# Remote access to the observatory

Remote Desktop Protocol (RDP)

In this section we explain how to access our observatory remotely using the Remote Desktop Protocol (RDP).

Linux:

For Linux users we recommend **Remmina**, which to our knowledge is available in the repositories of all major distributions. Nevertheless, the following configuration is in principle transferable to any other RDP client.
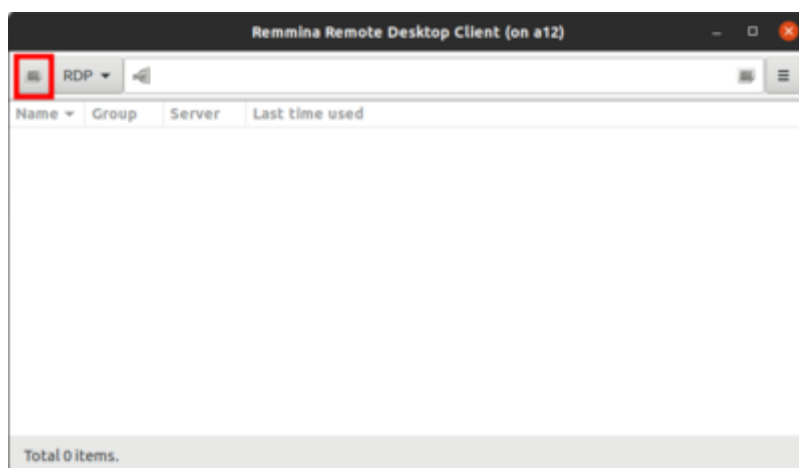

After **Remmina** has been started, the first thing to do is to create a new profile by clicking on the button in the upper left corner (see image above). The fields Name, Group, Server, Username and Password must be set (see image below). Name is the name of the profile, which can be chosen freely. Group must be set to *WORKGROUP*. Server is the IP of the Observatory Management System (OMS). The Username for daily use is *BP34_User*. Password is self-explanatory. Server and Password will be provided on request.
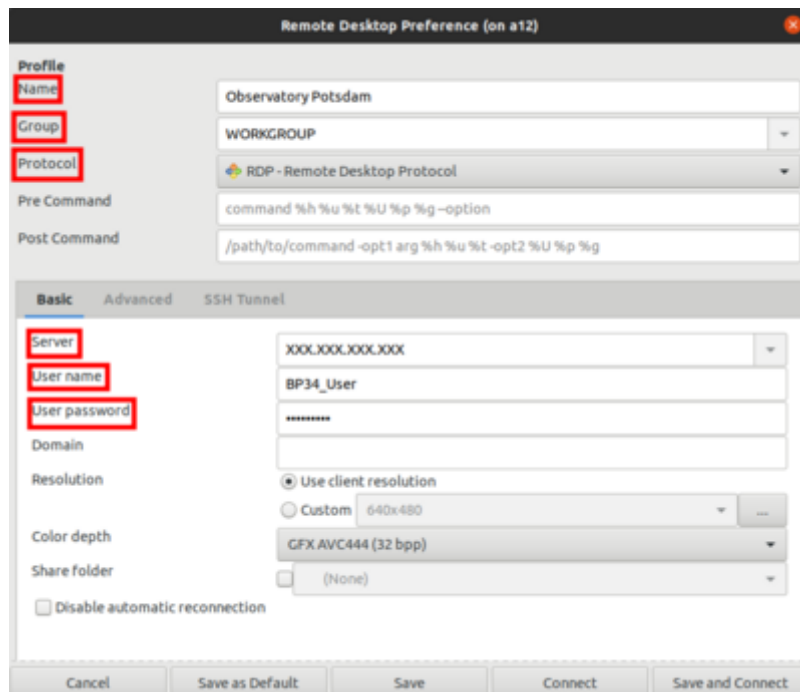
If access is not via the local IP address space, an SSH tunnel must be established. To do this, you should select the SSH Tunnel tab in the profile configuration-window (see image below). After that you have to select Custom, set the server name to one of the computers of the Astro Cluster, e.g. *prakt.astro.physk.uni-potsdam.de* and use a valid user name like *castor*. If authentication is not done by public key cryptography, the Password must be set as well.
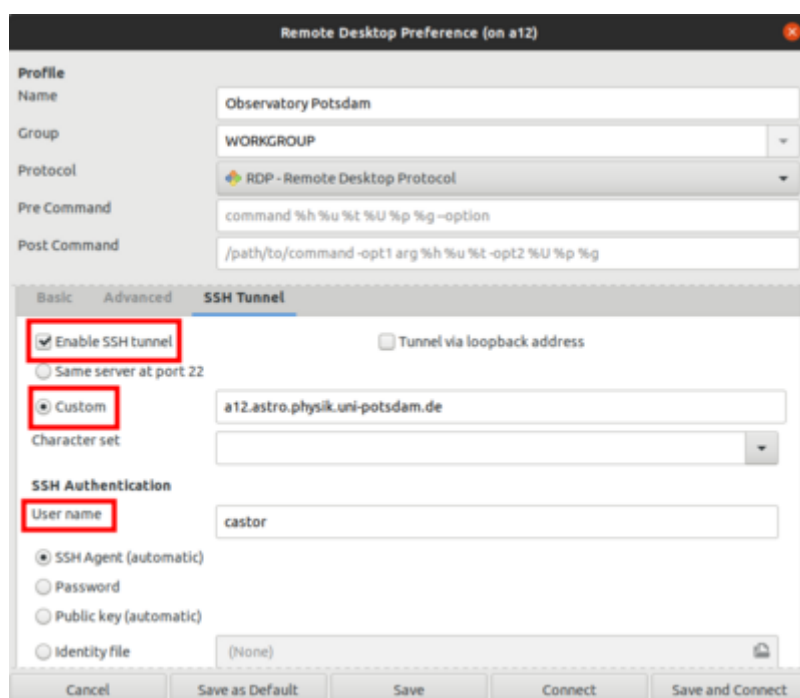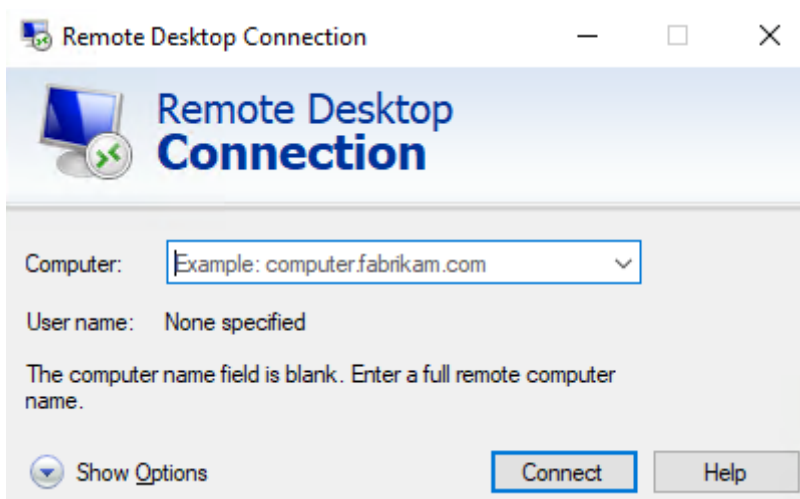

