SDE

SDE PC Terminal: turn a PC or laptop into a Terminal

The SDE PC image allows a 64-bit PC or laptop to function as an SDE Terminal, providing a streamlined setup for accessing SDE desktops. It's suitable for machines that can't run Windows 11 and can be run from a USB key or installed on the disk.

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PUBLISHED
24 Nov 2026

DOCUMENT
InfoHub — Knowledge, news, and updates from EssingtonITS

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The SDE PC image (model code RDXPC) turns almost any 64-bit PC or laptop into an SDE Terminal, the same as an SDE Remote Device in Terminal mode: people sign in to SDE and use their desktops, with nothing else on the machine. Write the image to a USB key and start the computer from it. It runs from the key, or copies itself to the computer's own disk. Machines that can't run Windows 11 make good Terminals.

Applies to: RDXPC, the SDE PC image (sde-pc) · Audience: SDE engineers, client IT · Time: about 15 minutes per computer, plus 5 to 10 to install to its disk

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1. What you get

The SDE PC image is Debian Linux with the SDE setup service and the SDE Remote app, full screen. It does exactly what an SDE Remote Device does in Terminal mode, and it's

managed the same way: in SDE Devices, on the **Remote devices** tab, next to your other remote devices. Updates come from SDE Devices too.

- **Locked down** like an SDE Remote Device: no local login, no other programs, no remote access. Once set up it accepts no connections from the network and talks only to your SDE gateway. The SDE Remote Devices security fact sheet applies to the PC image too.
- **Run from the key, or install.** From the key, the computer's own disk isn't touched (handy for trying it). Installing copies it to the disk, and the key can go to the next machine.
- **Streaming depends on the graphics.** Streamed desktops play as well as the computer's graphics can decode them. Most Intel, AMD and NVIDIA graphics decode video in hardware and stream smoothly; older or basic graphics may limit stream quality. RDP desktops work on any computer.

2. What you need

- A 64-bit PC or laptop (most made since about 2008) with 2 GB of memory or more, a screen, keyboard and mouse. Older 32-bit-only machines can't run it.
- A USB key of 8 GB or more. Everything on it is erased.
- A network connection to your SDE gateway: a cable (simplest), or Wi-Fi the computer supports.
- The SDE PC image file, `sde-pc-<version>.img.xz`, and its `.sha256` file, from SDE.
- Your SDE gateway's address, and an enrolment key from SDE Devices (**Remote devices** → **New enrolment key**) if it's to be managed there.
- balenaEtcher (Windows, macOS or Linux) on another computer, to write the key.

3. Write the USB key

1. Check the download: on Windows, `certutil -hashfile sde-pc-<version>.img.xz SHA256` ; on Linux or macOS, `sha256sum -c sde-pc-<version>.img.xz.sha256`. The two values

must match.

2. In balenaEtcher choose **Flash from file** and the `.img.xz` file, then choose the USB key and click **Flash**.
3. When it's done, eject the key.

On Linux `xzcat sde-pc-<version>.img.xz | sudo dd of=/dev/sdX bs=4M conv=fsync`, where `/dev/sdX` is the key (check with `lsblk`: the wrong letter erases another disk).

4. Start the computer from the key

1. Plug in the key and the network cable, and turn the computer on.
2. Open its one-time boot menu as it starts: usually `F12` (Dell, Lenovo, Acer), `F9` (HP), `F11` or `F8` (many desktops), or `Esc`. Choose the USB key.
3. The first start makes the system fill the key and takes a minute or two. Then the setup page appears, full screen.

Secure Boot can stay on: the image is signed through Debian. Both newer (UEFI) and older (BIOS or "legacy") computers start from it.

5. Set up on the screen

The setup page is the same as on an SDE Remote Device, but on the computer's own screen. There's no setup Wi-Fi and no phone needed.

1. Choose **Terminal**.
2. Choose the network: **Ethernet**, or a Wi-Fi network and its password.
3. Type the SDE gateway address, and the enrolment key if it's to be managed in SDE Devices. Optional: a name for the Terminal, a kiosk desktop and an idle sign-out time.
4. Click **Connect**. When it works, the screen switches to the SDE sign-in.

The PC's SDE Devices row shows the computer's make and model under its unit code.

6. Install to the computer's disk

When the computer is running from the USB key, the setup page starts with **Install to this computer's disk**. It's offered only on the computer itself, never over the network, because it erases a disk.

1. Choose the disk. It shows each disk's model and size; the USB key itself is never listed.
2. Type `ERASE` and click **Erase and install**. Everything on that disk is erased.
3. Leave the computer on and the key in until it says **Installed** (5 to 10 minutes).
4. Take out the key and click **Restart now**. The computer starts from its own disk, with any settings already made.

Do the install first Install before setting up, then set it up after the restart. One key can install a room full of machines.
If the computer doesn't start from its disk afterwards, check its firmware settings: the disk should come first in the boot order. On an older computer, also check whether it's set to UEFI or legacy boot; the installed disk supports both.

7. Using it

Everything in Using a Terminal applies: sign-in, desktops and pools, the **Stream** button, SSH and labs in the locked web window, idle sign-out, **Info** and **Report a problem**, and USB devices sent to the desktop. Differences on a PC:

- Streams play best with working graphics drivers. Intel, AMD and NVIDIA graphics are supported out of the box. How smooth a stream is depends on what the graphics can decode. In a virtual machine, turn on 3D acceleration, or streams may not play.
- To turn it off, press the computer's power button briefly, or just turn it off: it's built to survive power cuts.

8. Change settings or start again

From SDE Devices, an enrolled PC is managed like any other remote device: mode and kiosk settings, network, reboot, updates and factory reset (Remote devices: set up, assign and manage).

Without SDE Devices, use a recovery file, as on an SDE Remote Device. The USB key, or an installed disk, has a small drive called **SDE-BOOT** that any PC can open. Put an empty file in its top folder:

File name	What happens at the next start
`sde-setup`	Setup reopens with the current settings filled in.
`sde-factory-reset`	Forgets everything and starts setup from the beginning. An enrolled Terminal then needs a new enrolment key.

For an installed computer, start it from a newly written key instead and install again.

9. Troubleshooting

Symptom or message	Cause and fix
The key isn't in the boot menu	Try another USB socket (on older computers, a USB 2 socket at the back). Write the key again. In the firmware settings, allow booting from USB.
"Secure Boot violation" or similar	Rare, on firmware that hasn't had updates: update the firmware, or turn Secure Boot off.
A white or blank setup screen for more than a few minutes	Restart the computer. If it stays blank, send SDE support the make and model.
No Wi-Fi networks listed	The computer's Wi-Fi may need firmware the image doesn't have. Use a cable.
Install to this computer's disk isn't offered	The computer isn't running from a USB key (it's already installed), or it's set up over the network from another computer: install from the computer's own screen.
"No disk of 8 GB or more found"	The disk is missing or too small, or the firmware has it in a RAID mode Linux can't see: set the disk to AHCI in the firmware settings.
A stream won't play, or is jerky, but RDP works	The graphics can't decode the stream well enough. In a virtual machine, turn on 3D acceleration. On real hardware, send SDE support the make and model, and use RDP meanwhile.

Anything else	The SDE Remote Device troubleshooting table covers network, gateway and certificate messages: SDE Remote Device troubleshooting. Or save its **Log** and **Diagnostics** from SDE Devices and send them to SDE support.

10. Related pages

- SDE Remote Device: set up a port redirector or Terminal
- SDE Remote Devices: security fact sheet
- Remote devices: set up, assign and manage
- SDE Remote user guide

SDE Remote knowledge base · SDE PC Terminal