

BUYER'S GUIDE

KVM Switches



Eliminate clutter in server rooms

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Keyboard/video/mouse (KVM) switches are a necessary accessory for server rooms, lab environments, Help desks, and any place multiple computers exist and space is limited. Antiquated manual switches have given way to intelligent devices, which boast new features that increase reliability and productivity.

Keyboard and mouse emulation—a must-have feature for most environments—ensures that all connected devices can boot without the errors that an unplugged keyboard or mouse usually generate. Basic KVM switches consist of one master keyboard, a video and mouse port, and two or more sets of ports that let you switch between systems. Typically, you switch by pressing a button on the switchbox or a hot-key sequence on the keyboard. Additional valuable features are onscreen display, scanning, concurrent multiple-user access, multiplatform CPU support, and audio switching. Some KVM switches use Category 5 UTP cabling and consist of a master console, transmitters, and receivers to transmit KVM signals for remote control capabilities. Each controlled system still requires KVM cables that run from the back of the system to the console or transmitter. If you don't want to manage a lot of cables, you can choose a box-free solution that uses an internal PCI card and one cable for each controlled

system. Another feature you might want to consider is the KVM switch's ability to pass a high-resolution video signal without signal degradation.

With so many KVM choices available, you can narrow your options by deciding how many devices you need to switch among, how many concurrent users you need to connect (and the distance of those users from the main console), and the maximum video resolution you'll use. Most devices employ programmable hot keys for switching, but make sure that the device you select has at least one key sequence that doesn't conflict with another function in your organization. If you need to support many systems, you'll most likely need to cascade multiple KVM switches. In that case, look at how clean the cascading process is for both implementation and operation. In addition to the device's features, you need to consider form factor, cable quality, and ease of use.

—Ed Roth

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Compiled by Sue Cooper

Contact Information	Product Name	Price	Description
APC • 800-788-2208 http://www.apc.com/	AP9258	\$1064	Eight-port switch; hot-pluggable operation; can control as many as 64 PCs; advanced security for total control over system access; offers a 2-year comprehensive warranty
Apex • 425-497-5404 http://www.apex.com/	40DX	\$299	Four-port push-button OutLook console switch; supports multiple platforms; supports 1600 × 1280 video resolution
	180DX	\$879	Eight-port OutLook console switch with On Screen Configuration and Activity Reporting (OSCAR) menu system; controls as many as 64 PCs; supports 1600 × 1280 video resolution
	140ES	\$839	Four-port OutLook console switch with OSCAR GUI; can control as many as 64 PCs; supports 1600 × 1280 video resolution
	180ES	\$995	Eight-port OutLook console switches with OSCAR GUI; can control as many as 128 PCs; supports 1600 × 1280 video resolution
	280ES	\$1295	
	1160ES	\$1695	Sixteen-port OutLook console switch with OSCAR GUI; can control as many as 256 PCs; supports 1600 × 1280 video resolution
ATEN Technology 949-250-1260 http://www.aten-usa.com/	2160ES	\$2195	Dual-user 16-port OutLook console switch with OSCAR GUI; can control as many as 256 PCs; supports 1600 × 1280 video resolution
	CS-428	\$1579	Lets four users share eight PCs; provides built-in onscreen display and full multimedia sharing; supports 1920 × 1440 video resolution
	CS-1004	\$479	Can control as many as 128 PCs; provides onscreen display and audio support; uses custom-built cables; no software required
	CS-1008	\$949	Eight-port switch can control as many as 256 PCs; provides onscreen display and audio support; uses custom-built cables; no software required
CS-1016	\$1579	Sixteen-port switch can control as many as 512 PCs; provides onscreen display and audio support; uses custom-built cables; no software required	
Belkin • 800-223-5546 http://www.belkin.com/	F1D208-OSD	\$1000	OmniView Matrix 2 × 8 switch lets two users simultaneously access eight servers from two sets of keyboards, monitors, and mouse devices; supports 1600 × 1200 resolution; has an onscreen menu system
CompuCable Manufacturing Group 800-344-6921 http://www.compucable.com/	KVM-201LT	\$86	The KVM-201LT lets you control two PCs; the KVM-401LT lets you control as many as four PCs; both support 1920 × 1440 video resolution; both feature automatic scanning mode, hot-key controls, and a compact enclosure
	KVM-401LT	\$139	
	KVM-401PR-OSD	\$250	The KVM-401PR-OSD lets you control as many as four PCs; the KVM-801PR-OSD lets you control as many as eight PCs; both include keyboard and mouse emulation, onscreen display, hot-key switching, and auto scanning; both support 1600 × 1200 video resolution
	KVM-801PR-OSD	\$370	
KVM-XT	\$300	Uses conventional Cat 5 network cables that can extend as far as 500'	
Cybex Computer Products 800-932-9239 http://www.cybex.com/	AutoView 200	\$1295	Rack-mountable 2 × 8 matrix switch lets two users independently access eight attached servers simultaneously (the second user can be as much as 500' away); controls as many as 64 servers; features extensive mouse support
	AutoView 400	\$1495	Rack-mountable dual-user switch supports multiple platforms; supports a simultaneous user as much as 500' away

