



NWC Multiplayer Connection and Hosting Guide v2 (for PC)

By Carlo – [message the author](#) with any suggestions, feedback or errata

Brought to you by the new [Neverwinter Connections](#), the Neverwinter Nights community multiplayer resource site.

Welcome to the world of Neverwinter Nights: Enhanced Edition multiplayer!

This guide will walk you through everything necessary to get in game as a player, or to host a game on your own computer as a player or Dungeon Master (DM).

For those new to multiplayer, it is recommended that you follow this guide as a step-by-step walkthrough, since later sections will assume that you know the information from previous sections.

You should be aware that the three different game client installation options (Beamdog, Steam and GoG) for NWN:EE result in some differences in user interface functionality and file locations. The directions given below should work across all installation types.

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I. Connecting to a Multiplayer Game

Launch the NWN:EE player client - how you normally would start the game - and select the "Multiplayer" menu option. The first time you select multiplayer mode, you may be prompted for a CD key and to choose your player name. Select either the "Join Internet Game" or "Join LAN Game" options, depending on where the game is being hosted. A server listing will be displayed (Beamdog's Gamespy-style one, pictured below) if joining an internet game.



The server listing by default is sorted by number of players; the above display is sorted by server name. You can click on the different column titles to sort the server listing various ways alphabetically. If you know which server or module name to look for, sorting and scrolling is probably the fastest way to find it. There are also several other self-explanatory filters available for the server list; local vault and server vault terms are explained below. Servers displayed in red are password protected.

To join a game, click on the server name and the "Connect" button, then enter the server password if prompted for one. You can also click the "Server Details" info button or "Add to Favorites" button with the server highlighted. If you prefer to connect to a server using its IP address, whether or not it is actually displayed in the list, as long as the server is live you can do that via the "Direct Connect" button and typing in its IP

address. (Of course, you need to have been provided the IP address ahead of time.) Once you have visited a server, it should also appear under your History tab.

Many modules have additional custom content in the form of hak files, which will need to go into your **Neverwinter Nights \ hak** folder before you can actually log into the server they are hosted on. This works the same way as if you were loading a community module with additional hak content.

- Some servers are set up to sync the client's hak folder automatically, by using the [NWSync tool](#), but in other cases you will have to separately download hak files and copy them to your \hak folder prior to connecting.
- Servers should have custom content requirements publicly posted in their online "Server Details". Because the same requirement for installing custom content exists to play a module in single-player mode, in fact there is nothing different to do for multiplayer. However, players sometimes are not aware a new hak is required, or forget to install it, which is a common reason for being unable to log into a server.

Once connected to a server, players will be given the option to Create Character or Select Character (if an existing one is already in their associated local vault / server vault folder; see below if you are unfamiliar with this terminology). The character creation / selection process is essentially the same as if loading a single-player module.

- "Local vault" means that the server will accept characters from a player's computer, exactly as in a single-player game. This is normally an option used for small group play, when people want to bring in existing characters.
- "Server vault" means that only characters that have been created by the player **on that specific server** are available for use. This is typical for persistent world (PW) servers.

DM client instructions: In order to play as a Dungeon Master (DM), you will need to start the game with the command line switch **-dmc** to load the DM client. A reliable way to do this is to locate the **nwmain.exe** file in your **NWN:EE program files** installation folder – typically in the subfolder "[Program File path]\bin\win32" for those running Windows – and create a new desktop shortcut to it. Then, right-click and edit the shortcut properties, so that after the file location string ends in a quotation mark, **-dmc** appears, with a space between it and the quotation mark.

Below are some sample DM client shortcuts from GoG, Steam and Beamdog NWN:EE installations. Yours may be somewhat different, depending on how you chose to install the game's program files.

- **GoG** - "C:\Program Files (x86)\GalaxyClient\Games\Neverwinter Nights Enhanced Edition\bin\win32\nwmain.exe" -dmc
- **Steam** – "C:\Program Files(x86)\Steam\steamapps\common\Neverwinter Nights\bin\win32\nwmain.exe" -dmc
- **Beamdog** – "C:\Users\[name]\Beamdog Library\NWN EE\00785\bin\win32\nwmain.exe" -dmc

You will know that you've succeeded in launching the DM client when you start the game and can *only* select the Multiplayer mode. The DM client uses only local DM vault characters, so after you've created one DM character, you can use it in any module.

