

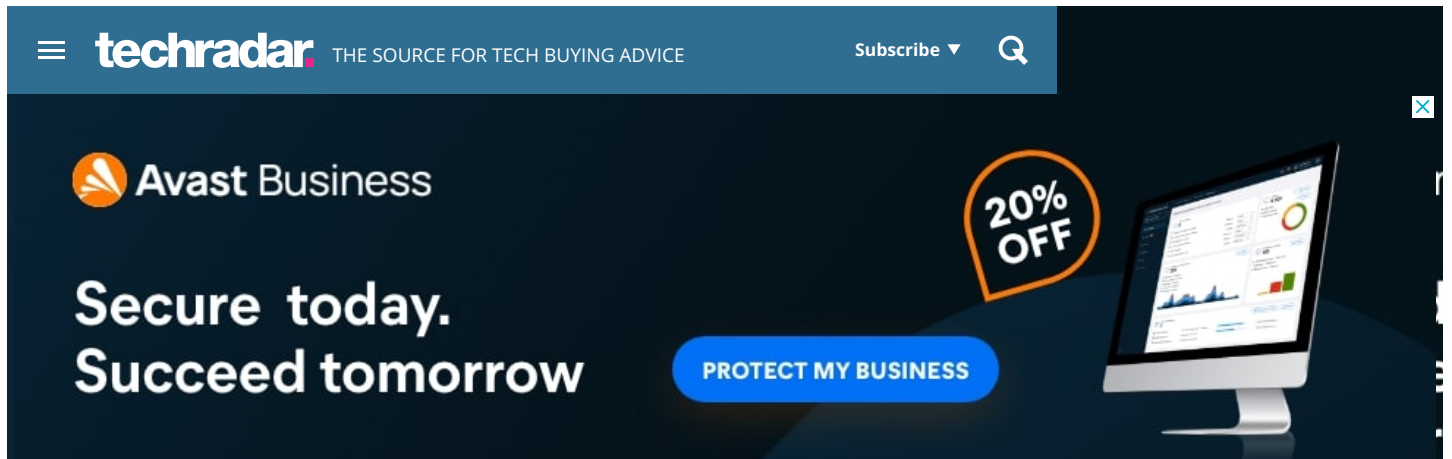
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## Outbreak Private servers - keeping online games alive after official support drops

By [Rosalie Newcombe](#) 16 days ago

Communities keeping games online



(Image credit: TechRadar)

It's happened to all of us: there's been a multiplayer game we loved to play and sink hours upon hours into, but due to various reasons, the servers are eventually shut down and we're no longer able to play the game that once brought us so much joy.

It could be because of a dwindling size in its player base, licensing issues or a bumpy start which never led to profitable success, but more and more we are seeing games disappearing from view because the servers that once supported these online-only games are no longer available.

However, in recent years there have been efforts by communities around certain games to create their own private servers, mirroring how the game used to operate, and now it's merely a matter of following a guide and checking to see if your favored

## Servers aren't free

Earlier in the year, Gearbox Software thanked players for playing as it shut down the servers entirely for [Battleborn](#). This game had the unfortunate circumstance of being released days before Blizzard's Overwatch, and despite its popularity, it couldn't find its footing and its server closure in January of this year felt almost inevitable. The game did have a single campaign mode, but that was also online only and can longer be played.

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Having servers costs money, and if a game is starting to cost more to host than it takes in, it'd be advisable for any studio to stop the support and move onto something else entirely, however, this doesn't bode well for game preservation.

There is some glimmer of hope. Over the years fans of older games have been creating their own private servers to enable people to play games that they'd normally have no access to. Online modes too, such as the online multiplayer to Nintendo's Mario Kart Wii, which was inaccessible since May 2014 due to the termination of their Nintendo Wi-Fi Connection (NWC), have now been given a second life via private servers.


The Sims Online, released back in 2002, was the first and only multiplayer Sims game but closed its servers back in 2008. However, because of the dedicated Sims fans out there, you can currently play The Sims Online in the form of FSO (or Free

Since its release, we've even seen well-known YouTube Let's Players such as [Call Me Kevin](#), making multiple successful videos playing The Sims Online and showing off their various funny antics, which they wouldn't be available to do via official channels.

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Quarantine means no socializing but we still have Sims Online



## The benefits of private servers

When I first learned about private servers, it was from some of my favorite games, namely Resident Evil Outbreak File #1 and its sequel File #2.

Originally released in Japan in 2003, Outbreak File 1 was Resident Evil's first foray into online gaming and puts players into a variety of different survival horror scenarios, each with their own stories, puzzles, and game staple B.O.W's (Bio-Organic Weapons). There's a great roster of characters to play as, each with their own gameplay advantages which can help you get through scenarios more smoothly.

A personal favorite of mine is the character Jim Chapman with his 'play dead' ability, which allows him to do exactly that – pretend to be dead, which allows zombies to pass by you without being alerted to your presence.

oo. In the scenario 'Wild Things' music amps up. Along with the slowly growing virus indicator in the bottom left corner, which once at 100% it's game over, each scenario leaves you feeling tense and exhilarated.



(Image credit: Capcom)

## Outbreak lives online again

You can play offline or with up to 3 players online, however the servers shut down for North America in 2007, followed by Japan four years later. Similarly, with Sims Online there is a dedicated community using private servers to allow for people still to play Outbreak File 1 and File 2, which you can do if you own a Japanese PlayStation 2 or via emulation.

14 years after the initial release of the games, Resident Evil 7 featured an Outbreak easter egg in the form of a newspaper article within the Baker Family Home, being written by the character Alyssa Ashcroft.

It may just be that, a fun easter egg, but it gives me hope that we'll see a day where Capcom decides to give the Outbreak games the remaster or remake treatment, something I think would go down well in the days of streaming games with friends. Until then, you can play and experience Outbreak File and File 1 thanks to those private servers and if you're a [Resident Evil](#) fan, I'd wholeheartedly recommend it.







(Image credit: Capcom)

Currently, if you want to get your online fix of a Resident Evil game there's always Resident Evil Resistance, available currently on the PC, PlayStation 4 and Xbox One. But like with Battleborn and many games that have come and gone, Resistance is online-only, even for its single-player campaign, so its future is also inevitably to face server shutdowns.

With the market being ever more saturated with 'online only' games, the list of games we will no longer have access to will only continue to grow, so who knows what the future of games preservation will be. I'm just glad that there are people out there working hard, putting together their private servers to allow us access to those games, and online modes, we thought really were lost to time.

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