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Surfshark is one of the best best VPN services currently available and comes crammed with features, runs almost everywhere, and has one of the best value introductory deals around.The network has 3,200+ servers distributed across an impressive 160+ locations in 95 countries.There are Windows, Mac, iOS, Android and Linux apps, plus Chrome, Firefox and now Edge extensions, and a website unblocking Smart DNS system for games consoles, smart TVs and more.Whatever you're using, there's no need to worry about annoying 'simultaneous connection' limits – you can install and run Surfshark on as many devices as you like.The service is excellent on the technical essentials, including strong AES-256-GCM encryption, WireGuard, OpenVPN and IKEv2 support, a no logs policy, and a kill switch to protect you if the VPN connection drops.Want to try Surfshark? Check out the website here (opens in new tab)There's real depth here. Android apps can be seen through most VPNs by requesting your physical location, but not Surfshark – a GPS Spoofing feature enables it to return the coordinates of your chosen VPN server.Oh, there's also ad and malicious URL blocking, P2P support on most servers, VPN chaining (use two servers for one hop), split tunneling, the company's own zero-knowledge DNS servers, and 24/7 support via email and live chat if anything goes wrong.Updates since our last review include a lighter, more practical Windows kill switch (we'll look at that later). There's finally a browser extension for Edge, as mentioned, and WireGuard is now the default app protocol.The company has also announced Surfshark Nexus, which it calls 'a cutting-edge technology to change VPNs.' Check this blog post (opens in new tab) for the details, but essentially it provides a smarter way of routing your traffic through Surfshark's network.Surfshark Nexus will deliver new features throughout 2022 and 2023, but the first is already here: IP Rotator automatically changes your IP address every few minutes, without you having to disconnect.The Surfshark One plan includes data breach alerts and a privacy-friendly internet search (Image credit: Surfshark)Surfshark VPN: what's new?Editor's note: Since our latest full test of Surfshark in March 2022, the following noteworthy updates have been made to the service:- July 2022: Even more locations have been added, bringing Surfshark's countries up to an impressive 95.- May 2022: GUI updated (opens in new tab) for Linux users.- May 2022: Eight new server locations added to the network in Brunei, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Mongolia, Nepal and Laos. - May 2022: Surfshark Antivirus (available through the Surfshark One suite) rolled out to macOS users.Surfshark pricingAs you'll see courtesy of our dedicated Surfshark price and deals guide, the service's monthly plan (opens in new tab) is more expensive than some at $12.95.Paying for a year upfront (opens in new tab) cuts the cost to a cheaper-than-most $3.99 a month, but that's just for the first term. It rises to $4.98 on renewal.Surfshark's 24 months plan (opens in new tab) offers the best value at $2.49 a month. Or to talk totals: signing up for one year costs an up front $47.88, but two years is only marginally more expensive at $59.76. But again, this is only for the first term; on renewal you switch to the regular $4.98 a month annual plan.That initial price beats most of the competition, but there are a few exceptions. Private Internet Access' three-year plan is priced at only $2.03 a month for the first term, for instance, and has a simple on-demand antivirus thrown in.The Surfshark One plan gives you all the same VPN features, and adds Avira-powered antivirus, data breach monitoring and privacy-friendly internet search. You can activate it for an extra $1.99 a month. Cheap? Well, it's a very basic setup. The antivirus supports on-demand scans, for instance, but doesn't have any real-time protection, so it's not a substitute for a full antivirus app.Surfshark One also gives you an Avira-powered antivirus, but it's a basic affair (Image credit: Surfshark)If security is a priority, keep in mind that most top antivirus companies now also include VPNs. Avast One gives you far more capable antivirus and security tools, and an unlimited VPN, for $4.19 a month in year one, $8.33 on renewal.Surfshark's 7-day free trial for Android, iOS and Mac gives you some time to sample the service for yourself. We'd like something for Windows users, too, but it seems unfair to complain when many providers have no trials at all.Surfshark even delivers more than you'd expect with its range of payment methods, with support for credit cards, PayPal, cryptocurrencies, Amazon Pay and Google Pay.But if, after all this, you sign up and find the company isn't for you, no problem – you're protected by a 30-day money-back guarantee.Surfshark keeps no logs on its users and the service protects your connection with AES-256 encryption and a kill switch (Image credit: Surfshark)Privacy and loggingSurfshark's privacy features start with the VPN basics: secure protocols (WireGuard, OpenVPN UDP and TCP), AES-256 encryption, and a kill switch to block internet access and prevent identity leaks if the VPN connection ever fails.Surfshark's network has its own private DNS on each server to reduce the chance