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uProxy FAQ

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What is uProxy?

uProxy is an open source browser extension for Chrome and Firefox that lets users share their route to the Internet with each other. uProxy can make it much harder for a third party to monitor or interfere with the traffic of the user who is getting access. It's like a personalized VPN service that you can use to provide secure access to friends and family, and to yourself when you travel.

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What do "get access" and "share access" mean?

When you are **getting access** from a friend, all the web traffic from your browser first travels encrypted to your friend's computer and from there, to the Internet. This means that, to most websites, the request will appear to be coming from your friend's computer, and someone monitoring your connection will only see that you have a secure connection to your friend.

When you are **sharing access**, authorized friends will be able to send their web traffic to your computer and from there to the Internet. Your friend can only connect through a computer if you authorize them on that computer, and you can revoke their authorization at any time.

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Why does uProxy connect to social networks?

uProxy needs a way to see when your friends are online, and it needs to exchange information (IP address, port, and encryption keys) between peers to set up direct connections. Instead of operating a central service that could be easily blocked, uProxy connects to social networks that you and your friends are already using. They are only used to help establish a direct connection between users; proxied Internet traffic is not sent through the social network. **uProxy will never post publicly on your behalf.** It only exchanges private messages with friends of yours who are also running uProxy.

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How do I find my friends on uProxy?

In order to see a friend in your contact list, you have to be logged into the same social network they're using with uProxy. You can log into multiple social networks at the same time by going into the menu (≡) and expanding the header (▼) to see social network options.

If you're logged into **Google**, friends will appear in your contact list if they're currently logged into uProxy and if they appear in your Google Hangouts (or Google Chat) buddylist. You can add friends by sending them a message using [Google Hangouts](#).

If you're logged into **Facebook**, people will appear in your contact list if they're your Facebook friends list and if they've logged into uProxy using their Facebook account in the past.

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When I am sharing access, what does the other party have access to?

Users who are getting access from your machine are only able to access the Internet. They cannot look at files on your computer, see what you're doing on the Internet, or log into websites using your identity. They also cannot access devices on your local home or work network.

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Where does uProxy work?

If access is blocked to all of the social networks that uProxy supports, then you will not be able to use a social network to help you set up a connection with your friends. You can still set up a one-time connection manually, by exchanging links generated by uProxy via a secure channel, but you'll have to repeat this exchange every time you want to connect to your friend. The advantage of using social networks is that connection establishment is seamless, once authorization is granted.

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How does uProxy help protect my Internet connection?

When you use the Internet normally, your Internet service provider (ISP) is able to see which sites you're visiting, and they may try to interfere with your connection by blocking access to some sites or even altering their contents. In addition, on some networks, like unsecure wifi, other users can also observe your web traffic.

When you're getting access through uProxy, the connection between you and your friend is encrypted, and your web traffic is sent through that connection, and then out to the internet from your friend's machine. Your ISP should not be able to monitor normal web browsing done over uProxy, and we intentionally make uProxy connections difficult for an ISP to identify and block.

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Why is it important that I trust the people I am connecting to?

uProxy is designed to help friends get and share internet access, and there are

risks to both getters and sharers if they connect to people they don't trust. If you get access from a sharer who is malicious, they may be able to spy on your web browsing or attempt a man-in-the-middle attack on your connections to secure sites. If you share access with someone you don't know, they may be able to use your connection to engage in illegal activity, and depending on the laws in your country, you may be legally responsible for facilitating that activity. Also, if you are using uProxy to get access to the Internet from a friend, it is important to trust that your friend's Internet connection is secure.

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Does uProxy log data about me, and what is uProxy's privacy policy?

We ask users if they would like to opt-in to report usage metrics. If they do, all metrics are anonymized on the client (before they are submitted) using [Rappor](#). In addition, when users manually use the Submit Feedback tool in the settings menu, they have the option to include logs from their recent uProxy activity. Logs may contain personally identifiable information (PII). PII is never shared outside the uProxy team, and the logs that contain it are retained for at most three months before being deleted. All reports are submitted in a way that makes it hard for an adversary to detect uProxy users.

