

How to play Dots-&-Boxes

Instructional Manual

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Introduction

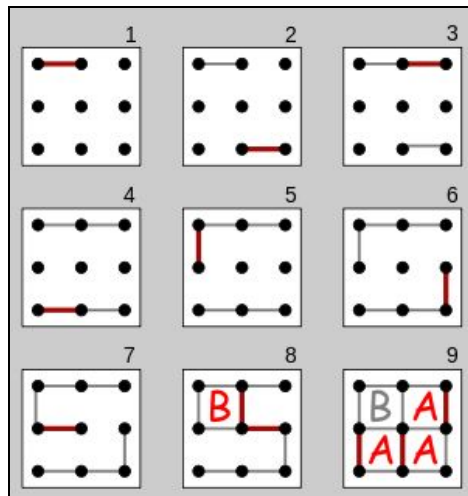
Hello and thank you for downloading Dots & Boxes, we hope you enjoy playing this fun game.

Rules of the Game

Starting a new game with an empty grid of dots, players take turns, adding a single horizontal or vertical line between two unjoined adjacent dots. A player who completes the fourth side of a 1 x 1 box earns one point and is allowed to take another turn. The game ends when no more lines can be placed. The winner of the game is the player with the most points.

Example of game play

Below is a demonstration of 2 players playing Dots & Boxes step-by-step. Player A will be have the first turn and next Player B and so on.



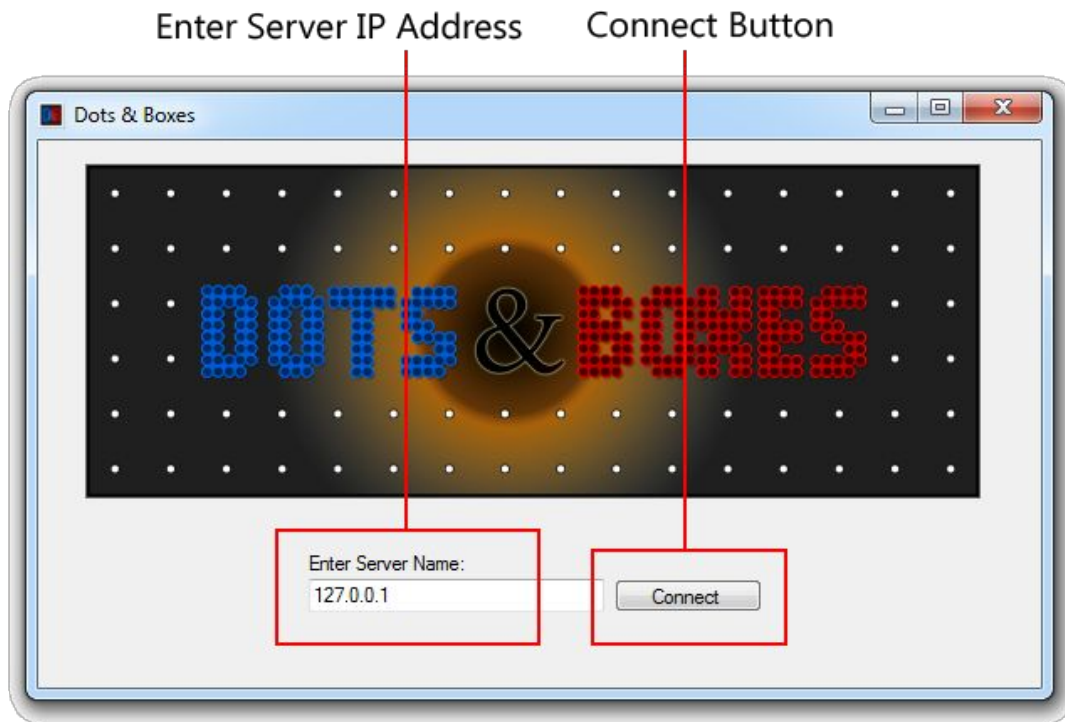
Played Steps:

1. **Player A** has added a single horizontal line.
2. **Player B** has added a single horizontal line.
3. **Player A** has added a single horizontal line.
4. **Player B** has added a single horizontal line.
5. **Player A** has added a single vertical line.
6. **Player B** has added a single vertical line.
7. **Player A** has added a single horizontal line.
8. **Player B** has added a single vertical line, and has completed a box and takes an additional turn.
Player B has added a single horizontal line.
9. **Player A** has added a single vertical line, and has completed a box and takes an additional turn.
Player A has added a single vertical line, and has completed a box and takes an additional turn.
Player A has added a single vertical line, and has completed a box and takes an additional turn.