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Cybex Computer Products continued	Key-View II	\$5995	Controls servers by using either a modem, the Internet, or a network connection; provides access to all levels of control, from CMOS settings to power-cycling servers
	SwitchView OSD	\$549	Eight-port switch lets you use one set of peripherals to control all your servers; features onscreen display and multilevel security
	XP series	Call vendor for pricing	Multiuser, multiplatform switch gives you access to any server or user; expands for multiple users and thousands of servers
Dakota Computer Solutions 847-816-1337 http://www.dakota-us.com/	1016-02	\$129	The 1016-02 two-port switch and the 1016-04 four-port switch support 1600 × 1280 video resolution, hot-key commands, and a mix of AT and serial and PS/2-style PCs
	1016-04	\$199	
	1035-01 1035-21	\$695 \$795	Both models extend any KVM as far as 1000' through one Cat 5 cable; support PS/2-style and wheel mouse devices; offer optional serial support; provide full keyboard and mouse emulation; offer a 1-year warranty
IOGEAR • 949-250-1260 http://www.iogear.com/	G-CS138	\$499	Can control as many as 302 PCs; features built-in AutoScan mode and onscreen display; supports 1920 × 1440 video resolution
Linksys • 800-546-5797 http://www.linksys.com/	KVM100SK	\$89	Lets you connect two PCs with PS/2-style mouse devices and keyboards or connect a PC with PS/2-style mouse and keyboard with a PC using an AT keyboard and serial mouse; includes adapters; supports 1920 × 1440 video resolution; offers a 1-year limited warranty
	PS2KVM2	\$49	The PS2KVM2 lets you control two PCs and the PS2KVM4 lets you control as many as four PCs; both models run with most PS/2-style and Windows 95 keyboards, are compatible with most PS/2-style mouse devices, support 1920 × 1440 video resolution, and offer a 1-year warranty
	PS2KVM4	\$85	
	PS2KVM5K	\$69	Lets you toggle between two PS/2-style PCs while using one monitor, PS/2-style keyboard, and PS/2-style mouse; lets you use your notebook PC to control the PCs from your monitor, keyboard, and mouse
	SVIEW02	\$109	Both models let you control multiple PCs; are compatible with most PS/2-style mouse devices; support 1920 × 1440 video resolution; run with most PS/2-style and Win95 keyboards; offer a 1-year warranty
	SVIEW04	\$129	
SVIEW08	\$339	Lets you control eight PCs; runs with all standard AT, PS/2-style, and Win9x keyboards; compatible with all major serial AT and PS/2-style mouse devices; offers a 1-year limited warranty	
Minicom Advanced Systems 888-486-2154 http://www.minicomusa.com/	Duet UTP	\$495	Lets you access CPUs from switches at distances of as much as 850' using a Cat 5 cable; supports PS/2-style and AT keyboards; works with KVM switches as well as PCs
	Supervisor PHANTOM Starter Kit	\$699	Box-free, cable-free switch supports 32 remotes at distances of as much as 360'; no software to install; PCI card fits in any open slot; controls four servers through onscreen display
	Supervisor PRO 4	\$495	Supervisor PRO 4 lets two users access as many as four PCs; Supervisor PRO 8 lets two users access as many as eight PCs; Supervisor PRO 16 lets two users access 16 PCs; all models offer PS/2-style and AT keyboard support
	Supervisor PRO 8	\$595	
	Supervisor PRO 16	\$1195	
Video Splitter UTP and USPR remote unit	\$189	Splits standard SVGA signals to as many as four locations through one Cat 5 cable; uses the USPR remote unit for each remote monitor at distances of as much as 360'	

