

USING WINDOWS REMOTE DESKTOP CONNECTION

Remote Desktop Connection is a Windows feature which allows you to connect to a remote desktop across a local network or the internet. While not so robust as other remote access applications, Remote Desktop Connection is easy to use, comes bundled with most versions of Windows and is natively supported by Windows Server.

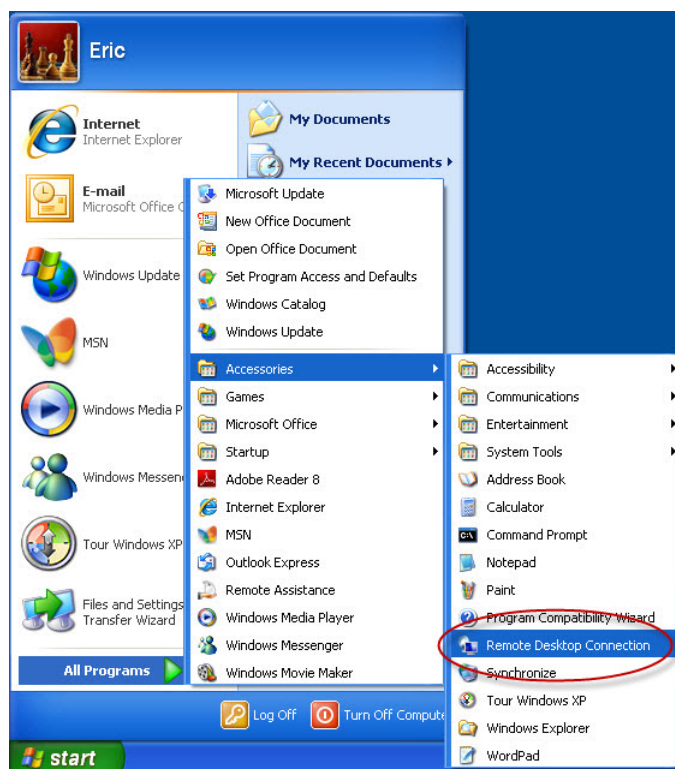
The purpose of this document is to show end users how to set up and configure a basic connection between their local computer and a remote desktop server in a Windows XP environment. It is far from an exhaustive technical reference and some advanced topics are specifically avoided for the sake of simplicity and usability.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

- Check with your manager and IT department to confirm that you have the permissions required to log on to the remote server.
- Ask your IT department if there are any special steps which you need to secure the computer which you'll use to log on to the remote server (which is presumably your home computer or laptop). It is likely that you will be required to show that you have up-to-date anti-virus software installed on your home PC, and that your system has received all of the latest security and software patches from Windows Update.
- Make sure that the Remote Desktop Connection program is installed on your computer: it comes bundled with Windows XP, Windows Vista and Windows 7 but if you use another version of Windows then you can download the client software from Microsoft's website [here](#).

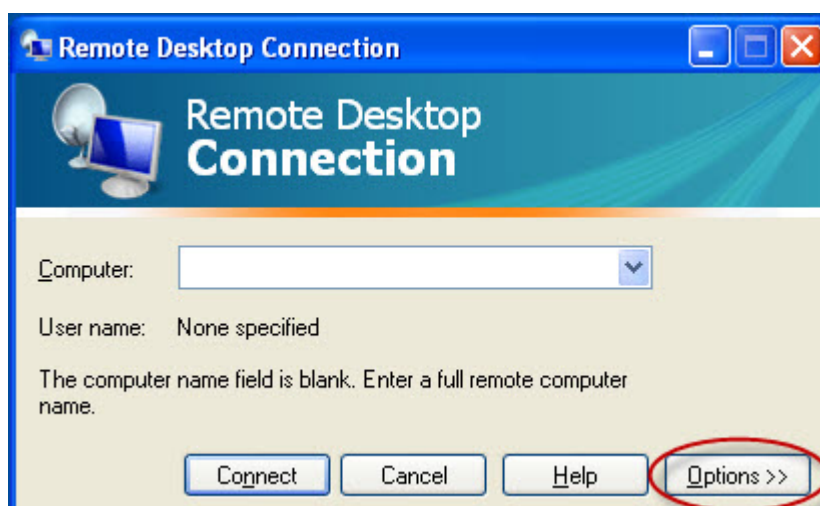
STEP 1

On the Windows Start Menu, select Programs > Accessories > Remote Desktop Connection.



