

Better Than the Universal Remote

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It's been two days now since I've had the luxury of controlling my DVD player from my comfortable chair. Having two small boys around the house sure makes life interesting, and I'm assuming they're responsible. It gets even more interesting when I find the DVD remote on a bookshelf where *I* had left it. I, along with millions of others, am now quite accustomed to the simple luxury of a remote controller. To make life even better, the "Universal Remote" has been created to combine all of our different controllers together (besides giving spouses one more thing to fight over). So now when one of my boys walks off with the Universal Remote, I can't control anything from my comfortable chair.

Though a remote controller seems to imply a message of laziness, it also brings many benefits. I would like to share a remote controller that I have discovered that is even better than a Universal Remote. This remote allows me to complete much of my school duties at home while playing with my two boys. I now have access to and can control a computer at the school using any computer with an internet connection. Not only has this service been hugely beneficial but it hasn't cost me anything.

LogMeIn Incorporated has provided a way to gain remote access to a computer from anywhere. And yes, this service even works for a Mac. After downloading and installing this free software onto a computer you would like to control, you will have the ability to log in "securely" and control it. Additional upgraded features such as remote sound, drag & drop files between connected PCs, remote printing, file synchronization, and more come with the LogMeIn Pro version which is \$69.95 per year.

I use the LogMeIn Free version and I have been able to connect with each of the classroom computers as well as the computer lab. With this free connection I can control each computer from home, run regular updates, and service the technology maintenance needs of my school. I've been able to install software, fix printing problems, and run diagnostic checks all from the comfort of my home. This sure beats running around from classroom to classroom as I download software updates, click "accept" to run installations, and then reboot each system for the updates to take effect. I simply have a web browser open on my HP notebook at home for each of the separate computers that I'm running updates on, and while I wait for these installations and downloads, I can be watching a movie with my wife or playing with my boys. I am also better able to assist staff members from home. If they have trouble creating a spreadsheet, for example, they just give me a call and I can simply log in to the computer at school they are working on and provide them with the support they need. I no longer have to run back to the school to assist them.

Remote controlling computers at school has opened countless benefits for me as a classroom teacher as well. I create handouts, worksheets, and tests on the computer which means most of my photocopy work each day is something I print from the computer. Our school has the photocopy machine connected through the network which gives me the benefits and features of the photocopier at home. All I do is simply log in to

my classroom computer and send my tests and worksheets to the photocopier. If I need 20 copies of a test double sided and stapled, I can now do all this from home in the morning. It will all be sitting on the photocopy tray ready for me to pick up once I arrive at school.

There are also times when I have needed a file at school that I know is on my computer at home. This doesn't pose any problems for me now. All I do is simply log in to my home computer when I'm at school. Since I haven't signed up for the Pro version of LogMeIn, I'll just email the file to myself. This also works in the reverse when I'm at home and I need to have access to a file I know is on my classroom computer. These remote control options are wonderful and I have truly enjoyed the teaching benefits LogMeIn has created.

For more information on how to get started, just visit the LogMeIn website at www.logmein.com.