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pcANYWHERE Internet Use Through a Firewall

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Introduction

pcANYWHERE offers the ability to communicate via the Internet, but some clients have DSL or other router-based Internet solutions that implement firewalls for security. This document describes the method of accessing a pcANYWHERE host that sits behind a firewall.

Definitions

Here are definitions for specific terms are used in this document:

Host – a computer that will be remotely controlled. This is typically a computer at an AIS client's site.

Remote – a computer that remotely controls a host.

Firewall – software running inside of a router or other device that provides security against unauthorized access to a user's internal network.

IP Address – a unique identifying number for a device. On the Internet, an IP address is analogous to a phone number including country code and area code. Every device connected to the Internet must have a unique IP address.

Port – a service running at a particular IP address. Similar to an extension at a telephone number.

On the host side

Setup

All of the setup work is done on the host side. There are five things that have to happen:

1. TCP port 5631 must be opened on the firewall.

2. UDP port 5632 must be opened on the firewall.

3. The firewall must create a static route to the host's internal IP address.

4. The firewall device's world-visible IP address must be communicated to the AIS support technician.

5. To use pcANYWHERE in this setup, the AIS client should create a host connection item in pcANYWHERE called "AIS Support" and set its connection method to TCP/IP. Caller privileges and security is entirely up to the security-consciousness of the client. The AIS Support icon can be copied to the user's desktop or even to the QuickLaunch taskbar so the user does not have to actually start pcANYWHERE in order to set their computer into Host mode.

Because so many kinds of firewalls exist, the specifics of how to implement this must be left to the AIS client. Typically, the network vendor for the client will set up these five steps one time.

On the remote side

Setup for remote control of a host is no different from any other pcANYWHERE remote control setup. Obtain the client's firewall device's IP address from the client, then use it in place of the phone number. Set the connection type to TCP/IP instead of a modem. If the user is security conscious, agree on a user ID and password for access, then put this in as well.

Use

Once the firewall ports, static routes, and pcANYWHERE host connection item are set up on the client, initializing pcANYWHERE as a host is a simple matter of activating the "AIS Support" icon. This icon may be in the "Be a Host" area of pcANYWHERE, on the user's desktop, or on their QuickLaunch taskbar. In pcANYWHERE 9.x, a SysTray icon will appear after Host mode is started.

On the remote side, first verify that the pcANYWHERE host is waiting, then start the connection item for the client. You should connect almost immediately. I have seen occasions where the first connection attempt times out, but invariably it is successful if you immediately try again.

Conclusion

Setting up pcANYWHERE to run as a host behind a firewall takes a bit of setup that typically requires the assistance of a network vendor, but - especially if the client has a broadband Internet connection – can result in much faster, more reliable, and less expensive remote sessions. It is well worth the few minutes it takes to set up.