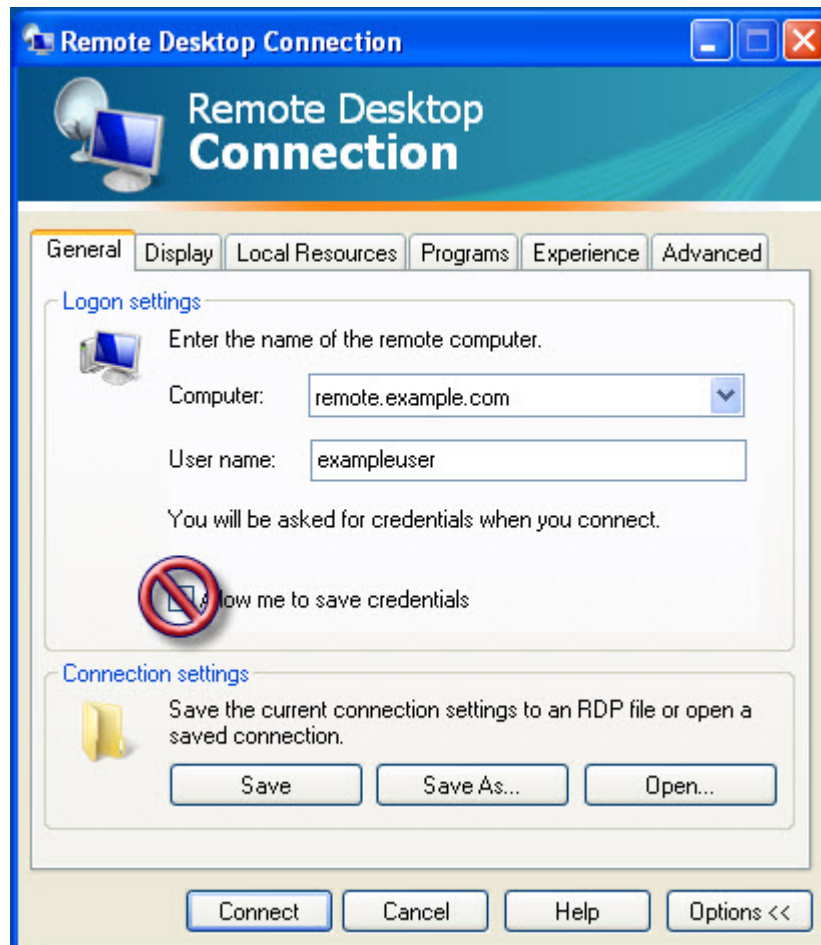
If you don't see the Remote Desktop Connection item in this location then refer to the above note about downloading the software from Microsoft's website.

The first thing you should do after you open the program is to click the "Options" button in the lower right-hand corner of the application window.



STEP 2

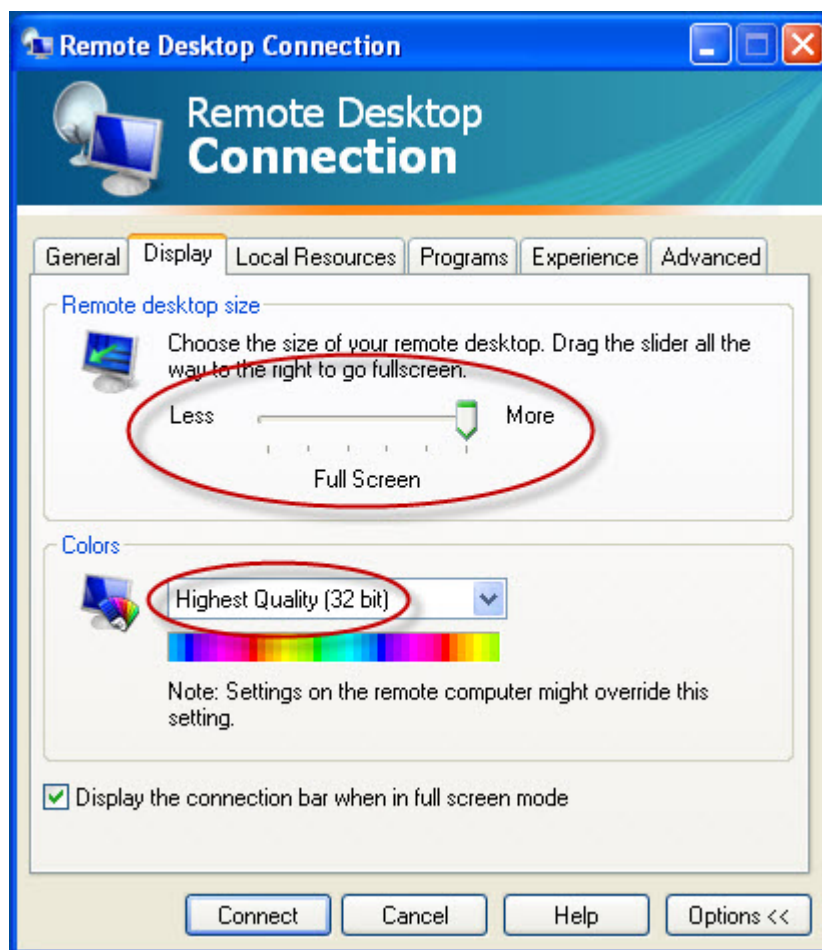
In the “Computer” and “User names” fields you should enter the remote server address and user name provided to you by your system administrator.



