GET STARTED WITH
MINECRAFT

Dig into Minecraft with this (parent-approved) guide

JOHN MOLTZ

Get Started with Minecraft

John Moltz

Peachpit Press
Find us on the web at: www.peachpit.com

To report errors, please send a note to errata@peachpit.com
Peachpit Press is a division of Pearson Education

Copyright © 2015 Peachpit Press

This material excerpted from *The Visual Guide to Minecraft*, published by Peachpit Press, 2015

Editors: Clifford Colby and Robyn Thomas
Production Editor: Dennis Fitzgerald
Interior Design and Compositor: Maureen Forys
Copyeditor: Scout Festa
Cover design: Mimi Heft

Extending Minecraft

This is where things get crazy. The ways to extend Minecraft are almost as plentiful as the things you can do in the game.

As a parent, I can tell you that Minecraft playdates are definitely a thing. And according to the 10-year-old in my house, what's even more fun than playing with a friend is getting your dad to play, too, so you and your friend can gang up on him. Yes, I have been trolled by two laughing ten-year-olds.

Hosting a Game

There are several ways to host a game and play multiplayer Minecraft, ranging from easy to much less easy.

Setting Up a Local Network (LAN)

The easiest way to host a multiplayer game, and the one that requires the least investment in time and money, is simply opening the game you're playing to your local network (LAN). If your house has a Wi-Fi network, the game you host will be available for anyone on the network to join.

1. While in your game, press the Esc key to open the Game Menu screen (**Figure 3.1**).

FIGURE 3.1 Open to LAN.

2. Click the Open to LAN button to display the LAN World options (**Figure 3.2**). You can choose two settings for the players that will join your game:

- The game mode: Survival, Creative, Spectator, or Adventure (a mode in which players cannot destroy most blocks)
- Whether to allow players to use cheats

FIGURE 3.2 LAN play options.

3. Click the Game Mode button to cycle through the options, and select the mode you want for the hosted game.

4. Click Allow Cheats to toggle the setting on and off.

5. Click Start LAN World to save your settings and host the world.

   Once you've opened your game on your LAN network, other players on your network can join.

6. The players joining the game select Multiplayer from the Game Type menu.

   Minecraft scans your network for hosted games, and the game appears (**Figure 3.3**).
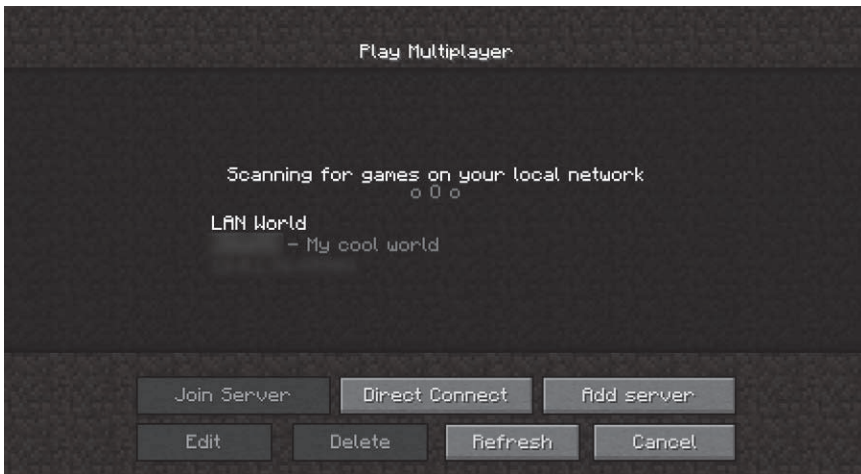
FIGURE 3.3 Logging in to a shared game.

7. The joining player clicks the hosted game and then clicks the Join Server button.

   If the player joining receives an error, make sure you are both running the same version of Minecraft.

LAN sharing is easy and free, but the player hosting must be in and playing the game in order for it to work. What if I'm hosting, but I need to get back to, say, writing a book about Minecraft and my son still wants to play in that world? That's when you want a game that's hosted on a server.

Purchasing a Realms Subscription

For $13 US dollars a month, Mojang offers a subscription service, called Realms, on which you can create and host your own Minecraft worlds. You will need a Visa or MasterCard in order sign up for Realms, so if you need an adult, go grab one. After all, paying for things is what they're there for.

1. Go to www.mojang.net/realms to sign up for the service.

2. Click the Get Realms button to display a form to log in to your Mojang account (**Figure 3.4**).

   Note that a Mojang account is separate from a Minecraft account (although Minecraft is the most famous, Mojang has other games that it sells), so you will most likely need to set up a new one.

FIGURE 3.4 Creating a Mojang account.

3. Enter your email address and a password.

4. Re-enter your password to verify you entered it correctly, and click Register.

   Once you've created the account, you will need to associate your existing Minecraft account with your new Mojang account (**Figure 3.5**).