of others spying on your activities. And the ability to use a double VPN hop (connect to Paris, say, then leave the Surfshark network in New York) makes it even more difficult for anyone to follow your tracks.Like ExpressVPN, Surfshark is based in the British Virgin Islands, and the company points out that this means it's not required to keep logs of user actions.Surfshark's No Logs page (opens in new tab) says the service doesn't collect your IP address, browsing history, used bandwidth, session information, network traffic or connection timestamps.'The only data the company keeps about you is your email address and billing information, the Surfshark FAQ (opens in new tab) explains.Surfshark underwent a second Cure53 audit on its server infrastructure in 2021 (Image credit: Surfshark)AuditsPrivacy policies are important, but we don't think customers should have to take a VPN provider's words on trust. And that's why we're happy to see that Surfshark has put two areas of its service through an independent security audit.In November 2018, the Germany security company Cure53 (opens in new tab) [PDF] put Surfshark's browser extensions under a very high-powered security microscope. The company only found a couple of small issues, and concluded that it was 'highly satisfied to see such a strong security posture on the Surfshark VPN extensions.'That was good news in 2018, but it's less interesting years later, especially when it only examined such a limited area of the service.In May 2021 Surfshark went further, though, reporting on a second Cure53 audit (opens in new tab) of its servers.This audit had a much wider scope: 'To thoroughly examine and evaluate the security posture exposed by the Surfshark server, VPN configuration, as well as the related infrastructure.'The auditors found only four security-related general issues, with a maximum severity of 'Medium.' If you're not used to reading Cure53 audits, that's not bad at all (they're exceptionally thorough and always find something).The report concluded 'the overall outcome should be regarded as good' and Surfshark had a clear understanding of the challenges presented by VPN security.Surfshark could have taken the audit a little further. It didn't verify Surfshark's no logging credentials, which feels like a missed opportunity. And the company has only published a summary of the report; we'd much prefer to see the full version.Still, we're glad to see Surfshark underwent this audit, and the conclusions look good to us. The company tells us there's another audit being planned imminently, and we'll be interested to see the results.Surfshark's Windows client will be easily recognizable to those familiar with other VPNs (Image credit: Surfshark)Windows appSurfshark's Windows app is easy to install, and reasonably simple to operate. The interface is a little more complex than usual – sporting tabs, icons, lists, and more – but the basic features work much like any other VPN. There's a Connect button to access your nearest server, a location list showing other servers, plus a Settings icon which leads to some useful extras.WireGuard connections are quick, and happen in just a couple of seconds, with OpenVPN taking a more mid-range 8-10 seconds. But the app keeps you informed, with desktop notifications letting you know exactly when you're protected (and when you're not).The well-designed location picker displays countries and cities in the same list. That makes for a little more scrolling, but it also means you don't have to browse cities in another tab: they're all visible at a glance. Surfshark spoils the effect a little by not sorting the cities alphabetically, but apart from that it works well.Locations don't have latencies by default, but you can check them with a click. A Search box allows you to find specific locations with a few keypresses (typing 'atl' is enough to display Atlanta), and there's a Favorites system to save your top locations for later.A Static IP list enables connecting to locations in Germany, Japan, Singapore and the UK (the US option has been dropped since our last review), and receiving a fixed IP from each one (that is, your IP will be from the country you choose, but it'll be the same every time you connect). That could be handy in some situations, but beware if you use it for security – perhaps to get access to an IP-restricted network. This is a static IP, but it's not a dedicated IP, just for you; any other Surfshark customer can be allocated the same IP address, so the IP alone isn't a guarantee of your identity.Surfshark even includes a MultiHop feature that sends your traffic through two VPN servers for added security (Image credit: Surfshark)A MultiHop tab passes your traffic through two VPN servers, ensuring that even if the exit server is compromised, an attacker still won't have your real IP. There are 14 routes available, where the first server is your initial connection (options include US, Canada, UK, Singapore, Germany, France, India, Netherlands and Australia), and the second is where you'll appear to be to the outside world (France, Germany, Hong Kong, India, Netherlands, Portugal, Singapore, Sweden, UK, US).A Bypasser panel enables specifying applications, websites and IP addresses that bypass the VPN (an expanded version of the split tunneling feature you'll see with providers like ExpressVPN). If using