Windows 2003.

When I shut down the remote system via Start-Shutdown, it's a gamble as to whether the system will shutdown or whether it will just shut down RDP services, thereby meaning I need to physically go and reboot the box.

Any clues/hints?

[Brett](#) on August 1, 2007 5:34 PM

i have an error when i log on to windows (windows configures ccCommon) this error is comming in my computer.

tell me what can i do with my computer.any software to install or any thing else can you tell me in e mail below.

thanks

sanober\_khanpakhtun@yahoo.com

[sanobar](#) on August 12, 2007 10:21 AM

I am trying to remote to my home pc from work in 32 bit color mode, but i cannot do it. I am using RDC 6.0 on both machines. Both of them are windows XP pro. I want to set it up so i cam run some 32 bit apps from work

on my home PC, but everytime i try, my home pc gets dumbed down to 16 bit. any ideas?

Brian on September 3, 2007 10:46 AM

the solution is quiet simple concerning the resolution issues microsoft guys says that both client and remote computer should have the resolution similar to each other in case if there are any resolution violation between the two the remote computer resolution would always appear different meaning smaller from the client computer

I figured out a way of this what i did i searched the hidden file (named default.rdp) just delete the file and u r ready to go on..

the default.rdp sometimes get tampered and changes the resolution set in the remote computer....deleting it create a new file with the same but with new settings...

asad on September 30, 2007 12:00 AM

I have been having trouble with a remote desktop connection in which I could connect to the remote machine but only got a gray field, no icons were displayed. To bring up the desktop icons, I used the ctrl-alt-end combo - that brought up the task manager, and the icons all appeared on the desktop. Magic! Hope that helps someone.

P Sears on October 5, 2007 8:36 AM

I am having an issue where the remote computer reboots itself if I am inactive for a couple minutes on my computer. As long as I am moving the mouse or entering data, the connection works fine. I am running through VPN. To get around this if I am going to leave for a few minutes I disconnect and reconnect when I get back. Is there a setting on the remote PC that is causing the reboot? Or possibly a firewall issue on that PC that has a timeout for a non response that could be causing this? Thanks for any info.

mdixon on October 16, 2007 12:36 PM

Jeff, thanks for the excellent article. Am running a very remote desktop (west-coast Canada to the Netherlands), and often get rather annoying lag on the display. I've never thought to limit bit color, but have done so now. Zero lag! Very nice responsiveness. Made my day!

appositive on October 19, 2007 9:47 AM

I also welcome the new RDP6 but I still have an issue with them limiting the height @ 2048pixels due that I am running 2 1920x1200 monitors on top of each other and I require a total of 1920x2400 to go full screen. I will

try to contact MS to see if I can do something about it.

Francis on October 25, 2007 5:03 PM

"I have yet to try any other remote control tool that performs as well."

Then you haven't tried NX Client. Granted, it's for connecting to unix/linux sessions. But it blows away Remote Desktop for speed. It feels like an order of magnitude faster to me.

Eric on October 30, 2007 6:45 AM

I can't get ctrl + alt + del to work with NoMachine NX when connecting from Linux to a RDP desktop (Windows terminal).

[mango](#) on November 13, 2007 6:52 AM

System administrators frequently have reason to RDP from one computer to another, thereby having one RDP session within another one, both in full screen. If you are in the child session and move your mouse up to the auto hide title bar, the very first parent window's name appears, not the current window. It can appear very frustrating to try to close the current (child) window, since your only choice is to act on the parent window's title bar. The way to minimize/resize/close the window-within-a-window is to float your mouse up to the top of the screen so that the auto hidden title bar of the parent window appears. You'll notice that just barely on the bottom of that bar is the lip of the bar behind it. Float your mouse to hang on that lip (it can take a little finesse). In a moment the parent title disappears and you are left with the child window's title bar to act on.

You can also resize the parent window to gain access to the child window's title bar, but that's obnoxious & clunky.

Daniel G on November 21, 2007 6:33 AM

I have been using RDC for years with no problems until recently. I tie into my office computer and work from home a lot. Occasionally I have to reboot the office machine -- I use the cntrl-alt-end feature. Recently when I do this, the office machine locks and I have to coerce someone in the office to reboot it. Has anyone else experienced this issue or should I be looking at my office machine to see if something else is causing an issue?

FredB on December 2, 2007 7:12 AM

Thanks for the shortcuts, but I have a further problem in that I sometimes have to Remote Desktop to a client's Server, then Remote Desktop to another of their servers - and the shortcuts only work on the first server. Do you know of any way to get them working on the final server? At the moment I'm faced with one,

where the taskbar has disappeared - I'm not sure why or how to get it back!