> **NOTE:** This will change your Minecraft login credentials to the email address and password you choose for your Mojang account. You will still retain your Minecraft user name, but it will no longer be what you provide to log in.

5. Enter your Minecraft login credentials, and click the button to associate the two accounts.

Mojang will then send an email to the address associated with your Minecraft account asking if it's OK to associate it with your new Mojang account.

6. Finish the process by clicking the link in the confirmation email that is sent to the address associated with your Minecraft account.
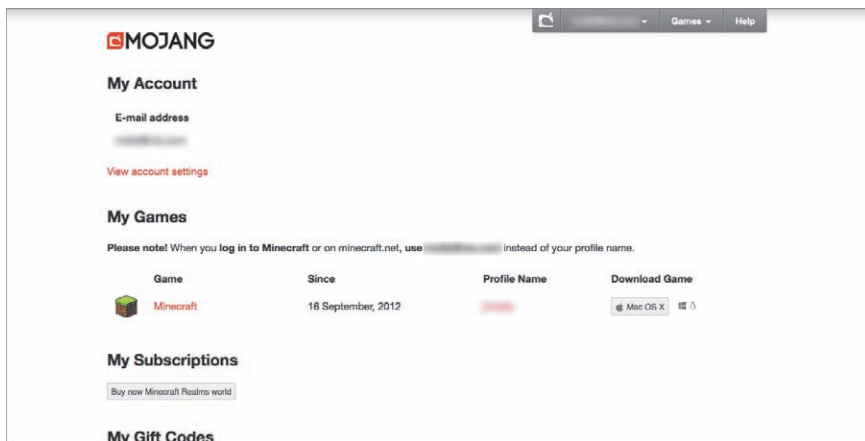
FIGURE 3.5 Your Minecraft and Mojang accounts are now merged.

7. In your account, scroll down to the Subscriptions section. Click the Buy New Minecraft Realms World button.

8. Choose your subscription plan and provide your payment information (**Figure 3.6**).

Only the host needs to have a subscription. The host can then invite other players to the realm.
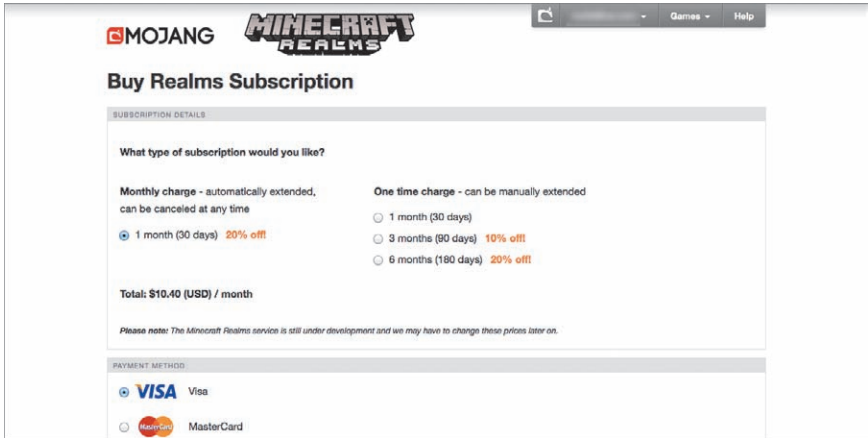
FIGURE 3.6 Subscription options, with sale prices.

Creating a Realm

Realms worlds have almost all the same features as regular Minecraft worlds. The host can use cheats but can't allow invited players to use them. Realms worlds also cannot be modded.

1. Return to the game application.

2. In the Game Type menu, click the Minecraft Realms button to display the Create Realm menu (**Figure 3.7**).

FIGURE 3.7 Create a realm.

3. Enter a name for your realm.

   The Select Template (Optional) button allows you to select from a short list of world templates. You do not have to select a template.

4. Click Create (**Figure 3.8**).

5. Click the world you just created, then click Configure to display a menu (**Figure 3.9**) where you can add and delete players and edit the usual world settings.

FIGURE 3.8 Your new realm.

FIGURE 3.9 Minecraft is more fun with a friend.

Setting Up a Home Server

If you want more control over your Minecraft server, you can create one yourself for free.

Regardless of your operating system, you need to make sure that Java is installed on the computer that will be your server. The next steps differ for each type of operating system. The Windows setup is quite simple, but the OS X and Linus setups are more complex.

Windows

If your server computer is running Windows, go to http://Minecraft.net/download and click the link to download the server install under Multiplayer Server. Then just run the executable to get it running.

OS X

The process for setting up an OS X server is a little more involved.

1. Go to http://Minecraft.net/download and download the server .jar file.
2. Create a folder somewhere on your computer from which you want to run your server.
3. Open TextEdit and type the following into a new document. Make sure you type it exactly as shown.