Surfshark causes issues with a particular website or app, adding it to the allow list should solve the problem.Alternatively, you're able to set the Bypasser to route only your chosen apps through the VPN. That may be more useful if you're only using Surfshark for one or two tasks, for example torrenting: set up your torrent client to connect via the VPN and everything else will use your regular connection.There are plenty of configuration options, and they all worked well for us, plus it's great to see a VPN provider deliver this level of ability to tune its service.If any of this doesn't work as it should, you can send bug reports, and raise (or browse) tickets from within the app (no need to open your browser and waste time hunting for the right area of the support site).Surfshark's iOS app also shares a similar look and feel to its desktop counterpart (Image credit: Surfshark)It's much the same story with Surfshark's iOS VPN app: the look and feel are very similar, and you still get the kill switch, the choice of protocols (OpenVPN, IKEv2, WireGuard) and more.Small but welcome recent additions include widgets to simplify getting connected, and the ability to report bugs from within the app.It's a surprisingly capable setup, as software for Apple's mobile OS is often short-changed for features in comparison to other platforms.Put it all together and these are impressive apps, well implemented, straightforward to use, and a refreshing change for anyone tired of losing VPN functionality on mobile devices.We used several different speed testing services to determine Surfshark's performance (Image credit: Speedtest.net)PerformanceWe measured Surfshark performance from a US location and a UK data center with a 1Gbps connection, giving us plenty of scope to see just what the service could do.We installed the latest Surfshark app on our test systems, connected to our nearest location, and checked download speeds using performance testing sites including SpeedTest (the website and command line app), nPerf and SpeedOfMe. We collected at least five results from each site using WireGuard, repeated each test again with OpenVPN, and ran the full test set in both morning and evening sessions.OpenVPN results were disappointing, peaking at around 140-150Mbps in both the US and UK. Most top VPNs reached somewhere in the 200-300Mbps region during recent tests, and Mullvad managed 480-490Mbps.Surfshark has a secret weapon in its WireGuard support, though, and switching protocols saw downloads jump to 550-700Mbps in the UK, and an excellent 720-790Mbps in the US. That's in the same ballpark as providers like NordVPN (730-760Mbps), IVPN (730-810Mbps) and Mullvad (740-820Mbps), although still a little behind our speed leader TorGuard (which hit 950Mbps+).Surfshark was able to unblock Netflix and all other streaming platforms we tested it with (Image credit: Netflix)Netflix and streamingIf you're tired of VPNs which vaguely hint about their unblocking abilities, but never make any real commitment, you'll love Surfshark. Not only does the company say upfront that it unblocks Netflix, but it also names the near 20 countries (opens in new tab) where it currently works (US, France, Japan, Italy, Australia and more).This wasn't just overblown marketing-oriented confidence, either. We were able to access US Netflix from each of our three test locations. Surfshark bypassed its VPN blocking with ease, giving us access from our three test UK locations.The good news kept coming, too, with Surfshark getting us into both US Amazon Prime and Disney Plus, giving it a perfect 100% in our unblocking tests.That's a great result which puts Surfshark right up there with the very best unblocking VPNs. At the moment, that includes CyberGhost, ExpressVPN, Hotspot Shield, NordVPN and ProtonVPN, all of which have got us into every one of our test streaming sites.Support guides even include tutorials on how to set up Surfshark on Chromebooks (Image credit: Surfshark)SupportIf Surfshark doesn't work for you, the support site (opens in new tab) has setup and installation tutorials, troubleshooting guides, FAQs and other resources to point you in the right direction.The content is well-organized. Clicking 'Get Started' takes you to a Tutorials page with articles on setting up the apps, getting the service working on other platforms and using its various features.These aren't the horribly basic 'download and run the installer' guides you'll get from lesser VPNs, either. Take a look at this example on How To Set Up Surfshark on Windows (opens in new tab) (no need to read it, just scroll down). There's a video guide, step-by-step installation advice with screenshots, plus first steps guidance on choosing locations and getting connected, and basic explanations of all the main features.If this isn't enough, Surfshark's support is available 24/7 via live chat. We tried this while attempting to diagnose a connection issue, and had a friendly reply in under 60 seconds. So, if you're struggling to find something on the website, it might be worth opening a chat session – the problem could be sorted out quicker than you might think.Surfshark review: Final verdictOpenVPN speeds aren't the best, but Surfshark excels just about everywhere else, providing an array of advanced features for (initially) a very low price. An absolute must for your VPN shortlist.