After saving the configuration, the connection can be established at any time by double-clicking on the corresponding entry.
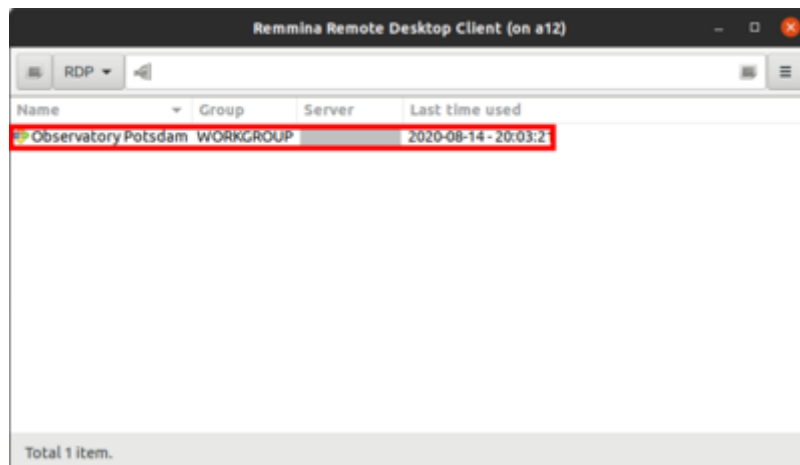
Windows:

RDP client from Microsoft

For Windows, **Remote Desktop Connection** from Microsoft can be used. After **Remote Desktop Connection** has been started, a new profile should be created. To do this, first click on "Show options".


Afterwards the IP or the URL of the Observatory Management System (OMS) can be entered under `Computer`. Furthermore the `User` name must be set, which is composed of the computer name and the account name as follows:

```
DESKTOP-6QQIP9S\BP34_User
```

The name of the computer and account is *DESKTOP-6QQIP9S* and *BP34_User*, respectively.

The IP and password will be provided upon request.