Jackie M on December 7, 2007 1:24 AM

Is there anyway to get RDP to work with multiple monitors and video cards. I have a machine with 3 monitors and 2 cards, when we RDP to the machine it disables the single card and we have to reboot Windows when you physically log into windows to have it display again on the third monitor.

Ryan on December 27, 2007 11:48 AM

I'm still trying to get 32-bit color enabled. I'm using console mode so I hope that's not the limiting factor. I've got a dedicated server hosted in Texas, that I use limited color (for speed reasons) but I'd like all 4 of my machines on my LAN (gigabit) to be 32-bit and I cannot get any of them to work. XP Pro, XP MCE, or Server 2003.

Yes, all updates are applied and all suggestions mentioned have been tried - even did a clean install of XP Pro on a dev-box machine and it won't work either. Tried using a laptop running XP Pro (to see if my 'main' machine client was fubar'd)...same results.

Any ideas? Thx in advance!

Travis on December 27, 2007 3:33 PM

Download new version (6) of remote desktop client from Microsoft.

g-rega on January 21, 2008 7:38 AM

I remote desktop to one specific (new core2, dual-xeon) using my work domain login, all of the icons display at a 256 color depth. However applications, web-pages, menu bars display with a greater color depth (16 bit default). When I connect to the same computer using a local account, or a different computer using my domain account, the icons are fine. I have admin priv. on all systems.

Any thoughts?

Gary on February 5, 2008 12:29 PM

. Here's how you run a remote desktop session maximized to a particular monitor:

1. Start a windowed (non-fullscreen) remote desktop session
2. Drag the windowed session to the monitor you want
3. Close the remote desktop session

4. Set the properties for the connection to "full screen". It must be "full screen", not the actual resolution of your monitor (1280x1024, etc).
5. Start a remote desktop connection; it'll be full screen on the target monitor

Excellent, this worked great!

Tony on February 21, 2008 7:59 AM

Unfortunately the above described keyboard shortcuts like ALT+INSERT do not work in my RDP session.

What are potential root causes for this? Which settings should I verify?

P.S: However, CTRL+ALT+END does work on the RDP target desktop, but all other shortcuts do not work

Niere on February 26, 2008 5:40 AM

Re: No 32-bit / 24-bit true color

This is a pre-defined limitation within the Windows XP RDP server that can easily be lifted by adding/changing a registry value.

See [http://blogs.sun.com/ThinkThin/entry/24\\_bit\\_rdp\\_under\\_windows](http://blogs.sun.com/ThinkThin/entry/24_bit_rdp_under_windows)

And yes, it worked for me.

Sorry for being that late..

[Reiner Saddey](#) on March 28, 2008 1:44 PM

Thank you ! o thank you! i was suffering from an accidental window mode on my rdc. you helped cure it back to full screen. u r da man

Rich on April 7, 2008 1:51 PM

WOOT! You are #1 on Google results for a reason, thank you so much for improving my RDP experience!

Bob Vila on April 9, 2008 7:59 AM

I have a problem w/ remote desktop rebooting after disconnecting .... when I rdp into my work desktop and then close out of the RDP session the pc reboots itself .... is there a setting somewhere on the pc that controls

that behavior ... both pc's have all the latest MS security patches ...

thxs

Frank Maresco on April 25, 2008 5:51 AM

I would like to be able to use remote desktop to an XP PC without actually locking the target PC while I am connected, we have software that runs on the pc that we cant have it locked because of scripts we have running. How would I be able to do that?

Eugene on May 9, 2008 4:27 AM

I have noticed today that clipboard behavior with Excel and RDP is strange. I'm fairly certain this used to work before...

Basically, when I start an RDP session, it screws with my local clipboard, even after the RDP session is closed.

Open Excel on my local PC. Copy a formula and paste it somewhere else in the spreadsheet. Inexplicably, it pastes the VALUE instead of the formula.

Now open Excel on my remote PC which I am accessing via RDP. Paste in that spreadsheet, and I get the formula which I originally copied.

What's stranger is that I can close the RDP session, and still get the broken paste in my local Excel.

If I reboot, the problem goes away (until I do RDP again).

Any ideas?

Bill Donnelly on June 3, 2008 12:39 PM

RE: Menno on the blog censor,

I think the filter is catching g spot as vaguely sex related. Gotta love a naive regex. Do you have control over this Jeff?

Paul on July 3, 2008 8:18 PM

For some reason couldn't get the 'close the window from the monitor you want it to come back in' trick to work for me.

Found this from a gent on another forum:

```
mstsc /f /v:ServerName /w:1600 /h:1200
```

tried that from a command line window displayed on my 1680x1050 monitor, it worked like a charm, widescreen rd!

Ben on July 10, 2008 5:03 PM

Hiya - I've got a problem when rdp'ing to a couple of servers (2003 R2). If I disconnect, the sessions on the remote server stop running and when I log in again, nothing is running.

