

Remote desktop to a Windows XP PC from Windows Vista

By Mark W. Kaelin

[Microsoft Windows Vista](#) adds several layers of system security above and beyond what was used in Windows XP. In general, that is a good thing. However, those added layers of security sometimes interfere with an end user's experience. The [Remote Desktop Application](#) is one example. Completing a remote desktop connection to a PC running [Windows XP](#) from another PC running Vista can be troublesome if some care is not taken during configuration.

This quirky connection, running desktop remote on a Vista PC at home while connecting to a Windows XP machine at the office, is becoming more common as home users purchase new PCs. Consumer adoption is taking place much faster than corporate network administrators are willing to roll out [Vista in the enterprise](#). *This blog post is also available in PDF form in a TechRepublic download.*

Windows XP

For the purposes of this exercise, we are going to assume that you have already created a valid, stable connection to the remote network via VPN or other secure connection. The problem to be solved is completing the remote desktop connection. We are also assuming the remote Windows XP PC is configured to accept a remote desktop connection as shown in the Remote tab under System Properties (**Figure A**).

Figure A

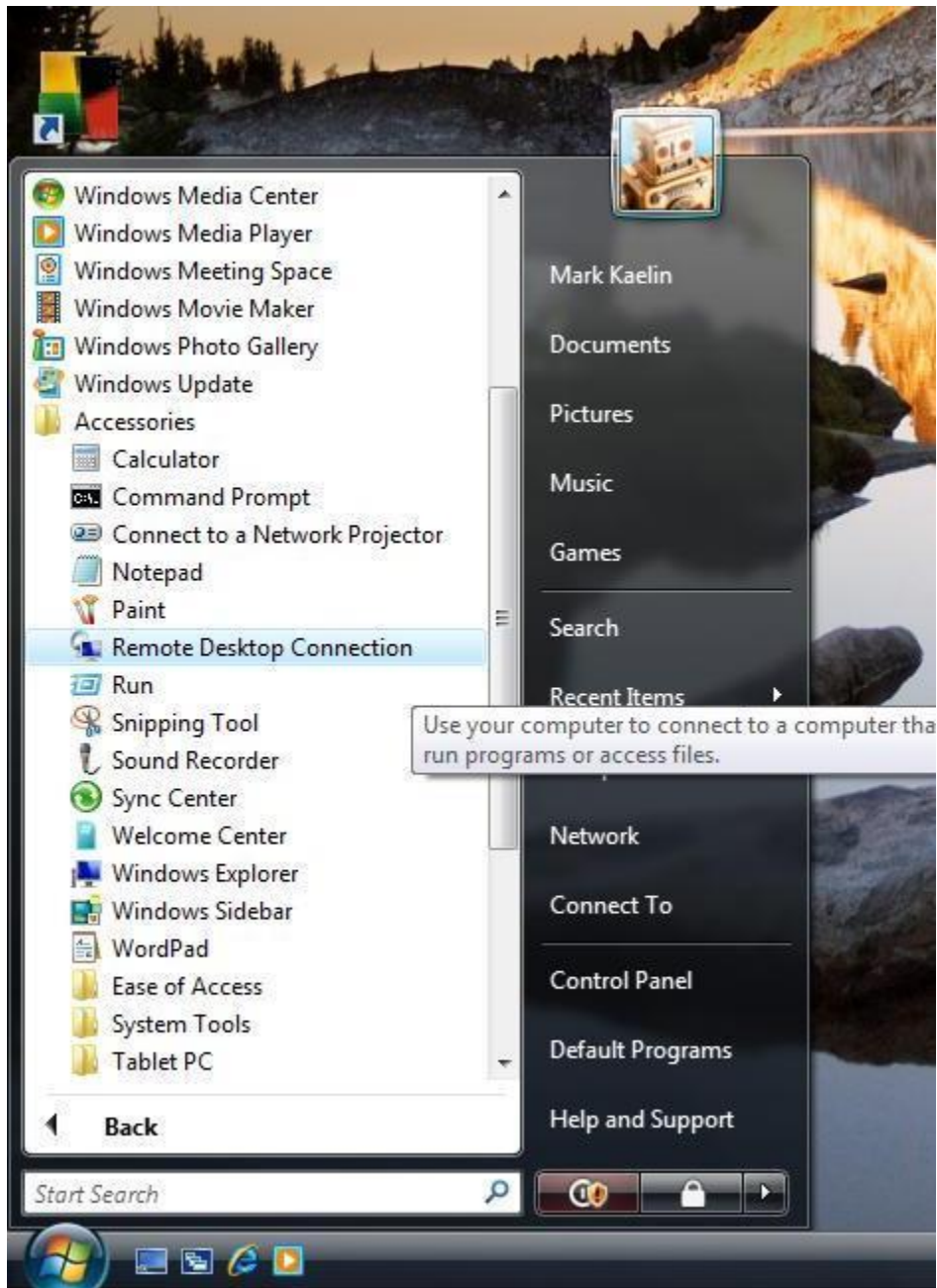


Remote tab (System Properties)

Windows Vista

After establishing your VPN connection (at least that is how it works here at CNET) you should start the Vista Remote Desktop Connection application. For some reason, the shortcut in Vista is buried deep in the menus. (Figure B). My test machine is using Windows Vista Ultimate.

Figure B



Start Remote Desktop Connection