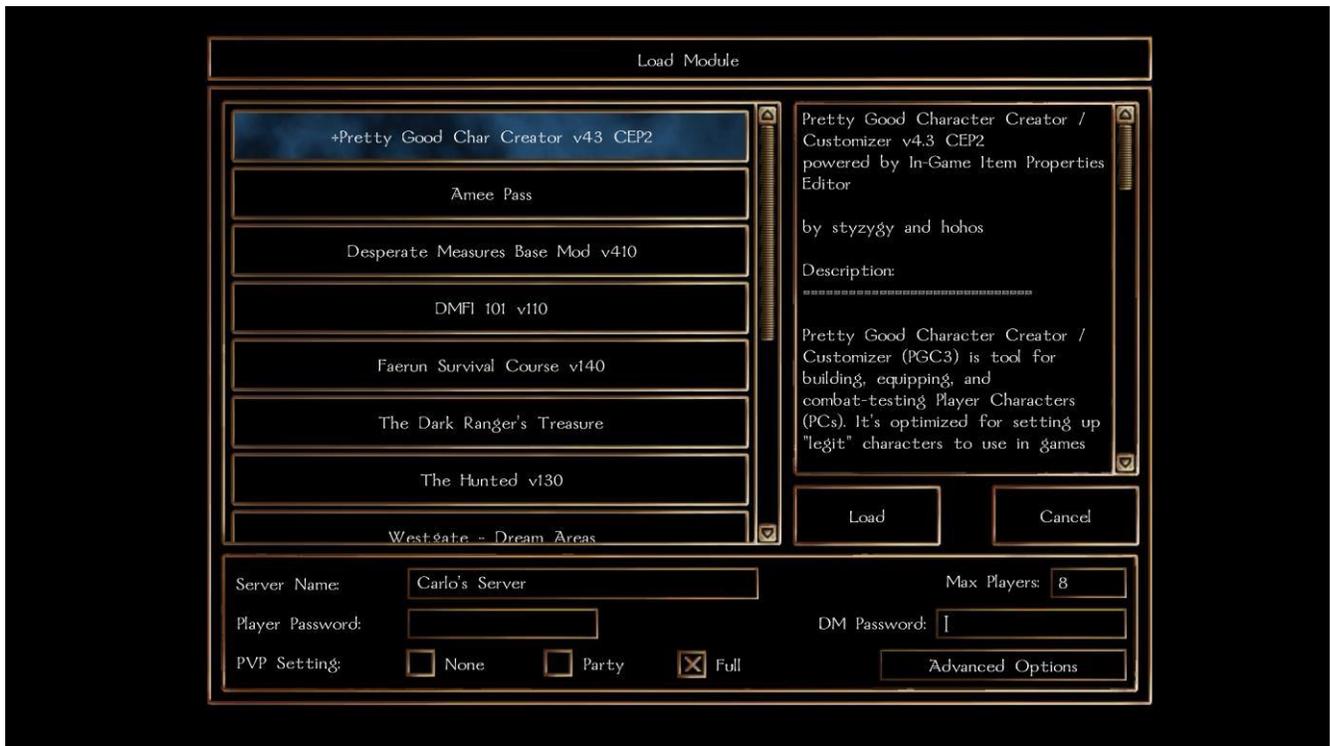
As either a player or DM, after selecting the character you want (or having created a new one), hit Play. You're now headed in-game!

II. Hosting a Module using the Client interface

You can host a module on your computer in one of two ways: by hosting using your player or DM client, or by launching a separate server application (NWServer). The first way may be easier for those who are new to hosting, and it is also a good way to quickly adjust most of the server settings in-game, although the second way has some practical advantages, for example being able to separately view and manage the server while it is running.

