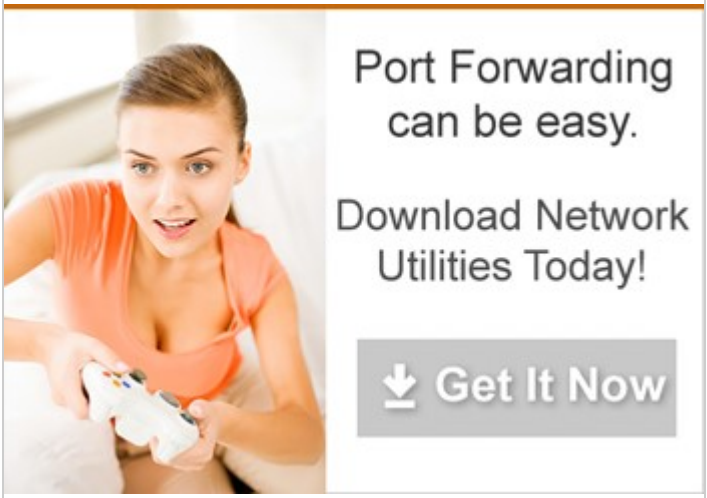

How to Port Forward.

If you are wondering where to start or what exactly needs to be done, you have come to the right place. This guide will provide a overview of what you need to do and know to forward ports to your computer. It will also provide an order to the guides on these pages, and help you avoid several common pitfalls.

In order to forward properly you really need to understand what port forwarding is. This might seem like an irrelevant step, but it is not. Port forwarding is akin to driving a car. It's very difficult for most people. The more you know about port forwarding the easier it will be to get your ports from point A to point B. Imagine if you tried to go to the store without first learning how to drive your car. Well enough of this introduction, let's get to work. The very first thing you should do is to read the following guide which will explain what port forwarding is. Don't worry it's really short.
What is port forwarding?

Now that you have some idea of what we are about, let's see if we can find your router. Your router should be some kind of box that your computer is connected to. The box might have a cable TV or phone line coming out of it. It probably has serveral flashing lights on the front of it. The cable that will run from your computer to this box is called a network cable. The ends of this cable look like the ends of a large phone cable. When you find this box, it will probably have a maker and model number on it. If you can't find the make and model number check the stickers on the bottom of the router. Write this information down. We will use it later.

Let's figure out what ports you need to forward. The first place to check is our Common Ports page. Some of the program names will be highlighted in orange. That means the name is a link, and you can click that name for further information. We have written guides for many programs. Go ahead and check the common ports page now for the program you want to forward ports for. If you find a guide for the program you are forward ports for, follow it. After you have completed that guide come back here for further information. If you did not see the program there, you will need to find that information on the internet. Usually the software manufacturer's website is the best place for that information. Sometimes it can be very hard to find out which ports you need forward for a program. Whereever you find the ports you need to forward, be sure to write that information down. There should be a series of ports listed, along with the protocol type of those ports. Usually this protocol type will be TCP or UDP.

Let's goto our Router page. As you can see we have a lot of routers listed on that page. Go ahead and find your router on that list. If you found a guide for your router on our website, go ahead and click it to open it.

We need to setup a static ip address on the computer you are going to forward ports to. A lot of people struggle with this. Really it's not that tough, so don't worry. The first

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IP Address with your router guide. Go ahead and follow that guide now. If you can not connect to your router, make sure you are entering your computer's gateway into the web browser. If you are sure that you are entering your computer's gateway into your web browser and it's still giving you a page can not be found, your router is probably setup as bridge. Your computer would be behind your ISP's NAT. You should contact your ISP and ask them for a public ip address. If you can not connect to the internet after following that guide, it is probably because you have the wrong DNS servers. Give your ISP a call and ask them what DNS servers to use. They should be able to tell your right off. If they can't at least you can smile, because at this point you probably know more about networking than they do. Then go back to your TCP/IP configuration and put in the correct dns servers.

Now that you have setup a static ip address, you are ready to forward ports. You can use port forwarding or port triggering to forward ports. Generally you should use port forwarding. Only use port triggering when the software manufacturer provided specific port triggering settings for the program you are forwarding ports for. Never have the same port numbers defined in the port forwarding and port triggering page. Doing that basically screws things up, and neither configuration will work. Also do not put the same port numbers in more than one configuration. Doing that will also prevent those configurations from working properly. I'm not sure why people do that, but I've seen it often enough. Alright go ahead and open up the port forwarding or port triggering guide for your router. Remember those guides can be found on our Forwarding page. Forward all the ports that need to be forwarded for the program you are running. This will probably require setting up multiple configurations in your router. When you are done creating configurations remember to save those settings, and then reboot your router for the settings to take effect.

Alright! The ports should be forwarded. Now we need to make sure that there are no firewalls blocking those ports. Now there are a couple places that ports can be blocked. Your ISP can block ports in their router. Hopefully this is not the case, because there is little we can do about that. If your ISP is blocking the ports required by the program you are forwarding ports for, check the program for a port configuration. Sometimes programs will allow you set the port that it uses. You could then set that program to use some port that is not being blocked by your ISP. How can you tell which port is not being blocked? You can't. You really need to just try different ports, until you find one that works. Your router can have a firewall that is blocking ports from coming into your network. You could have a personal firewall installed on your computer. You need to allow those ports through that firewall. The ports you have forwarded need to be allowed through every personal firewall you have on your computer.

Sometimes things just don't work out. I'll give a couple suggestions here, that will hopefully help you fix any problems you encounter. If everything was done properly above, the ports should be forwarded. That is assuming your ISP is not blocking those ports.

In your router you can DMZ your computer's ip address. Almost every router has a DMZ. The DMZ forwards all ports

computer, you know that the ports were not forwarded properly. Disable the DMZ. Then go take another look at the port forwarding configuration in your router. If the ports are still not forwarded after you dmz your computer, there is probably a software firewall on your computer that is blocking those ports or your isp is blocking the ports. Take a really good look for a software firewall on your computer.

You can also simplify the port forwarding problem, by disabling firewalls. Turn off all firewalls on your computer and then disable the firewall on your router. NAT(Network Address Translation) will act as a pretty good temporary security system. NAT is already enabled if you are forwarding ports. If the ports are forwarded after turning off the firewalls, you know that one of the firewalls was causing the problem. Turn the firewalls on one at a time, to figure out which one was causing the problem. Then open the ports that you forwarded in that firewall.

Well I hope you found this guide helpful. Good luck!

-Dave Clark PORTFORWARD.COM

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Jason Bauer is an owner and programmer for PortForward. You can find more of his articles in the Games and Applications section of our site.