The Vista version of the remote connection software is very similar to the application found in Windows XP. The key to getting the connection to work is you need to type in the full name of the remote PC. In my case at CNET, that means adding the domain information to the end of my workstation PC name. It should look something like this:

```
yourworkstationname.domain.server
```

Unlike Windows XP, the Vista remote connection software will ask for credentials when you click the connect button, which brings you to the dialog shown in Figure C.

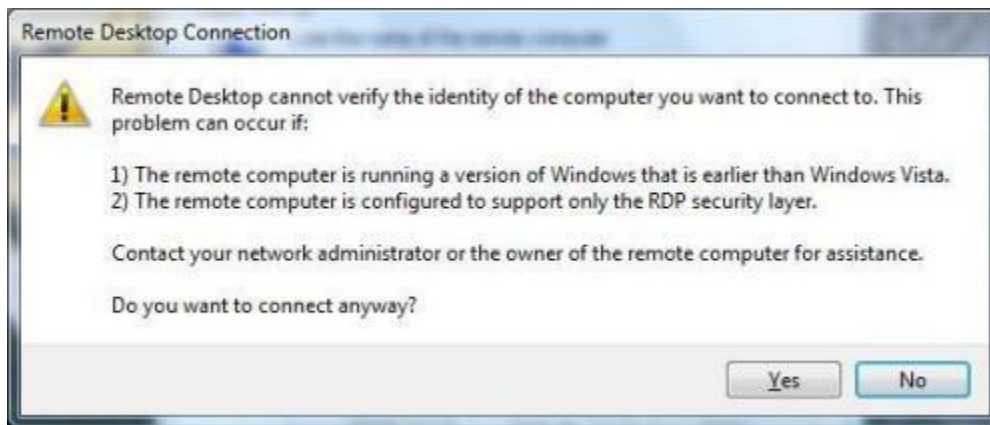
Figure C



Enter your credentials

After clicking OK, you will reach the warning screen shown in **Figure D**, which can be quite intimidating for users the first time they see it. Vista is informing you that some of its security features will be lost because we are attempting to remote connect to a Windows XP machine. There is nothing you can really do about this except say *Yes, I want to connect anyway.*

Figure D



Yes, I want to connect anyway

From here you should be looking at the familiar desktop of your remote PC.

Caveats

If your Network Administrators are like ours here at TechRepublic/CNET, this Vista to XP remote connection is not a supported configuration yet. That means that you could be on your own when it comes to troubleshooting. But that doesn't mean we can't help each other out. I have only been using this setup a few days and I have yet to run into problems, but I am going to assume that some of you have. Share any problems you may be having with the remote connection scenario and tell us what steps you took to troubleshoot it. This remote configuration is only going to increase in frequency; we should at least try to overcome whatever gremlins may lurk in the wings.

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