

Control all your computers from one iPhone

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I've gone on record defining the iPhone to really be a mobile computer that can also make cell phone calls. It uses OS X, the Macintosh operating system to run software such as productivity, game, Internet applications and more. A platform is an underlying computer system on which application programs can run. On personal computers, Windows, Linux and the Mac OS X are examples of different platforms. Sometimes just the OS itself can be referred to as a platform. Conversely the hardware itself can also be called a platform and in my opinion, the iPhone absolutely is a computer platform.

Just because there are fewer Mac owners out there doesn't mean I shouldn't write about things that run on the Mac. Who knows? I may write about something for the Mac that may be just the thing you need and can't do on your PC. As a computer columnist, it's my job to inform you about what I feel to be important information for all platforms, big and small. The iPhone is becoming an important computer platform that continues to expand in its abilities. And now there's a new iPhone application that lets you totally and remotely control all of your other computers.

Known as "Virtualization," applications that let you control a computer remotely using another computer have been around for a while now. You literally see the screen of the remote computer on the computer's screen at your location. Moving the mouse on your system correspondingly moves the mouse on the remote PC. You can click on folders, copy files, run applications, load and save files, you can do everything that can be done sitting in front of a computer using the remote system running the

virtualization application. But until now, you needed a desktop or notebook computer to run the virtualization software. Now you can do it on an iPhone.

LogMeIn Ignition is the incredible little application that lets you remotely control a PC running Windows or a Mac running OS X. For each computer you wish to remotely control, you have to first download a little, free application that runs unnoticed in the background. You also have to create a LogMeIn Free account and add each computer you wish to control. Once installed, you have the ability to control that computer remotely with Ignition. Just run Ignition on the iPhone and it will connect to the LogMeIn website and access your account. From there, Ignition will ask which of the computers you wish to control. A setting lets Ignition remember all of this information so you only need do it one time.

The next thing you see on your iPhone's screen is the current screen of the remote computer. I did this while sitting in front of my Macintosh that sports a 30-inch display. I saw the entire screen but rotating the iPhone to a landscape position gave me the best view. Two different modes of mouse control are offered. Using a finger, you can drag the mouse pointer to any location on the screen or you can have the pointer anchored at the center of the iPhone's screen and have the desktop move behind it. I found the latter to be more comfortable but I'm sure it's a personal choice so be sure to give both methods a try. Other settings let you lock the remote computer's keyboard and blank its screen, and display a variety of on-screen keyboards.

Using the iPhone "pinch" gesture, you can zoom in and out to more accurately see and focus in on what you are doing. Watching everything react while sitting in front of my computer truly gave me a feel of how this worked and I would suggest you do the same before actually using it remotely. But once it's in place, you can really do it all. I was able to

control both my Windows notebook and Macintosh computer from another location. For the times you need to access your computer remotely, Ignition is truly a wonderful new way to get the job done without having to lug around a notebook or trying to find an online computer somewhere. You already have the computer in your pocket.

Since there is quite a bit of data being moved to pull this off, I highly suggest you use Ignition only with a WiFi or 3G connection. LogMeIn Ignition sells for \$29.99 and works on both the iPhone and the iPod Touch.

On the web: www.logmein.com

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