Newsletter - November 2017
Products of the Month, Issue #2: Google Remote Desktop

Ever had to do your own Tech Support for friends or family? Wish you could log in and see what they see on their computer screens when you get the call for help? Or how about being able to remote into your home PC to access files or check on... whatever you want to check on. This month, we devote an entire page to Google Remote Desktop, a computer remote access program from, well, Google.

Google Remote Desktop

First off, I am going to refer to it as GRD, just because I don't want to type out the full name. GRD operates in two modes: Ad-Hoc (single use, attended) and Permanent (ongoing, un-attended). To use GRD, you will need 1) A gmail user ID/Password, and 2) use Google Chrome Browser to obtain and install GRD from the Chrome Web Store on each computer you want to **connect to**, and also the computer you will use to **connect from**.

Once you have installed GRD, it is in Ad-Hoc mode by default. In Ad-Hoc mode, both computers need to be attended to initiate a session. So, for example, if you want to help Aunt Millie or Uncle Fred, you'll have to do the installation yourself, or coach them over the phone to get it installed.

To initiate an Ad-Hoc session, start GRD on your computer and tell Aunt Millie (she's pretty good with computers) to start GRD on hers. Once started, have Aunt Millie click the green **[SHARE]** button, and a single-use access code will appear. On your end, click the **[ACCESS]** button, then have Aunt Millie tell you the code. Enter the code in your GRD session, and voila! Aunt Millie's computer screen will appear. You can now see what she sees, and use the mouse and keyboard as-if you were there.

If you want to take the next step and make it permanent, things will get a bit more complicated. Let's say you want to help Uncle Fred, but he's not very computer-savvy. He won't like starting an Ad-Hoc session every time, so you need to set up GRD with your gmail address and password, then in GRD, click the **[Enable Remote Connections]** button. You will need to set an access code (password) as a safety measure, record what you select, you'll need it later. You're all set to help Uncle Fred next time he calls…

The next time turns out to be the next day… Uncle Fred messed something up and needs help. You open up GRD on your computer, and there in the list of computers is Uncle Fred's computer. You click on it, enter the code, and voila! You can control Uncle Fred's computer without his being present. Marvelous!

There are other remote access programs out there that do more (and cost more), but you can't beat GRD: it's free. For casual users and occasional use, it does the job with a minimum of fuss.

-John Becker