You should leave the “Allow me to save credentials” box unchecked. If the box is checked then you will be given the option to save your password when you connect to the remote server. While this feature is convenient it is a potential security risk to the remote server and the private network to which it is connected. Different organizations will have different policies regarding this topic but most system administrators would be reluctant to expose their internal network to such a risk.

STEP 3

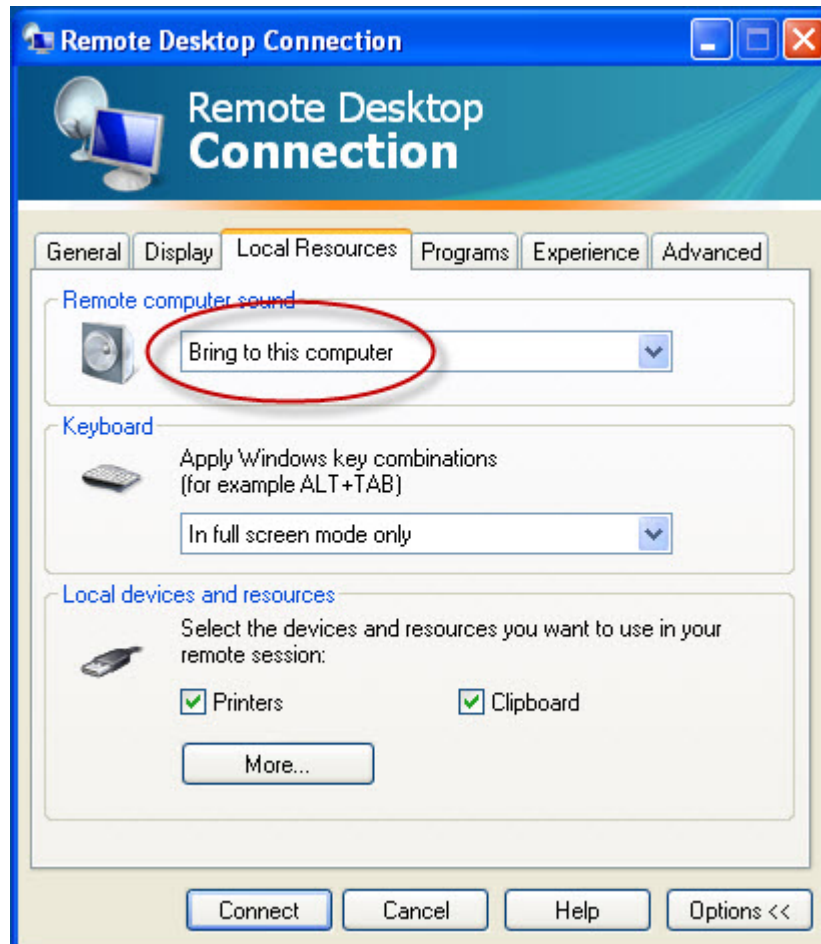
Click the “Display” tab to adjust how the remote desktop will appear on your home computer.



These settings can be adjusted to accommodate your hardware, connection speed and usage requirements. Full Screen mode is the best choice for most users as it allows the most space with which to work. Some users would rather the remote desktop appear as a smaller window on their home computer so they can easily access their local system, and those on a slow internet connection might see speed improvements by selecting a smaller screen resolution. The same is true of the color quality option, but keep in mind that any color quality setting less than 24 bits is going to create an unacceptably rough display.

STEP 4

Click the “Local Resources” tab to adjust how certain features and hardware might be shared between the remote server and your local computer.