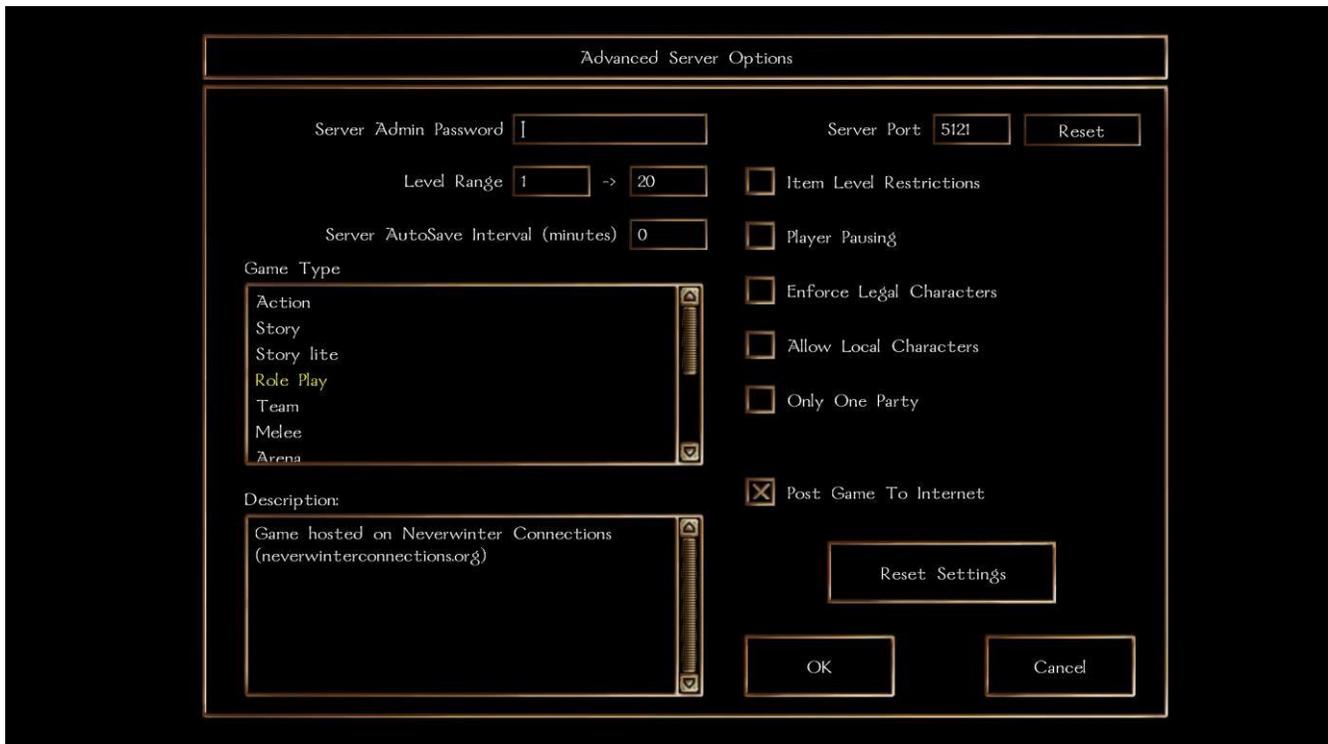
We'll start with how to set up and host a game from your client. Launch your NWN:EE client, as either a player or DM. Once the program loads, select the "Multiplayer" option. Then choose "New Internet/LAN Game" to host a new module, or "Load Internet/LAN Game" to use a previously saved game.

Before the module loads, you'll see a server options screen with "Load Module" at the top. Let's look at each of the sections and their options.



- Server name: name it whatever you want, keeping in mind that is how it will be displayed in Beamdog's server list, if you are posting it publicly.
- Player and DM passwords: set these if you want to require a password for access to your server. A DM password should always be set, if a game posted publicly.
- PVP Setting: controls whether players can damage each other while on your server. "None" and "Full" are self-explanatory. "Party" means that players can only damage other players who are not in their current party.
- Max players: maximum number of players allowed at one time on the server (including DMs).

Next, let's look at the Advanced Options screen.



- **Server Admin Password:** can be ignored, does not actually do anything in this setup. It defaults to the DM password, if any.
- **Level range:** total number of levels that each PC (player character) on the server is allowed to have. Players are not allowed to enter the server if their total levels are above the range. You will also not be able to level up in-game past the set limit.
- **Server autosave:** set the interval in minutes if you want the server to autosave the game; leave at 0 for no autosave.
- **Game type:** in NWN, when the old Master Server was active, this used to determine in what Gamespy room the server would appear. Currently nonfunctional, as there is only one consolidated server listing for NWN:EE.
- **Description:** public description of server. Note that this is different from the module description, which is set by the module author in the toolset.
- **Server port:** the computer port your server uses to connect to the Internet. Do not change from the default (5121) unless you know what you are doing (i.e. you have custom firewall, router, or ISP settings).
- **Item Level Restrictions:** enforces magical item use restrictions by PC level; PCs then cannot use items graded above their current level.
- **Player Pausing:** when enabled, players can use the pause button as in a normal single-player game; this pauses the entire server, so most servers do not enable this option. DMs however can always use the pause button.
- **Enforce Legal Characters:** anything the server detects as a modified (hacked) PC will not be allowed. Sometimes legitimate PCs can be affected, so use with care.

