



Fact sheet

MINECRAFT

(For parents)

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What is Minecraft?

Minecraft is a video game where players are given a 3D world to create and adapt as they see fit. It is popular with primary school-aged children, but is played by millions of people of all ages from all over the world. It's like a huge virtual sandbox in which players use a variety of tools to gather resources

from the environment and use them to build structures and craft tools. Players can create weapons and armour to fight monsters and interact with other players.

What devices can Minecraft be played on?

The original version of Minecraft is available for Windows, Mac, and Linux computers. A console version

is available on the PS3, PS4, PS Vita, Xbox 360, and Xbox One. There is a condensed 'pocket edition' of Minecraft for phones and tablets running Android, iOS and Windows Phone.

How do children interact with other players?

Players can interact with other players in several ways when playing Minecraft. While you can play offline and play on your own, players can also join small private servers where a group of friends play cooperatively online, or huge servers with thousands of players from all over the world.

To play Minecraft you need a username, and players select their own username to identify them in the game. If you want to restrict your interaction with others, it's important players know their friends usernames, and vice versa, so they know who they are playing against.

What are the benefits of playing Minecraft?

When played alone, Minecraft is a game that enhances creativity and

problem-solving skills. It can help children with their reading, writing, maths, and basic geometry. Played online with others, it can encourage teamwork and improve social skills.

What are the potential problems with Minecraft?

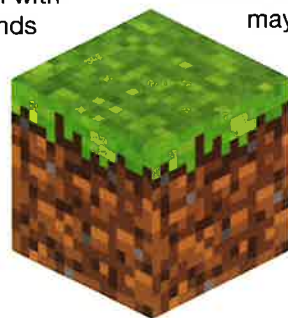
As with any online environment, children playing Minecraft online may be exposed to undesirable content or malicious individuals. Players can message each other privately or participate in a public chat with all other players connected to the same server. (A server is like a 'room' in which the game is played in, so only the people allowed into the room can play and everyone within that room can see what everyone else is doing.)

Bullying, swearing and rudeness are not uncommon in online gaming and, because servers in Minecraft can be hosted by anyone, there's no guarantee that server administrators will moderate the chat or stop negative behaviour when a complaint is made. Online gaming may also be an environment in which young people are exposed to inappropriate content or unwanted contact from adults for exploitative purposes.

Can I restrict who my child plays Minecraft with?

If your child plays on a server administered by someone who you don't know, then you have no control over who your child plays with. Some servers may have hundreds or even thousands of players on them.

If your child wants to play online with their friends we recommend they play on a server administered by a trusted adult, such as a parent. Whitelisting mode (where only players on the approved list, the 'whitelist', can access the server)





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should be turned on and configured to ensure that only your child and their friends are provided with access to the server that they play on.

Advice on how to configure a private server, or how to purchase hosting through a third-party, can be found at minecraft.net.

Disabling the chat function

Chat can be disabled in multiplayer mode by selecting **Options > Multiplayer Settings** and clicking on the chat button to toggle it between 'Shown', 'Hidden', and 'Commands Only'.

By setting the chat function to hidden, your child will not be able to see private messages or the public chat.

Disabling multiplayer mode

In single player mode, a user does not interact with other users of the game; however, you can still access the multiplayer mode and enable online play with others. The ability to access this multiplayer mode cannot be disabled.

Downloading 'mods'

Mods are user-created files which modify the game by adding new features or changing existing features. Mods are not inherently dangerous; however some malicious users attach viruses and other malware to the mod files they post online. If your child wants to download mods for Minecraft, we recommend that they only download them from reputable websites and that the files are scanned by up-to-date anti-virus software.

What can I do if another player is harassing my child?

Server administrators are able to control which players are given access to multiplayer servers. You should contact the server administrator for the specific server that your child plays on and report the abuse to them. However, it is up to the server administrator to determine what action should be

taken. While some servers have strict rules and codes of conduct for players, others may operate with no rules.

If you are unhappy at the response from the administrator you should consider having your child move to another server with more strictly enforced rules, or hosting your own server for your child and their friends to play on privately.

More information

The Minecraft website (minecraft.net) contains further information on the game and links to additional resources.



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