If the credentials are to be saved, the option `Allow me to save credentials` must be activated.
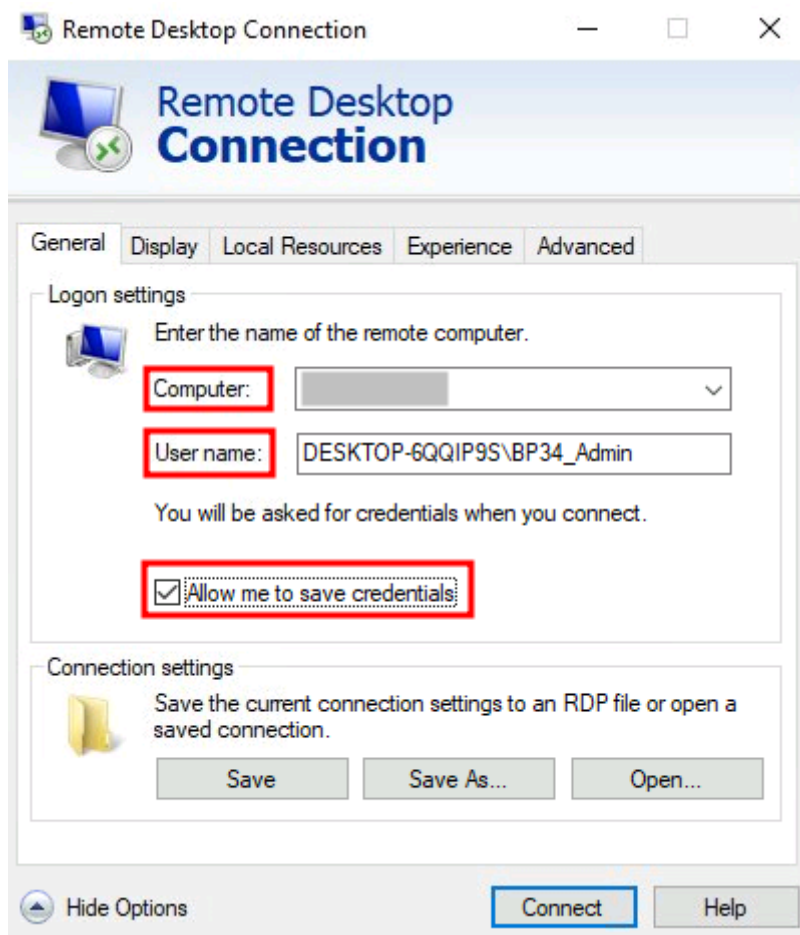
The connection can be established by clicking on `Connect`. You will then be asked for the credentials. If entered correctly, the connection will be established.

However, these settings only work if access is not from the local IP address space. For external access, a tunnel to the university network must first be established. Unfortunately, **Remote Desktop Connection** does not directly support an SSH tunnel like **Remina**. However, on modern systems this can be easily solved using **PowerShell**.

PowerShell + RDP Client

Current installations of Windows 10 and 11 have a built-in SSH client. We can use this to create an SSH tunnel to the network and then connect to the OMS via the RDP client.

1. Log in to the University VPN
2. Open **PowerShell** from the Windows Start menu
3. Type or copy the following command into **PowerShell** and use it to create the SSH tunnel:

```
ssh -N -L 3399:IP_of_the_OMS.39:3389 pollux@columba.astro.physik.uni-potsdam.de
```

4. Launch the RDP client from the Windows Start menu and enter *BP34_Admin* as the `User name` and *localhost:3399* as the `Computer`.
5. Press Enter and enter the password
6. Done :)

