

Operate Anywhere

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As the pace of innovation increases, both businesses and individuals are benefiting from access to powerful tools they can use to improve the way they work and live. As companies compete to carve out a place in the market, many of these tools are provided free of charge.

One big trend is the ability to work anywhere you have a connection to the Internet. To do that you will need to be able to control your computer remotely and be able to manage your documents and files online. Many people already keep their email in one location on the Internet. The ability to manage files and control your computers is an extension of that concept of having everything available from anywhere.

Remote Desktop

Most people are familiar by now with applications such as GoToMyPC (www.gotomypc.com), which allow you to connect to your home or office computer remotely over the internet via a web browser. (Microsoft Windows even has a remote desktop application built into it, although it may be more difficult to set up for most computer users.) If you have ever left an important document at your home or office, you know how important it can be to have access to all your files, all the time. I use and recommend a product called LogMeIn (www.logmein.com), which is nearly identical to GoToMyPC in that once you set it up, you can connect to your computer with any browser. It also has the added bonus that it is free for basic service. If you would like to control more than one computer with the same account (so that you can connect to your home AND office computers), you can upgrade for a nominal fee. One advantage of these browser-based applications over



traditional remote desktop tools such as Windows Remote Desktop and VNC is that they are very easy to install and work well behind your network firewall. Many other products require more preparation than most people feel comfortable with. I've used LogMeIn in many different environments from large corporations to hotels and airports, and I've never had any problems connecting even through the most aggressive firewalls. As for security concerns when connecting to your computers, LogMeIn uses powerful 128-bit end to end encryption to keep your remote connection secure as you use wireless hot spots and outside networks.

Online storage

To operate anywhere you have to make all your important documents available from anywhere. Since the Internet is basically one vast repository of data, the idea of storing documents online is not a new one. Files often need to be shared among different users, safely archived, and easily retrievable. While this is not a new concept, the technology has

matured due to cheap storage hardware and better systems for managing files. Several new companies have appeared to bring online storage to the masses. As with many new services on the web, the basics are available for free. One popular service called XDrive (www.xdrive.com) provides 5GB of storage at no charge. To store files online, you simply drag and drop your files into the XDrive window and they are uploaded to XDrive. XDrive also provides tools to perform automated backups of import files and folders so you never have to worry about losing anything if something happens to your computer.

Due to network effects between various technologies, the pace of innovation will keep churning out new and better tools at a faster and faster rate. It is not difficult to imagine a world where you are able to access everything you need from any corner of the globe due to ubiquitous computing and communications resources. Freeing yourself from the office is just the first of many benefits to come.