

The Bulletin

Technical Tips

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Frequently Asked Questions and Answers for Working Remotely

Q: What are my options for working remotely?

A1: You have four primary options

Carry your files with you on your laptop – We only recommend this when all other options are unavailable because of the likelihood you will lose files or have version problems. **Description:** Copy your key files to your laptop before you travel. When you return copy updated files back to the server. **Advantages:**

- No internet connection required
- No problems printing to your local printer
- Fastest experience

Limitations:

- Files are not backed up. If the laptop is lost so are the files. Alternatively you need a backup solution for the laptop.
- Only you can work on the files because they are not stored in shared space on a server
- There can be multiple versions of files as you work on the copy on your laptop and colleagues work on the copies left on the server
- You can only work on the files you have with you. If you forgot to copy something before you left you have a problem.

Work on your laptop using a VPN connection **Description:** Install all needed software on your laptop, but keep data on the server. Use “VPN” technology to connect back to the office so that you can access files and e-mail on the company servers while traveling. You click on a desktop icon to work remotely. **Advantages:**

- You have access to all company files and e-mail
- There is only one copy of the file, the one on the server. There is no wondering who has the most recent revision.
- You can easily print to your local printer

Once you open a file, working on it is fast

Limitations:

When you travel you may sometimes find that the internet connection provided by the hotel , airport, etc. does not support your VPN connection.

Opening a large file over the VPN can be slow

You need to carry your own laptop configured with your VPN settings and your software, you can't just sit down at any old computer and work

Certain database programs e.g. Quickbooks or ACT! simply don't work over a VPN

The quality of your experience is limited by the speed of your internet connection. We don't recommend using a VPN over dial-up connections.

Use a Terminal Services connection **Description:** Allows you to remotely control a virtual desktop in the office ala PCAnywhere or Timbuktu.

However, special software allows many people to have their own virtual desktop at the same time using only one computer, a "terminal server" in the office. **Advantages:**

You don't need to have your own specially set up computer. Terminal Services works from almost any Windows computer with an internet connection. No prior setup is required. You click a web link to work remotely.

You have access to all company programs, e-mail and files

Works even for very large files and for database type programs like ACT and Quickbooks

Limitations:

Not a good solution for remote work involving image manipulation i.e. if you are working with picture files like JPEGs or GIFs, using programs like Autocad or editing PowerPoints that contain a lot of embedded graphics or pictures

Some internet cafes, Kinko's and customer locations will lock security down on their workstations so tightly that Terminal Services does not work

Sometimes remote printing will not work without help from an IT support

person.

The quality of your experience is limited by the speed of your internet connection. We don't recommend DSL connections slower than 384 Kbps.

Use Outlook Web Access **Description:** Allows you to access Outlook functionality such as email, calendar and contacts. **Advantages:**

You don't need to have your own specially set up computer. This works from almost any Windows computer with an internet connection. No prior setup is required. You click a web link to work remotely.

You can easily print to your local printer

Limitations:

You only have access to generic Outlook functionality. Any personalized settings such as signatures don't appear.

You don't have access to company files or programs

You can't print to remote printers

The quality of your experience is limited by the speed of your internet connection. We don't recommend DSL connections slower than 384 Kbps.

A2: For information on remote access via handhelds, [please visit our handheld buying guide](#).

Please call 866.928.8746 or email support@xantrion.com if:

you need a VPN icon, Terminal Services web link or Outlook Web Access link
you would like VPN, Terminal Services, Outlook Web Access or Handheld
access set up for your company

this article doesn't provide the answers you require

===== If you have questions or concerns about your particular situation, please e-mail me at tpsnyder@xantrion.com. I will use your input to direct future columns. =====