No more lines can be placed with which ends the game. Player A has earned 3 points and Player B has only 1 point declaring Player A the winner of this game.

Connecting to a Server

The first steps getting started is entering a server IP address in the input form under **Enter Server Name**. An example below is using the localhost (127.0.0.1) as the example server. Once you have a server name, you then click the **Connect** button to gain access. A list of dedicated game servers is provided below.



Graphical User Interface of selecting the game server

List of Server Names

Server Name	Server IP Address
Default Dots-&-Boxes Server (USA)	127.0.0.1
Dots-&-Boxes Server B	0.0.0.0
Dots-&-Boxes Server C	0.0.0.0

Creating an Account

Register a username

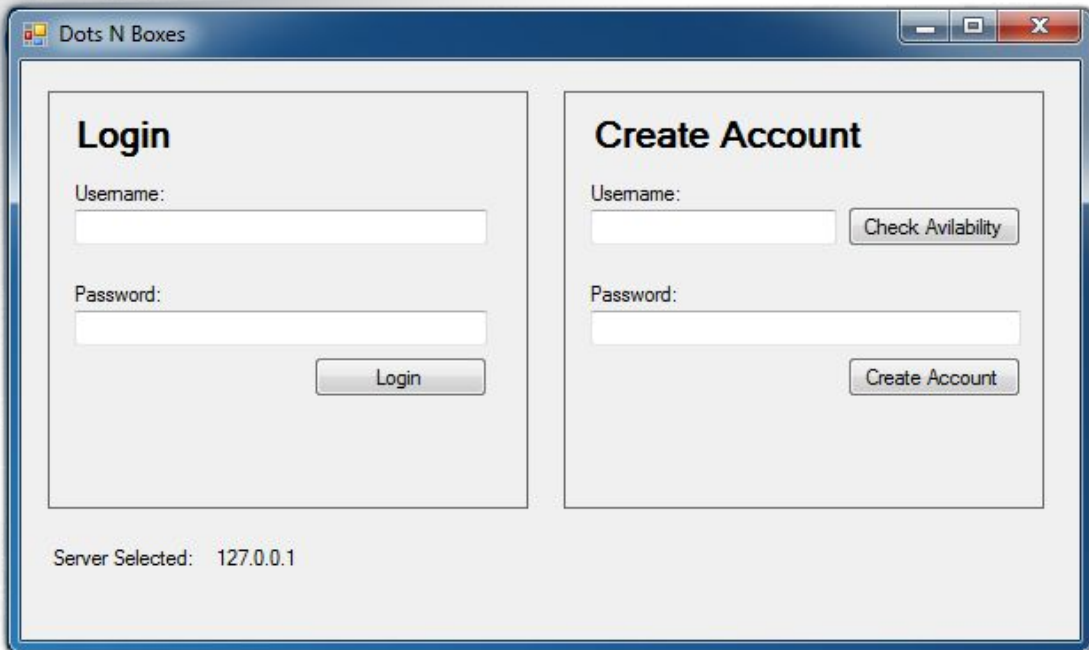
In order to play the game, you are required to register a username and password. Remember that your username has to be unique, so please check if it's available on your selected server by clicking the **Check Availability** button. Once you have a username and password, select **Create Account** and you will automatically be signed in the server.