Alternative to the RDP client from Microsoft - MobaXterm

Alternatively, MobaXterm can be used under Windows. Via MobaXterm, in contrast to the RDP client of Windows, an SSH tunnel can be established, which is called "SSH jump host". First of all a new session has to be established and for this the **RDP** protocol has to be selected. Click **RDP** and make the basic settings. As **Remote host** the IP of the OMS has to be specified, which will be disclosed on request. As **username** you have to enter BP34_User again.
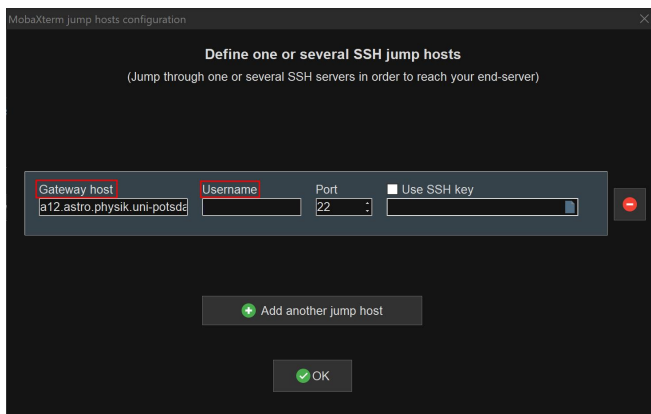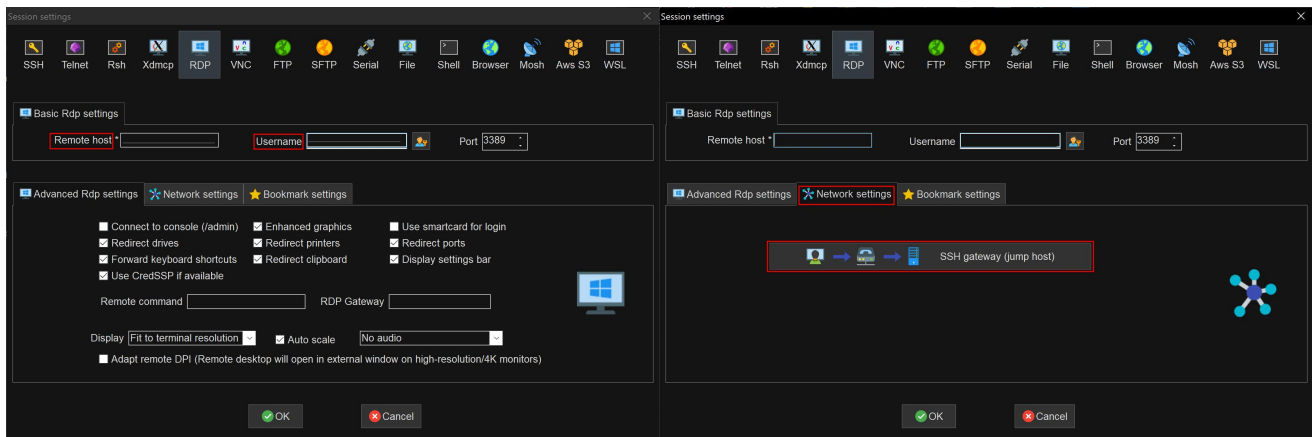

In the second step, the tab **Network settings** must be selected. There you have to click on **SSH gateway (jump host)** to specify the SSH host. Don't be surprised there are no changes shown in this window, after the next step.

In the window that opens, the **Gateway host** must be specified. In the example shown here we used `columba` but basically any host from the Astro domain can be used for this. The **Username** has to be chosen accordingly.

By clicking **OK** the settings of the corresponding windows can be confirmed. Afterwards the connection can be established.

TeamViewer

TeamViewer is a proprietary software for remote access to computers, online meetings and conferences, which can be used free of charge for non-commercial purposes. It is characterized by an extremely simple handling. To log in to a remote computer, only the ID of the remote computer and the associated password are required. The ID must be entered under `Partner ID`, while the password is requested after clicking the `Connect` button.
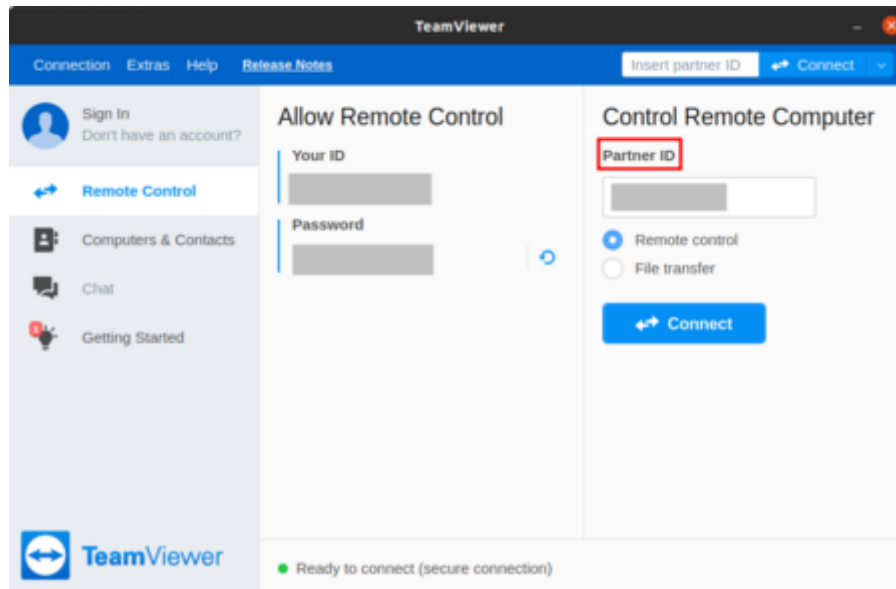
Both the ID and the password will be provided upon request.

The big disadvantage of **TeamViewer** is that it only works if an account is already logged into the computer and **TeamViewer** is started.

Virtual Network Computing (VNC)

May still be completed…

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