   ```
   #!/bin/bash
   cd "$(dirname "$0")"
   exec java -Xms1G -Xmx1G -jar minecraft_server.jar nogui
   ```

   You might want to give your server more RAM. If you do, change the two instances of 1G in -Xms1G and -Xmx1G to another value, such as 2G.
4. On the last line, make sure that the file name `minecraft_server.jar` matches the name of the server .jar file you just downloaded. If it doesn't, change either the name of the file or the reference to it in the text file.
5. Change the document format to plain text by selecting Make Plain Text from the Format menu.
6. Save the document as **start.command** and place it in the same folder as the server .jar file.

7. Make sure you have execute permissions set on the start.command file by opening Terminal and then typing the following command:

```
chmod a+x
```

TIP: You can open Terminal by typing *terminal* into Spotlight.

8. Press the spacebar once to leave a space at the end of the command.
9. In the Finder, locate the start.command file and drag it into the Terminal window.

   This will insert the correct path and file name into the command you are going to run.
10. Press Return in Terminal.
11. Double-click the start.command file.

    The first time the server runs, it will create additional files in the folder. You might also see some error messages, which you can ignore.
12. Quit out of the server for now by pressing Command-Q.

Linux

If you are running Linux, the instructions are different depending on which distribution you are using. For more information, see http://minecraft.gamepedia.com/Setting_up_a_server.

Completing the Home Server Setup

From here, the configuration is the same for all platforms.

When running the server for the first time, you might see a message about not having agreed to the terms of the EULA (end-user licensing agreement).

1. Return to the folder you created. You'll see that one of the files Minecraft created is eula.txt.
2. Open the file in a text editor, and on the last line, change `false` to `true` (**Figure 3.10**) to indicate you agree to the terms, which you probably didn't read. I know I didn't.
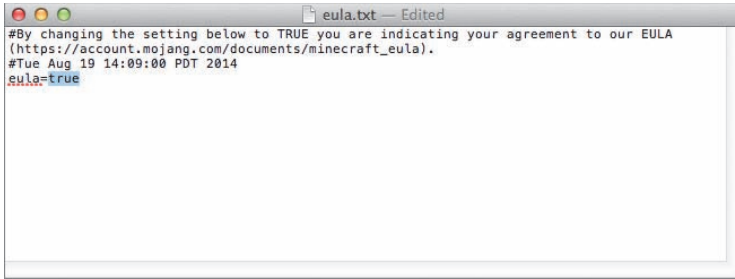
FIGURE 3.10 I agree to whatever.

At this time you can also change server settings in the server.properties file, which you will find in the folder you created. The default settings might be good enough to get started, but this is your server, after all. Make it yours.

To see a full list of the server settings, go to http://minecraft.gamepedia. com/Server.properties.

3. Once you're set, start up the server again by double-clicking the start. command file.

To play on the server, users on your network will need to know the IP address of the server machine.

4. Determine your IP address.

- On Windows, go to Run by pressing the ⊞-X. Type `ipconfig` in the command window and press Enter.

- On OS X, go into System Preferences, click Network, and select your active network connection.

- In Linux, run the terminal command `ifconfig`.

Joining the game is almost like joining a hosted game, except with more persistence.

5. Click Multiplayer in the Game Type menu.

6. Click Add Server.

7. Enter a name for the server and the IP address of the hosting machine (**Figure 3.11**).

You can join from the same machine the server is running on (although you may find performance is slower). To do so, type in **localhost** for the Server Address.
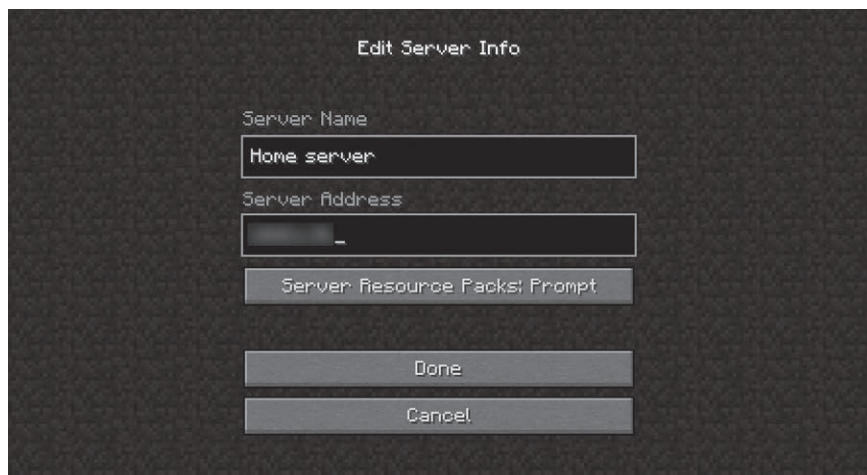
FIGURE 3.11 Setting up the server connection.