Username Rules

- A username can contain numbers and alphabet letters
- A username can only contain between 3 and 20 characters
- A username can **NOT** have spaces

Password Protection

- Passwords are using RSA Encryption for security



The screenshot shows a Windows-style application window titled "Dots N Boxes". The window is divided into two main panels. The left panel is titled "Login" and contains two text input fields labeled "Username:" and "Password:". Below the "Password:" field is a "Login" button. The right panel is titled "Create Account" and contains two text input fields labeled "Username:" and "Password:". To the right of the "Username:" field is a "Check Availability" button. Below the "Password:" field is a "Create Account" button. At the bottom left of the window, it says "Server Selected: 127.0.0.1".

GUI - Logging into the selected game server

Server Game List Room

Once you have successfully logged onto the game server, you are allowed to join a game on the Game List. The list will show the name of the room, grid size of the game, and number of players. Select the desired game and click start.

Leaderboard & Scoreboard

A score of each game will be recorded on the selected server on the scoreboard.

The screenshot shows the 'Dots & Boxes' application window. It features a 'Games' list on the left and a 'Leaderboards' section on the right. Red boxes and lines highlight specific elements: the game name, board size, number of players, and the private/open status of the rooms.

Games List:

Name	Board Size	Players
(P) Cylon empire	8X8	1/4
(P) IceCreamNetworkLab	8X8	2/4
(O) AngelCookieMonster	4X4	4/4
(O) SuperManPlusBatman	6X6	1/2
(P) CatsInBoxes	4X4	4/4

(P) = Password required, (O) = Open

Leaderboards:

Rank	Player	Wins	Loses	Highest Score
1	player 1	20	1	16
2	player 2	17	3	16
3	player 3	13	4	14
4	player 4	11	5	10
5	player 5	10	6	6
6	player 6	10	3	6
7	player 7	8	7	6
8	player 8	5	5	4

Buttons: Create Game, Join Game, Account Settings

Creating a Game

Once you have successfully logged onto the game server, you are allowed to host your own game. You will next be asked to choose the desired game settings and options. Once you have selected everything, click the start button to go into the waiting room.

Naming the Game Room

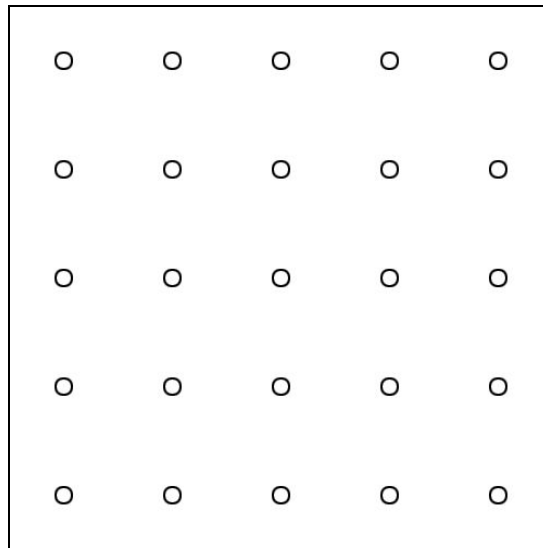
A room name will be automatically be generated for you, however if you wish to use something else more unique you can easily change it.

(Maximum room name is up to 80 characters)

Selecting the Grid Size

There are three types of grid sizes in this game, and those follows options are:

- **Small grid (4 x 4)**
 - The small grid size is ideal beginner and newbie players
- **Medium grid (6 x 6)**
 - The medium is ideal for intermediate players
- **Large grid (8 x 8)**
 - The largest grid is ideal for dots & boxes experts



Example of a small grid (4 x 4)

Selecting the Number of players

Before you began playing a game, you are able to select the number of players that you wish to participate in your game. A maximum of 4 players per multiplayer game is allowed.

Room Password Protection

You have the option to set a password for the room to prevent random players from entering.