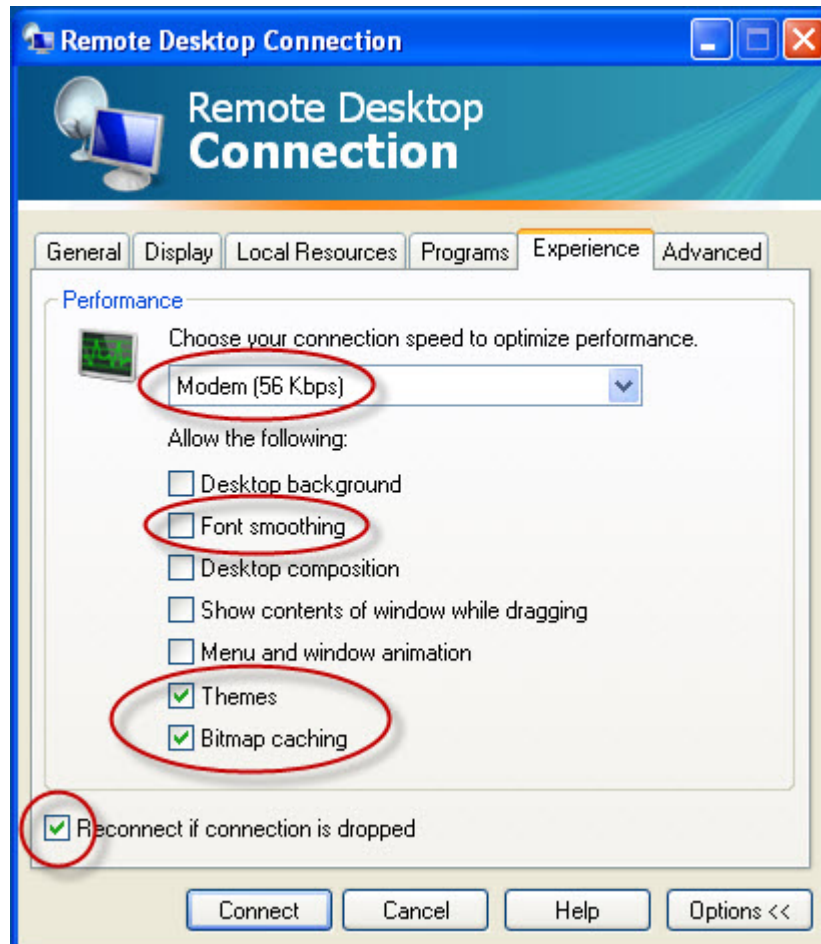
You might choose to disable sound to improve connection speed, but in most usage scenarios it is best left enabled so you can hear alerts and other sounds during your remote desktop session.

It is recommended that you keep the default keyboard settings to preserve important functionality while you use the remote desktop in full screen mode. Access to your local printer and clipboard should also remain enabled for the sake of functionality. Other options (accessed by clicking the “More” button) can be adjusted for specific usage scenarios which are beyond the scope of this document’s purpose.

Likewise, this document doesn’t cover the options available under the “Programs” tab: these options apply to advanced usage scenarios and should only be adjusted by very knowledgeable users or IT staff who seek to provide very specific functionality to the remote desktop environment.

STEP 5

Click the “Experience” tab to adjust visual effects which will affect the appearance of your remote desktop and the speed of your connection.



