

KVM Switch That Doesn't Require Electricity



Overview

If you need a remote, do you want a wireless one, or will a wired unit do (connected to the KVM switch by a cable)?

Key Takeaways

Bus-powered or USB-powered KVM switches allow you to control multiple computers without an external power adapter, drawing power directly from the connected systems.

Bus-Powered KVM Switches

Some KVM switches operate entirely on bus power, meaning they draw electricity from the USB ports of the connected computers. A notable example is the ATEN CS724KM, a 4-port USB KM switch that supports up to four computers without needing an external power supply. It features Boundless Switching, allowing you to move the mouse cursor across displays to switch control between computers intuitively. It also supports independent switching of keyboard, mouse, USB peripherals, and audio via hotkeys, and can be daisy-chained to control up to eight computers from a single console.

USB-Powered KVM Switches



Certain compact KVM switches are USB-powered only, activating automatically when a connected computer is turned on. These are ideal for setups where only one system is used at a time, avoiding the need for a constant DC power connection. Examples include models like the KCEVE USB-powered KVM, which supports high-resolution video and USB 3.0 peripherals without an external adapter. The main consideration is ensuring that the USB ports on your computers can supply sufficient power for the switch and connected devices .

USB-C KVM Switches Without Power Adapters

Some USB-C KVM switches also operate without external power, particularly mini or travel-friendly models. For instance, the StarTech.com 2-Port USB-C KVM Switch functions without a power lead, supporting 4K video and multiple USB peripherals. These switches are convenient for laptops and modern systems with USB-C ports, providing both video and peripheral sharing without additional adapters .

Considerations

- **Video Resolution:** Bus-powered KVMs may have limitations on maximum resolution or refresh rate compared to externally powered models. Check specifications if you need 4K or high-refresh-rate support.
- **Peripheral Power:** High-power devices like external drives may require more power than the KVM can supply; in such cases, a powered hub or externally powered KVM may be necessary.
- **Switching Methods:** Options include hotkeys, front-panel buttons, or mouse cursor movement. Bus-powered models often support multiple intuitive switching methods.
- **Compatibility:** Ensure your computers' USB ports and video outputs match the KVM's requirements, especially for USB-C or HDMI connections. Bus-powered and USB-powered KVM switches are ideal for simpler setups, travel, or energy-conscious environments, providing full keyboard, mouse, and video control without the need for an external power source.

Article Content

The Best KVM Switches

If you need a remote, do you want a wireless one, or will a wired unit do (connected to the KVM switch by a cable)?

KVM Switches: What You Need to Know

Analog KVM switches, which require a direct cable connection (usually either Coax or Cat5) between the controlled

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