5. Click Done and Minecraft will scan for the server. If you see a set of green bars next to the server name, you're good to go (**Figure 3.12**).
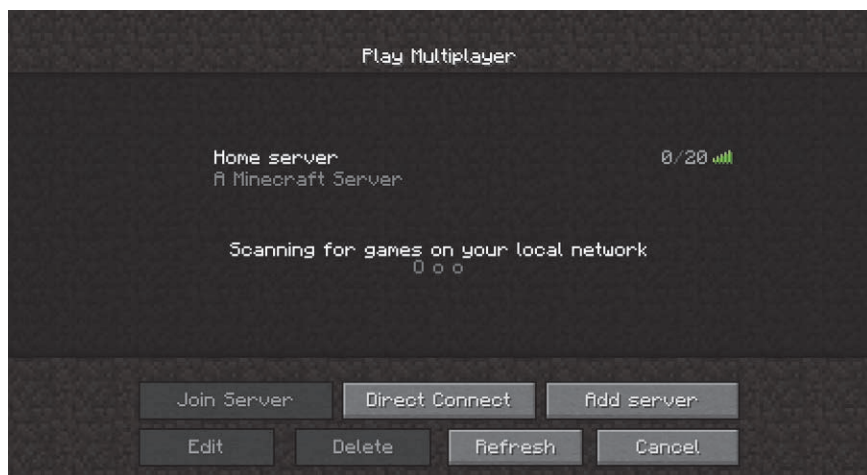

FIGURE 3.12 Ready to connect to the server.

NOTE: If you want to make your home server accessible on the Internet, you'll need to open a port on your router. This process varies depending on which router you have. You can find more information at: http://minecraft.gamepedia.com/Tutorials/Setting_u

Modifying the Game

Ready to get crazy? Minecraft's extensible nature can be aggravating and rewarding. The game itself will let you change textures and your player skin, but if you're willing to get your virtual hands dirty, you can add maps, additional ores, and whole new worlds. Let's start simple and work our way up.

Skins

Don't like the default look of your character? Mojang has you covered. Your appearance in Minecraft can be changed via a skin. A *skin* is nothing more than a small image file that works like a piece of papercraft. The image file contains every visible surface of your Minecraft character's body, and each one is mapped accordingly.

Skins can be downloaded from sites like the Skindex (www.minecraftskins. com), or you can make one yourself with an image editor. Log in to your account on Minecraft.net, and click Profile. There you'll find a reference skin that you can alter to your heart's content. Follow the instructions to download and edit the skin.

Once you have your skin, upload it to your account by clicking Choose File (**Figure 3.13**).
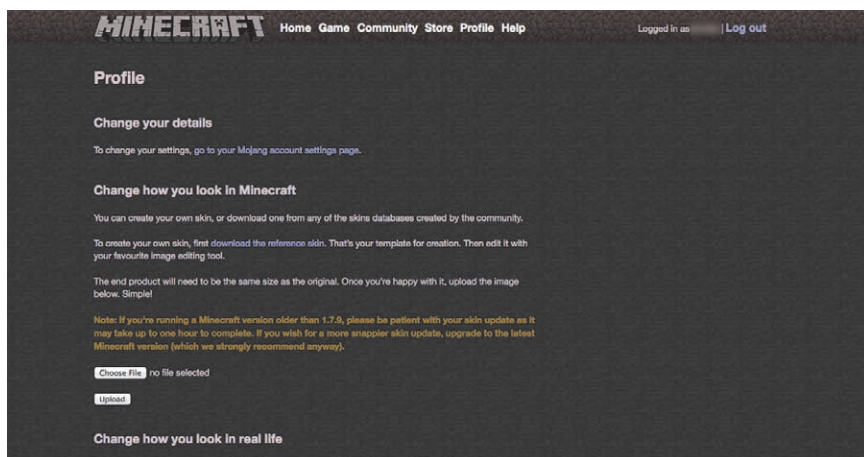

FIGURE 3.13 Change your skin on the Profile page.

Navigate to your file and select it. Then click the Upload button. Now your character will have a more personalized look on every Minecraft platform you log in to.

Resource Packs

You can change the look and sounds of the game by adding and managing resource packs.

Numerous resource packs are available to download on the Internet. The Minecraft forums are probably the safest place to do so. Minecraft's popularity has sparked nefarious websites that entice users to visit by claiming to be hosting Minecraft resources. You can find resource packs at www.minecraftforum.net/forums/mapping-and-modding/resource-packs.

One of the more popular ones is a pack that changes textures, called Faithful 32x32.

Once you've found a resource pack you're interested in, you need to get it on your computer.

