

VPN Services

ExpressVPN

- Number of IP addresses: 30,000
- Number of servers: 3,000+
- Number of server locations: 160
- Number of simultaneous connections: 5
- Country/Jurisdiction: British Virgin Islands
- 94+ countries
- 3 months Free with 1-year plan

ExpressVPN also offers a 30-day money-back guarantee, and has impressive protocol support. While few will use PPTP (unless there are specific needs), the added support of SSTP and L2TP/IPSec may be welcome to some users.

We like the quality of their setup guides, and the detailed information in their FAQ. The ExpressVPN gained points from us for their support of Bitcoin as a payment method, and their reliable and easy-to-use connection kill switch feature.

The company has been in business since 2009, and has a substantial network of fast VPN servers spread across 94 countries. Their best plan is priced at just \$6.67 per month for an annual package which includes 3 months free. ExpressVPN's commitment to privacy is a standout feature.

NordVPN

- Number of IP addresses: 5,000
- Number of servers: 5000+ servers
- Number of server locations: 61
- Country/Jurisdiction: Panama
- 60+ countries
- \$2.99/month (75% discount) for a 3-year plan
- NordVPN in-depth review and hands-on testing

NordVPN is one of our top-performing VPN providers. They even offer a generous simultaneous connection count, with six simultaneous connections through their network, where nearly everyone else offers five or fewer.

NordVPN's network isn't as large as some of their competitors, so if you're trying to obfuscate your tracks, you might want a company with more servers. Otherwise, this company is clearly providing a winning offering.

Their best plan is 1-year subscription plan: \$6.99 (\$83.88). While their monthly price of \$11.95 is at the high end of the spectrum, their yearly price of \$83.88 is lower than most our contenders. And yes, they also have a full 30-day refund policy. NordVPN also offers a dedicated IP option, for those looking for a different level of VPN connection. They do offer \$2.99/month (75% discount) for a 3-year plan.

IPVanish VPN

- Number of IP addresses: 40,000+
- Number of servers: 900
- Number of server locations: 60
- Country/Jurisdiction: United States
- \$4.87/month (60% discount) for a 1-year plan
- **Father's Day Sale:** Friday June 7th - Sunday June 17th --
All IPVanish plans 50% off!

A big win for IPVanish is the fact that the company keeps zero logs. Zero. We also like the company's stance towards privacy. They even provide support to EFF, the Electronic Frontier Foundation, a nonprofit at the front lines of protecting online privacy.

A unique feature of IPVanish, and one we're very intrigued by, is the VPN's support of Kodi, the open-source media streaming app that was once known as XBMC. Any serious media fan has used or built Kodi or XBMC into a media player, and the integrated IPVanish Kodi plugin provides access to media worldwide.

At \$7.50/month and \$58.49 for a year, they're obviously trying to move you towards their yearly program. We awarded the company kudos for Bitcoin support, and their money-back guarantee. We're a little disappointed that they only allow a 7-day trial, rather than a full 30-days. The company is generous, with five simultaneous connections. We also liked their connection kill switch feature, a must for anyone serious about remaining anonymous while surfing.

PureVPN

- Number of IP addresses: 300,000
- Number of servers: 2000
- Number of server locations: 180
- Country/Jurisdiction: Hong Kong
- \$3.33/month (70% discount) for a 1-year plan

PureVPN does not log connection information. We like that they offer a 30-day refund policy. They got bonus points because, important for some of our readers, PureVPN supports bitcoin payments and you're going like their fast performance.

Also, you can grow with them. If after some time, you need to scale up to business-level plans, the company has offerings for growth. Pricing is middle-of-the-road, at \$10.95 per month and \$35,88 per year.

Finally, we like that PureVPN has both Kodi and a Chromebook solution called out right on their Web page. In addition, PureVPN earns the distinction of being the first VPN service we've seen to fully implement the GDPR.

CyberGhost VPN

- Number of IP addresses: 2,800
- Number of servers: over 3,700 worldwide
- Number of server locations: 115
- 24/7 support response
- \$2.75/month (79% discount) for a 3-year plan

- CyberGhost in-depth review and hands-on testing

CyberGhost has been around since 2011 and has come out strongly as a supporter of "civil rights, a free society, and an uncensored Internet culture." We really liked how the company specifically showcases, on their Web site, how folks normally prevented from accessing such important services as Facebook and YouTube can bring those services into their lives via a VPN.