Joining a Game

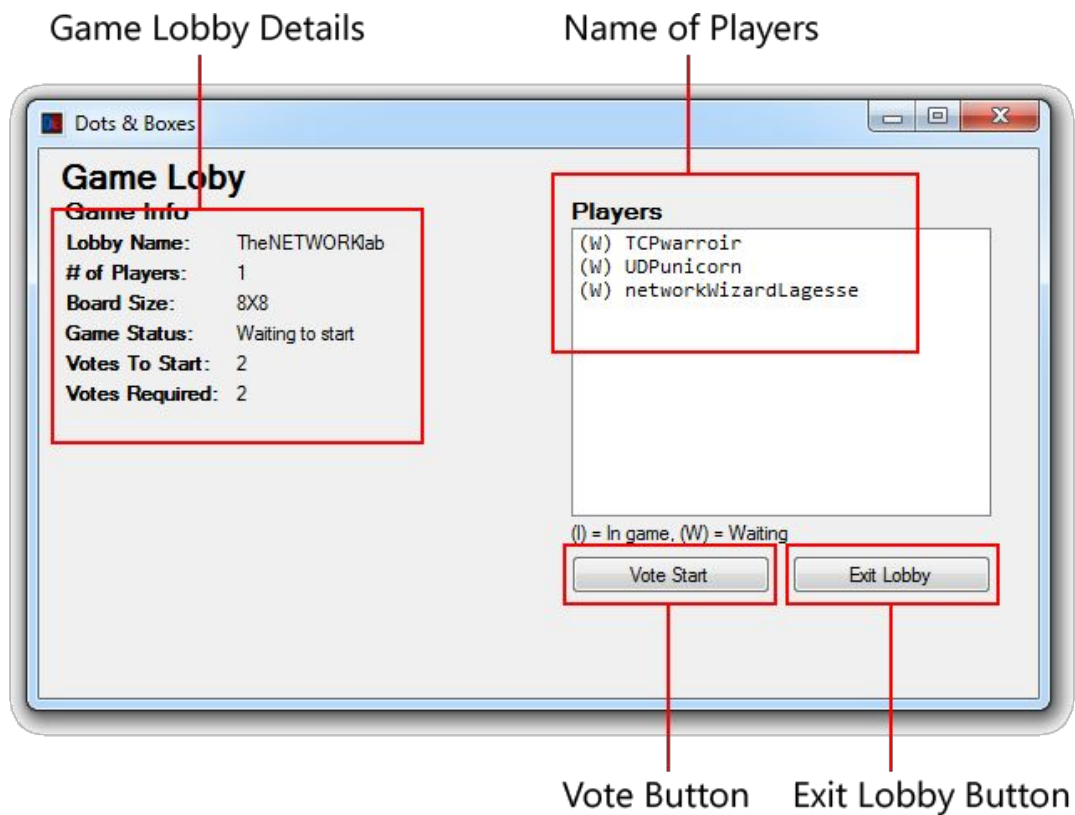
Once you have successfully logged onto the game server, you can now Join any room from the gaming list (password may be required to enter room). Once you have joined the desired room you will be placed in the Game Lobby.

Casting Votes

Once you enter the game you selected, you will wait for the other players to enter the game lobby and vote to start the game. If more than half the players vote to start the game, the game will begin.

Exit Lobby

You have the option to leave the Game Lobby from clicking the **Exit Lobby** button