1. Download the resource pack to your computer.

   You'll find that many independently developed Minecraft modifications are hosted on advertising-based file download services such as AdFly. When you click the link in the forum post, you may be redirected to a deliberately confusing page (**Figure 3.14**).
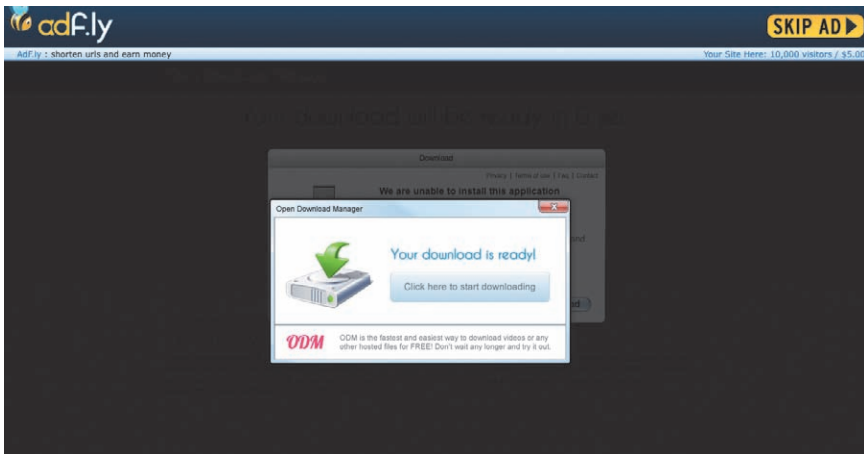

FIGURE 3.14 What do I click?

For AdFly, one of the more popular services, the download link will appear in the upper-right corner after 5 seconds. Click carefully.

Once you've downloaded the resource pack, you have to install it. Do not unzip it unless otherwise instructed, because Minecraft reads it in that format.

2. On the Game Type menu, click Options and then click Resource Packs.

This is your list of installed resource packs. There might be only one, the Minecraft default.

3. To add a new one, open the directory where resource packs are stored by clicking the Open Resource Pack Folder button. Drag the file you down-loaded into that folder.

4. Click Done.

5. Click the Open Resource Pack Folder button again to see the list of resource packs. There is your new resource pack (**Figure 3.15**).
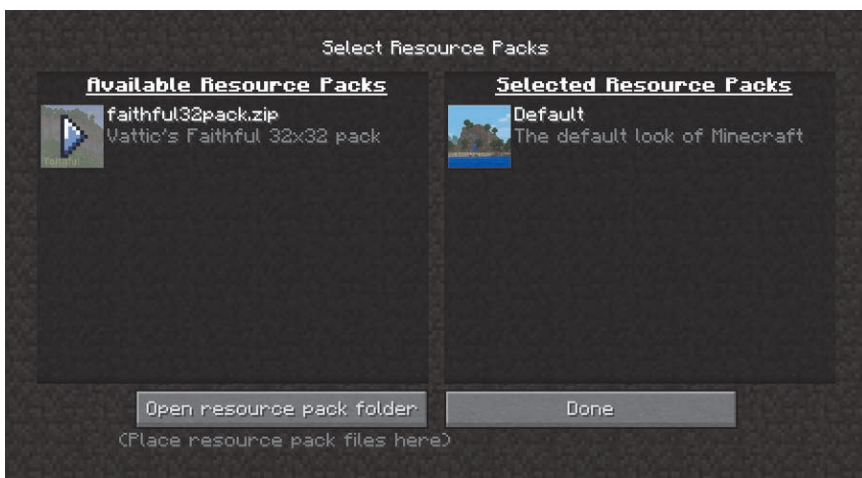

FIGURE 3.15 Resource acquired.

Now you need to activate it.

6. Hover over it and click the right arrow that appears to move it from Available Resource Packs to Selected Resource Packs.

You can install multiple resource packs at a time (the Default pack cannot be removed), but be warned: Some may not work and play well with others and may prevent the game from fully loading.

You can deactivate a resource pack that you no longer need or that is not playing well with others.

Hover over it in the Selected Resource Pack list and click the left arrow.

Faithful 32x32 will take the scene that appears in **Figure 3.16**...

FIGURE 3.16 Unaltered Minecraft.

...and make it look like **Figure 3.17**. This is just a subtle example of what skins can do.

FIGURE 3.17 The effects of Faithful.

Maps

Are you finding that the random maps of biomes that Minecraft generates are boring or frustrating? I hear you. Fortunately, there's a cure. You can download and install custom maps.

You can find many in the Minecraft forums at www.minecraftforum.net/forums/mapping-and-modding/maps.

Or you can find some in the Minecraft World Map site at www.minecraftworldmap.com.

Before you start downloading, it's time to get a little more familiar with what's in that Minecraft folder that gets created during installation (**Figure 3.18**).

Name		Date Modified	▲	Size	Kind
▶	assets	Aug 10, 2014, 9:27 AM		--	Folder
▶	config	Aug 21, 2014, 4:30 PM		--	Folder
	launcher_profiles.json	Today, 5:06 PM		787 bytes	Plain Text File
	launcher.jar	Today, 5:06 PM		4.8 MB	Java JAR file
	launcher.pack.lzma	Today, 5:06 PM		1.1 MB	LZMA File
▶	libraries	Aug 21, 2014, 3:23 PM		--	Folder
▶	logs	Today, 5:06 PM		--	Folder
	options.txt	Aug 21, 2014, 4:33 PM		2 KB	Plain Text
▶	resourcepacks	Aug 10, 2014, 9:26 AM		--	Folder
▼	saves	Today, 5:08 PM		--	Folder
▶	Creative	Today, 5:09 PM		--	Folder
▶	New World	Today, 5:08 PM		--	Folder
▼	versions	Today, 5:09 PM		--	Folder
▶	1.7.10	Today, 5:09 PM		--	Folder

FIGURE 3.18 The Minecraft folder.

