

## Virtual Private Networks (VPN)

### Introduction:

A VPN is a feature used on networks to help protect your privacy and anonymity.

### VPN: Core Function:

- A VPN creates an encrypted “tunnel” between your device and a server run by the VPN provider.
- This hides your real IP address and makes it harder for others on the network (or your broadband/mobile provider) to see which sites you visit and what you’re sending.

### Reasons you might want one:

- Common practical reasons people use a VPN include:
- Securing logins and data on public Wi-Fi (cafés, hotels, airports), where other users could otherwise snoop on unencrypted traffic.
- Reducing tracking by ISPs and advertisers, because they see an encrypted connection to the VPN rather than each site you visit.

### When is it beneficial?

- Travel or work remotely and need to access sensitive work systems, online banking, or personal accounts over unknown networks.
- Live in or travel to places with heavy censorship or region-restricted sites and want more open access to information and services.

## What a VPN does not do?

A VPN is not a magic invisibility cloak.

Websites you log into (e.g., Google, Facebook, your bank) can still identify you by your account, and you still need good habits like strong passwords and antivirus.

## Do you personally “need” one?

- For a typical home user on reasonably trusted UK broadband, a VPN is more of a strong extra layer than an absolute requirement.
- If you often use public Wi-Fi, handle work or charity data, care about ISP/advertiser tracking, or travel frequently, using a reputable paid VPN is worth considering.

## Which VPN do I go for?

There are several VPNs which the tech press recommends; the top one seems to be:

### Nordvpn

Which has many features, but it does have a small cost to it.

The next best alternative, with enough for the personal user, is:

### Proton VPN: <https://protonvpn.com>

Select the download file for your computer or go to the Play Store or App Store to install it on your tablet or phone.

## Summary:

Ultimately, it is a personal choice.

Do you really need to use a VPN? No at home? Yes, if on public Wi-Fi?

Which one do I choose, free or paid?