There is more information on the team's development site about [our data collection policy](#) and [trusting social networks](#).

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Does uProxy give me anonymity online?

uProxy is not an anonymity service; it is useful for concealing your browsing from your ISP, but not for hiding your identity from the sites you visit. A website visited by someone who is getting access via uProxy will see the IP address of the person who is sharing access, and the website may be able to discover the IP address of the uProxy user who is getting access. If you need to hide your identity from the websites you visit, we recommend using the [Tor Browser](#).

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What isn't proxied, and can uProxy leak information about the sites I visit?

uProxy only proxies traffic for the web browser it is running in, not for other applications, like email programs. There are some uncommon situations where

the browser might make unproxied requests, and some web technologies, notably Flash and WebRTC, are capable of making requests that don't go through the proxy. Similar information leakage can occur with many popular VPNs, and users with strong privacy needs are encouraged to consider the Tor Browser, which is engineered specifically to avoid revealing information to observers.

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Who knows that I'm using uProxy?

Anyone you get or share with knows that you're using uProxy. In addition, if you choose to connect uProxy to Facebook or Google, your friends on that network (Facebook friends or Google Hangouts contacts) who are also using uProxy will be able to see that you've logged on.

If you connect uProxy to a social network, that company is able to tell that you're running uProxy. In addition, using uProxy with Google and Facebook relies partly on Firebase, a service operated by Google, so Google and the uProxy team (which administers the uProxy Firebase account) have access to information about which accounts are using uProxy.

Users who are concerned about using uProxy with their personal accounts may wish to consider creating a dedicated pseudonymous account.

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Does uProxy protect me from viruses, phishing, or hacking?

uProxy can help protect you from an adversary who is trying to redirect your web connection to a malicious site. But, in general, uProxy is not designed to protect you from these kinds of attacks.

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Why is uProxy asking for these Chrome permissions?

When you install uProxy on Chrome, it asks for permission to (1) read and change all your data on the websites you visit, and (2) Communicate with cooperating websites. These permissions are necessary for uProxy to route your traffic through your friend's computer. No data about the websites you visit is ever sent to the uProxy team or the social networks you connect to.

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What does "port control" mean?

Network Address Translation (NAT) is typically implemented by routers to allow a single IP address to be shared by multiple computers. However, this can make it challenging for users to establish direct connections with each other, and some types of NATs (particularly symmetric NATs) can prevent uProxy from successfully establishing connections.

If your router has port control enabled (UPnP, NAT-PMP, or PCP), uProxy can instruct your router to specifically allow incoming connections from other uProxy users. If either side of a uProxy connection is able to use port control, connections will almost always be successful, regardless of NAT configuration. To learn how to enable port control on your router, check your router manual or Google "your router name" + "enable UPnP".

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How does uProxy compare to VPNs?

uProxy is designed to be trustworthy and resistant to blocking. VPN users typically connect to a shared pool of servers that can be identified and blocked. However, uProxy users connect to each other, rather than to common servers, and we conceal the nature of those connections, to make them hard to identify. Also, just like ISPs, VPN services can monitor which websites you visit, and it's often impossible to know what they do with that data. uProxy users only have to trust their friends, not VPN services they don't know. We also try to minimize the trust you have to place in the uProxy team, by open sourcing our code and encouraging external review.

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Who made uProxy?

uProxy is being developed by the University of Washington. The project was seeded by Google Ideas and has received contributions from Google, Brave New Software, and the open source community.

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What is an alpha release?

This alpha version of uProxy is still under development and may be unstable at times; some features are not complete, and there's a [list of open issues](#) on GitHub. We'd love for you to try it and help us make improvements, by giving us feedback.

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How do I submit feedback?

To submit feedback, click on the menu icon (≡) and then on "Submit Feedback," or email us at info@uproxy.org.

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