- **Allow Local Characters:** if checked, players can select PCs stored on their own computers (“local vault”). If unchecked, players will use PCs stored on the server instead (“server vault”) - if they don’t have one yet on a server, they will have to create one. Server Vault is often used to reduce the chances of cheating, or to enforce a common character creation process on players. Note: remember that the DM client always uses local vault, so this setting does not affect DMs.
- **Only One Party:** everyone joining the server will be automatically assigned to the same party. This option is typically used by an established playing group that doesn’t want to bother with having to manually party up in-game every time.
- **Post Game to Internet:** makes the server publicly visible in the Beamdog list. If this option is unchecked and you are connected to the internet, your game will still be available for others to connect to. However, they will need to type in the server’s IP address using the Direct Connect option.

Once you have completed your selections on the Advanced screen, hit the “OK” button to return to the “Load Module” screen. From there, select the module or save game file to load and hit the “Load” button.

- **Loading server vault saved games:** in this case, be aware that players entering the game will be given the option to select either their PC version from the savegame, or the one from the server vault. Normally players should select the savegame version, otherwise they may find themselves in a different location upon entering the game (wherever the PC was at the last point the server vault saved it).

If you are the host, it’s useful to know that you can manually create a server vault folder for a player, and also copy and paste any player character files (the ones with a .bic extension) into it, for them to use. For example, if you allow your players to create their own characters before a long-term campaign, they can be sent to you before the game starts, but then their character files will all reside on the server afterwards. Another example is if you are playing in your own server vault game and want to bring in a local vault PC, you can just copy the desired .bic (character) file from your localvault to servervault folder.

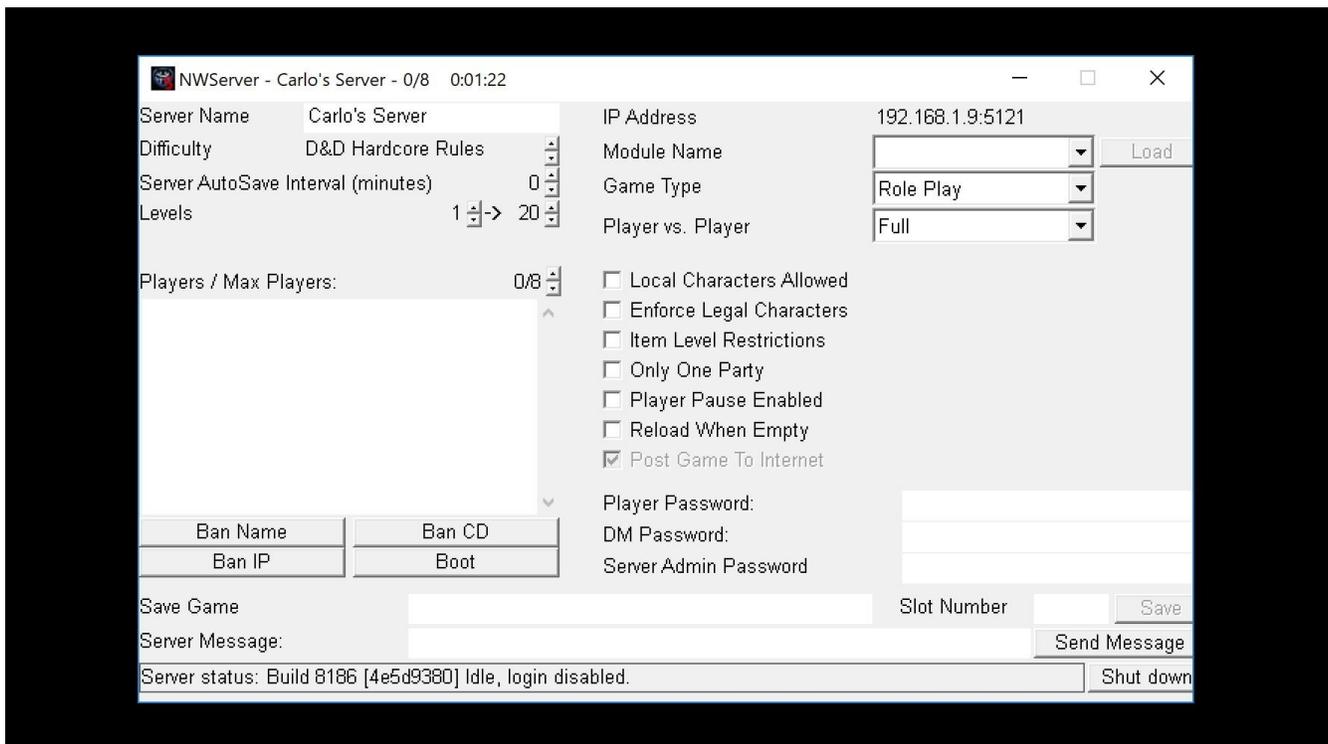
III. Hosting a Module using separate server and client applications