If I disconnect, then reconnect very quickly afterwards, I see the sessions.

Has anybody seen this?

Thanks

Jackie on July 16, 2008 7:47 AM

Thanks for the tip on the multiple monitors and getting the full screen rdp connection to open on my second monitor. This was bugging me for a few months.

Reagan on August 4, 2008 12:41 PM

on August 30, 2008 9:45 PM

But seriously, at the point where you're remoting from machine A into machine B, and then remoting from machine B to machine C, isn't it time to stop and ask yourself.. why?

\*\*\*\*\*

Sometimes it is just an accident. From my work computer I had session(s) open and did not get them disconnected. Later I VPN to the work computer, and there they still are.

Also, it is a way to bypass a firewall without resorting to a VPN, which may not be available.

With the original xp version the title bar would come up pinned, or not. With the current version, I have not found a way to bring it up pinned.

Kal

Kal on September 2, 2008 1:08 PM

Thank you for posting these. My RDP connection (WinXP-to-WinXP) for some reason refuses to send the "normal" key combination like Alt-Tab or Windows key, in any setting, "on remote computer" or "only in full screen", it's just broken. No help on it anywhere on the web. So instead I have trained myself to use the keystrokes from your page, and problem solved.

Bart Blacha on October 6, 2008 9:01 PM

I have 2 tablet pc's and I'm wondering if there is any way use them both at the same time with one tablet being the second display for the other? I'm thinking that I would get what I want if there were some way to have the RD client on one connect to a second display on the other.

There is a setting for the external display to either mirror or extend the desktop. If it's set to extend, could an RD client connect to the extension?

gary on October 27, 2008 7:44 PM

Jeff, RD -> Machine A -> Machine B -> Machine C is common for cases where Machine C resides in some isolated network and Machine B is the bridge between them.

Raindog on October 28, 2008 5:53 PM

Task manager can be launched with ctrl+shift+esc

I use it quite often, and it is fairly easy to explain to somebody remotely how to get to task manager.

Ultramon can have assigned keyboard shortcuts that can move windows from the one screen to the other

Just my keyboard tips of the day :)

Rihan Meij

Rihan Meij on October 30, 2008 7:54 AM

Thank you for the tip on how to get your fullscreen to match your monitor. I've run into that problem multiple times and this is the first fix I've seen for it.

[Joy Nicholson](#) on November 25, 2008 11:12 AM

To invoke task manager for nested terminal services sessions (two levels deep) use :

Ctrl+alt+shift+home

iceman on February 2, 2009 4:38 AM

thx for the dual screen tip...just needed that so i can play wow on main screen and remote desktop on the other screen...heheh

H.Jensen on February 5, 2009 11:34 AM

good solution

thanks

hatimali on February 11, 2009 2:54 AM

Quick question,

I try to use remote desktop to log in to my work computer from home but it just seems to slow. My question is this,

Which computer is it more important to have running in optimal performance?

I have 3GB of RAM on my work computer, and only have 512MB of RAM on my home computer.

Would it help if I upgraded my home computer to 3GB of RAM or not make much of a difference?

Thank you,

[Alex in San Diego](#) on May 29, 2009 10:45 AM

Thanks Jeff, yet another very useful post from you!

[Jim Manico](#) on June 3, 2009 12:24 PM

I have a memory question relating to remote desktop.

I run an apache server containing a Java app with VM args [-Xms256M -Xmx512M -XX:MaxPermSize=1024M] on my work machine, my work machine has 3.25Gb memory. It runs fine at work, but when i remote desktop from home it complains that it cannot create the Java virtual machine (presumably out of memory as it will

run with 512Mb). However it runs fine if I start it at work and then remote desktop in with it still running, but once i stop it, it will not start again.

It should have enough contiguous memory in the latter scenario as nothing occurred between the shutdown of the server and my attempt to restart it.

How exactly does memory allocation work in a remote desktop environment?

Eric on June 7, 2009 2:28 PM

In windows remote desktop user are logged of after a certain time out if they have disconnected. Is it possible disconnect only specified user with this timeout ?

What I mean is that I want to be user specific.

[mohd ahmed](#) on June 23, 2009 6:18 AM

I have been using ALT+TAB to flip between applications on a remote computer through Remote Desktop for years. But with my new Dell laptop ALT+TAB no longer works in full screen mode, even after changing the setting on the Display tab to "Full Screen." It's driving me nuts. I hate having to use ALT+PAGEUP and ALT+PAGEDOWN. Any tips?

Kris on July 3, 2009 9:52 AM

Content (c) 2009 [Jeff Atwood](#). Logo image used with permission of the author. (c) 1993 Steven C. McConnell. All Rights Reserved.