Systems Manager Remote Desktop

One useful feature of Systems Manager is the ability to quickly establish a remote desktop session to troubleshoot end-user issues without having to go on-site.

Remote Desktop allows you to view and control the desktop of any managed client running Windows or macOS with the agent installed.

Clients are listed in the client device table showing:

- Status: Online or Offline
- Computer name
- Logged-in user

Devices that are online will show a green icon. Devices that are not reporting to the cloud will not be displayed on the list.

Use the Search bar the top of the screen to quickly sort through the list of computers shown.

If you have “Auto-start remote desktop on selection”, you can simply click the computer name to launch the Remote Desktop feature. If this is not selected, it will give you the option to start your own VNC session.

Remote Desktop Security

The live tool version of the Remote Desktop tool uses Websockets over HTTPS to the Dashboard backend. The traffic from the backend to the device uses a second SSL tunnel alongside the main SSL tunnel used for regular agent-backend communication. On the client itself, there is a connection between the VNC server and the tunnel (bound to localhost and therefore only accessible on the local computer) that is using plain VNC, which is unencrypted except for the initial password handshake.

Using Remote Desktop

By default, remote desktop is disabled on Dashboard. To prompt the device for a confirmation prior to taking remote control or enable silent remote desktop, navigate to Configure > General > Feature restrictions, and select the desired option for ‘Disabled features’. Note that devices capable of remote desktop need to be enrolled in your network before this setting appears.

Navigate to Systems manager > Monitor > Remote desktop, or select the client from the Monitor > Devices page and select ‘Remote desktop’ from the live tools section.

Administrators can use a locally installed VNC client in order to gain additional remote functionality. These locally installed VNC clients can be remotely connected to the client desktop once the session has been established from the cloud. You’ll need to point your client to the provided URL and enter the password shown.

Warning: remote desktop connections are sensitive to network conditions - if connections establish and disconnect randomly, run a throughput test and ensure enough bandwidth is available, especially if using a wireless network.
Issuing Ctrl-Alt-Del

Remote administrators may need to remotely issue a Ctrl-Alt-Del command over a remote desktop connection. The following instructions detail how to issue a Ctrl-Alt-Del command over a Systems Manager remote desktop session:

2. Select the check box "Launch in External Window"
3. Click the Name of the remote desktop you wish to launch.
4. This will launch the Java VNC pop-up.
5. Click the button "Send Ctrl-Alt-Del" at the top of the Java VNC pop-up.