You can also launch separate server and client applications when hosting a game. The main drawback of using the client as the host is that you can’t separately view or control the server. This is often helpful, for example, to see how many players and who exactly

is on the server, confirm the server is visible on the Beamdog list, ban/boot players if necessary from the server interface, or save games with different names while in progress (not just quicksave). Also, in the event your client crashes and it is also the game host, then the game goes down with it, while in a separate server/client setup you can just restart and reconnect the client.

To launch the server application separately, first go to your NWN:EE **Program Files** and create a desktop shortcut to **nwserver.exe** (since you'll be using it often, right?) The file should be in the same folder as your nwmain.exe file.

Once the application loads, you will see the NWServer interface on your desktop (pictured below). Server options are exactly the same as described above, with a drop-down menu in the upper right section next to "Module Name" for loading modules and savegame files. However, you have some additional functions as well.



- **Difficulty:** you can now adjust the difficulty level using the up/down rocker buttons, including while the game is running.
- **Players / Max Players** shows the number of players currently on and the total allowed (0/8 for example). You can adjust the max players setting using the rocker buttons.

- Below that is a white box containing a list (by Player name) of anyone currently on the server. If you click on a player name, you can then use one of the four options listed below the box: Ban Name, Ban CD, Ban IP, or Boot.
- The Ban options permanently block that person from accessing the server based on their Player name, CD key, or IP address. Which one you select to use is based on what you think will keep them out most effectively. The usual order of longterm effectiveness from least to greatest is Name, IP, and CD. Boot will disconnect the player from the server, but allow them to return afterwards.
- Save Game: type the desired name and the slot number and hit the “Save” button. If a game already occupies the save slot, you can either overwrite it or cancel.
- Server Message: type text in this box and hit “send message” to send a server text message to all players in-game. This is handy for announcing server reboots or other technical issues that affect everyone in-game.
- IP address: it’s worth noting that if you are behind a LAN, this will likely only show your local IP address, in which case it should be ignored for connection purposes. (You can always internet search on “What is my IP address” to get your actual public one, for use with the Direct Connect option.)

In order to permanently change the default settings for the NWServer application, the easiest route may be to launch the client as a host and modify the options there, which are then automatically saved; note that NWServer interface changes are only temporary. Alternatively, you can edit the **settings.tml** text file in the main Neverwinter Nights data folder. Additional settings options are detailed in the next section of this guide.

Once NWServer is up and running, you can separately launch your client as if you were playing a normal multiplayer game. You can confirm if your server is publicly listed by selecting the “Join Internet Game” option. To actually get in-game as the host, however, instead you will need to select the “Join LAN Game” option. Your server info will appear at the top of the screen and you can highlight and connect to it.

IV. Settings and Server Options

Starting with Patch 1.79, NWN:EE has consolidated the previous multiple .ini files into **settings.tml** in your base Neverwinter Nights information folder. This file can be edited with a normal text editor, if you want to make adjustments directly. Many of the multiplayer settings can also be adjusted via the client’s hosting interface, as detailed above. Below you will find information on other multiplayer-relevant settings and what they do.

How server vault settings work: By default, player character files are stored in the server vault folder in a sub-folder named after their CD key, rather than their actual player name. This means that when you view the **Neverwinter Nights \ servervault** folder, you cannot tell from the sub-folder name who it belongs to. This is intended to serve as a security feature, but at the same time makes it more difficult to identify and manually change server vault files, if you are trying to do that for particular players.

To change server vault settings to use player names, do the following:

- Scroll down in the settings.tml file to where you see the [server] section
- In the last part of it, under [server.vault], make sure the following are shown as:
by-player-name = true
sticky-player-names = true

The sticky player names option effectively forces players to use only one name per CD key on your server, in other words the same CD key cannot be associated with multiple player names.

One other server vault note, you should leave the “suppress-base = false” setting as is, unless you are sharing a server vault with another computer.

