

Participant Information Sheet

Securing Minecraft Servers: An Investigation into Game Server Threats and Defence

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We would like to invite you to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether to take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take some time to read the following information carefully, and please retain this copy for your personal records. Please ask if anything requires further clarification.

What is the purpose of the study?

Minecraft is an incredibly popular online game, with over 350 million purchases – making it the most sold game of all time. However, Minecraft’s online play aspect hugely revolves around player-run servers, which raises concerns about security. This study aims to investigate a sample of Minecraft players to understand how and what threats they perceive to their online play in Minecraft, as well as their awareness of security risks and best practice. This data will help inform decisions when developing a security-focused Minecraft plugin later during the project.

Why have I been invited to take part?

As a Minecraft player, you will likely have some experience with online play in Minecraft, whether as a player, a server owner, or both. By understanding your thoughts about threats and level of security knowledge based on other factors, you will be crucial to this project’s success.

Do I have to take part?

Participation in this research study is completely voluntary. This participant information sheet has been produced to help you decide if you would like to take part in this study. It is up to you (and you alone) to decide whether you wish to take part. If you do decide to participate, you will be free to withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason, and with no detriment to you.

How do I give my consent to participate in the study?

It is important that you give your informed consent if you decide to take part in this study, and you will have the opportunity to ask any questions in relation to the research before you provide your consent. If you are happy to participate in the study, you may indicate this by selecting ‘I Agree’ at the bottom of this page. You may choose to receive a copy of your survey responses by email, or save them to your Microsoft account, which will include your consent.

What does taking part involve?

On the next page you will be asked to answer a series of questions about your experience with online play in Minecraft. Questions will focus on how you play, what experience you have, if any, with hosting servers, and your overall security knowledge in the field. The survey will be conducted via a Microsoft Form, and should take no more than 10 minutes to complete, and can be completed throughout March 2026.

Are there any risks associated with taking part?

The study’s organiser does not foresee any significant risks to you that may arise out of your taking part in this study. Any data that may suggest vulnerable servers, or the existence of other security issues will be protected through anonymisation.

In order to protect your anonymity, please **do not submit any information that could be used to identify you**. If any data that could be reasonably used to identify you is found in free-text answer questions, the specific data will be removed from answers where possible, otherwise, your entire submission will be removed. Any data that has been removed this way will be disregarded and not influence any of the research.

Are there any benefits associated with taking part?

There is unlikely to be any direct benefit to taking part, however, the research will inform decisions in the development of a Minecraft server security plugin, which may be made available to you on request. Additionally, the responses will form part of a study that will help formalise certain security best practices on player-run game servers, and may prove beneficial to further studies in the field.

What will happen to my data?

Textual response data will be stored securely on university computing systems, and may be downloaded to the research teams' personal devices where needed. Responses will be fully anonymised by default as the study does not collect any personal or identifiable data.

All data generated by the study will be stored in research specific drives on secure servers of the University of Aberdeen and only accessed or transported by encrypted and password-protected devices. It will be retained in accordance with the University of Aberdeen Research Data Management Policy for 5 years after the project end date and thereafter permanently deleted in accordance with University IT data security procedures. You can also consult the University's Privacy Notice for Research Participants for further information on how we manage your data - <https://www.abdn.ac.uk/about/privacy/research-participants-938.php>.

Will my participation be confidential?

The data you provide will be analysed and may be used in publications and other scholarly means of disseminating the findings from the research project, but this will be done in such a way that your identity is not disclosed.

How will I find out about the results of the study?

Once the project is completed and submitted (on 1 May 2026), you may contact the principal investigator to request a copy of the final report and the resulting plugin. Alternatively, the report will be made available on the principal investigator's website (<https://piotr-weychan.dev/research>), and their GitHub (<https://github.com/PiotrWey>) at a later date.

Who is funding and/or sponsoring the study?

N/A

Who has reviewed the study?

The research has been approved by the School of Natural and Computing Sciences on the 10 March 2026.

Contact Details

If you have any general queries, require further information about the study or would like to withdraw your consent to participate, please contact the principal researcher:

Name: Piotr Weychan

E-mail: u02pw22@abdn.ac.uk

If you have any concerns about the way in which the study has been conducted, you can contact the Course/Programme Coordinator.

Name: Miles Everett

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Thank you for considering taking part in this study.