

PROJECT AETHER

Quick Setup Guide

Get playing in about a minute

NO TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE REQUIRED

Setting up

There are only two steps. You do not need to open a terminal, install anything by hand, or change any settings.

1

Install Node.js (one time only)

AETHER needs a free program called Node.js. If it is already on this computer, skip to step 2.

How to install it

Go to **nodejs.org** > click the big **LTS** download button > run the installer > click Next and accept every default. That is all.

2

Start AETHER

Open the **Project-Aether** folder and start it:

IF YOU USE	DO THIS
Windows	Double-click START-AETHER.bat
Mac or Linux	Double-click start-aether.sh

That's it

A black window opens and does the setup for you. The **first time** takes about a minute. After that it starts in a couple of seconds.

When it is ready, your web browser opens automatically and the black window shows this:

AETHER IS RUNNING

On this computer : http://localhost:4100

For other players: http://192.168.0.50:4100

Press Ctrl+C to stop.

Leave that black window open

It is running the game. Closing it stops AETHER. To stop on purpose, click the window and press **Ctrl** and **C** together.

Playing

Pick a mode on the main menu.

MODE	WHO PLAYS	WHAT HAPPENS
Single Player	You, on your own	You choose Blue Team (defend) or Red Team (attack). The computer plays the other side.
Campaign	You, on your own	Three connected missions that get harder. You defend.
Local PVP	Two people, one screen	Defender on the left, attacker on the right.
Remote PVP	Two people, two computers	One person defends, the other attacks, over the network.

Playing on your own

Choose **Single Player**, then pick which side you want to be:

YOU PICK	YOU DO	THE COMPUTER
BLUE TEAM	Spot the attacker and throw them out before they reach the Core Database.	Plays the attacker.
RED TEAM	Break in and reach the Core Database before time runs out.	Plays the defender. You can set how good it is: Recruit, Operator or Elite.

Playing with someone else

Both computers must be on the same Wi-Fi or office network.

1

You: host the game

Click **Remote PVP**. A short code appears at the top of the screen, for example **MTW01V**. Tell it to the other player.

2

Them: open the link

They type the "**For other players**" address from your black window into their web browser. They do not install anything.

3

Them: join

They type your code into the **RANGE CODE** box and click **Join as Red**. The game starts straight away.

If something goes wrong

WHAT YOU SEE	WHAT TO DO
It says Node.js is not installed.	Do step 1 on page 1, then start AETHER again.
Nothing happens when I double-click.	Right-click the file and choose Open. On Mac or Linux you may need to allow it to run first.
The browser did not open.	Type the " On this computer " address from the black window into your browser yourself.
Windows asks about the firewall.	Click Allow . Without this, other people cannot join your game.
My friend cannot connect.	Check they used the " For other players " address (not 'localhost'), and that you are both on the same network.
It says the port was busy.	Nothing to fix. It picked another one - just use the address it shows you.
The page is blank or stuck.	Refresh the browser. If that fails, close the black window and start again.

Still stuck?

Close the black window, then start AETHER again. Nothing is saved between games, so restarting never loses anything and fixes almost everything.

Want more detail?

This guide covers setup only. The full **User & Setup Guide** in the same folder explains how the simulation works, how to connect an AI provider, how the scoring works, and how to change the game's difficulty settings.