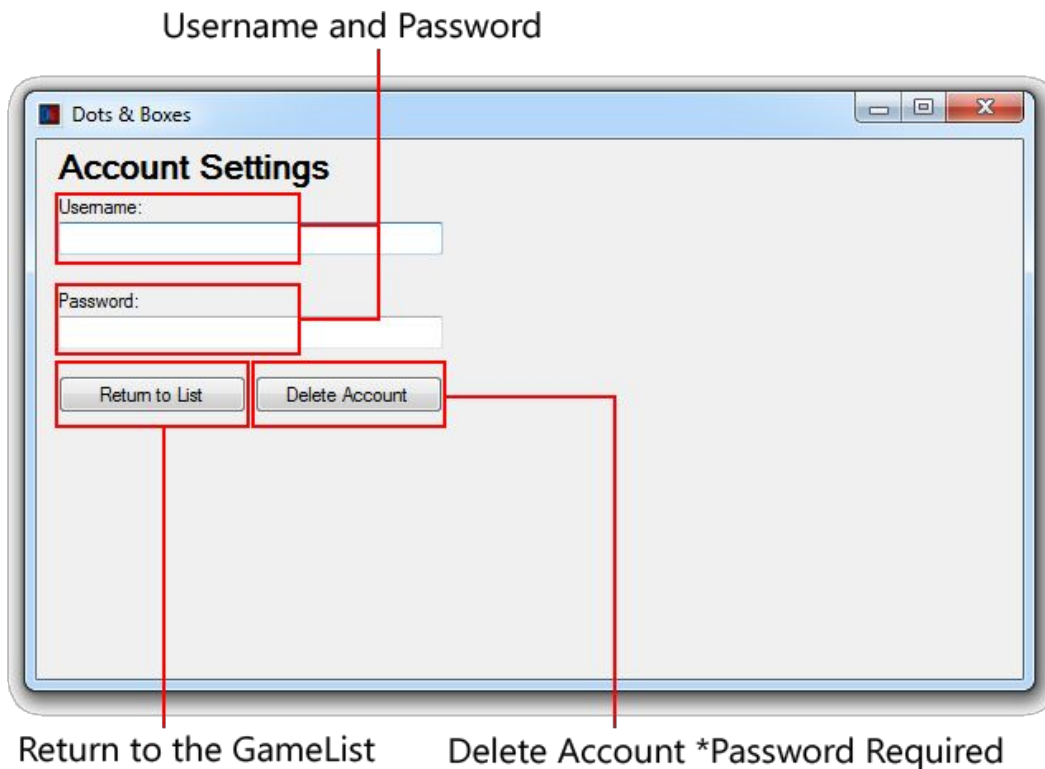


Account Settings

Once entering in the account settings you are only able to delete your account or return to the previous window into the Game List room

Deleting an Account

In order to delete an account, you first have to log onto the server where you created the account you wish to delete. You are also required to provide a password in order to permanently delete your account.



Exiting a Game

To exit a current game just close the window if you wish to forfeit victory to the other players, or by simply winning the game.

Tips and Strategies

The Chain Rule

To control the game,

- Player 1 should aim to have an odd number chain count
- Player 2 should aim to have an even number chain count

Taking Every Chain

1. In order to capitalize on the chain counting principles, you must be able to take every chain that is made. When your opponent gives you the first chain, take every box EXCEPT THE LAST TWO. Sacrifice these two by placing your line at the end of the two boxes, leaving space for a line in between one box and the other. This is known as the Double Cross.
2. If your opponent plays within a loop, leave FOUR boxes and play so that there is a space between two boxes on either side of your last line. By sacrificing the last 2 boxes of a chain or the last 4 boxes of a loop, you are guaranteed to obtain every single chain in the game.

The Mirroring Technique

Since the mirror trick makes things even, it favors Player 1. Since player 2 is second to play, Player 1 must find a way to become 'Player 2' in terms of being able to copy moves. Although many people try to create a mirror top-bottom and left-right, most do it wrong by only mirroring either the top-bottom or the left-right. A true mirror reflects top-bottom and left-right at the same time.

As many may have found out before, the way to change the turn in favor of Player 1 for mirror tricks is to give away the center box so that Player 2 is effectively playing ahead of Player 1, allowing him to copy. While most might think this automatically spells doom for Player 2 if they let it happen, it does not. There are two strategies against this:

1. Don't let Player 1 give you center box. In the event that they seem to be forcing you to take it, make sure there are un-copied lines somewhere else on the board. Also, try to circle around the center block, incorporating it into a waving chain that counts as "1" so that if they mirror you the rest of the way, the count will remain odd.
2. If Player 1 insists on playing exactly the same moves as you, then sacrifice non-chains repeatedly. Since you are already 1 box ahead, if you share all the remaining boxes evenly, you will win. So eventually Player 1 will see that copying you will cause them to lose and they will stop.

About the Creators

Jordan Walker

Chief Software Developer



Matthew Ramos

Software Developer / Illustration Designer