You're already familiar with the resourcepacks folder. The saves folder is where Minecraft stores all your saved game data. Each game is saved in its own folder within saves. Conveniently, maps download as a complete folder. To install one, unzip it, if necessary, and drag the resulting folder into the saves folder. It will then appear in your list of saved games in the Singleplayer game list in the application.

Maps come in different types. Some are Survival maps just like the games you'd create within the application, but others are Adventure maps. Adventure maps are designed to play out a story, more like you'd play in a first-person shooter or other video game. Many blocks can't be broken, and you go through a series of challenges, from puzzle-solving to parkour, in order to complete the adventure.

E-land is a map that provides a city and several outlying areas for you to explore and make use of, such as two sports stadiums, an airport, and a shipyard (**Figure 3.19**). You can download it from www.minecraftworldmap.com/worlds/gp7tu#/939/64/-75/-4/0/0.

FIGURE 3.19 The E-land capital building.

Mods

Texture packs and maps are nice, but if you really want to turn the game up to 11, you want to run mods. Mods can add features to the game—new ores, new recipes, new creatures. They can be great and incredibly frustrating.

Why frustrating? Each mod has to be written for a specific version of the game. A mod written for Minecraft 1.6.4 might not work with Minecraft 1.7.10. The incredible popularity of YouTube mod reviews over the past few years means that you could easily take a shine to mod only to discover that it was written for an older version of Minecraft.

Fortunately, Mojang has made modding easier in recent releases by allowing you to more easily manage and run different releases of the game.

But the easiest way to play mods is to use Technic Launcher.

Technic Launcher

Technic Launcher is a Minecraft launcher built and maintained by a group of independent developers. The Technic platform allows people to bundle collections of mods with a particular version of Minecraft and download them as a package. The Launcher comes with several packs of mods pre-installed. Most offer enhanced crafting, such as the ability to make advanced machines like mining drills, jet packs, and lava-powered generators.

First you have to download the Launcher.

1. Go to www.technicpack.net.

2. Click the Download link, and select the download for your operating system.

3. Once it downloads, double-click the TechnicLauncher.jar file (**Figure 3.20**).
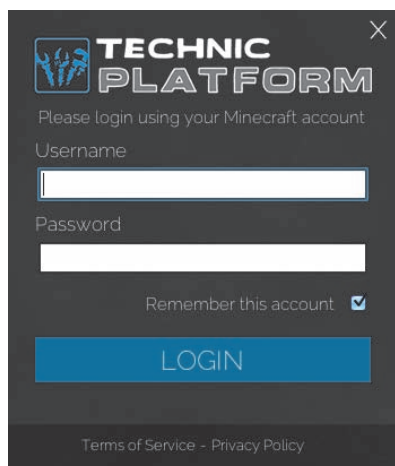
FIGURE 3.20 Log in to the Technic Launcher.

4. Log in with your Minecraft user ID and password, and the game home screen will load.

5. Use the arrows in the upper- and lower-left corners to scroll through the installed modpacks (**Figure 3.21**). The one in the middle of the column is the one selected to run when you click Play.

FIGURE 3.21 The Technic Launcher.

It's relatively easy to add more modpacks.

6. Click the Get More Modpacks button and the Technic website will load in your browser (**Figure 3.22**).
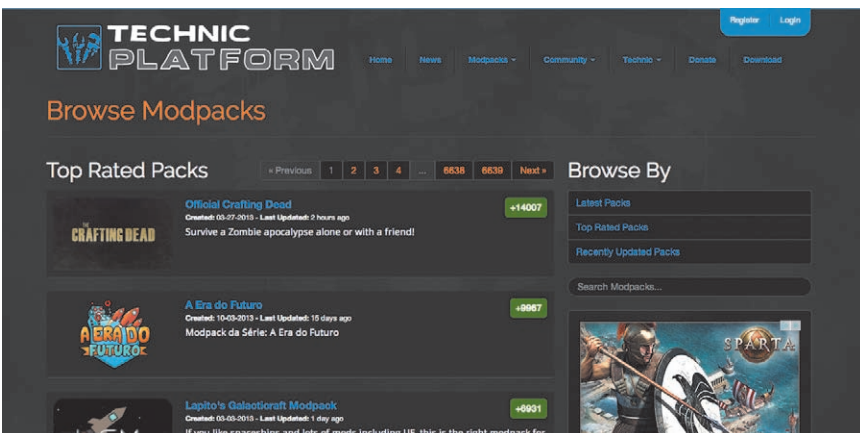

FIGURE 3.22 More modpacks than you can shake a stick at.