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Minicom Advanced Systems continued	Video Splitter UTP and USPRL remote unit	\$259	Splits standard SVGA signals to as many as four locations through one Cat 5 cable; uses the USPRL remote unit for each remote monitor at distances of as much as 850'
	Video Splitter UTP 4-port and USP4 remote unit	\$299	Splits standard SVGA signals to as many as four locations through one Cat 5 cable; requires the USP4 remote unit for each remote monitor
	Video Splitter UTP 2-port and USP2 remote unit	\$239	Splits standard SVGA signals to as many as four locations through one Cat 5 cable
	Supervisor MU 2 × 4	\$895	The Supervisor MU 2 × 4 lets two users simultaneously access as many as four PCs; the Supervisor MU 4 × 4 lets four users simultaneously access as many as four PCs; the Supervisor MU 2 × 8 lets two users simultaneously access as many as eight PCs; the Supervisor MU 4 × 8 lets four users simultaneously access as many as eight PCs; all models offer PS/2-style and AT keyboard support
	Supervisor MU 4 × 4	\$1195	
	Supervisor MU 2 × 8	\$1195	
Supervisor MU 4 × 8	\$1295		
NTI • 800-742-8324 http://www.nti1.com/	KEEMUX-P2U	\$280 to \$4370	Lets you control as many as 16 PS/2-compatible CPUs; supports 1900 × 1200 video resolution with no signal degradation
	Modular ST-nXm Matrix switch	\$1620 to \$19,445	Lets eight users control as many as 32 (or 512 with expansion) PC, Sun, and Macintosh CPUs; supports true autoboot KVM switching for USB; supports 1900 × 1200 video resolution with no signal degradation; OSD user interface (UI) provides password security and dual-redundant power
	Universal ST-nU Multiplatform switch	\$315 to \$4360	Controls as many as 128 PC, Sun, and Mac CPUs; supports 1900 × 1200 video resolution with no signal degradation
	Universal ST-nXmU Matrix switch	\$2700 to \$4330	Lets four users control 32 (or 512 with expansion) PC, Sun, and Mac CPUs; supports 1900 × 1200 video resolution with no signal degradation; lets you use adapter cables to change platforms
Raritan Computer 800-724-8090 http://www.raritan.com/	Cat5 Reach	\$545 to \$585	Lets you extend PCs as much as 650' using Cat 5 UTP cable; lets a local user console connect to the transmitter as well as to the remote user console
	CompuSwitch	\$320 to \$695	Multiplatform switch that can control as many as eight PCs; expandable to control as many as 64 PCs from one console
	MasterConsole II	\$695 to \$1595	Multiplatform switch that lets you control as many as 256 PCs from one console with onscreen UI; rack-mountable
	MasterConsole MX ⁴	\$2895 to \$8995	Multiplatform switch that lets four users simultaneously access and operate as many as 256 PCs; has an onscreen UI and multilevel security features; rack-mountable
	Paragon	\$9000 to \$20,000	Modular, scalable server-management system lets eight users simultaneously access and control 32 PCs; expandable to 2048 PCs at distances of as much as 1000' using Cat 5 UTP cable
	SwitchMan	\$169 to \$249	Desktop switch that lets you control as many as four PCs from one console
StarTech.com 800-265-1844 http://www.startech.com/	SV821E	\$539	Eight-port enterprise switch with expandability for control of as many as 64 PCs; features onscreen display; supports 1600 × 1280 video resolution
	SV4X8E	\$1425	Lets you control as many as eight PCs from four independent user consoles; features onscreen display; supports AT and PS/2-style keyboard and mouse devices
	SV1621EM	\$749	Sixteen-port switch with expandability to control 128 PCs; features onscreen display; supports 1600 × 1280 video resolution