Other Server and Gameplay options: settings.tml is easy to navigate and you can change a variety of other options that can affect the multiplayer hosting and play experience. The below MP-relevant options are presented in order of appearance in the file, with explanations in parentheses (*like this*). Only options not previously mentioned in this guide are given.

[game.log] (*this is the section for the client log settings - not the server logs. If chat log options are enabled as true, every time you exit a game with your player or DM client, a text file called “nwclientLog1” will be saved in the Neverwinter Nights\logs folder. IMPORTANT: after exiting the game, be sure to rename the log file, or save it in another directory, to prevent it from being overwritten the next time you play. Tip: it’s often helpful to create a desktop shortcut to the logs sub-folder, and/or to your main Neverwinter Nights data folder, for easy access.*)

[game.log.chat]

[game.log.chat.all]

enabled = true (*this saves all client chat window messages in the log*)

[game.log.chat.emotes]

enabled = true (*all graphic emotes are logged as their text equivalent*)

[game.log.chat.text]

enabled = false (*if true, then the text part of the chat window is logged; if both this and chat.all are set to true, then the text chat will duplicate in the log*)

[ruleset] *(this section has a number of gameplay-affecting settings, which normally should be understood by the entire group playing, in order to avoid confusion)*

- *always-roll-max-hitpoints-on-levelup = false (set it to true to make it max out)*
- *natural-ones-fail-saving-throws = true (this means there is always at least a 5% chance of failing a saving throw, based on a d20 roll. Otherwise, with enough bonuses a saving throw will become automatic.)*
- *show-active-effects = true (graphically displays effects. Set to false if this is viewed as annoying or if it slows down performance.)*
- *show-challenge-ratings = true (set to false if you do not want PCs to be able to see the CR level of a creature when examining them in-game)*
- *validate-spells = true (this setting normally means that the server will not allow spells not included in the server files, typically an anti-cheating mechanism. Custom content modifications may make this necessary to be set to false.)*

[server]

- *restore-spell-uses-on-login = true (this has the server track spell use and restore the previously saved state if a character logs out and back in)*
- *savegames-store-characters = true (stores a separate copy of each character inside a savegame, including their location at time of save)*
- *savegames-vault-characters-only = false (set to true to use only vault copies of characters in savegames)*
- *show-dm-join-messages = true (set this to false if you want DMs to stealth login, otherwise a server message is sent to all players when a DM enters)*

[server.log] *(this is the section for the separate server log, saved as nwserverLog1.txt in the Neverwinter Nights \ logs folder)*

[server.log.creature-deaths]

enabled = true (records information about creature deaths, as a debug or anti-cheating mechanism, or just if you're interested in such things)

[server.log.heartbeats]

enabled = false (recommend only set to true for debugging purposes)

[server.log.rotation]

enabled = false (IMPORTANT: if set to false, then each time the server is shut down, it will append its log to the existing text file. If set to true, then the file is overwritten in the same manner as the client log file.)

V. Now that I can host, what next?

Although it may appear like a complicated process if you haven't hosted before, once you've done it once or twice, it quickly gets easier. And the best way to get familiar with it is to actually host games, either for your friends or for other interested players in the community.

The [Neverwinter Connections](#) community multiplayer resource site – relaunched in February 2019 – is freely available for anyone to use to help organize playing sessions using its events calendar, forums and Discord.

Suggestions on community modules to host:

- [A validated list of multiplayer modules](#) that do not require a DM to play.
- [The DM-Friendly Initiative module list](#) includes ones which have all the necessary documentation for DMs to run their own game “out-of-the-box”.

Tech note: Beamdog has implemented robust multiplayer tunneling / NAT punching features for NWServer. This basically means that most people will not have to make any manual changes to their router settings to host a game behind a LAN (which is the default type of internet connection if you're on WiFi). That said, the only sure way to find out if it works for you is to post a game to the internet and have someone else (not on your LAN) attempt to connect to it.

If for whatever reason you are on a network where the outside connection doesn't work automatically, in order to host you'll need to change your router settings to forward at minimum the client port (5121) to your host computer on the LAN. [Here is one of the clearest explanations I've seen for NWN](#), which works with NWN:EE as well.

This guide does not contain everything there is to know about server hosting and multiplayer, so you may also want to [visit the official Beamdog forums](#) for the latest information, as well as the [NWN:EE Multiplayer Resource page](#) for additional guides on the multiplayer experience, including how to create your own ones as a module builder and DM. We hope you enjoy!