7. Hover over the Modpacks button and select Browse Modpacks.

8. Click the title of a modpack to open that modpacks page.

9. Copy the platform URL (**Figure 3.23**) and return to the Technic Launcher.

FIGURE 3.23 Pick a peck of modpacks.

10. Scroll through the list of modpacks until you get to Add New Pack.

11. Click the plus sign (+), and then paste in the platform URL.

The Launcher attempts to get the information for that pack.

12. Click Add Modpack.

> **NOTE:** To exit the Launcher, click the X in the upper-right corner.

Technic is the simplest way to play mods, but you have to choose someone else's pre-packaged collection. If you want to try your own combinations or run the hottest mod to hit downtown Minecraft, you'll need to run Forge.

Forge Mod Loader

Back in the dark ages, the world of Minecraft mods was like the Wild West. There were no standards, and mods were installed in a variety of arcane methods. Then along came Forge Mod Loader, a set of application programming interfaces that developers could use so that mods could be installed in a standard and relatively painless way. Mojang helped the process, too, by creating *profiles*. What are profiles?

1. Go back to the Minecraft Launcher.

2. Click the Profile Editor tab.

You'll see one profile there that's set to run the latest release of Minecraft (**Figure 3.24**).
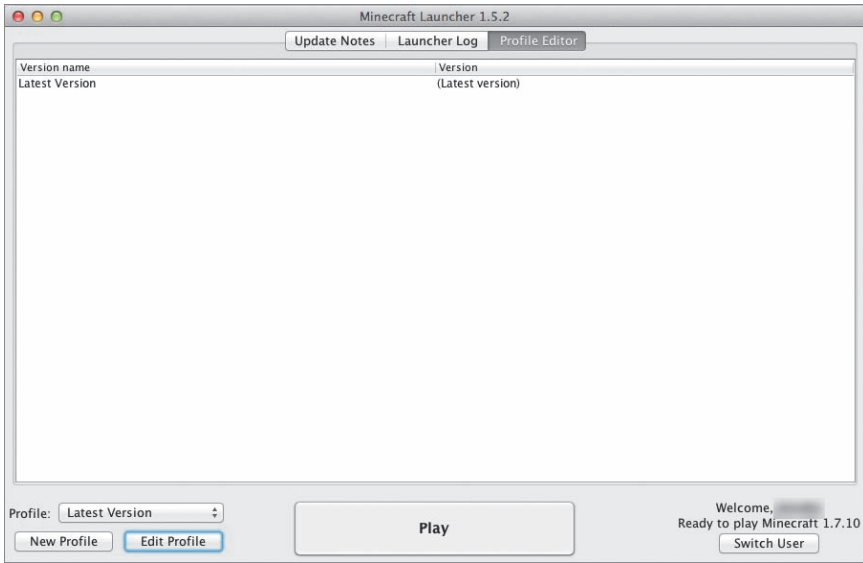
FIGURE 3.24 Profiles.

But you can make more profiles, each running a different version of the game. Why is that important for mods? Remember that mods are written for specific versions. Consequently, so is Forge Mod Loader.

If you're getting a mod that's written for Minecraft 1.7.10, you need a profile for that version. First, set up a profile for that version in Minecraft.

3. Click New Profile, give it an appropriate name, and select 1.7.10 from the Use Version pop-up list (**Figure 3.25**).

4. Run it, and the Launcher downloads that version to your computer.

You don't actually have to play, just click Quit Game once the Game Type menu loads. Now you want to get the right version of Forge from the Forge downloads page (**Figure 3.26**).

5. Go to http://files.minecraftforge.net.

FIGURE 3.25 New profile.

FIGURE 3.26 Forge downloads.

6. Click the link for the installer for the version of Minecraft under the Downloads column (it's best to choose the recommended release).

   Once the installer downloads, you need to run it.

7. Double-click the download to run it (**Figure 3.27**).

8. Make sure the path in the Forge mod installer is set correctly to your Minecraft folder, and then click OK to run the Forge installer.
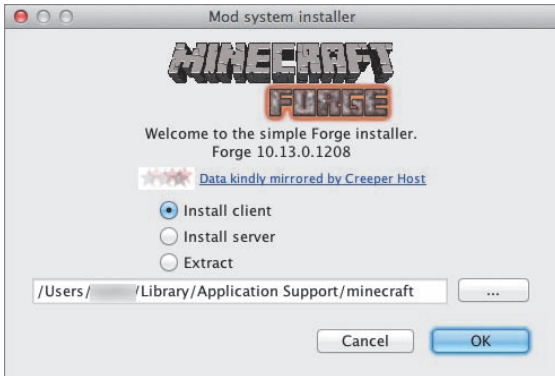

FIGURE 3.27 Forge installer.

The installer runs. It copies the folder for the right version of Minecraft, renames it with "Forge" in the name, and installs its components in that folder.

So far all you have is a new version folder.