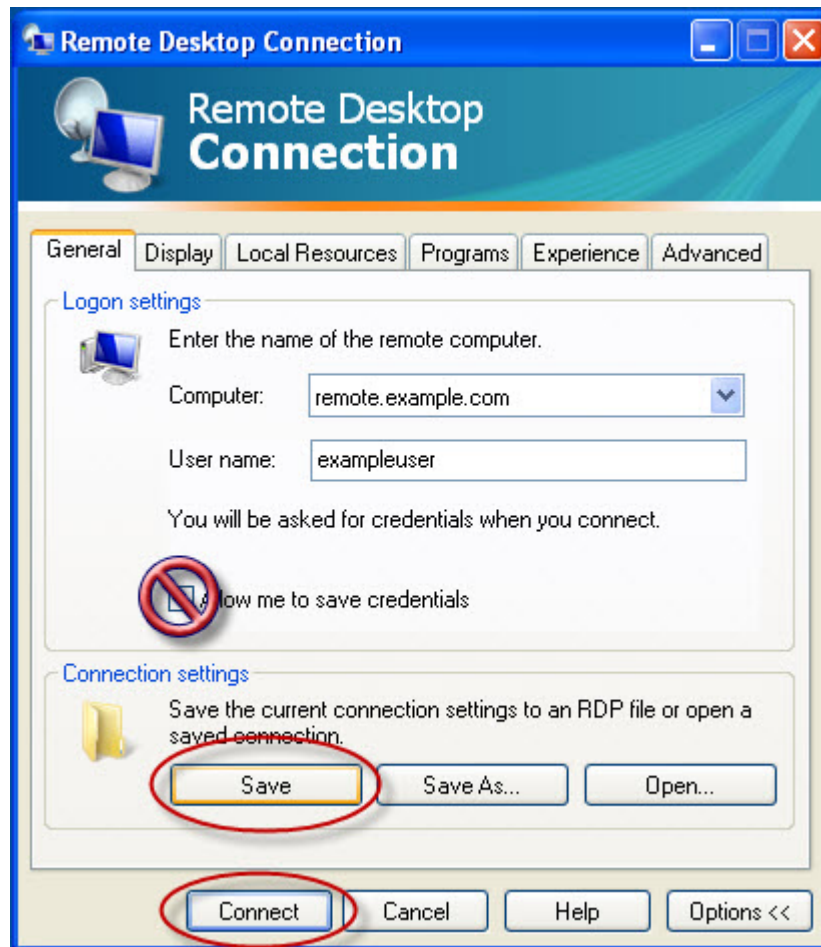
Select the “Modem” settings from the circled drop-down menu to provide basic visual functionality while improving connection speed and reducing the effect of your session on the remote server. This is particularly important if your remote desktop server experiences a lot of traffic from multiple remote desktop users. Users who have a hard time reading text during their remote sessions should check the “Font smoothing” option. Users with especially slow connections should disable the “Themes” option. It is recommended that “Bitmap caching” always be left enabled to preserve basic display integrity.

Make sure that the option to “Reconnect if connection is dropped” is enabled.

In keeping with its purpose this document doesn’t cover the options found under the “Advanced” tab.

STEP 6

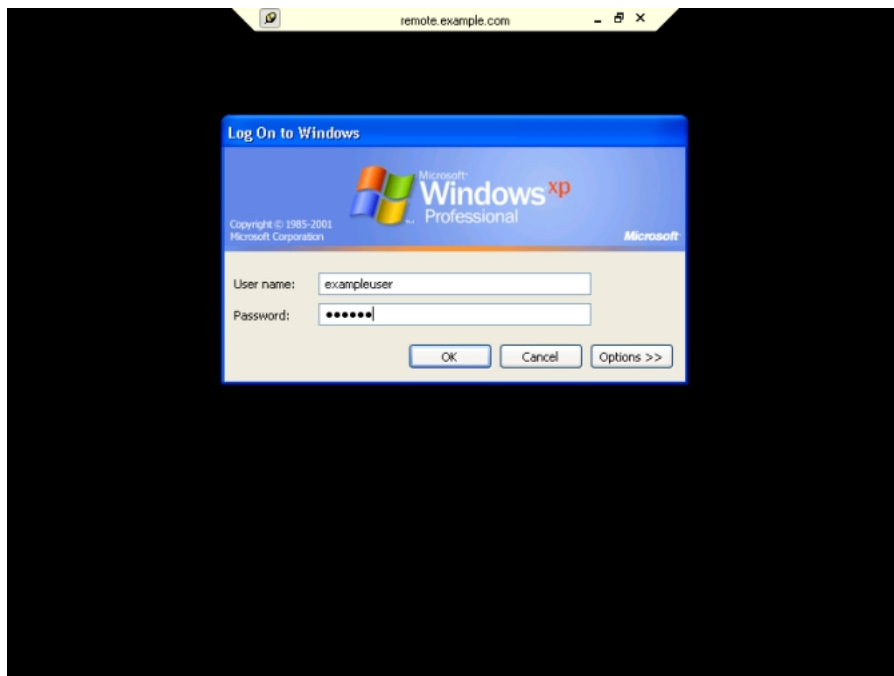
Return to the “General” tab and click “Save” to preserve your settings. Users who connect to multiple remote servers, or who use different collections of settings on the same server, should use the “Save As” function instead, but if you only connect to one remote server then simply click “Save.”



Once you've saved your settings you can click the “Connect” button to begin your remote desktop session.

STEP 7

When you connect to the remote desktop server you will be prompted to enter your password which, like your user name, will be provided to you by your IT department.



Once you have successfully logged in you will be ready to begin your remote desktop session.

