

Is the private game server legal?

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Online games are stored on a central server quite popular. Unlike other games that can be played back for a long time after they are released, online games will lose the server when they disappear. This makes the whole game unplayable, because no one has a server to connect.

Private server

However, some people host their own servers for gaming. This server is called a separate server and there is a lot of work to do to run that server. If the server owner succeeds, a forgotten game can be revived.

Some people even create their own game servers that are still active. The purpose of this is usually to take control of the game and perform features that the server owner wants to see in the game, including bringing the game back to a 'classic' state. Private servers also allow people to play games without paying for the main game. Regardless of the intention of the owner of the private server, the legality of creating and playing games on a separate server still needs to be considered.

It is worth noting at this stage that we want to include the servers created without the explicit permission of the developer. Some games allow users to store a server on their own hardware and this is obviously very legal!

Is it legal to own a private server?



The problem when owning a private server is that the owner needs to simulate the server somehow. This simulation process is usually done with the server code being leaked, cracked or stolen. If the player has no way to connect to the server, the owner also needs to distribute a client so everyone can connect. Both of these actions are illegal and copyright infringement, because you are making a copy from the results of others.

Some owners of private servers will receive donations from players to maintain the game. This is considered to turn a private server into a nefarious money-making tool and will often cause serious online game developers to suffer.

Things get softer when the private server is simulating an old game that has been 'deadly'. Although the game is no longer active, it is still illegal to store a server and distribute a client. However, unlike the simulation of an active game, no developer lost any revenue because the game was "dead" long ago.

Therefore, it is likely that an old game simulation server will appear, while servers simulating existing games will be forced to stop working.

Is it legal to play games on a private server?



Storing a private server may be illegal, but playing on a separate server is not. Because all legal issues are in simulating a server and distributing clients, actually playing on a separate server will not cause you legal trouble.

However, it is worth noting that many online games come with the End User's License Agreement (EULA) - stating that users cannot play games on their own servers. If EULA is violated, developers may prohibit you from playing games on the main servers.

Should you play on a private server?



Ideally not! If the game is still active, you should support the developer and play on their official servers, instead of downloading a separate client and playing the game for free. This will seriously affect developer revenue.

Playing a game that has been "eliminated" by the developer and has no official server on the private server can be more easily accepted by people.

People create their own servers for many reasons. Whatever the cause, creating a separate server is still a copyright violation. However, whether the server owner is prosecuted depends on the specific case.

Do you think people will be able to legally host a separate server for older games? Let us know in the comments below!

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