9. Run Minecraft again and select that profile. It will appear as "Forge" in your list of profiles.

10. Click Play.

Since this is the first time Forge is running, it does some setup; in particular, it creates a "mod" folder in your Minecraft folder. You'll know everything's good so far if there's a Mods button (**Figure 3.28**) on the Game Type menu.

FIGURE 3.28 Success!

11. Quit the game yet again, and now let's find a mod.

One of the best sources for mods is the MCF Modlist, at http://modlist.mcf.li.

The MCF Modlist helpfully keeps listings of mods by version.

12. Click the List menu at the top of the page, and you can see each version and the number of mods the site has listed for that version.

Let's try one out. How about BattleTowers (**Figure 3.29**)?

FIGURE 3.29 Battle Towers.

Ooh, that sounds good. They're *towers* that you have *battles* in! Hard to go wrong.

13. Click the title of the mod and it will take you to the developer's page for that mod.

Many of these are postings on the Minecraft forum and can be confusing. Usually the developer will keep the first page of the forum post up to date with the latest release information and download links for the mod. Again, most use an advertising-based hosting service for the files.

Once you've downloaded the mod, you need to find it in your file manager. Some mods have to be unzipped and some don't. Check the developer's installation instructions to see. If the developer doesn't provide good instructions, just try it both ways. It won't harm anything.

14. Drag the mod into the mods folder in your Minecraft folder. Hang in there, you're almost playing.

15. Open Minecraft again and play the Forge profile.

16. Click the Mods button and you can see if your mod is installed. If it is, you're ready to play (**Figure 3.30**).
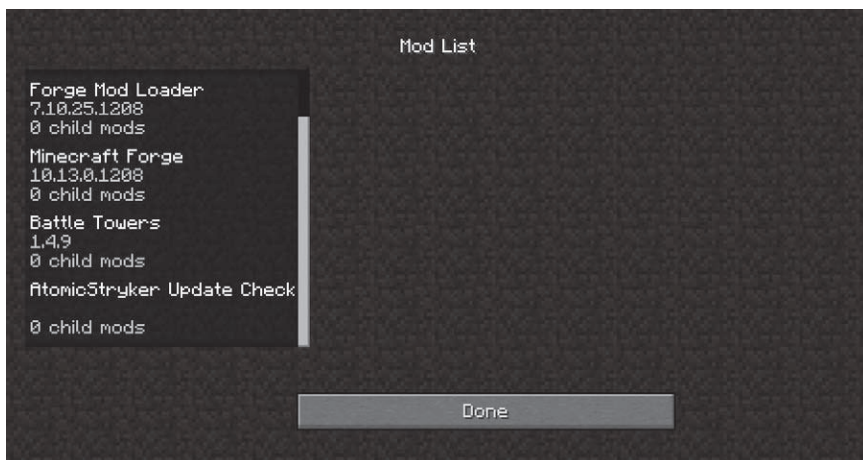
17. Click Done.

FIGURE 3.30 Ready to play!

You've taken your first step into a larger and more bewildering world. If you're looking for someone to separate the wheat from the chaff for you, a host of YouTube channels are dedicated to reviewing Minecraft mods: Try the Diamond Minecart (www.youtube.com/user/TheDiamondMinecart), SkyDoesMinecraft (www.youtube.com/user/SkyDoesMinecraft), and AshleyMarieeGaming (www.youtube.com/user/AshleyMarieeGaming).

Here are some recommended mods to help you get started:

- **The Lord of the Rings Mod:** http://lotrminecraftmod.wikia.com/wiki/The_Lord_of_the_Rings_Minecraft_Mod_Wiki

  This mod adds orcs, elves, and all the other denizens of J.R.R. Tolkien's world to Minecraft, as well as mithril swords, Gondorian towers, and dwarvish caverns. The mod comes with a life-sized Middle Earth map featuring all the requisite biomes. Start in the Shire and see if you can make it all the way to Mordor. The mod is still in beta, but the plan is to turn it into an adventure map that lets players play out the events of *The Lord of the Rings*.

- **Too Much TNT:** www.minecraftforum.net/forums/mapping-and-modding/minecraft-mods/1282366-1-6-4-too-much-tnt-mod-35-new-tnts

  Sometimes it's just fun to blow things up. This mod adds different and more powerful kinds of TNT to the game. Currently this mod is updated only for Minecraft 1.6.4. This is where the Profiles feature comes in handy; you can create a dedicated 1.6.4 profile.

- **Biomes O'Plenty:** www.minecraftforum.net/forums/mapping-and-modding/minecraft-mods/1286162-biomes-o-plenty-over-75-new-biomes-plants-and-more

  Minecraft comes with plenty of biomes, but Earth has more. With this mod you can get pretty much all of them, such as marshes, meadows, moors, and mountains. And that's just the *M*s.

Summary

There's really no wrong way to play Minecraft. Maybe you just like building in vanilla Minecraft, or maybe you want a tricked-out version with a dozen mods. The point is to make it what you want. The magic of the game is that you can.