The company has solid Linux support, supports VPN via routers, and has a solution for the popular Kodi media player. They check off all the boxes on protocol support and get kudos for offering a connection kill switch feature, along with supporting P2P and BitTorrent in most countries.

Still, the few extra dollars are worth it. We liked how the company offers custom app protection, IPV5 support and DNS, IP, and WebRTC leak prevention. CyberGhost also picked up points for preserving anonymity by not logging connection data.

StrongVPN

- Number of IP addresses: 59,500
- Number of servers: 689
- Number of server locations: 70
- \$5.83/month (42% discount) for a 1-year plan

StrongVPN blasts onto our favorites list with excellent infrastructure and decent price performance. As with our other favorites, StrongVPN has a strong no-logging policy.

Since VPN is all about protecting your privacy, that's a place the savvy VPN providers can pick up points.

Strong also picks up kudos for its large base of IP addresses, which also helps protect your anonymity. They have a solid collection of servers and worldwide locations. For those of you who need a dedicated IP, you can get one from the company, but you'll need to contact support to get help setting it up.

One of StrongVPN's strongest strengths is the company's network. They own and operate their entire network infrastructure, which means they have no externally-dictated limits on bandwidth or the type of traffic allowed on the network. This gives you the confidence that you'll be able to power through your work.

StrongVPN's monthly price of \$10 is in the middle of the pack, but their yearly price of \$69.99 is among the lowest of our contenders.

Norton Secure VPN

- Number of countries: 29
- Number of servers: 1500
- Number of server locations: 200
- Country/Jurisdiction: US
- \$39.99 for the first 12 months

Symantec, long known for excellence in security products, has a relatively limited offering in its VPN product. It does not

support P2P or BitTorrent, it does not have a kill switch feature, and it does not support Linux, routers or set top boxes.

On the other hand, it's a VPN product from Symantec, a publicly-traded company with a clearly documented management team. In most software categories, this might not be a notable advantage, but in the VPN world, where most companies have shadowy management and impossible-to-track-down ownership structures, it's refreshing to know exactly who we're dealing with and know through independent sources (the company's annual filing, the SEC, and analyst reports) that the company is trustworthy and accountable.

Hotspot Shield

- Number of IP addresses: 50,000
- Number of servers: 2500
- Number of server locations: 26
- \$2.99/month (77% discount) for a 3-year plan

HotSpot Shield is a product that has had some ups and downs in terms of our editorial coverage. Back in 2016, they picked up some very positive coverage based on founder David Gorodysky comments about protecting user privacy. Then, in 2017, a privacy group accused the company of spying on user traffic, an accusation the company flatly denies. Finally, just this year, ZDNet uncovered a flaw in the

company's software that exposed users. Fortunately, that was fixed immediately.

So what are we to make of HotSpot Shield? Frankly, the controversy caused us to drop them from our directory for a while. But they approached us, made a strong case for their ongoing dedication to privacy, and we decided to give them another chance.

Here's the good news. They offer one of the best money-back guarantee we've seen for VPN services, a full 45-days. They support Windows, Mac, iOS, and Android, along with plugins for Chrome and Firefox. They also support routers and media players (but not Linux). And, as a bonus, they have a connection kill switch feature.

The company does not support P2P or BitTorrent – and they also don't support the OpenVPN. Every other vendor does, but HotSpot Shield limits its protocol support to L2TP/IPSec and something they call Hydra, an enhancement of the transport protocol.

Overall, the company did impress us with their attention to privacy. They have a published privacy canary. They also told us, "We have built in malware, phishing and spam protection. Our commitment to our users is that Hotspot Shield will never store, log, or share your true IP address."

Hide My Ass

- Number of IP addresses: 3,106
- Number of servers: 830
- Number of server locations: 280

- Country/Jurisdiction: United Kingdom
- \$2.99/month for 3-year plan

We have to give these folks an extra shout-out just for the name of their service. The firm has a strong network with a good selection of protocols supported. While they have an extensive (and very clearly written set of policy documents), the company explicitly allows P2P and torrents.

We like how HMA offers support on a wide range of devices including game consoles. We gave them kudos for bitcoin support, and their excellent money-back guarantee. They did make us frown a bit because they do log connection data. They also offer five simultaneous connections.

While their monthly pricing of \$11.52 is at the high end of the spectrum, their yearly pricing is competitive at \$78.66 for a full year.
