

Wireguard: A Modern VPN Protocol

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July 15, 2018

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Introduction

Why VPN?

- Necessary for point to point security between campuses (e.g. DC's, corporate offices, ...)
 - As early as the 1970's governments have tapped undersea cables for intelligence,
 - Operation Ivy Bells in 1971 tapped Russian communications to military bases¹,
- Necessary for end users to get a clean connection:
 - ISP's doing DNS hijacking to serve inappropriate content,
 - Open WiFi networks when travelling,
 - Geoblocking,

¹https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Operation_Ivy_Bells

Necessity in real life

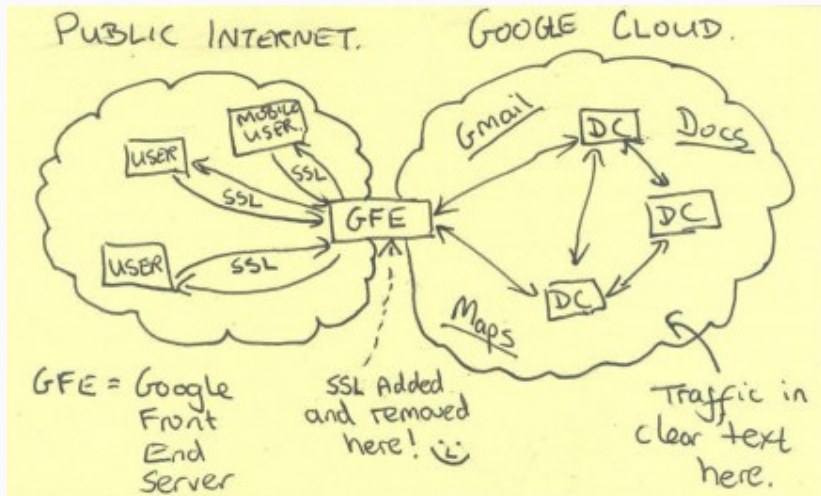


Figure 1: Government attempts to intercept user's content

History of VPN protocols

- IPSEC
 - Popular for site to site connections with dedicated router hardware,
 - Tedious to set up and high degree of complexity,
 - Large attack surface between IKE (v2), SA mechanisms, XFRM in Linux,
 - Legacy protocol support,
 - IP in IP,
- OpenVPN
 - Implemented in userspace with TUN/TAP (slow),
 - Complex configuration vulnerable to leaks,
 - Stateful protocol which is brittle in real networks,
 - Large codebase / attack surface,

What is Wireguard?

- Opinionated Layer 3 secure network tunnel for IPv4 and IPv6.
- Lives in the Linux kernel, but cross platform userspace implementations are available.
- UDP based. Punches through firewall.
- Modern conservative cryptographic principles.
- Emphasis on simplicity and auditability.
- Authentication model similar to SSH's `authorized_keys`.

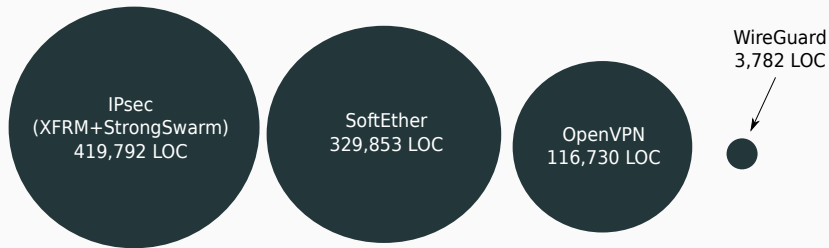


Figure 2: Comparing different VPN protocols in terms of LOC

Minimalistic Interface

“Developers should write programs that can communicate easily with other programs”

— Unix Philosophy

- Wireguard presents a normal network interface

```
# ip link add wg0 type wireguard  
# ip address add 10.0.32.1/24 dev wg0  
# ip route add default via wg0
```

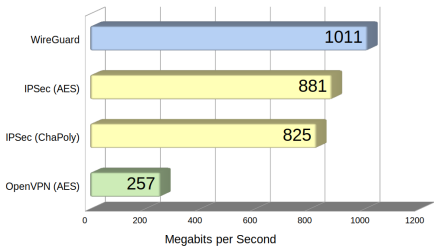
- By using a standard interface it becomes easier to administer using the existing iproute2 utilities for example

Cryptokey Routing

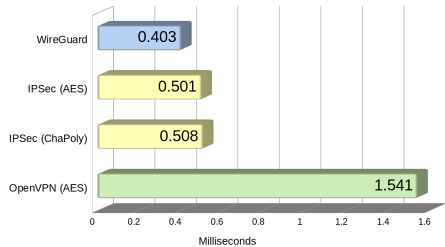
- Fundamental concept of any VPN service
 - Create **mapping** between **public keys of peers** and their **IPs**.
- WireGuard interface has:
 - A private key
 - A listening UDP port
 - A list of peers
- Peer has
 - A public key
 - A list of associated tunnel IPs
 - Optionally has an endpoint IP and port

Performance

Bandwidth



Ping Time



Stealth

- Behaves like a rootkit in some sense.
- Should not respond to any unauthenticated packets.
- Hinder scanners and service discovery.
- Service only responds to packets with correct crypto.
- Not chatty at all.



The Key Exchange

